

a breakfast serials story



S.O.R. LOSERS

BY NEWBERY
MEDAL-WINNING
AUTHOR **AVI**

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY **TIMOTHY BUSH**

Teacher's Guide created by

Jan McDonald, Rocky Mountain Readers

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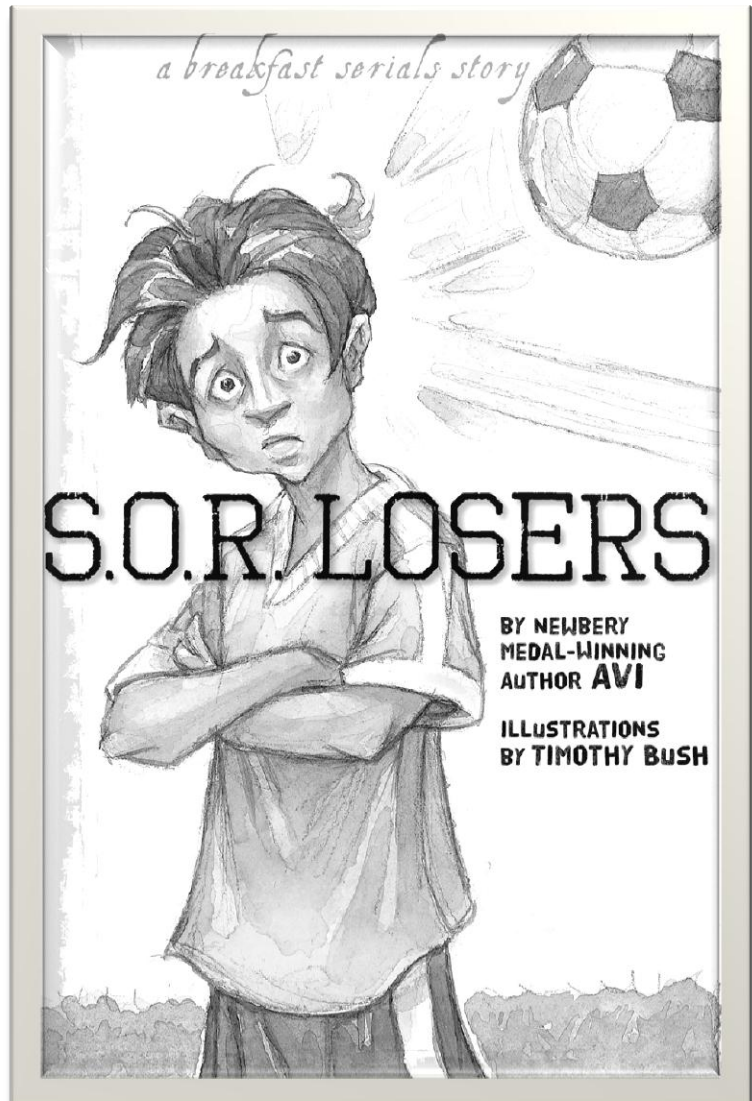
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COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This guide has been aligned with the Common Core Standards and these standards are noted at appropriate places throughout the guide in abbreviated form. The related standards in longer form for reading, writing, language, listening and speaking are listed at the end of this guide.



I. BEFORE READING

A. AUTHOR Common Core Reading 7, 10

The best way to learn about Avi is from his own website. Click on <http://www.avi-writer.com/about/about01.html> and read the question and answer session there. Also read Avi’s blog for insights into his writing and thinking.

B. BEHIND THE BOOK (in Avi’s words) Common Core Reading 7

“As noted in the entry for Bright Shadows, I am often asked “How long does it take you to write a book?” The answer is about a year. But it can vary. A lot. SOR Losers took me one day to write. It has never happened before, or since and I don’t think it is likely to happen again. How did it happen in this book? When I was in high school I played on our school soccer team. I was goalie. We were terrible. How terrible? We never won a game. My own kids- who had become good soccer players – loved to hear how bad their dad – me – was. So I told them many a story about how we always managed to lose. They thought it was very funny.

One day I decided to write it all up as a novel. Since I had - in a way – practiced telling the tale of our terrible team so often – it just flowed out – game by game – in one day.” From Avi’s blog <http://avi-writer.com/books/books/sorlosers.html>

C. ANTICIPATION GUIDE Common Core Reading 2 Common Core Writing 4

An anticipation guide is a comprehension strategy that is used **before** reading to activate students' prior knowledge and build curiosity about a new topic. Before reading, students listen to or read several statements about key concepts presented in the text; they're often structured as a series of statements with which the students can choose to agree or disagree.

Read each statement below. Respond in the left column whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with each statement. Think about why you agree or disagree, and be prepared to share. After reading the story, respond again with agree or disagree. Have any of your ideas changed?

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Before Reading

- _____ 1. Too much is expected of 12 year olds.
- _____ 2. Pride is gained by trying
- _____ 3. Pride is gained by winning
- _____ 4. It is un-American not to like sports.
- _____ 5. Sports are fun whether you win or lose.
- _____ 6. There is nothing wrong with losing.
- _____ 7. If you believe in yourself, you can do anything.
- _____ 8. The key to winning is desire.
- _____ 9. The key to winning is being positive.
- _____ 10. Everybody loses sometimes.

After Reading

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

D. Word Splash for Chapter 1 Common Core Reading 2

<http://www.coloradocast.org/userfiles/wordsplash%20variables.pdf>

Word Splash (Hammond) is both a comprehension and vocabulary strategy that uses pre-reading, during reading, and after reading steps. A word splash is a collection of terms or concepts from a reading or other activities which students are about to see or hear. Words and terms are “splashed” on a page or overhead. Students come up with complete statements connecting two or more of the words or phrases. They predict how the words might relate to the reading or activity.

How to use WORD SPLASH:

1. Students work in pairs. Each person will need a reading journal or sheet of notebook paper and a pencil.
2. As a pre-reading activity, display an overhead that relates to the article to be read. Explain that the words that the students are looking at relate to the article that they will be reading about. Read the words aloud to students.

3. Tell the students that they need to connect two of the words or phrases together and tell how they might go together in the article. They need to do this for all of the words on the word splash.
4. The students then need to share with another pair how they think the words will go together in the article. This may also be done as a class discussion with the teacher calling on different students until all words and phrases have been connected.
5. The students then need to read the articles to learn how the words and phrases are connected in the article and compare the connections with their predictions.
6. Students now need to explain how each pair of words is connected in their journals/papers.
7. Students can then share their findings with the other pair from the pre-reading work. The teacher may also lead a discussion of how the word/phrases were used.

panic

7th grade soccer

honor

eleven of us

goaltender

REQUIREMENT

ability?

laughing hysterically

worse collection of athletes

PLAY ONE TEAM SPORT EACH YEAR

I. DURING READING

1 VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

requirement "...our school had a **requirement** that you had to play at least one team sport each year." (*n. something that is necessary or demanded by a law or regulation*)

frustration "When Mr. Lester got red in the face from **frustration**, he looked like an overripe tomato." (*n. a feeling of disappointment or weariness caused by goals being unsatisfied*)

tradition "South Orange Middle School has a fine sports **tradition**," continued Mr. Lester. (*n. customs*)

honor "Let's do it with **honor**." (*n. dignity, respect*)

panic "Sir, " I said in a **panic**. "I never played goalie before." (*n. a sudden feeling of fear or anxiety*)



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. Why is Mr. Lester so concerned about where Kelly is?
2. Is Mr. Lester a good fit to coach this new team?
3. Explain the South Orange River Middle School requirement which created this team.
4. Make a list of Mr. Lester's reasons for this rule. Are there any negative effects of such a rule?
5. How much preparation, training, and drive to win does this team have?

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 4

1. How does Avi, the author, include humor in his writing? What kind of figurative language does he use? Find examples starting with the title of this book.
2. Sarcasm is cutting language or remarks that mean the opposite of what they seem to say and are intended to mock or deride. Find examples of how the characters use sarcasm.

WRITING Common Core Reading 9 Common Core Writing 4, 7, 9

1. A blog is a frequently updated personal journal posted on a web site and intended for public viewing. Follow Avi's blog at <http://www.avi-writer.com/blog/>. Go to your local news media and discover the blogs that are kept by columnists and reporters. Follow one for a period of days. What topics does this writer post about?
2. Saltz would rather be writing poetry than playing soccer. Write the poem that Saltz would compose about this school requirement.

2

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

moody, glum “Now it was our turn to sit **moody and glum.**” *adj.*
unpredictably grumpy/gloomy

antihuman “You’d think not being into sports was **antihuman**, or worse, **un-American.**”

un-American (*adj. not human, not American or being against America*)

A.S.P.C.A. “It reminded me of a class trip to the **A.S.P.C.A.**” (*acronym for American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*)

bribe “Think he’s open to a **bribe?**” (*n. money or some other incentive given to somebody to do something, especially, something illegal or dishonest*)

**TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS** Common Core Reading 1

1. Compare the 7th grade team’s attitude to the other teams on the bus. How does the weather match the mood?
2. If sports isn’t fun to these boys, what is fun?
3. How good is the Buckingham Junior High team?
4. What does Mr. Lester mean when he says, “Learn to meet the ball?”
5. Mr. Lester is interrupted as he says “And gentlemen, the most important thing of all is...” Finish this sentence for him.
6. Make a list of adjectives that Ed Sitrow, the goaltender, is feeling at the end of this chapter.

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 1, 2 Common Core Writing 7, 8, 9

In Chapter 1 Mr. Lester says that “Sport is a major part of American life.” Look through the media and find examples of the influence of sports on our culture. How important do you think sports is in the average American’s life? How important is sports in your life? Find one article/example that illustrates your answer.

WRITING Common Core Reading 1, 2 Common Core Writing 2, 4

Create a book of rules titled “How To Play Soccer.” Have a student who does not play soccer edit the directions for clarity. Have a student who does play soccer edit for accuracy.

3

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

stampeding "...they looked like a herd of **stampeding** blue buffalos."
(*v. a sudden frenzied rush of panic-stricken animals*)

tangled "...Fenwick....got **tangled** in his own feet..." (*v. twisted in a jumbled mass*)

sportsmanship "**Sportsmanship**," Mr. Lester murmured and quickly sat down."
(*n. fair conduct in a game*)

**TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS**

Common Core Reading 1

1. Describe the first score of the game. How does it reflect the entire game?
2. Why is Mr. Lester proud of their losing team?
3. What did Mr. Lester mean when he explained "they only had four men on the field" as sportsmanship?
4. How do others on the bus feel about the loss?
5. How do the boys themselves feel about the game?

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 1, 7

1. Check the sport section for recent soccer games. Add up all scores and divide by the number of games to find the average scores for a particular day. Compare this average to the final score of the 7th grade game. How badly did S.O.R. lose?
2. Find the most lopsided score for any sport in today's news media. Then read the story to discover what caused the big difference in the won-lost score.

WRITING Common Core Language 4, 5, 6

1. The players use many words that connect the game to a battle. Keep a list of these words and use them in your own writing.
2. Choose a sports story from the front page of the sports section of your local media. What words did the writer use to describe that particular game? Use them in your own writing.

4

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

giggle "From somewhere in the back of the room came a **giggle**."
(n. a quiet laugh)

licking "We took quite a **licking**."
(n. a beating)

adjustments "We can make **adjustments**."
(n. changes made in order to match or fit)

seriously "Now gentlemen," he said, "we have to think about this game more **seriously**."
(adv. in a sincere way)

**TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS** Common Core Reading 1

1. After seeing the game score on the board at school, Ed feels bad for the first time about the game. Did the boys do something wrong?
2. How does Mr. Lester react to the "licking"?
3. Did Ed earn the title of captain? How does he feel about this title?
4. Mr. Lester thinks the boys should think about soccer more seriously. Is the boys' attitude the problem? What adjustments could be made?
5. What made this practice the most interesting practice the boys had all season?
6. What was the point Mr. Lester was trying to make?

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 1, 4, 9

1. Tim Bush, the illustrator of this story, said, "It's exciting to be participating in the renewal of a classic narrative form. This is a great way to tell stories." How are stories in serial form different from the way other stories are told? How do they keep you interested and anticipating the next chapter?
2. Photojournalists create another layer of information with their photographs and captions in the news media. Write a caption for each of Tim Bush's illustrations for SOR Losers.

WRITING Common Core Reading 2 Common Core Writing 4, 9

1. The news media doesn't have the time or space to develop a story the way Avi can so news stories begin with a lead that in capsule form explains what is contained in the article. Use a news story as your mentor text and write a lead that includes who, what, where, when, and why of this chapter.

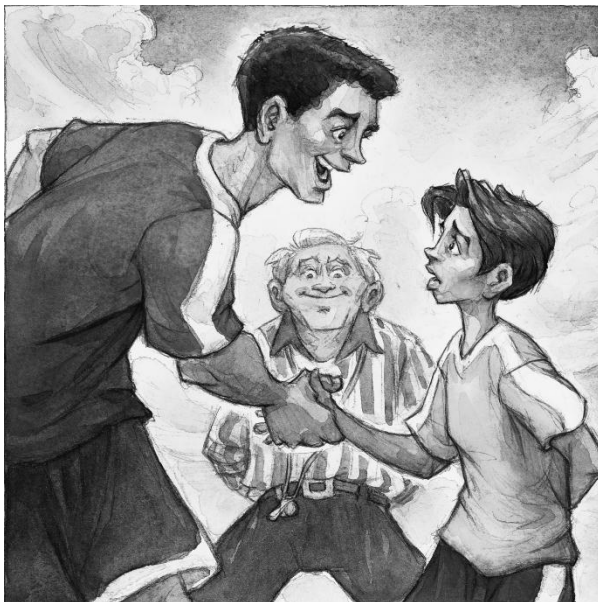
5

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

- reputation** “If South Orange River had a **reputation** for being great in sports, so did Shoreham.” (*n. something that somebody is known for*)
- rivals** “In fact, the schools were **rivals**.” (*n. a person or group that competes with another*)
- referee** “When the **referee** calls, you’re supposed to go out and meet the opposing captain.” (*n. an official who oversees the play in a sport or game, judges whether the rules are being followed, and penalizes fouls or infringements*)
- highlights** “I can’t tell you about the whole game. Just the **highlights**.” (*n. important parts*)
- flailing** “...Root and Hays were right in there, **flailing** away, hacking with their feet, rear ends, heads...” (*v. thrashing*)
- instinct** “Hays was right there and gave it a kick with the swift **instinct** of a true player.” (*n. a natural gift or skill*)

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. If Ed doesn’t care for soccer, what does he think makes for a neat day”?
2. What was the highlight (or lowlight) of this second game against Shoreham?
3. Why did Hays’ grin drop like dead weights?
4. How did the Shoreham goaltender show he wasn’t worried about losing to the SOR team?
5. How do the boys take this latest loss?
6. Do any of the boys have “the swift instinct of a true player?”

**EXTENDING THE STORY**

Common Core Reading 5, 7, 9

Find an article about a recent soccer match in the news media from your area or school. As you read, highlight the terms that are particular to this sport. Follow this team for a few weeks and chart their won/lost record.

WRITING Common Core Writing 2, 4

Mr. Lester is reading How To Be a Successful, Winning Coach. Make a list of 10 ideas that could be included in that book.

6

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

message	“...every team member got a message from our principal, Mr. Sullivan.” (<i>n. a communication</i>)
defeatist	“Don’t have a defeatist attitude.” (<i>adj. expecting failure</i>)
embarrassment	“I’m beginning to think we might be an embarrassment to someone,” said Saltz. (<i>n. a feeling of uncomfortableness, shame, or humiliation</i>)
lesson	“I think they want to teach us a lesson ,” I said. (<i>n. strong criticism or reproof, usually instructing or reminding somebody how to behave correctly</i>)
concerned	“I think it’s very kind of you to be concerned when a teammate gets hurt.” (<i>adj. worried</i>)

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. What is the message Mr. Sullivan, the principal, wants to give this special team?
2. Is Mr. Sullivan an athlete? What does he make the boys promise?
3. What do the boys learn from the main highlight of this game?
4. Are the boys getting any pleasure from this? Have they given up? Are they winners or losers?
5. In the very last paragraph for this chapter, Lucy gives Ed a funny look. Could Ed be motivated to win by what Lucy thought?

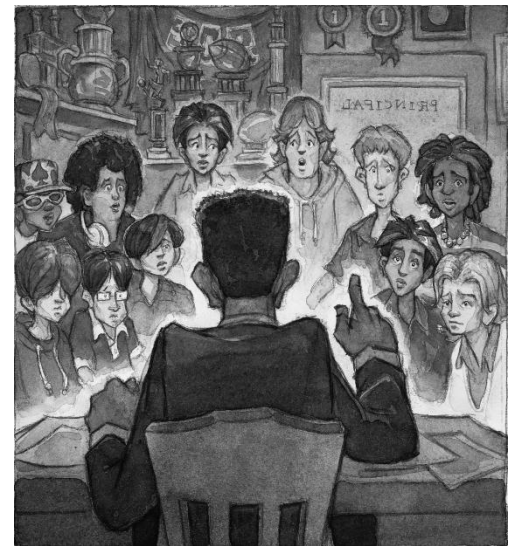
EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 7, 8, 9

1. Look in the media for examples of how our culture tells boys to “Be men”. Choose one article, ad, picture, etc. and explain what the message is contained within it.

WRITING Common Core Writing 2, 3, 4

1. Using free verse, write your own poem about the SOR team.
2. Write the news story that would be attached to the headline:

NEW TEAM HAS WORST START IN SCHOOL HISTORY!



7

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

- straddles** “When he **straddles** the chair, backwards, that means he’s my pal and we’re going to talk man to man.” (*v. to sit or stand so that one leg is on one side and the other leg is on the other side of something or somebody*)
- slogans** “This time he straddled my chair and looked around at all the **slogans**, pictures, bits, and pieces I had picked up and stuck to the wall.”
(*n. a short catchy phrase used to promote or advertise something*)
- attitude** “I just told you, your **attitude**.” (*n. a personal view of something*)
- quitter** “He shook his head. “That’s being a **quitter**.” (*n. somebody who gives up easily*)
- disgust** “I threw my book down in **disgust**.” (*n. strong disapproval*)

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. Would anyone want to see a movie about a team that always loses? What actors could play the leads?
2. Why didn’t Ed ever tell his father about the soccer team? Who did tell Ed’s father about the team?
3. What is really on Ed’s father’s mind?
4. Can Ed be accused of quitting when he didn’t want to join?
5. What is the solution proposed at the parents’ meeting?
6. Is the team a “disgrace”?

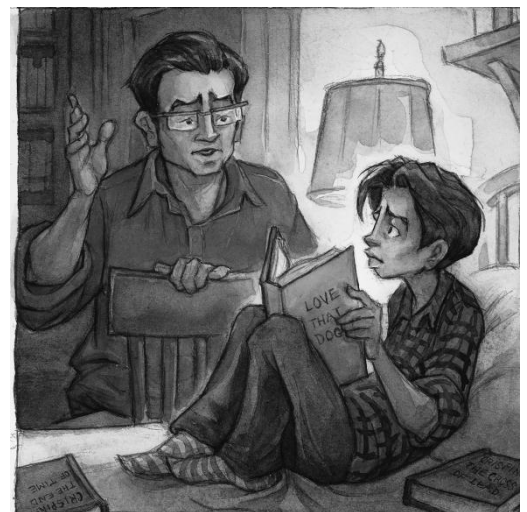
EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 7, 10

Ed tells Lucy on the phone that “I’ve got to practice being a hero.” Find an example of a hero in the news media. Explain why you chose the example. Does it involve sports?

WRITING Common Core Reading 7

Common Core Writing 4, 7

Create a poster that contains “slogans, pictures, bits and pieces” that Ed might have on his bedroom wall. Use the news media to help you find articles that would match up with Ed’s interests or create your own.



8

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

dynamic “Mr. Lester gave us his usual **dynamic** talk.” (*adj. full of energy and enthusiasm*)

waterlogged “The ball got so **waterlogged** it was like kicking a cannonball.”
(*adj. soaked with water*)

muck “...when I came down in the **muck** I lost my wind and all desire to get up.” (*n. sticky dirt*)

wobbled “When those boys got up, they **wobbled**.” (*v. to move in a swaying, shaking, or trembling way*)

**TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS** Common Core Reading 1

1. When Ed says that Mr. Lester gave his usual dynamic talk, this is another example of sarcasm. Explain.
2. What are the weather conditions for this game? How does Ed compare this to trench warfare?
3. Ed takes “this great leap” and finds himself in the muck. How does he react? How do Ed’s parents react?
4. What was the big difference between WWI and the S.O.R. game?
5. What created Ed’s favorite memory?
6. There are two games left. How could it get worse?

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 4, 6

Find your own example of sarcasm in this chapter.

WRITING Common Core Writing 1, 7

Do you think this school requirement is a good one? What would be the positive and negative effects of such a rule? How would it affect you if you attended S.O.R.? Find an opinion piece of writing in the news media as a mentor text and put your thoughts in this form.

9

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

root “I’d like to come to your next game and **root** for you.” (*v. cheer*)

depressing “I thought it **depressing**, as if you weren’t allowed to be anything but happy.” (*adj. causing sadness*)

**TEXT GENERATED QUESTIONS** Common Core Reading 1

1. The adults all praise the boys because “you guys won’t give up.” Why is this quote an example of irony?
2. Why does everyone want to attend their soccer game?
3. What is Mr. Tillman’s point in bringing them into his office?
4. Do the boys avoid their responsibilities?
5. What is more important: winning a soccer game or the reading project?
6. Will the boys be allowed to lose in peace?
7. What is the problem with the team? heart? accepting responsibility? trust? or something else??

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 7

Make a poster that might have been part of the class project Ms. Appleton created.

WRITING Common Core Writing 3, 4

Create a conversation that Ed could have with the school board president if he attempted to change the school requirement for playing a sport.

10

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

desire “Gentlemen,” said Mr. Lester, “we can turn the season around if you really **desire** it.” (*v. to want something very strongly*)

pathetic “Now,” concluded Mr. Lester, “come out fighting and keep fighting.” He made a **pathetic** fist. (*adj. pitiful*)

intercepted “Then one of their guys **intercepted**, dropping the ball along his body.” (*v. to gain possession of a ball intended for an opponent*)

lull “Normally, I’d wait for a **lull** in the action to re-tie it.” (*n. period of calm*)



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. Can the boys turn the season around with desire? What else is necessary to winning?
2. Is this team pathetic?
3. Who should get the credit for the first goal scored by S.O. R.?
4. Can you answer the 8th graders question: “When are you jerks going to get your act together?”
5. Describe Mr. Tillman’s new attitude. Will this new attitude make a difference?
6. Do the guys want to “go down in history as the worst team?”

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 9

1. Think of a competition where the boys could create a successful team. What could they really enjoy and feel was something important? Write an article for the school newspaper about this possible competition as if it was really happening.
2. Is there anything that could be offered to the boys that might change their attitude?

WRITING Common Core Writing 3, 4

Write Chapter 11 and create the outcome you would like to read. Who wins “Worst in the Universe?”

11

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

- novelty** NEWSPAPER: Do you want to win?
ME: For the **novelty**. (*n. something considered new or unusual*)
- pep rally** “Next thing I knew some kids decided to hold a **pep rally**.” (*n. a gathering designed to fire enthusiasm into those attending, especially one held in a school before a sporting event*)
- defect** Later, I said to Saltz, “Maybe we should **defect**.” (*v. to leave your native country or the country you are living in and refuse to return there, usually for political or moral reasons*)

TEXT GENERATED QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. What do we know about Lucy so far in this story? What does Lucy tell Ed when they meet in the stairwell at lunch?
2. What ends the “beautiful romance” between Ed and Lucy Neblet?
3. How does the school react to Ed’s newspaper interview?
4. Answer Ed’s question to Ms. Appleton “why do people care if we win or lose?”
5. Does the team “want to lose?” Should they care about losing?



EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 4

1. How does Avi use humor in this chapter?
2. Is there a place for humor in the news media? Where is it located?

WRITING Common Core Writing 4

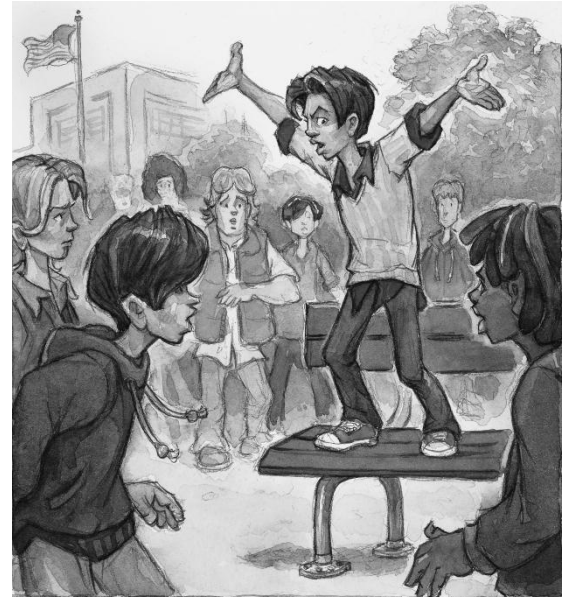
1. There are a number of conversations in this chapter each written in a different style
 - a. a rapid conversation between Ed and his buddy, Saltz
 - b. a newspaper interview with Ed

Discuss the different style of writing in each. Is one easier to read than another? Why did Avi choose to write this chapter in this way? How does this add interest to the story?

12

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

- terminal** “It was fake cheerful, as if I had a **terminal** illness and she wanted to pretend it was a head cold.”
(*adj. causing death*)
- supportive** “Don’t be so smart,” he returned. “I’m trying to be **supportive**.” (*adj. helpful*)
- ashamed** “Anyone **ashamed** of losing?” I said.
(*v. embarrassed, regretful*)
- treason** “It’s not like we’re committing **treason** or something. People have a right to be losers.” (*n. betrayal of country*)



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. How does everyone try to show support for the team?
2. What does Ed mean when he says, “I’m sick of support!”
3. If each boy is good at something, why isn’t that enough?
4. What is the purpose of the emergency meeting of the team?
5. Are any of the boys “ashamed of losing?”

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 1

What if a student “just plain stinks” at sports? Is he/she treated differently in school like the S.O.R. Losers? How come sports are so important?

WRITING Common Core Reading 7, 10 Common Core Writing 6, 9

1. *Newspaper Blackout* is a best-selling book of poetry made by redacting (editing) newspaper articles with a permanent marker. Check out Austin Kleon, the author, and his ideas for using the newspaper at <http://www.austinkleon.com/newspaperblackout/>
2. View this video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=bPAkoPsX0gA&NR=1> and create your own blackout poem from the newspaper. Extra points if your poem connects with SOR Losers.
3. Follow Austin Kleon’s blog at <http://www.austinkleon.com/blog/>. What can you learn from him about the art of writing?

13

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

- ordinary** “It wasn’t going to be an **ordinary** day.” (*adj. unremarkable, not special*)
- rejected** “Listen here you guys,” said Mr. Tillman, “it’s no fun being **rejected**.”
(*v. to be turned down, to feel not good enough*)

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

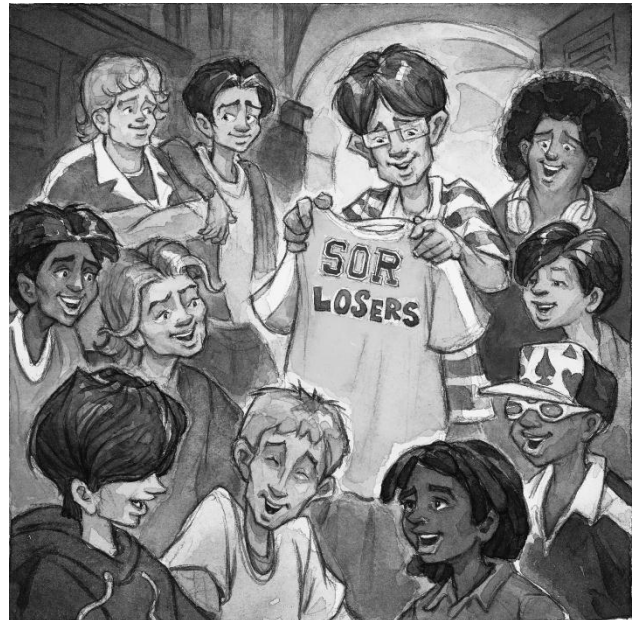
1. What was the point of the t-shirts and the money?
2. What affect did the t-shirts the boys created have on everyone?
3. What does the team learn about Mr. Tillman down in the locker room? How did losing affect his life?
4. What will happen if they win?

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Writing 1 Common Core Speaking & Listening 2

1. The Summer Olympics Games of 2012 in England have ended. What does our American fascination with these games show about our feelings about competition and winning. What was the final medal total for the US compared to the other major nations that competed?
2. Write your own opinion piece about the value of competition.

WRITING Common Core Reading 1 Common Core Writing 4

1. Avi writes in his blog how he feels about blurbs <http://wp.me/s2rZyw-blurbs>. What are his thoughts about writing a blurb for another writer?
2. Write a blurb for S.O.R. Losers.



14

VOCABULARY Common Core Language 4

Horribles “From the way they kicked the ball around – tried to kick the ball around – it was clear this was going to be a true contest of **horribles**.” (*n. group very bad at something*)

frantic “Especially as it becomes very clear that Parkville is **frantic** about winning.” (*adj. out of control emotionally*)

penalty “He was screaming, **Penalty! Penalty!**” (*n. punishment or unpleasant consequence for breaking a rule*)

desperate “Not only had he the cleanest shot in the universe, he was **desperate**.” (*adj. wanting something very much, in great need*)

shame “You could see it all over Hays. **Shame.**” (*n. state of disgrace*)



TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS Common Core Reading 1

1. What was the big difference between the S.O.R. team and Parkville?
2. Saltz adds some comic relief. What did he do?
3. Hays almost ties the game. What happened?
4. How does Fenwick react after tripping and losing the ball? Why did he react that way?
5. What was the cure?
6. Explain this passage: “We hugged each other, screamed and hooted like teams do when they win championships. Want the truth? We were a lot happier than those Parkville guys who had won.”

EXTENDING THE STORY Common Core Reading 1

There are many ways to motivate people. Describe the way used by the Parkville coach. What other ways do teachers, parents, and others use to encourage kids to do things? Which one works best?

WRITING Common Core Writing 3, 4

You are the sport reporter for the South Orange Patriot Press. Write the story of the final game of the S.O.R. Losers soccer season. How will you report the ending?

III. AFTER READING

A. Who said it?

Identify who made each statement. Then explain its importance to the story.

1. "You are all—each one—nice, smart boys. You, however, have avoided sports. Too much desk work."
2. "I never played goalie before. I never played soccer before. I never played *anything* before."
3. "Wrong side, Bozo."
4. "Boys, if you believe in yourselves, you can do *anything*."
5. "Ball's still in play! Ball's still in play!"
6. "I didn't know you were on it, much less captain of the team. That's quite an honor. How come you never told us any of this?"
7. "Gentlemen, this will be a true test of your characters. Conditions are terrible. It was either play or forfeit. We voted to play."
8. "Excellent! Now we're talking *truth*! And you feel bad about it. Think miserable. Have bad dreams. Sense of defeat. Disappointment. Any bedwetting? Kids tease you about the games? Probably some of your parents yell at you for being so rotten all the time. Any of you guys have girlfriends?"
9. "I'm very sorry that you're losing."
10. "No S.O.R. team has ever lost all its games in one season. How do you feel about that record?"
11. "That's *their* problem. I mean, we *are* good, good at *lots* of things. Why can't we just plain stink in some places? That's got to be normal."
12. "That's sick,"

Answers:

1. Mr. Lester
2. Ed
3. Eliscue, another SOR player
4. Mr. Sullivan, the principal
5. the referee
6. Ed's father
7. Mr. Lester
8. Mr. Tillman, the school counselor
9. Lucy
10. NEWSPAPER
11. Ed
12. Mr. Tillman, the school counselor

Common Core Readin 3:

B. Create a crossword puzzle using the vocabulary words in this story. Use www.puzzlemaker.com to help you.

Common Core Language 4

C. Read over these quotes made by famous people about winning. Research who these people are and what the context was for their statement. Then evaluate whether you agree or disagree.

“It is deeply satisfying to win a prize in front of a lot of people.”

— [E.B. White](#), [Charlotte's Web](#)

“Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing.”

[Vince Lombardi](#)

“The person that said winning isn't everything, never won anything.”

[Mia Hamm](#)

Common Core Writing 8, 9

Answers to Text Generated Questions AWW means **Answers Will Vary**.

Chapter 1

1. Mr. Lester hopes that Kelly has some soccer skills as a goaltender and will help the team.
2. Mr. Lester doesn't know anything about soccer so in that way he matches the knowledge of the team. He volunteered to coach this team so he wants to lead them. However, a coach with some skills could probably be more help.
3. South Orange Middle School has a requirement that students had to participate in at least one team sport per year.
4. Mr. Lester's reasons include students should not have “too much deskwork”, school should be about “the whole person”, the school's motto is “everybody plays, everybody wins”. AWW.
5. The boys on this team have little or no desire, training, and preparation. They know nothing about soccer. They have avoided playing team sports however, they have many other interests.

Chapter 2

1. The 7th graders are relaxed and making jokes. The others on the bus are nervous, moody, and glum. The weather is chilly on a gray September afternoon.
2. These boys have other interests including poetry, art, writing, biology.
3. The Buckingham team is their school's third string team, but they come out warming up like they know how to play.
4. Mr. Lester is referring to the moment when the body comes in contact with the ball.
5. AWW.
6. AWW.

Chapter 3

1. The first score of the game came within the first 15 seconds when Saltz missed the ball and it trickled into the goal. The boys played badly the entire game and lost by a wide margin.

2. Mr. Lester is proud because the team didn't give in, they kept up their spirits and they showed courage and character. The boys didn't feel the same.
3. The other coach pulled one of his players to give the S.O.R. team a chance to at least score. He tried not to pile on to the already losing score.
4. Everyone else on the bus is stunned by the lopsided score and then they start making jokes.
5. AWV. The boys on the 7th grade team don't take it too seriously nor care about losing and revert to talking about their other interests.

Chapter 4

1. AWV. The team lost the game badly. Some people view that loss as embarrassing, some view it as just a game, and others think it is funny.
2. Mr. Lester takes the licking very seriously, studying up on soccer and making other adjustments.
3. AWV. Mr. Lester thinks that a good team needs a captain. He believes Ed is the best player because he blocked a shot so he makes him captain. Ed is sick about the title.
4. AWV.
5. The boys thought this was a great practice because they got Mr. Lester off topic when they asked him history questions. The questions got him so off topic, the team really didn't have a practice.
6. Mr. Lester was trying to get the team to think of a soccer game as a battle from history where they should never give up.

Chapter 5

1. A neat day for Ed was going to a museum, seeing a film, and discussing the topic of dinosaurs.
2. The lowlight was how the first goal was scored. Hays put the ball in the wrong goal and scored the first point for the other team.
3. Hays thought he had scored a goal so he was grinning until he realized he made the goal for the wrong side.
4. The other goaltender lay on the ground, flat on his back, taking a sunbath.
5. AWV. The boys still do not seem to be taking the games seriously. On the bus, they applaud the fact that they scored a goal even if it was for the other team.
6. AWV.

Chapter 6

1. Mr. Sullivan wants the team to believe in themselves and then they will be able to do anything.
2. AWV. Mr. Sullivan runs 27 miles once a week, but he doesn't look like an athlete because he is small, thin, and cross-eyed. Sullivan makes the boys promise they will not give up.
3. The main highlight of the Sanger game was Fenwick got hurt and the whole team stopped the game to try to make him feel better. They should have played on and through the injury.
4. AWV. It doesn't seem like they are enjoying this. They do want to give up.
5. AWV. Earlier in the story Ed did say that Lucy was especially beautiful and gifted and talented.

Chapter 7

1. AWV. Avi suggests the movie would have to be changed from the real events of this story.
2. Ed never tells his dad about the soccer team because it isn't important to him. Playing soccer is not something he cares about; he is forced to do it. The school counselor called Ed's dad.
3. Ed's father is concerned that the team is losing and that they don't have the right attitude.
4. AWV.
5. The solution the dads come up with is to hold extra practices.
6. AWV. Everyone in the school and community has a different point of view.

Chapter 8

1. Ed means the exact opposite of a dynamic talk. Mr. Lester is low key and his pep talk merely said we will play in the rain even though conditions are terrible.
2. AWV. The weather is raining like crazy. The mud makes a humorous and exaggerated connection to WWI and the trench warfare Ed read about.
3. When Ed lands in the muck and mire, he just lays there winded and deliriously happy. Ed's parents think he is hurt and then they do not appreciate his happy attitude in a losing game.
4. Ed says the soldiers after being shell shocked in WWI got a rest in Paris. Mr. Lester and Ed's parents just wanted him to get back up and play some more.
5. Ed's favorite memory was when the ball was being chased by two players, both went up for it, the ball went up in the air, came down, hit them in the head, and knocked both players out.
6. AWV.

Chapter 9

1. This is ironic because the boys want to give up – badly.
2. AWV. Everyone wants to encourage the team. People think they just need more encouragement and support and they can be turned into winners.
3. Mr. Tillman has his own ideas of why the boys are losing. As the school counselor he is looking for hidden problems that may be causing their team to lose.
4. AWV. The boys only want to do the things they care about – mainly academics not sports.
5. AWV. Mr. Tillman may have a different point of view than Porter who just wants to work on his reading project.
6. AWV.
7. AWV.

Chapter 10

1. AWV.
2. AWV.
3. Since Hays was the last person to touch the ball before it entered the net, he should get the credit for the goal.
4. AWV.
5. Mr. Tillman is giving up on the sweet talk and telling the team exactly how bad they really are. He also tells them that no team in school history has completed a season without winning at least one game. Will it work??? AWV.
6. AWV.

Chapter 11

1. Ed has told us that Lucy is gifted and talented and exceptionally beautiful. She is in some of his classes and he likes working with her in groups. The note makes Ed act giddy and silly. In the stairwell, Lucy tells Ed she is sorry that he is losing.
2. When Lucy says this, Ed realizes she doesn't understand him and what is going on with the team and the romance is over.
3. The school decides to put on a pep rally to help the team win the last game.
4. With a tradition of winning, the school expects to win. They don't understand the "losing attitude" the boys seem to display. Everyone expects the team to care about winning and losing.
5. AWV.

Chapter 12

1. Ed's family tries to be supportive, Staltz's father offers him a bribe, and the school puts on a pep rally.

2. AWW. Ed is tired of this team being the center of attention and everyone trying to help them win.
3. AWW.
4. The point of the emergency meeting was for the team to regroup and refocus on what is really important to them – and it isn't sports
5. No, not one of the boys is ashamed of losing.

Chapter 13

1. The boys took the school t-shirts, bought iron on letters, and created the SOR Losers shirts for them to wear at the last game. It made them feel better and more in control of what was happening and how the community would feel about a losing season.
2. The rest of the team members laughed. Mr. Lester moaned, and Mr. Tillman called it "sick" and "defeatist."
3. The team learns that Mr. Tillman tried out but did not make it in professional sports. He says it was no fun feeling rejected and he flees the locker room after his confession.
4. AWW.

Chapter 14

1. Parkville was nervous and tight. SOR was joking and loose.
2. Saltz ran out to meet the ball, kicked it, missed, and landed right on top of it – sitting on the ball.
3. Hays try so hard, running all out towards the goal when he trips and falls. The other team's goaltender gathers the ball and throws it downfield.
4. Fenwick starts to cry after losing the ball. Perhaps frustration of a losing season gets to him.
5. The boys gather around him chanting SOR Losers, the crowd joins in, and the mood changes.
6. AWW.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.¹

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Anchor Standards for Language

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.