

Grade 8 English First Additional Language Worksheet

Reading comprehension on school bullying

Look at the following article, which was published in *The Star*, Wednesday June 24 2019:



OUTCAST: In this scene from a play, *One False Move*, actress Mia Godfrey-Thom is the victim of bullying. Boys are not the only ones doing the bullying these days. Girls are becoming more aggressive and are using Mxit and Facebook to humiliate and oppress their classmates.

School bullies can scar you for life

The nature of bullying at school is becoming more violent and, unless steps are taken to combat it, schools will become even worse hives of harassment, writes Latoya Newman

John* is in his 40s, the father of one and a working professional, but when he walks past a group of schoolboys he still has an unexplainable fear of them.

“People just do not understand what kind of emotional scars bullying can leave you with,” he said.

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John was bullied emotionally and physically for many of his school-going years, starting at the age of 11, at the two co-education schools and one boys' high school he attended in KwaZulu-Natal.

"At one school I had to learn all the boys' names, the teachers' names and the teachers' dogs' names. If you did not know them, they (the bullies) would punch you so hard that you would fall down. You pick yourself up and they would punch you again, and again. They called it character-building, but it is soul-destroying," he said.

The man says he was teased "relentlessly" by fellow pupils and he developed a low self-esteem throughout most of his adult years.

"As you grow older, you learn to numb it, but it takes a while. Another challenge as you grow older is the anger. Sometimes when people offend me and try to belittle me, it is tempting to just beat them. But I restrain myself. I have embraced martial arts and it has helped me in some areas ... I was never an aggressive person before," he said.

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Questions

1. Who is shown in this photograph and what do you think is happening? (3)
2. Why do you think this photograph was included in the article? (2)
3. For whom is the article written? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
4. What do you think is the message of the photograph? (2)
5. From whose point of view has the photograph been taken? (2)
- 6.1 Do you think that the photograph suggests that only girls bully other girls? Explain who you think bullies are. (2)
- 6.2 If you were to include another photograph with the article, what would you show? (2)
- 6.3 Do you think this is a good photograph for the article? Explain. (2)
7. Have you ever had any experience of bullying? Describe it, or say why you think you have never been bullied. Write 2–3 sentences. (3)

[20]

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Suggested Solutions

1. A group of girls are all pointing at one girl. It seems as if everyone has ganged up on the girl, who is alone and looks sad and frightened. (3)
2. The article is about bullying ✓ and we see what seems to be girls bullying another girl. ✓ (2)
3. The article is for everyone: everyone needs to think about bullying and put a stop to it. (2)
4. The photograph shows that picking on someone is cruel and hurtful. ✓ It also shows that the bullies seem excited and pleased. This is frightening and needs to be stopped. ✓ Any TWO points. (2)
5. The photograph is taken from the point of view of an observer. The photographer seems to be watching what is going on and shows the group and the single girl. (2)
- 6.1 The photo shows girls only, but all children bully and all children are victims of bullying. (2)
- 6.2 Any reasonable suggestion: boys or boys and girls, or a boy as a victim. (2)
- 6.3 Any reasonable answer. The pointing fingers and the apparent pleasure are memorable. It is reassuring that this is staged, because it looks so vicious. (2)
7. Mark on the description of the experience or on the reasons given. 1 mark for language control and sentence structure, 2 marks for content. (3)

[20]