

The Quarterback

8th Grade Fiction

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Jose was a quarterback at his old school. The team had won 8 of its 10 games. He knew how to play. He had to transfer to a new school this year. His family had moved to the other side of the city.

When he got to school the first day, he went to see the football coach. He said, “I want to be quarterback.”

“You’re late,” the coach replied. “We had tryouts last spring. We already have a quarterback. We even have a backup. So you can come to practice. But we don’t have a place for you on the team.”

Jose was discouraged. He told his stepfather that he wanted to go back to his old school. But his stepfather said that they could not move back there because his new job was on this side of the city. “Your mother’s family is near here, too, and we need to go to help them sometimes now that your grandmother is sick.”

Jose had not made any friends, and he sat alone in his room. He would text his old friends at his old school, and they would text back with news. But that just made him unhappier.

Then he went to the first practice. The coach said, “Jose, help with the warm-up. Let’s see what you can do.”

Jose played with the team, practicing, just throwing passes at first. Then the coach put him into some plays. Meanwhile, Jose was watching Mason, the quarterback. “He’s not that good,” he said. “I could do better.” But he knew he was wrong. Mason could throw the ball farther, faster, and more accurately.

Then Mason turned to him. “Let’s give Jose a chance.” So Jose did take the quarterback role for one play. As they played, he realized that it wasn’t the quarterback who made the play work. It was the whole team. The team took the ball he passed and made a touchdown. All he had done was make the first pass.

After the practice, he went to the coach. He told him that he would be proud to be able to help the team. He said that he did not expect to be on the team but wanted to be with them. “I just love football,” he said. “I didn’t realize until today that I just want to be part of the game.”

The coach asked him to be part of their practices from then on. “Next year, Jose, we will have a position for you.”

By the end of the season Jose had many friends. One of his best friends was Mason.

Identify, analyze, and infer relationships - Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question

1. At first, how does Jose feel about the new school?

- a. lonely
- b. glad
- c. angry
- d. sad

3. How does Jose's stepfather feel about his family?

- a. responsible
- b. sorry
- c. angry
- d. sad

2. How does the coach help Jose?

- a. He gives him a job.
- b. He teaches him.
- c. He is mean to him.
- d. He is friendly to him.

4. At first, Jose is

- a. strong
- b. caring
- c. selfish
- d. mean

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Why does Mason become Jose's friend?*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	d	b	a	c

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

He helps Jose; he lets him play even though he does not play as well as he does.