

Teacher's Guide

Aligned to the Common Core Standards



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**For more resources,
go to www.erinmfry.com.**

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Notes to the Teacher

These activities and handouts are meant to supplement your students' reading of *LOSING IT*, by Erin Fry. You are free to use them as you'd like and, of course, copy them for your students. You are also welcome to share them with colleagues.

In addition to being an author, I am a teacher and published curriculum writer. I have written for educational publishers and textbook companies, creating standards-based lessons and assessments. It's my hope that you will find these resources useful as you read *LOSING IT* with your students.

Summary

After his father has a stroke, Bennett Robinson—an overweight teen who lost his mom to cancer at age five—has to move in with his know-it-all Aunt Laura who makes it her personal mission to get him healthier. After some excruciating morning runs with his *uber*-fit uncle, Bennett decides to try out for the cross country team, a move that alienates his best friend. As taunts from a persistent school bully escalate, a cute girl in English gets friendlier, and his father's insurance threatens to pull the plug, Bennett begins to see running as more than just as a sport, more than just a way of losing weight, but as his way of standing up for himself.

Themes

Bennett's story is one that many young people can relate to. As you read this with your class, you may find it helpful to discuss the different themes that are present: teenage obesity, health and fitness, bullying, standing up for oneself, friendship, forgiveness, and acceptance.

Persuasive Writing

The writing assignment at the conclusion of the curriculum guide can be done solely using information from the novel. However, there are wonderful resources available online for students to further research this topic. Consider having students examine the articles on the following sites:

Scholastic.com: Should states ban junk food in schools?

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=10853>

Yahoo Voices: Should schools allow the sale of junk food?

<http://voices.yahoo.com/should-schools-allow-sale-junk-food-6976784.html>

Vocabulary [LS6.4a and d]

Chapters 1-5

Directions: Match the vocabulary word on the left with the correct definition on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ diabetes (p.3) | a. to state something as being true; to insist |
| 2. _____ gripe (p.5) | b. causing death |
| 3. _____ deficiency (p. 12) | c. to grumble or complain |
| 4. _____ wary (p. 15) | d. highly satisfied with oneself |
| 5. _____ terminal (p.21) | e. a shortage or lack of |
| 6. _____ deceased (p. 27) | f. dead |
| 7. _____ assert (p. 28) | g. cautious, suspicious, alert for problems |
| 8. _____ smug (p. 36) | h. a disease in which a person has high blood sugar |

Directions: Use one of the words above to correctly complete each sentence below.

9. Because of his _____, he had to watch what he ate and check his blood sugar levels every day.
10. Bryan hated when his sister got a _____ look on her face, usually because she was right about something and he was wrong.
11. The first thing people often want to know after being diagnosed with a disease is whether or not it is _____.
12. Mary lives with her mom; her father is _____, having been killed overseas in the war in Afghanistan.
13. It's important to learn to _____ yourself and stand up for what you think is right.
14. My dad likes to _____ about the meals my mom makes but he always manages to clean his plate anyway.
15. It's good to be _____ if you are walking home alone, especially after dark.
16. Because she has an iron _____, she has to take supplements to keep her iron levels where they should be.

Chapters 6-10

Directions: A synonym is a word that means the same or almost the same as another word. Match the synonym on the right with the vocabulary word on the left.

<u>Vocabulary Terms</u>	<u>Synonyms</u>
1. _____hassle p. 43	a. absorbed, occupied
2. _____engrossed p. 43	b. scowl, frown
3. _____concocted p. 49	c. echoing
4. _____hypocritical p. 50	d. bother, annoy
5. _____grimace p. 52	e. insincere, two-faced
6. _____reverberating p. 58	f. examine
7. _____scrutinize p. 59	g. invented, created

Now, find a word from the Vocabulary Terms on the left that fits in each sentence below.

8. Liz heard her voice _____ off the walls of the cave and laughed at how odd it sounded.
9. When Kate saw the low grade on her math test she couldn't keep the _____ off her face.
10. Jake was so _____ in the book he was reading that he didn't hear his sister and her friends come into the kitchen.
11. Sam's mom was known to _____ every inch of his backpack when he brought it home; he couldn't hide his progress report even if he'd wanted to.
12. In order to keep their mom from knowing the truth, George and Luke _____ a crazy story to explain why their clothes were all wet and their bikes were broken.
13. Cleaning up after her dog every day was definitely a _____; but because Kim loved her golden retriever so much, she didn't mind doing it.
14. Mr. Larson gave his students detention if they came to class even a second after the bell rang; but this was _____ of him since he never showed up to one meeting on time himself.

Chapters 11-15

Directions: Use the context—the words and phrases surrounding the underlined word—to try to determine its meaning. Then, look the word up in a dictionary and compare your definition to the dictionary definition.

1. He's got slick-backed black hair and a sneer on his face that looks as if it might be permanent. (page 68)

From this passage, a sneer might be a _____.

The dictionary says a sneer is a _____

_____.

2. Fortunately, they're in trouble a lot—suspended or at lunch detention—and they cut school pretty frequently, so chances are pretty good that within a week their numbers will dwindle. (page 71)

From this passage, dwindle might mean to _____.

The dictionary says dwindle means to _____

_____.

3. "I was a scrawny little kid, at least a foot shorter than everybody else." (page 77)

From this passage, scrawny might mean _____.

The dictionary says scrawny means _____

_____.

4. He's got a little more range of motion in his arms and a little more strength in his hands. His stamina is improving every day. (page 97)

From this passage, stamina might mean _____.

The dictionary says stamina is _____

_____.

Chapters 16-20

Vocabulary: Use the context to help you decide the meaning for the underlined word or phrase in each of the following sentences. Circle the letter of the meaning you think is closest to that of the underlined word.

1. The firefighters were grateful for the bountiful food provided by the community, since they were starving after having battled the wildfire for nearly fourteen hours straight. (p. 100)
a. plentiful b. hot c. unappealing
2. John Wooden, a legendary coach at UCLA, is remembered and respected for his coaching style and his pyramid of success. (p. 104)
a. fictional, make-believe b. famous or well-known c. hated, despised
3. Our scraggly, half-dead rosebushes are looking even more pathetic than usual. (p. 105)
a. lovely b. all-knowing c. sad, pitiful
4. If you are going to play a sport, it is mandatory that you get this physical form signed by your doctor. (p. 114)
a. required b. recommended c. suggested
5. The coach took a moment to survey the runners gathered before him, looking them over to see what kind of a team he might expect for that year. (p. 126)
a. talk to b. inspect, look over c. question

Chapters 21-25

Directions: An antonym is a word that means the opposite or almost the opposite as another word. Match the antonym on the right with the vocabulary word on the left.

<u>Vocabulary Terms</u>	<u>Antonyms</u>
1. _____ dignity (p. 154)	a. non-transmittable, noninfectious
2. _____ audible (p. 155)	b. quick to act
3. _____ ruthless (p. 161)	c. solution
4. _____ contagious (p. 168)	d. unclear, soft
5. _____ hesitant (p. 184)	e. without pride
6. _____ dilemma (p. 187)	f. kind, showing pity

Now, find a word from the Vocabulary Terms on the left that fits in each sentence below.

- Lois talked so softly that her voice was barely _____ in the loud cafeteria.
- Catherine didn't know whether to go to the dance on Friday or go to her friend's birthday party; her _____ was causing her to lose sleep.
- The new dictator was _____; anyone who did not agree with his policies was immediately imprisoned or killed.
- Because my mom didn't know Hannah's parents, she was _____ to let me spend the night at her house without meeting them first.
- The doctor said my virus was _____ and I had to stay home from school and away from other people for at least three days.
- Despite having very little money and no home of her own, the older woman still carried herself with _____ and the community had great respect for her.

Chapters 26-30

Directions: Fill in the following Vocabulary Map by a) finding the sentence in which each word appears in the story and copying it in Column 2; b) looking up each word and writing a short definition in Column 3; c) making a connection with that word by drawing a picture or writing a sentence that explains how that word might relate to something familiar in your life in Column 4.

Vocabulary Map

Word	Sentence from the book in which the word appears	A short definition	An illustration of the word OR a way this word connects to my life
1. chaos, p. 189			
2. manhandle, p. 200			
3. charade, p. 205			
4. dehydration, p. 208			
5. quaint, p. 210			

Chapters 31-37

Directions: Match the vocabulary word on the left with the correct definition on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. _____ craving (p. 220) | a. shocked, upset |
| 2. _____ contemplate (p. 220) | b. consider |
| 3. _____ devastated (p. 221) | c. desire, longing |
| 4. _____ holistic (p. 222) | d. dies out, finishes |
| 5. _____ collateral (p. 226) | e. insurance, security |
| 6. _____ expires (p. 226) | f. all-inclusive, general |
| 7. _____ incapacitated (p. 250) | g. injured, disabled |

Directions: Use one of the words above to correctly complete each sentence below.

8. After the car accident, Josh's leg was broken, leaving him _____ and unable to walk for three weeks.
9. My driver's license _____ this year so I probably have to fill out a renewal form.
10. In order to qualify for the loan, we had to use our house as _____.
11. After his dog died, Jack was _____ and wouldn't get out of bed for two days.
12. Walking through the movie theater and smelling the buttery, salty smell, Judy started _____ popcorn.
13. Before you make a decision, take some time to _____ all of the different options.
14. As a traditional medical doctor, Dr. Kline doesn't believe in _____ remedies like acupuncture, yoga, herbs, or meditation.

Vocabulary Answers

CHAPTERS 1-5

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1. h | 9. diabetes |
| 2. c | 10. smug |
| 3. e | 11. terminal |
| 4. g | 12. deceased |
| 5. b | 13. assert |
| 6. f | 14. gripe |
| 7. a | 15. wary |
| 8. d | 16. deficiency |

CHAPTERS 6-10

- | | |
|------|------------------|
| 1. d | 8. reverberating |
| 2. a | 9. grimace |
| 3. g | 10. engrossed |
| 4. e | 11. scrutinize |
| 5. b | 12. concocted |
| 6. c | 13. hassle |
| 7. f | 14. hypocritical |

CHAPTERS 11-15

1. Answers may vary.
An expression of scorn or disgust
2. Answers may vary.
To decrease in number
3. Answers may vary.
Very thin
4. Answers may vary.
Mental energy and strength

CHAPTERS 16-20

1. a
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. b

CHAPTERS 21-25

- | | |
|------|--------------|
| 1. e | 7. audible |
| 2. d | 8. dilemma |
| 3. f | 9. ruthless |
| 4. a | 10. hesitant |
| 5. b | 11. dignity |
| 6. c | 12. audible |

CHAPTERS 26-30 (definitions only provided)

1. a state of disorder and confusion
2. to handle someone roughly
3. an absurdly false or pointless act
4. loss of body fluid
5. charming or old-fashioned

CHAPTERS 31-37

- | | |
|------|------------------|
| 1. c | 8. incapacitated |
| 2. b | 9. expired |
| 3. a | 10. collateral |
| 4. f | 11. devastated |
| 5. e | 12. craving |
| 6. d | 13. contemplate |
| 7. g | 14. holistic |

Character Profile: Getting to Know Bennett [RL6.1; 6.6]

Directions: An author lets us get to know a character through several ways: their actions, their words, other characters' words, and sometimes by just describing them outright.

Read each of the statements below. What do they tell us about Bennett? Below each statement, explain what you think the author is revealing about Bennett's life, his personality, or his appearance. The first one is done for you.

1. "Baseball got my dad and me through my mom's death."

Bennett and his dad like baseball. Bennett's mom has died.

2. "Thirteen-year-old boys—even fat, easygoing ones like me—aren't supposed to cry in front of people. Especially fat, easygoing ones like me."

3. "Here's the thing: I'm really good at standing up for myself . . . in my head. When it comes to actually getting my mouth to say the words, I suck."

4. "Last year, P.G. and I had physical education together, sixth period. . . It was humiliating. Or it would have been without P.G. by my side."

5. "Sure, I've wished to be thinner or smaller. But I've never really thought about what I need to do to change. . . . Maybe because deep down, I just don't think I can do it."

Now, in the space below, write a paragraph that describes what you know about Bennett. Make sure your paragraph has

- a topic sentence
- at least three supporting sentences that give descriptions of Bennett and examples from the quotations above
- a conclusion sentence

Note to the Teacher

Depending on your class and time constraints, the activity on the following page can be run a few different ways:

- **PAIR-SHARE:** Place students in pairs. Give each pair a copy of the Tough Choices handout on the next page. Introduce each situation and have pairs discuss what they believe to be the correct choice. Call on volunteers to share what they chose and encourage students to respectfully disagree with each other. Promote discussion by pointing out strong arguments made by certain groups and asking other groups if they agree or disagree.
- **FOUR CORNERS:** Label each of the corner of your room with the letters: A, B, C, and D. Place each situation on an overhead projector or PowerPoint presentation. Read through the situation and the choices. Then, instruct students to go stand in the corner of the letter for the choice they most agree with. In those small groups, allow students to form arguments to support their choice. Call on volunteers from each corner to share each group's reasoning. Then, ask if anyone would like to change corners and explain why. Tally students to see what the most popular answer is.
- **CONSENSUS:** Assign the Tough Choices handout for homework. Then in class the following day, place students in groups of three. Read each situation and explain that groups must come to a consensus—agreement—about what is the best choice for that situation. Allow groups time to discuss their choices. Call out each letter and have a volunteer from each group stand if that group chose that letter. Encourage volunteers to argue why their choice is best. Try to get the class to agree on a choice, if possible.

Tough Choices Activity [SL6.1]

Directions: In LOSING IT, Bennett has to make some difficult decisions. Read each of the following situations with your partner. Decide which response you think is the BEST and write WHY in the space that follows. Be prepared to share your choice with the class.

SITUATION A: You and your friend eat at the same place every day for lunch. One day when you show up, a group of trouble-making kids sits down next to you. Soon, they start harassing you and threaten to take your lunch. What do you do?

- A. Ignore them and hope that they'll stop.
- B. Stand up to them. Tell them they can't tell you where to sit. You might get in trouble if they start a fight, but sometimes you have to stand up for yourself.
- C. Go tell the lunch duty supervisor that these kids are bugging you and hope that she takes care of it.
- D. Move to another spot; it's easier to give in than try to fight bullies.

Why did you choose your answer?

SITUATION B: You decide that you are going to try a new sport at school. You're really excited about it, but nervous, too. But when you tell your best friend about it, he/she gets really weird and says you shouldn't do it. In fact, you end up in a big fight and don't speak to each other. What do you do?

- A. Forget joining the sport. Your friendship is way more important than some stupid activity.
- B. Stick with your original plan. If your friend is really your friend, he or she will eventually see how important this is to you and get over whatever is bothering them.
- C. Try to compromise; ask your friend if there is a sport that they'd like to join with you. Even if it isn't your first choice, it's something you guys can do together.

Why did you choose your answer?

SITUATION C: You're forced to stay with your aunt for a while. You can't stand her---she's kind of bossy. One morning, she decides to put you on a no-sugar, low-fat diet and set up a daily schedule of workouts for you. What do you do?

- A. Tell her to forget it; you don't have to follow her rules.
- B. Go along with the plan in front of her. But when she's not looking, sneak some Oreos and potato chips. And take your cell phone on the workouts to get in some good texting.
- C. Give her plan a shot. You'd like to try to get a little healthier anyway. She might be bossy, but her plan isn't necessarily a bad one.

Why did you choose your answer?

Pre-writing [W6.4 W6.10]

OPTION A: TEENAGE OBESITY

A lot of kids and teenagers in the United States struggle with **obesity**. Obesity is a medical condition in which someone has accumulated (or gained) an abnormal amount of body fat, usually 20% or more over their ideal body weight. Being obese puts a person at a higher risk for illness, disability, and death.

Today, about 1 out of every 5 teens (ages 12 to 19) is obese. Bennett, the main character in *LOSING IT*, is fictional. But if he were a real teenager, he would be one of these kids.

Pre-writing activity: In the space below, write a paragraph in which you answer the following question:

What are some challenges that an overweight teenager might face?

OPTION B: BULLYING

Because of his weight and appearance, Bennett becomes the target of the taunts and threats of a school bully.

Approximately 13 million kids in America will experience some form of bullying this year. Bullying can occur in different ways: physical, verbal, and social. Bullies use both words and actions to hurt others. Bullying even happens over cell phones, on Facebook, or on Twitter.

Discussion: Your teacher will break the class into small groups of 3 to 5 students. Appoint one student in your group to take notes. As a group, consider these questions and be ready to report your ideas to the class.

- What is bullying? Give at least one example of a situation in which bullying is occurring.
- Why might a kid be bullied?
- Why might a kid be a bully?

Pre-writing activity: In the space below, write a paragraph in which you answer the following question:

If you saw another student being bullied, what would you do? Why?

Double Entry Journal [RL6.1, RL6.5]

Pages Read: _____

Directions: In the first column, choose a significant quote or situation from the text.

In the second column, record your thoughts or reactions to the text. Remember that connections can be *text-to-self*, *text-to-world*, or *text-to-text*.

Quote or situation from reading (include page number)	Reaction or connection
<p>Example: (page 4) “I couldn’t hit a baseball to save my life . . . But I love this sport.”</p> <p>Example: (page 4) “Missing in action. Along with Matt Kemp’s swing, I guess.”</p> <p>Example: (page 10) “Then, with no warning my dad pitches forward. His body goes limp as he hits his head loudly on the coffee table.”</p>	<p>That’s how I feel about basketball. I’m not very good at it, but I love to play it anyway. And I watch it all the time on TV. (<i>text-to-self</i>)</p> <p>Matt Kemp plays centerfield for the Dodgers. (<i>text-to-world</i>)</p> <p>That had to be scary. I wonder if his dad is still alive. And what happened to him? (<i>text-to-text</i>)</p>

Note to the Teacher

Consider having your students keep a food and exercise journal throughout their reading of *LOSING IT*. A sample EXERCISE JOURNAL might look like this:

EXERCISE JOURNAL	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total Weekly Time			

Encourage them to log any activity that has them up and moving around: sports, P.E., walking, running, biking, playing outside, etc.

A sample FOOD JOURNAL might look like this:

FOOD JOURNAL	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

At the completion of the novel, have your students reflect on their habits with these questions:

Examine your food journal. Write a sentence that evaluates your intake of the following: Fruits? Vegetables? Fast food? Proteins? Whole grains? Are you eating too much or too little of any one food category? What is one area of strength in your eating? What is one area of weakness? Write two sentences that summarize your overall thoughts as you look at your food journal.

Now, examine your exercise journal. Are you getting enough exercise? The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Are you meeting that guideline? If not, why not? What can you do to improve?

Chapter Discussion Questions

[RL6.1; RL6.2; RL6.3; RL6.4; RL6.5; RL6.6]

CHAPTER 1: BELLY BUTTON STAINS, BASEBALL, AND 9-1-1

1. Describe the relationship Bennett has with his dad. How might his mom's death have affected this relationship?
2. Hypothesize—or make a realistic guess—about what happened to Bennett's dad at the end of the chapter.

EXPLORING POINT OF VIEW

The **point of view** of a story refers to the perspective from which the story is told. *Losing It* is told in **first person point of view** because the story is narrated by the main character (Bennett).

3. Write down a passage that shows that the story is told from a first person point of view. Circle 1-3 words in that passage that signal the first person point of view.
4. Why do you think the author chose to write this book from a first person point of view?
5. As a reader, what do you gain from a first person point of view? What do you lose?

CHAPTER 2: IS YOUR DAD DEAD?

1. What are Bennett's feelings toward Aunt Laura? Cite a specific passage from the text that lets you know this.
2. Describe Aunt Laura's feelings toward Bennett's dad. How does the author reveal these feelings?

CHAPTER 3: WAITING, WAITING, WAITING

1. How is Aunt Laura's arrival to the hospital different than the Gomez's arrival? Give at least two examples from this chapter that show how Aunt Laura and the Gomez family are different, including how Bennett feels when he sees them.

UNDERSTANDING SIMILES AND METAPHORS

A **simile** is a comparison between two unlike things that uses the words LIKE or AS.

Underline the two things being compared in this sentence from page 29:

It seems as if everywhere I look there are gunmetal gray machines with cords hanging like vines in a sterilized jungle.

Metaphors make a comparison between unlike things but don't use the words LIKE or AS; they are less direct.

Underline the two things being compared in this sentence from page 2:

With the room temperature at ungodly hot and my body resembling that of a walrus, pushing up off the couch requires a lot of grunting . . .

Similes and metaphors are both known as **figurative language**. Any time you describe something by comparing it with something else, you are using figurative language.

In LOSING IT, the author uses a lot of figurative language to describe the world around Bennett. Read the sentences below. On the blank, write an S if the comparison is a **SIMILE** or an M if it is a **METAPHOR**. Then, underline the two things being compared.

1. ____ She smelled like a rosebush. Or maybe sixty of them. Her shiny, pointy nails dug into my arms like thorns.
2. ____ At least three monitors blip steadily while about three dozen cords snake from him to scary-looking machines.
3. ____ And like a herd of antelope startled by a pack of hungry lions, the whole class would take off running up that awful hill.
4. ____ But mostly, I'm just deflated, like a tire who's met a nail.
5. ____ My heart feels like a brick.
6. ____ You've heard the rumors, dude. A switchblade as big as a banana.
7. ____ But nobody seems to notice or care that I'm as flexible as a tree trunk.
8. ____ This is a no-brainer for me. I head toward the turtles in the back.

9. ____ I probably resemble a hippopotamus in running shoes.
10. ____ Forget belly button stains: the sweat pours off of me in waterfalls.

Now, create your own similes. Use these clues to get your started. Remember that your comparisons should be between two UNLIKE things that have a similar quality.

1. The sun that morning was as bright as _____.
2. When the race started, she ran like _____.
3. He's been working out so much, he's as strong as _____.
4. When she heard she'd won the competition, her face went as white as _____.
5. The two sisters often fight like _____.

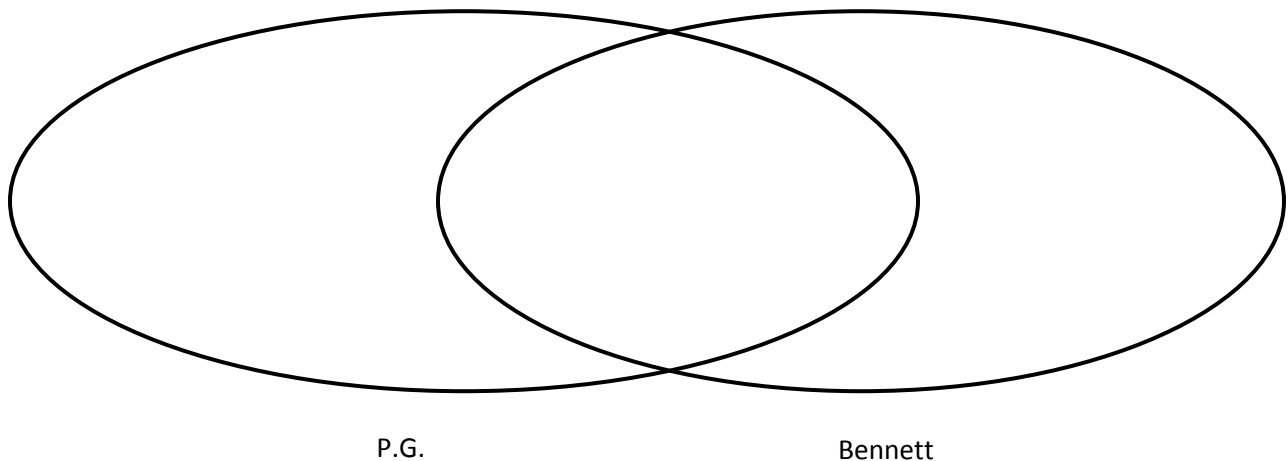
CHAPTER 4: THE BIG AUNT LAURA TAKEOVER

1. Why is Aunt Laura Bennett's only choice as a guardian?
2. List three or four specific things you know about Bennett so far. You can include things about his life, his personality, or his appearance.
3. Why doesn't Bennett insist that he stay with his dad instead of going home with Aunt Laura?

CHAPTER 5: WHEN A DODGERS FAN MEETS A GIANTS FAN

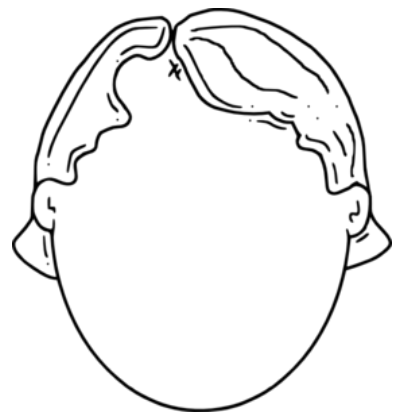
1. What does the kindergarten playground scene tell us about P.G.'s character?

2. Where the circles overlap in the Venn diagram, write at least two things Bennett and P.G. have in common. Where the circles separate, write at least one way each character is different.



CHAPTER 6: DEFLATED

In the outline of the head shown below, fill in a facial expression to indicate how you think Bennett is feeling in this chapter. Then, draw a speech or thought bubble. In one or two sentences, summarize how he might answer the question, “So, how are things going?” Your response should start with the pronoun “I” since you’ll be writing from Bennett’s perspective.



CHAPTER 7: OPERATION: GET BENNETT HEALTHY

1. Why does Bennett enjoy spending time with Josh? Cite a specific example from the story.
2. Discuss why Bennett gets angry with Aunt Laura at breakfast. Do you think he was right or wrong to get angry with her?

CHAPTER 8: HOPE

1. Why do you think this chapter is entitled, “Hope”?
2. What is the significance of the last two sentences of this chapter?
3. Do you notice a change in Bennett? If so, identify at least one way that he has changed since his dad has had the stroke.

CHAPTER 9: CONTROL FREAK

ANALYZING MOOD

Mood refers to the general feeling in a novel (or in part of novel like a chapter). For instance, the mood of a chapter could be described as fearful, anxious, somber, light-hearted, serious or suspenseful. An author usually conveys various moods throughout a novel and sometimes even within a chapter.

- a. Use three words to describe the mood at the end of this chapter.
- b. How is it different from the mood in the last chapter?

EXAMINING NON-RESTRICTIVE ELEMENTS

Writers sometimes use *non-restrictive elements* - like commas, dashes, or parentheses – to add detail to a sentence. A non-restrictive element is a phrase or clause that interrupts a sentence to add a piece of information. You can recognize such an element because the sentence can still make sense without it. Examine these examples from *Losing It*.

EX: Then, **promising to return later**, she leaves me alone with my dad. (page 59)

↙ ↘
non-restrictive clause set off by commas

EX: Two more minutes pass – **I’m watching the time on my cell phone with growing annoyance** – when suddenly the door open and everyone files out. (page 57)

↙ ↘
non-restrictive clause set off by dashes

EX: Jameel isn’t there, but a young nurse named Al **(short for Alexis)** is. (page 103)

↙ ↘
non-restrictive clause set off by parentheses

Now reread the following sentences from *LOSING IT*. Circle the nonrestrictive element in each sentence.

4. For a few seconds – but it seems way longer than that—I wait. (p. 55)
5. He needs to gather some insurance papers, and I want to get some clothes I can run in (in case I actually decide to go on Tuesday). (p. 105)
6. I’ve pretty much decided that thirteen-year-old girls, in general, are not an easy bunch to like. (p. 48)

Now, find the page number shown below and write in the non-restrictive element missing from the sentence. Make sure to use the correct punctuation.

7. But then a feeling _____ hits me. (p. 25)
8. In fact _____ it seems as if his breathing may have stopped, too. (p. 6)

CHAPTER 10: AUNT LAURA, ONE. BENNETT, ZERO

1. What is Bennett’s reaction to his aunt’s plan to have him exercise with his uncle? Why? Does Bennett have a right to be angry?
2. Imagine you are Aunt Laura. Draw the same outline of the head you drew for Chapter 6. Draw a thought bubble. Then, write two sentences, both starting with the pronoun “I” in which you tell how Aunt Laura might explain to Bennett why she’s making him exercise.

CHAPTER 11: FAT BOY

1. What is Bennett’s reaction to Luis’s taunts at lunch?
2. What do you think Bennett *should* have said to Luis? Write one to two sentences in which you say what you *WISH* Bennett would have said to Luis.

CHAPTER 12: SHRINK

1. What does Uncle Jim suggest to Bennett?

2. Do you think that it will be as easy as Uncle Jim makes it sound? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 13: WHEN THE MONEY RUNS OUT

In 2-3 sentences, summarize the new problem that Bennett and his dad face in this chapter.

CHAPTER 14: CROSS-COUNTRY FLYER

Seeing the cross country flyer causes Bennett to pause and consider joining. Then, he immediately dismisses the idea as crazy, *loco*.

- a. Do you think that someone who weighs as much as Bennett could succeed in cross country? Why or why not?
- b. Why do you think the author included this scene? In other words, how might it be significant to the story?

CHAPTER 15: GO—FOR—IT

Why would someone who is overweight like Bennett be uncomfortable in a locker room?

CHAPTER 16: CUTE GIRL CALLS FAT BOY

1. What is P.G.'s advice to Bennett about Luis? Do you think it's good advice?

2. The title of this chapter is “Cute Girl Calls Fat Boy.” The author could have simply entitled it, “A Cute Girl Calls,” or “Taylor Leaves a Message.” How does the specific word choice of this chapter reveal Bennett’s tone and point of view?

CHAPTER 17: THE LONGEST MILE EVER

1. Bennett’s first morning run is excruciatingly hard. Find TWO passages from this scene (pages 108-110) that you think best illustrate the MOOD of this run.
2. Why is P.G. disappointed in Bennett at lunch? Do you think it’s fair of P.G. to feel this way?

ANALYZING CHARACTER

The events in this chapter are a big turning point for Bennett. Not only does he run for the first time, but he calls Taylor and overcomes a food temptation. On the left side of the figure below, list a few BEHAVIORS and DESCRIPTIONS that would have described Bennett at the beginning of the book. On the right side of the figure, write at least THREE passages from this chapter that show how he has changed in some way.



Bennett

CHAPTER 18: THE CROSS-COUNTRY QUESTION

1. What is the significance of Bennett’s dream?

2. What do you think of P.G.'s advice to Bennett about Luis? Should Bennett stand up to him? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Bennett doesn't confide in P.G. about cross country? Do you think this was a good or a bad decision?

CHAPTER 19: *LOCO* P.G.

Imagine you are P.G. Draw the same outline of the head you drew for Chapter 6. Draw a thought bubble. Then write two sentences, both starting with the pronoun "I" in which you explain why P.G. reacted the way he did when he learned Bennett was going to run cross country.

CHAPTER 20: COMMITMENT

1. Why is Bennett getting angry with P.G.?
2. How has Bennett's attitude toward cross country changed by the end of this chapter? Why?

CHAPTER 21: IN A RUT

1. How does Bennett react when his father says, "You . . . don't . . . understand"? Do you think it was a fair reaction?
2. Describe Bennett's feelings about his mom. Do you think they are reasonable?

CHAPTER 22: “DATE” NIGHT

1. Why do you think Bennett feels comfortable around Maddy? Do you think he would have felt that comfortable before his dad’s stroke? Why or why not?
2. How much has the relationship between Bennett and Taylor changed? Cite a specific example from this chapter that shows the change.

CHAPTER 23: RUN. EAT. SLEEP. REPEAT.

1. Reread this passage from the chapter:
By the following Sunday, I want to dive into a bowl of Doritos and not come out. For the first time ever I’m grateful that my aunt doesn’t keep junk food around the house. I would have gained back every pound I’ve lost.
 - a. What does this sentence reveal about the change in Bennett?
 - b. How does it contribute to the development of a theme of the book?
2. Bennett says that what he feels now when he sees Luis is *acceptance*. Why does that feeling scare him?
3. Bennett questions how he should have handled Luis in the library. Re-write the end of this scene. How should Bennett have handled it differently?

CHAPTER 24: WHEN THE GUN GOES OFF . . . RUN!

1. How does Bennett feel about having his Aunt Laura at the race? About his dad not being there?
2. Describe how Bennett feels during this race. Why do you think he doesn’t stop and walk?

CHAPTER 25: COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS

1. Why does Aunt Laura think P.G. is upset with Bennett about cross country? Do you think she's right?
2. In what ways does this scene show a different side to Aunt Laura than Bennett has seen before?

CHAPTER 26: LOVE NOTES AND SIDE CRAMPS

1. Do you think it was a good idea for Bennett to stand up to Luis? Why or why not?
2. What does P.G.'s response reveal about why he's angry with Bennett? Do you think he has a right to be angry? Why or why not?

ANALYZING MOOD

Remember that mood refers to the general feeling in a novel (or in part of novel like a chapter).

3. Describe the mood at the beginning of this chapter. Cite at least TWO passages from the text that the author uses to create this mood.
4. Describe the mood at the end of the chapter. Cite at least TWO passages from the text that the author uses to create this mood.

CHAPTER 27: DODGING CRAP

1. Why do you think Bennett finally stands up to Luis? What do you think will happen now that he has?
2. Have you ever had a day like Bennett's having? In 1-2 sentences, describe how you felt during a really rotten day.

CHAPTER 28: THE LAST STRAW

1. Since Vindeep and Calvin are not running in the next race, how does this affect the team? What does it mean for Bennett?
2. Why do you think this news is suddenly “the last straw” for Bennett?
3. In the last paragraph of this chapter, Bennett turns and walks away from his team. Predict what you think will happen because he’s made this choice.

CHAPTER 29: WANT. FOOD.

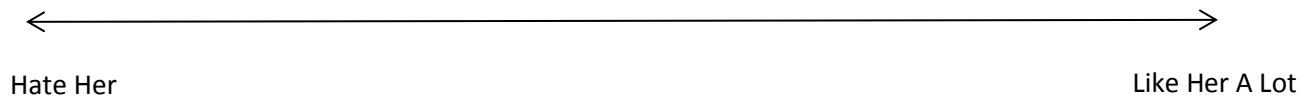
1. Why do you think Bennett eats the cake, the cheese crackers, and the candy when he gets home, after so many weeks of eating healthier foods and trying to take care of his body?
2. Why does the flyer that Bennett finds make him so angry?

CHAPTER 30: WHEN A DODGERS FAN NEEDS A GIANTS FAN

1. Were you surprised that P.G. showed up? Why or why not?
2. What do you think of the advice that P.G. gives Bennett about the cross country team?
3. What kind of coach do you think P.G. will make for Bennett? Give one example from the book to support your answer.

CHAPTER 31: FORGIVENESS

1. Why does Aunt Laura say she was so angry with Bennett's dad?
2. Do you think this conversation will change things between Bennett and Aunt Laura? Why or why not?
3. Draw the following spectrum. Place an X showing how you felt about Aunt Laura at the beginning of the book. Then, place a circle showing how you feel about Aunt Laura now. Describe in two sentences why you placed your marks where you did.



CHAPTER 32: OPERATION: GET BENNETT FASTER

1. Why do you think Bennett hasn't gone to swim parties in the past? Why do you think he's willing to go the one at Mark's house?
2. List three words to describe how you think Bennett felt watching his dad.

CHAPTER 33: PLATE TIME

1. The picture frame that Bennett's aunt and uncle give him has a quote by John Wooden. Who was John Wooden?
2. Re-read the quote by Wooden. What do you think it means? How might it apply to Bennett's running on the cross country team?

CHAPTER 34: WHEN A GUY’S GOTTA PEE . . .

1. When Luis taunts Bennett in front of the bathroom, Bennett doesn’t back down. How is this different from the way Bennett reacted to Luis at the beginning of the book?
2. Why do you think Bennett stands up for Luis in front of the principal and assistant principal?
3. Describe at least two ways that Bennett has changed since the beginning of the story until now.

CHAPTER 35: THE ROCK

1. How does Bennett feel when he sees his dad at his race?
2. What effect does the Meadowbrook kid with the shaggy hair have on Bennett at the start line? How does he respond?

UNDERSTANDING SUSPENSE

An author tries to build tension and suspense in a story in several different ways. **Suspense** is the feeling a reader gets when he or she is waiting to see what happens next. One way an author can create suspense is through the use of a cliffhanger. A **cliffhanger** is when the audience knows that something exciting or dangerous is likely to happen to the main character but the story stops right before the intense action starts.

This chapter ends with a cliffhanger: “I didn’t see the rock.”

3. What is the effect of that last sentence on the reader? In other words, how does it make you feel?
4. In this case, the cliffhanger foreshadows something bad is going to happen. What do you think that is?

CHAPTER 36: FINISHING WHAT I STARTED

1. Why is finishing this race so important to Bennett?
2. How does he manage to beat the kid from Meadowbrook?

CHAPTER 37: FAST BOY

1. What do you think the Meadowbrook kid might have been thinking when Bennett first called out his name after the race?
2. Do you think Bennett will keep running? Why or why not?

Theme Analysis [RL6.2]

As you read *Losing It*, think about how these four themes are developed throughout the story. Give specific examples from the text that show how each theme is portrayed. Then, in the final column, discuss what you think the author's message might be to her readers concerning that theme.

THEME	Examples from the Text	Author's Message
Bullying		
Healthy/Teenage Obesity		
Friendship and Forgiveness		
Acceptance of Yourself and Others		

Two Sides Debate Activity [RL6.1; SL6.1; SL6.3; SL6.4]

Directions: You are going to be assigned one side of one of the following questions to argue:

Luis: Should Luis be expelled from school for his treatment of Bennett?

Aunt Laura: Is Aunt Laura justified in the way she has taken over Bennett's life since he's moved into her house?

P.G.: Is P.G. completely to blame for the problems in his friendship with Bennett?

Bennett's dad: Is Bennett's dad responsible for his son's unhealthy lifestyle?

After your teacher determines which question and which position you will be arguing, use information from the book, examples from real-life, and your own background knowledge to create a solid argument.

In the left column of the chart below, list at least TWO passages from the book that SUPPORT your position. Make sure to include page numbers.

In the right column of the chart below, clearly explain how these passages support the claims you are trying to make.

Passage from book (with page number) that SUPPORTS my arguments	Explanation

Now, in the chart below, list at least TWO passages from the book that the OPPOSING side might use to SUPPORT their position. Make sure to include page numbers.

In the right column of the chart below, clearly explain how these passages support the claims they might try to make. Then, write how you might argue against them.

Passage from reading (include page number) that SUPPORTS the opposing argument	The opposing argument AND my response to it

Now, work with your team to clearly lay out your argument. Fill in the following graphic organizer.

MY TEAM'S POSITION (this should be written as a statement): _____

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

Reason #1: (make sure that you use information from the book to support your argument)

Reason #2: (make sure that you use information from the book to support your argument)

Reason #3: (make sure that you use information from the book to support your argument)

COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

Our opponent might say that _____

But here is why we believe that is wrong: _____

Performance Task: Bullying [RL6.1; W6.2; W6.9]

TASK: You are a writer on your school’s student newspaper. Lately, there is increasing evidence of bullying at your school. Your advisor has assigned you the task of finding out more about bullying in middle schools in the U.S. and writing an article for the paper. In order to do this, you must learn about bullying as well as talk to students at your school about it. Below are three sources for your research.

In Part 1, you will review each source and answer the questions that follow.

Then, in Part 2, you will write your article using what you’ve gathered from these sources as well as your background knowledge from reading *Losing It*.

Part 1

Sources for Performance Task: Read each source carefully, thinking about what it might tell you about why bullying occurs, what effect it has on both the bully and the victim, and how it could be stopped. Answer the questions that follow.

Source A: Passage from *LOSING IT*

On the other side of us is a group of guys who are more hard-core. They aren’t gangbangers, but they’re close. Fortunately, they’re in trouble a lot—suspended or at lunch detention—and they cut school pretty frequently, so chances are good that within a week their numbers will dwindle.

But we have to get through today.

Things start off just fine. P. G. and I chat about our classes. No one has commented on my dad all day, so they either don’t know or don’t care. I tell P. G. about Taylor. Apparently, Miranda, the girl he’s had a crush on since fourth grade, said she liked his hair—a good sign in his eyes that she’s hot for him.

“Look,” one kid to our left says loudly. “We get to sit by the Fat Boys. You know what that means, right?”

I try not to look; but out of the corner of my eyes, I see a short, skinny kid in baggy jeans that are barely hanging on to his hips. He’s got slicked-back black hair and a sneer on his face that looks as if it might be permanent.

His friends laugh.

P. G. and I pretend we haven’t heard. But we quickly start grabbing our stuff.

“Means we’ll have some tasty lunches, right, Fat Boys?” the kid says, coming closer.

He grabs my lunch bag from my hand. “What’d you get today, Fat Boy: chocolate cake? Cookies? Doughnuts? Come on, man, don’t hold out on me.”

“Sorry, man,” I say, trying to sound confident. My in-sides have turned to jelly. “Finished everything already. Kids like me eat pretty quick, you know.”

If I can laugh at myself, then laughing at me won’t be nearly as fun for him, right?

“Ah, gordo thinks he’s funny, guys. Is he funny, homeys?”

A really scrawny kid next to him smirks. “He ain’t funny, Luis.”

Luis gets in my face. “I tell you what, Fat Boy; you save me a piece of cake tomorrow, and we’ll be good. Got it?”

“Sure, man, whatever.” I grab my backpack and follow P. G., who’s already climbing the hill.

“Go work off those calories, boys!” yells Luis. His friends cackle.

P. G. and I have been through stuff like this before. It’s never fun. But P. G. doesn’t let it bother him, and I try to follow his lead.

As we get to the top of the hill, breathless, P. G. mutters, “Jerks.” And we drop it.

1. What is Bennett’s point of view about the encounter with Luis? Underline or circle one sentence or phrase from the passage above that shows how he is feeling.
2. How do Bennett and P.G. handle the situation? Be specific, using examples from the passage in your answer.
3. Do you agree with how they handled it? Why or why not?

Source B: An Internet Article Titled, “Bullying In Schools”

Studies focused on bullying at school are not encouraging; they reveal a problem that confronts more students at all grade levels in more areas of their lives than ever before. In fact, some experts believe that nearly one out of every three students has experienced some form of bullying, and over half (56%) have witnessed a bully in action at school.

Who are these bullies? And what kinds of kids are they likely to target? What effect are they having on our campuses, playgrounds, and busses? And what, if anything, can be done to stop them?

What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior toward another person—the target. These behaviors include making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, or excluding a person from a group. In addition, three other characteristics define bullying:

- an imbalance of power—this power can be real or perceived, but bullies use their strength or influence to cause harm, to control, or to manipulate
- an intent to cause harm—bullying is not accidental; bullies plan to damage their victims
- repetition—most bullying is not isolated but takes place repeatedly

What are some different types of bullying?

All of us have been teased by a friend. But when the teasing becomes hurtful and persistent, it crosses the line into bullying. Teasing, however, is only one form of bullying. There are many others. Though bullying can be any action that is unwanted and aggressive, bullying generally falls into three categories.

- Physical—actions such as kicking, shoving, or hair pulling that mean to inflict pain or damage; can also include taking a victim's property
- Verbal—threats, name-calling, teasing, or writing that is mean or degrading
- Social—hurting someone's reputation or their relationships with others; includes spreading rumors, leaving someone out on purpose, embarrassing another person publically, and **cyberbullying**—bullying which takes place over the internet, through texting, or other digital means

Who is likely to be bullied?

Anyone can be the target of a bully. However, certain characteristics make some kids more likely to be a target. These groups of kids might include:

- students who are perceived as different, such as those who are overweight, new to a school, who are wear glasses, or seen as not being “cool”
- kids who are seen as unable to defend themselves
- students with lower self-esteem
- those who are less popular or have fewer friends
- students with physical or learning disabilities

What are some of the effects of bullying?

Bullying affects not only the victim, but also the bully and even bystanders who witness repeated bullying. The biggest impact undoubtedly, though, is on the person who is the target of the bullying. Targets of bullies may suffer from:

- increased depression and anxiety, and feelings of loneliness
- changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- decreased academic achievement and lower school participation

Sometimes, students who are the target of a bully will **retaliate**. This could involve acting out violently against those that they believe have bullied them.

Why do kids bully others?

There are many reasons that a kid would bully another kid. Sometimes, the aggressive behavior has been modeled for them. Others use bullying to try to raise their social standings with their peers. Nearly one in five students admits that they are responsible for bullying someone else. Bullying also has long-term effects on the kids who continually commit these aggressive acts as well. These effects include:

- a greater likelihood of abusing drugs or alcohol later
- an increased chance of dropping out of school
- a greater probability of having a criminal conviction later in life

How can bullying be stopped?

On any school day, roughly 160,000 students in the United States stay home due to fear of a bully. These students are being denied their right to an educational environment in which they can feel safe and in which they can participate actively and without fear.

It takes an entire community working together to create a place where bullies can't exist. But there are things that we can all do to minimize the effects of bullying.

- Don't give bullies an audience. If you see an incident occurring, move away quickly and let an adult know what's going on.
- Don't be an aggressor. Remember that everyone is different. Helping your friends accept others' differences instead of belittling them is a good way to combat bullying.
- If you are the target of a bully, try telling him or her to stop in a calm, clear voice. Then, walk away and let an adult know what just happened.
- Help out a kid who is a target. Let him or her know that they have a friend and that they aren't alone.

(Sources: www.stopbullying.gov, <http://www.education.com/reference/article/why-do-kids-bully/> and www.bullyingstatistics.org)

Questions to answer after you've read "Bullies At School."

1. Which of the following best summarizes the main idea of this article?
 - a. Most kids have been bullied at some point in their lives.
 - b. Bullying takes many forms and affects a large number of students.
 - c. The best way to fight bullying is to tell an adult when you see it happening.
 - d. Bullies choose targets who don't have many friends or who are seen as different.

Sometimes, students who are the target of a bully will retaliate. This could involve acting out violently against those that they believe have bullied them.

2. Which of these is the best definition for the underlined word?
 - a. to forgive a crime
 - b. to strike back against
 - c. to spread rumors or lies
 - d. to intentionally hurt oneself

3. Which of the following statements from the passage above best illustrates that bullying is a widespread problem in schools?
 - a. Targets of bullies may suffer from increased depression and anxiety.
 - b. Bullying affects not only the victim, but also the bully and even bystanders who witness repeated bullying.
 - c. Bullying can include making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, or excluding a person from a group.
 - d. Some experts believe that nearly one out of every three students has experienced some form of bullying, and over half have witnessed a bully in action at school.

4. Based on the passage's definition, which of the following would likely qualify as an example of cyberbullying?
 - a. A student who trips another student on the school bus.
 - b. A student who threatens another student over the phone.
 - c. A student who posts a rumor about another student on Facebook.
 - d. A student who writes an insulting note about another student and then passes it around at school.

Source C: A Poem from an Anonymous Student at Your School

"Arrows"

I slog through the crowded school hallways,
silently,
hoping to be
invisible.

“Move it, Fugly.”

Pang—arrow number one.

“What is the whale doing on the ground?”

Pow—arrow number two.

“Maybe you need a little more water to swim home to your mama.”

Zing—arrow number three.

No one comes to help.

No one ever does.

I pull the arrows out

Tie them to the others

Hug them tight

Keeping my heart safe behind my ever-growing

Shafted shield.

--An anonymous student

Questions to answer after you’ve read “Arrows.”

1. What are the three “arrows” that this student gets hit with? Give an example from the poem.
2. How do you know that this isn’t the first time this student has been treated like this?
3. Why is this student a target? Underline evidence from the poem to support your answer.

Part 2

You will now review your sources, take notes, plan, write, and edit your article.

Your Assignment: You must now write a multi-paragraph article on bullying. You should include what you know about why bullying occurs, how it might be prevented, and how it affects both the bully and the victim. Use specific information from each of the three sources to inform your readers and strengthen your writing.

Your article will be graded on the following:

Accuracy and Strength of Content: How well did you incorporate information from the three sources into your article? Did you present enough facts to support your statements about bullying? Are your arguments clear and concise?

Organization: Is your article organized into different topics? Are the topics clear and well-stated? Is the information presented in such a way that it is easy to follow?

Conventions: How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling?

Final Exam

PART A: Multiple Choice: Circle the statement that best answers each question.

1. What event forces Bennett to move in with his aunt and uncle?
 - A. His father has a stroke.
 - B. His mom dies of cancer.
 - C. His father is injured on the job.
 - D. His father dies of a heart attack.

2. Which of these sentences accurately describes Bennett at the beginning of the book?
 - A. an angry teenage boy who is frustrated with weight and appearance
 - B. a likable overweight teenage boy who doesn't speak up for himself
 - C. an outspoken, popular boy who uses his weight to make fun of himself
 - D. a depressed boy who has few friends and turns to food to cope with his problems

3. Which event happens first in the story?
 - A. P.G. quits talking to Bennett.
 - B. Bennett joins the cross country team.
 - C. Aunt Laura starts her Get Bennett Healthy campaign.
 - D. Bennett goes to Taylor's house to hang out with her neighbor, Maddy.

4. How does Bennett react when Luis first calls him Fat Boy at lunch?
 - A. He grabs his lunch and decides to eat in the library.
 - B. He stands up to Luis and tells him he's done talking with him.
 - C. He makes fun of himself for being fat and tries to ignore Luis's threats.
 - D. He gets angry and tells P.G. they should go report Luis to the assistant principal.

5. Which of these statements most accurately describes Bennett's relationship with Aunt Laura?
 - A. He appreciates having a mom-like person in his life again, but has a hard time opening up to her.
 - B. He resents that she controls his life and doesn't trust her, but doesn't stand up for himself.
 - C. He is grateful that she has taken him in, but wishes she would tell him more about his own mom.
 - D. He pretends to hate that she makes him exercise and eat healthy foods, but secretly he's pleased that she cares so much about him.

6. Which of these statements most accurately describes why Bennett joins the cross country team?
 - A. He hopes to make some new friends and impress Taylor.
 - B. He wants to show his aunt that he is serious about losing weight.
 - C. He loves running in the morning and wants to do it competitively.
 - D. He wants to get healthier and lose weight to set an example for his dad.
7. Which of these events causes Bennett to consider quitting the cross country team?
 - A. The training gets too hard and Bennett just doesn't think he can take it anymore.
 - B. He comes in last place at the first race and decides that he's just not cut out to be a runner.
 - C. He feels pressure when two runners can't run since that means his score will count in the next race.
 - D. His dad's condition isn't improving and Bennett feels he should focus more on helping him get better than running.
8. Why does Bennett stand up for Luis in front of the assistant principal at the bathroom?
 - A. He hopes that Luis and he can become friends.
 - B. He knows that Luis isn't guilty of doing what he's been accused of.
 - C. He hopes that if he helps him then Luis might leave him alone at lunch.
 - D. He knows that Luis will make good on his threat to punish him if he doesn't.
9. Which of these scenes is the climax of this story?
 - A. Bennett asks Taylor to the dance and she says yes.
 - B. P.G. shows up at Bennett's house unexpectedly and they argue about cross country.
 - C. Bennett confronts Aunt Laura about how she wants to sell his house and how she's treated his dad.
 - D. Bennett runs his final race and finishes ahead of the Meadowbrook runner despite twisting his ankle.
10. What do you think is one of the major themes of this book?
 - A. Adults don't always have the right answers.
 - B. School bullies should be punished more severely.
 - C. Running cross country is a great way to lose weight and make new friends.
 - D. People have the ability to improve their lives through the choices they make.

PART B: Short Essay: Choose one of the following prompts and write an essay response to it. Your response must include:

- an **introduction** that contains a thesis stating your position
- a **body** with three supporting details pulled from the book that back up your position
- a **conclusion** that re-states your position, summarizes your main points, and leaves your reader with an answer to the question, “So what?”

#1 Bennett is a dynamic character; he changes and matures throughout the story. Write an essay in which you analyze how he changes, including the challenges he must overcome to do so.

#2 The author had several themes throughout the novel. Choose one and discuss how it developed throughout the book. Make sure to give specific examples of how the theme was evident in the story and what you think the author’s message was in the end.

Answer Key: Multiple Choice

1. **A.** His father has a stroke.
2. **B.** a likable overweight teenage boy who doesn't speak up for himself
3. **C.** Aunt Laura starts her Get Bennett Healthy campaign.
4. **C.** He makes fun of himself for being fat and tries to ignore Luis's threats.
5. **B.** He resents that she controls his life and doesn't trust her, but doesn't stand up for himself.
6. **D.** He wants to get healthier and lose weight to set an example for his dad.
7. **C.** He feels pressure when two runners can't run since that means his score will count in the next race.
8. **B.** He knows that Luis isn't guilty of doing what he's been accused of.
9. **D.** Bennett runs his final race and finishes ahead of the Meadowbrook runner despite twisting his ankle.
10. **D.** People have the ability to improve their lives through the choices they make.

Language Arts Common Core Standards

GRADE 6

READING OF LITERATURE

RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (Chapter Discussion Questions, Two Sides Debate)

RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (Chapter Discussion Questions, Theme Analysis)

RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution. (Chapter Discussion Questions, Theme Analysis)

RL.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone. (Vocabulary)

RL.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. (Chapter Discussion Questions, Theme Analysis)

RL.6.6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text. (Chapter Discussion Questions)

READING OF INFORMATIONAL TEXT

RI.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (Performance Task)

RI.6.2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (Performance Task)

RI.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. (Performance Task)

WRITING

W.6.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (Persuasive Essay)

Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

W.6.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concept, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (*Performance Task*)

Introduce a topic: organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g. headings) graphics (e.g. charts/tables) and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples

Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic

Establish and maintain a formal style

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented

W.6.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) (*Persuasive Essay*)

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (*Two Sides Debate Activity, Tough Choices Activity, Pre-writing on Bullying*)

Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

L.6.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (Chapter Discussion Questions)

Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive elements

L.6.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (Vocabulary)

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g. by checking in inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary)

L.6.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (Chapter Discussion Questions)

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.

GRADE 7

READING OF LITERATURE

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (*Chapter Discussion Questions, Two Sides Debate*)

RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (*Chapter Discussion Questions, Theme Analysis*)

RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama. (*Vocabulary*)

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text. (*Chapter Discussion Questions, Two Sides Debate*)

READING OF INFORMATIONAL TEXT

RI.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (*Performance Task*)

RI.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone. (*Performance Task*)

WRITING

W.7.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (*Persuasive Essay*)

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.

Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.7.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (*Performance Task*)

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) (*Persuasive Essay*)

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (*Two Sides Debate Activity, Tough Choices Activity*)

Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

L.7.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (*Vocabulary*)

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

GRADE 8

READING OF LITERATURE

RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (*Chapter Discussion Questions, Two Sides Debate, Theme Analysis*)

RL.8.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. (*Chapter Discussion Questions, Theme Analysis*)

RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (*Chapter Discussion Questions*)

RL.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (*Vocabulary*)

READING OF INFORMATIONAL TEXT

RI.8.1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (*Performance Task*)

RI.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (*Performance Task*)

WRITING

W.8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (*Persuasive Essay*)

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (*Performance Task*)

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Establish and maintain a formal style.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

W.8.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Persuasive Essay, Final Exam)

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (Two Sides Debate Activity, Tough Choices Activity)

Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

L.8.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (Vocabulary)

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.