

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

No Easy Answers

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Item No. 201204

Bliss at the Burger Bar

4. At first, Bliss does not seem sympathetic or compassionate towards Old Faithful. As he's leaving the restaurant unable to get 32 cents-worth of fries, Bliss tells Hannah, "We're not a homeless shelter or a soup kitchen. The customers would resent it if we gave food away to some people and made some others pay full price." When Hannah asks if she can give the cold but fresh burgers to the homeless man, Bliss answers, "He can wait at the dumpster." In a paragraph or two, describe a time when you've seen someone in desperate need and not felt compassion for him or her. After you thought about his situation, what made you feel more compassionate and empathetic? Why did your feelings change?
5. After Bliss drops Hannah at home, she thinks, "You can't save [help] someone who doesn't want saving." Write a letter to a friend or someone you know who's in trouble, convincing him or her to do something to improve his or her situation.

Moon Over Missouri

6. On poster board, design a colorful magazine advertisement for *Conquest*, the computer game in this story. Concentrate on the benefits of the game, unusual features, and hint about the surprise ending without giving away the surprise. Don't forget to include the computer requirements on which the game must run.

No Easy Answers

7. Oftentimes, people refuse to take personal responsibility for their actions, and blame others for their problems. For example, some who choose to smoke blame the tobacco industry; some who choose to eat at fast-food restaurants blame the corporate owners for their obesity, claiming that the advertisements are misleading or lead people to believe the products have no risks. These industries can be sued for their part in the health problems of individuals. Similarly, in this story, people are blaming the computer game, its designers, and the production company for “making” them “moon” others. Imagine you are a lawyer. Make two lists of reasons why those who are suing a company (tobacco, fast food restaurants, or computer games) are wrong and right in their pursuit of blame. Make sure to include at least five reasons to support your claim.

Follow this form:

Suing _____

Right

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Wrong

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

8. Bradley, who is African-American, is almost seven-feet tall and plays basketball so well that he has a college scholarship waiting for him. Unlike the stereotype of his physical features and skills, he loves music and poetry and hates basketball. Write a persuasive paper (two – three paragraphs) about whether you believe stereotypes force us to be what others believe we are.

I've Got Gloria

9. Physical appearance plays a big role in whether we like someone or not. Scott doesn't like Mrs. Whitman because of the way she looks and because she "gave" him an "F." Many times a person looks angry, frustrated, tired, ornery, pretty, or pleasant, but once you get to know that person, you realize that the individual's look has nothing to do with his or her personality. Write a letter to a friend, describing a time when you first met someone and made a false assumption about that person's personality. What perception did you first have of this person and why? What changed your impression of this person?
10. Scott's plan of revenge seems good to him. He doesn't think about all the problems he might face to avoid being caught. Imagine you are Scott's parents. Write a letter to your son, explaining why you view him as irresponsible. Be detailed; you want Scott to understand your point of view.
11. As Mrs. Whitman, create a dialogue about what you would tell Scott the next day in class after you realized he faked the dognapping. Would you be angry and resentful or sympathetic?

Mrs. Whitman: Well, good morning, Scott.

Scott: Ah, hi.

Mrs. Whitman: I suppose you know that...

12. Mrs. Whitman adores her dog. Pets often have a special place in our hearts, because they are good listeners, they are comforting, and they give unconditional love. Describe how a pet has made your life easier and helped you through bad times. If you don't have a pet, how has a pet made a difference in the life of someone you know? As an alternative, write a short poem to your pet, explaining how you feel about it.

Duet

13. Betsy loves Winston and wants him to be happy so she basically gives him permission to have sex with her best friend. Betsy feels that this way she wouldn't be pressured into having sex, and Winston can satisfy his physical desires. Betsy does not let Winston know that deep down inside, she is secretly frightened of losing him to her friend. Write a letter to Betsy giving her some advice. Help her understand her decision.
14. Patsy seems very self-confident and talks about doing what she wants. There are advantages and disadvantages to this kind of thinking. Make two lists itemizing why this philosophy of life is good and why it is bad. Then write a short paragraph on why this philosophy contributes or detracts from a successful future.
15. The whole time Winston is with Patsy, he makes jokes and tries to understand why she doesn't take having sex as seriously as Betsy. Write a note to Betsy answering the following questions:

Why do you think Winston does this?

Why do you think he cannot bring himself to have sex with one of the prettiest girls in school?

What is missing from his relationship with Patsy that he has with Betsy? In the end, does Winston still respect Patsy? Why or why not?
16. Winston has been dreaming about sex for a long time, but when he gets the opportunity he doesn't pursue it. Think about a time when you had the opportunity to do something you had dreamed about for a long time (playing a sport, trying out for a school function, buying a car, etc.) Write a journal entry explaining what that dream was and why you did *not* pursue it.

Confessions

17. Someone once said, “The end justifies the means.” In other words, if the result of a situation is moral or good, it doesn’t matter what you do or how you go about getting it. In order to protect their environment, JJ and his friends use vandalism to achieve their goal. Imagine you are JJ or Danny trying to defend your actions. Write a letter explaining your actions to your parents. How would you convince them that, even though everything went wrong, your intentions were good.
18. Imagine that you are the parents of JJ and Danny. In a few paragraphs, explain why the concept of “the end justifies the means” doesn’t work and why it’s not right, regardless of good intentions.
19. Journalists who cover wars are keen observers of people’s actions, emotions, and unseen consequences. Imagine you are a reporter on the street just after the police car in this story passes by. Write an article about what happened. Don’t forget to include the answers to the five W’s: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Remember a newspaper article begins with the most important facts first, then gives the background information. For example, a report about a robbery might begin:

The owner of Smith’s Corner Market was robbed at gunpoint at approximately 11 p.m. last night. John Smith was closing for the night when a masked man barged through the locked glass door, demanding cash and liquor. Smith reached for his pistol, but as he bent down the masked man fired a round of shots preventing Smith from getting the weapon...

Try to create a headline for this story and be sure to report all of the information.