The Lovesick Skunk
by Joe Hayes, illustrated by Antonio Castro

This story is about a boy who loves to hold on to the things that he loves. From pencils sharpened down to nubs, old holy jeans, or a favorite old hat. But this boy loves one thing more than anything else—a black and white pair of sneakers. The sneakers and the boy are together through everything from the desert sands to a very smelly cow pie. Even when his mom buys him new sneakers (just like the old ones!), the little boy wears his old sneakers. One night, while camping out, the boy and his friend hear a strange sound, only to see a skunk snuggling up to the old black and white sneakers. The skunk’s boyfriend comes along and sprays the sneakers, making them super stinky. In the end, the boy puts on his new sneakers without complaint!

The following questions are aligned with CCSS standards for literature for grades K-3. You will find the corresponding standard after each question.

Questions Before Reading:

1. Looking at the cover of this book, what do you think is going to happen in this book? Explain your thinking. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.7)

2. What does lovesick mean? Do you know anyone who has ever been lovesick? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.4)

3. What do skunks do when they are scared? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

Questions During Reading:

1. What is the boy in the story like? Use the illustrations and text to help you discover your answer. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.3)

2. Why doesn’t the boy want to get rid of his favorite things, even though they are getting too worn to use any more? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)
3. Why does the little boy eventually get rid of his pencil and his jeans? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

4. What does the boy love the most and why? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

5. Describe the little boy’s shoes. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.7)

6. What is a cow pie? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.4)

7. Why did the little boy’s mom make him leave his shoes outside? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

8. Why won’t the little boy try on the new shoes? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

9. What do the boys see that makes them want to go camping? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.7)

10. What woke the boys? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

11. What were the boys afraid the skunk would do to them? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

12. What words in the book help you understand that the boys were scared? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.4)

13. Where did the skunk go instead of spraying the boys? Why was this a problem? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.3)

14. How did the sneakers become even smellier? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

15. How did the boys react after the skunk sprayed the shoes? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.3)
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16. Why didn’t the little boy tell his mom what happened to his shoes? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

Questions After Reading:

1. Retell the story in your own words. What happened first, next, then, and last? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.1)

2. What important lesson can we learn from this book? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.2)

3. Describe the main characters in this book. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.2.3)