

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Nothing But the Truth*

*by Avi*

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## Chapters 1, 2, and 3

1. The memo of the Harrison School District outlines the manner in which most schools throughout the country begin their day. If you are so inclined, try to write a parody of the Harrison High memo. A parody uses the format of the original, but makes fun of it through exaggeration, sarcasm, or other comic techniques.
2. Philip Malloy is excited that Coach Jamison wants him to try out for the track team, and Philip knows that his dad will be excited also. Can you think of a time that you felt the way Philip does?
3. Imagine you're Allison Dorsett, and Philip has just hung up the telephone after calling you. In a letter are you writing to a cousin, describe Philip.
4. Imagine you're a sophomore member of the track team, and imagine, also, you're in Philip's English class. Describe Philip to your best friend, who is also on the track team.
5. Mr. Lunser has a comment on every part of the announcements. Do you find him funny, annoying, or what?

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## Response Journal

6. Philip has a theory about achieving in school. He says, “The trick is getting past the teacher. It’s like a race. You have to have a strategy—know when to take it easy, know when to turn on the juice. Get teachers to think you’re in control.” If you think you understand Philip’s theory, use examples to explain it to a classmate who doesn’t understand what Philip is talking about.
  
7. The format of this book is not the usual format of a novel. What’s your reaction to this format the author used?

## Chapters 4, 5, and 6

8. Imagine that Miss Narwin, when she gives Philip his test paper back, tells him to come in after school for a conference to talk about the quality of his work. Write the dialogue that takes place that afternoon.
  
9. In this scenario, you are a student in Miss Narwin’s class. One evening, your mother says, “Philip Malloy’s father told Dad that Miss Narwin is a terrible English teacher. Is that true?” Answer your mother and explain the reason for your answer.
  
10. Sarah Gloss says *The Outsiders* is the best book she has ever read. Tell about the best book you’ve ever read.

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11. Philip has been practicing for track tryouts. Coach Jamison says Philip is a promising runner but cannot try out with a “D” in English. Do you think it is fair that grades should be a qualification for participating in extra-curricular activities?

## **Chapter 7, 8, and 9**

12. Did you have any reaction to the dialogue that took place between Philip and the track coach? What was it?
13. Mr. Malloy states a popular opinion of adults: “Kids only do what they want to do.” How do you feel when you hear these kinds of generalizations?
14. Philip writes in his diary that he tells his father the truth about his grade in English. How do you think Philip can actually believe that the reason he gives is the truth?
15. Mrs. Malloy said that if they do not mention track to Philip, perhaps he will change his mind and try out. Her reasoning seems to be that if his parents don’t push him to do it, he’ll do it faster. Do you think that’s true, or is that reasoning a myth?
16. Did you have any reaction to the conversation between Philip and his father, or the dialogue between Philip’s father and mother? What was the reaction?

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## *Response Journal*

17. What is the impression of Miss Narwin you get from the letter she sent to her sister?
  
18. At least three students have mentioned liking Miss Narwin. What do you suppose these students see in Miss Narwin that Philip doesn't?
  
19. When Allison sits by Philip on the bus, he doesn't speak with her. When Allison moves her seat, Philip regrets his actions. Did you ever act one way to a person and then wish you had acted another way?

## **Chapter 10, 11, and 12**

20. Did you have any reaction to the conversation between Mr. Lunser and Miss Narwin?
  
21. When Philip tells his parents about the singing incident, his father seems to have other things on his mind. Have you ever tried to talk to someone about something important to you, and he or she seemed to have something else on his or her mind?
  
22. Philip's dad tells him to stand up for his rights. What does this phrase mean to you? Do you think that was good or bad advice for the father to give Philip?

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23. Philip is confident that he'll get out of Miss Narwin's class and homeroom. What's your opinion? Should he be able to get out? Will he be able to get out? What advice, if any, would you give him about the situation?
24. Mr. Malloy tells his wife that he did not stand up for himself with his boss because he is not in a position of power and he does not want Mr. Dexter to get angry with him. Was there ever a time when you or a friend did not stand up for yourself for similar reasons?
25. At this point, is your opinion of Philip's father mostly positive, mostly negative or what?
26. The memo admitting Philip to Mr. Lunser's homeroom implies Philip has problems at home. Has anyone ever jumped to an inaccurate conclusion about the cause of your behavior or the behavior of a friend? Why do you suppose people make quick judgements?
27. Do you find it strange that Mr. Malloy is concerned about Philip sticking up for his rights, but Mr. Malloy is not as quick to stand up when he thinks his rights are violated? Why?
28. By the end of this chapter, it appears that Mr. Malloy is going to maintain that Philip was right in what he did and the school wrong in suspending him. How can this father be so stupid?