

Squeak the Skater Goes Surfing

By Michael Stahl



Legend has it that Lincoln Elementary School once had a student named Steven James Skweekenheimerschtopen. He was a very popular boy and different from everyone else. Even though Skweekenheimerschtopen had a one-of-a-kind last name, it was not actually what made him so well known. By the time he was halfway through Kindergarten, his teacher grew tired of calling out “Skweekenheimerschtopen” each time she took attendance, so she decided to shorten his name to just “Squeak.” The nickname stuck, and everyone went around calling him Squeak. His ability to ride a skateboard like no other is what made him famous at school and in his town. However, it was not until he accepted the challenge of surfing that he would become a hero.

When Squeak entered the fifth grade, he was already a wiz at riding a skateboard. Every day he would be outside pushing himself to do better, crazier tricks. One of the best places in town to do so was in the playground of his very own school, so he spent a lot of his time there. This gave all his classmates a chance to watch him get better at skateboarding, day after day. While on his board, he’d hop up onto any railing he could find, and fly off any surface, too. Squeak quickly learned how to do 360-degree turns in the air, and how to flip his legs up to the sky while keeping the board against his feet with one arm and holding his whole body upside down with his other arm. The crowd of classmates would cheer him on, especially when he performed a new stunt for the very first time. The school’s principal did not mind that Squeak got so much attention from participating in a sport that was a little bit dangerous. Squeak always wore his protective gear: a helmet, knee pads, and elbow guards. He also kept his grades up, proving he was really a great role model for the other students.

After one particular weekend when Squeak took home five gold medals in a skateboarding competition, he thought to himself that he might want to give something new a try. Squeak was basically bored. He loved skateboarding and would never stop. He was completely certain about that. However, anytime Squeak would compete against other skilled skateboarders, he would win—hands down. He needed something new to push him. After seeing a video on the Internet of some amazing surfers, he knew what challenge he wanted to take on next.

“Surfing is perfect for me,” he told his parents at Sunday dinner, while trying to get them to pay for lessons. “Besides,” he added with a heap of confidence, “it’s just like skateboarding!”

Squeak’s parents agreed to pay for some surfing lessons for their son. They hired a man named Troy Mason to teach him. Troy had been in international competitions when he was young and was rather famous in the surfing world. He was a little bit older now and could not compete against the youngsters who were taking over the sport. So, he decided he should teach those young kids how to surf the right way.

Squeak knew in his mind that he would find surfing success. He had dreamt of going out in the ocean on his very first day and doing flips and spins as if he were on his skateboard and the waves were just like the rails in his schoolyard. Squeak would soon find out, though, that surfing may look similar to skateboarding, but it is quite different.

After forty-five minutes of his first lesson with Troy, Squeak had failed to balance himself on his new surfboard for more than a second or two. Of course, the board was slippery, which caused problems for Squeak. On top of that, unlike the pavement underneath his skateboard that never moved, the water never *stopped* moving, causing him to fall time and time again.

“You’ll get it, kid,” Troy said to him, trying to encourage Squeak after seeing the frustration on Squeak’s face. “Don’t you worry about a thing. You just need to keep coming out here into the water with me to practice, same as what you did with your skateboard.”

Squeak thanked Troy for that and indeed showed up for each of his lessons, ready to try and learn surfing over the course of the next few weeks. It was just the challenge he needed. Squeak realized that he certainly wasn’t bored with surfing!

Throughout his fourth lesson with Troy, Squeak was finally making some progress. He could stand on the board and direct it a little bit left and a little bit right.

“Keep up the good work!” said Troy. “Let’s head back to the beach and get some milkshakes.”

Troy turned around and swam in the direction of the beach. Squeak wanted to keep on surfing and try staying on his board a little longer.

Suddenly, Squeak heard someone yelling from way over his left-hand side in the water. “Help! Help!” the man said. Squeak saw that the man was drowning, but no one else had seen or heard him. The lifeguard must’ve just switched spots, and Troy was headed in the opposite direction.

Squeak concentrated as hard as he could and hopped on his board, taking a wave right over to the man who called for help. It was the longest time Squeak had spent balanced on his surfboard yet! Squeak got over to him in a jiffy and put his arm under the other man’s. They used his board to float on in to the beach where a crowd gathered. Finally, the lifeguard saw what was happening and jumped in to help, too.

By the time Squeak and the man he’d helped got back to the beach, Troy was waiting along with a crowd of people.

“Troy!” Squeak squealed. “Did you see me? I surfed! I really surfed!”

“I saw you surf,” said Troy. “But the more important thing is you saved that drowning man. You’re a hero!”

From then on, Squeak was known more for his surfing than his skateboarding.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What activity does Squeak try after getting bored with skateboarding?
 - A) swimming
 - B) roller-skating
 - C) surfing
 - D) sailing

2. What is the climax of the action in this story?
 - A) Squeak starts surfing lessons with Troy.
 - B) Squeak saves a man from drowning.
 - C) Squeak practices skateboarding in his school playground.
 - D) Squeak gets his nickname.

3. Although surfing may look similar to skateboarding, it is actually quite different. What evidence from the story supports this statement?
 - A) Although Squeak is good at skateboarding, surfing is a challenge for him.
 - B) At dinner Squeak tells his parents that surfing is just like skateboarding.
 - C) Squeak takes surfing lessons from Troy Mason, who used to be a famous surfer.
 - D) Squeak spends a lot of time practicing skateboarding in his school playground.

4. What is one similarity between Squeak's skateboarding and his surfing?
 - A) He is not very good at either when he starts out.
 - B) He works hard to get better at both.
 - C) He takes lessons to get better at both.
 - D) They both make him into a hero.

5. What is a theme of this story?
 - A) the importance of saving money
 - B) the need to choose your friends wisely
 - C) the benefits of challenging yourself
 - D) the difficulty of living in a new place

6. Read the following sentence: "Every day he would be outside **pushing himself** to do better, crazier tricks."

What does the phrase **pushing himself** mean?

- A) leaning hard against a wall
- B) getting upset with himself
- C) relaxing after doing a new trick
- D) making himself work hard

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

First, Squeak skateboards; _____, he surfs.

- A) initially
- B) although
- C) next
- D) as an illustration

8. When does Squeak start making some progress with surfing?

9. What does Squeak do to reach the drowning man?

10. Why was Squeak finally able to surf at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.
