

Name _____

Date _____

Not a Small Problem

Hi, my name is Albert. My friends call me Al. You can call me Al if you like. I want to tell you about a problem I have. It's not a big problem, but it is not a small problem either. I guess it's somewhere in between.

My problem involves my best friend. His name is Joe, but everybody calls him Joey. Joey and I have been friends for a long time. That's part of the problem. See, Joey likes to smoke. He says he doesn't, but I know he does. He tries to hide it from me, but I see him do it sometimes. When I see him do it, he just laughs and walks away.

When Joey started smoking, he only did it after school sometimes. I know because I could smell it on him.

He smelled like old clothes, or like my dad's car used to smell. My dad used to smoke too, but he quit because his doctor told him he would have major health problems if he continued to smoke. I am glad he quit, but I am still worried about Joey.

Nowadays, Joey smokes all the time. When he comes over to my house, he always brings his cigarettes with him. He keeps them in his front pocket. Once, when we were watching a movie, he asked me to stop it so he could go outside and smoke. I didn't want to stop it, but I did.

The worst part about his smoking is that he thinks it's okay. He thinks it's not a bad idea to smoke. He says, "Don't worry Al. I'm okay. I know what I'm doing." He tells me that I don't understand, but I think I do.

And what's worse, I feel it's Joe's right to smoke. I mean, it's his body, and he can do what he wants with it. Plus, Joe just turned fifteen. I'm only thirteen. That means he is older than me, and therefore he thinks he knows more than I do. Joe keeps telling me that I'll understand one day...when I get older. I hate that phrase, "When I get older."

I know he can make his own decisions, but I can't help being worried about him. He's my best friend, remember?

Anyway, I don't want to bother you anymore with my problem. After all, it's not a big problem, but it's not a small problem either.



1) Based on the information in the passage, we can understand that

- A. Joey's smoking has increased over time
- B. Joey and Albert's father share a lot in common
- C. Albert and Joey are now no longer friends
- D. Albert's father got a new car after he quit smoking

- 2) Which of these words best describes Albert's father's relationship with his doctor?
- A. friendly
 - B. fearful
 - C. strained
 - D. trusting
- 3) In paragraph 6, Albert says he hates the phrase, "When I get older." Why is this most likely the case?
- A. because Joey is always right
 - B. because it makes Joey think about his father
 - C. because Albert is older and should know better
 - D. because it makes Albert feel less important
- 4) Which of these statements best summarizes the way Albert feels about the human body?
- A. You should always respect your own body no matter what.
 - B. You should be free to do what you want with your own body.
 - C. You should obey the law with respect to your own body.
 - D. You should always do what the doctor tells you with respect to your own body.
- 5) Albert can best be described as
- A. annoyed
 - B. hopeless
 - C. angry
 - D. worried
- 6) Put yourself in Al's position. Tell how you would continue to resolve the problem he is having. What would you do next? Explain from Al's point of view.

Answers and Explanations

1) A

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, Albert tells us that "When Joey started smoking, he only did it after school sometimes." Later, in paragraph 4, Albert says, "Nowadays, Joey smokes all the time." Given that Joey started smoking only after school sometimes, and nowadays he smokes all the time, this lets us know that Joey's smoking has increased over time. Choice **(A)** is correct.

Although Joey and Albert's father both have dealt with smoking, there is no reason to believe they share anything else in common. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

(C) is incorrect because although Albert and Joey disagree about smoking, this does not mean they are no longer friends.

There is no reason to believe that Albert's father got a new car. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

2) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, Albert tells us that his father "quit because his doctor told him he would have major health problems if continued to smoke." Since Albert's father did what his doctor told him to do, we can infer that he trusts his doctor. If he didn't trust his doctor, then he would not have taken this warning seriously, and it would not have caused him to quit smoking. Therefore, **(D)** is correct.

Although Albert's father may be friends with his doctor, this does not explain why he decided to take his advice. This eliminates choice **(A)**.

Albert's father may fear death, but there is no reason to believe that he fears his doctor. So **(B)** is incorrect.

(C) is incorrect because the passage does not provide information to support the idea that Albert's father's relationship with his doctor is strained, or tense.

3) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

Albert is concerned about his older friend, Joey. He feels strongly about how dangerous smoking is and has a good reason to feel this way (his father's doctor told his father that he could have major health problems if he continued to smoke). Nevertheless, Joey is able to dismiss Albert's concerns by virtue of the simple fact that Albert is too young to understand. Although Albert feels he is right, his credibility is questioned merely because of his age—something he has no control over. Regardless of the legitimacy of Albert's concern, Joey makes him feel less important than himself, telling Albert that he "will understand when he gets older." This lets us know that **(D)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 6, Albert says, "I feel it's his right to smoke. I mean, it's his body, and he can do what he wants with it." This lets us know that Albert feels that you should be free to do what you want with your own body. Choice **(B)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, Albert tells us about his father's addiction to smoking and how it dangerously affected his father's life. At the end of this paragraph, Albert says, "I am glad he quit, but I am still worried about Joey." This shows us that he is worried about Joey. Later, in the next to final paragraph, Albert repeats this worry when he says, "I know he can make his own decisions, but I can't help being worried about him. He's my best friend, remember?" This lets us know that Albert can be best described as worried. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

Although Albert is worried about Joey's problem, he is not annoyed, or bothered, by it. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

Albert hopes that Joey will quit smoking. Otherwise, he wouldn't bother thinking about it so much, or taking the time to tell us about it. This makes **(B)** incorrect.

(C) is incorrect because the passage does not provide information to support the idea that Albert is angry about Joey's problem.