

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 4

“This is Orly Hall, where you’ll be staying,’ Leeds said. ‘It’s the second floor, room two twenty. There’s practice tomorrow morning at nine. You need anything tonight?’

I heard myself saying no and a moment later I was struggling up the stairs with my bags” (p. 4).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you were someplace completely new or completely outside your comfort zone. This might have been when you moved, started in a new school, began a new activity, met someone new or found yourself completely alone.

Write a 1-paragraph narrative. Introduce your situation and describe what happened. Be logical in your flow and have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Use strong transition words.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 17

“Eddie comes here with his mother. She sits in the gymnasium for the whole time. Whatever you do will be wrong as far as she is concerned. If she had the money she would take him to the – how does she put it now – ‘the best clinics in the world.’ But she doesn’t, so she’s stuck with us, and we’re stuck with her. She’s not shy about telling you either” (p. 17).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you were dealing with someone you could not please. No matter what you did, it was the wrong thing. No matter how much you did, it was not enough.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Tell about your situation. Who was involved, what happened, how did it end up? Use a clear timeline to describe the events in a logical order. Use good transition words to help your flow. If appropriate include dialog that helps describe what happened.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 35

"I said, 'Okay.' I didn't really want to play that much, but another thing I didn't want to do was go to any more classes that day" (p. 35).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you didn't want to go to any more classes, but you did. Why didn't you want to go? Why did you decide to go? You could also write about a time when you ended up not going to class, if you wish.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened? Who was involved, what did you end up doing? What was the final affect? Include details and a logical flow/timeline of events. Use descriptive language to help tell your story.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 41

“Then you would be a fool,’ Fat Man said. ‘Education is what you got one chance to get’” (p. 41).

Writing Task

Think about the statement above. Think about your education. Do you value it? Do you think it will get easier or harder to obtain as you have more responsibilities?

Write a narrative paragraph in which you share about your education. Why is it important to you? Introduce people in your life who support you in following your dreams, with details. If there is an opportunity to use dialog insert it where appropriate.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 51

“Against my own better judgment I threw in another dollar. Sly turned over a deuce. Snatched up my two dollars and howled with laughter” (p. 51).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when your better judgment told you to do one thing, but you did another. Or someone talked you into something you knew you didn't really want to do. Or someone talked you into doing what they wanted you to do, instead of what you wanted to do, and knew would be better for you.

Write a narrative paragraph. Use descriptions and logical flow to describe what happened? Use dialog to tell what happened. Be vivid in your details and order. How do you wish the situation had turned out?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 57

“Lonnie Jackson, a product of New York’s Harlem school yards, played the entire second half, mostly out of control, at guard. He combined poor shot selection with sloppy passing to reveal himself as a rank freshman. What he did do, however, was to crash both boards well and play good defense. Teufel might make a player out of him” (p. 57).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you heard, or heard about, someone else’s description of you, or something you did that you disagreed with, or felt was biased or inaccurate.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Describe who was involved and introduce them with vivid descriptions? What did they have to say about you (use dialog)? What did you do to change their opinion? Conclude by telling your reader how the situation ended or resolved itself.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 76

“It wasn’t just that things were hard, because they weren’t really. I had hustled food from the supermarket when I was ten. There had been a time, when my mom was sick, that I had to fight my way through the junkies to get to the drugstore and get her prescription filled, and then fight my way past them again to keep it. I could take hard. I had learned to handle it. This was different. I had been man enough to struggle and get over in Harlem; in Montclare I was struggling just to let people know I was for real” (p. 76).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you were struggling to fit in to a place you wanted to be, or be taken seriously by people who were important to you, or just make the best of a situation you had to stay in.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Use details and descriptions to set the situation. Introduce the characters with vivid details. If appropriate use dialog to help tell your story. Conclude your paragraph by explaining how your situation turned out.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 86

“‘You’re suspended from the team for a week,’ he said as I walked into the room. ‘The next offense and you’re off the team for good. I also expect you to apologize to each member of the team. If you don’t want to do that, you can turn your uniform in. Now get out of here’” (p. 86).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you thought a problem or conflict was going to work out but it did not. Instead, it got much worse, or the person responded far more strongly than you expected. Or think of a time when you thought you were in a little trouble and you turned out to be in big trouble,

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Introduce the situation. Who was involved and what happened. Use detailed and descriptive language. Use transition phrases to help with flow. Conclude your paragraph by describing how the situation turned out.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 105

“‘I want something more,’ Ruth said, leaning against the fender of the car. ‘I want to be all excited about something, have people excited about me for some reason – you know, that kind of thing’” (p. 105).

Writing Task

Think about a time when you wanted your life to be more exciting; a time when you wanted your life to be more than it is, or become more than it is.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Introduce your reader to your situation. Explain with detail what you want to be different? Use colorful words and phrases to show your reader what you want from your new and exciting life.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 112

“At Montclare it was different. There were players who could bend the rules enough to get an edge even against a better player. There were players who could put the ball on the floor a split second after they had moved their pivot foot and it wouldn’t be called a violation. There were people who you could beat on, and some you couldn’t touch” (p. 112).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when someone took unfair advantage of you. Or a time when someone got away with doing something to you they shouldn’t have.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Using descriptive language set the scene. Who was involved? What happened? With vivid details, transitions, and dialog detail the situation in logical order. Conclude your paragraph by giving the end result of the situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 118

“I don’t believe he’s actually giving him a chance,’ she said. ‘I really don’t believe it.’

‘Maybe he’s just changing,’ I said, knowing darn well that Eddie’s father would probably never change” (p. 118).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when someone changed for the better, and you didn’t expect it. Or a time when someone acted like they were going to change, whether they did or did not. Or a time when someone who is usually a problem wasn’t.

Write a narrative paragraph describing the situation. Introduce your readers to the situation and the characters. With details and logical flow, describe the situation and what happened in a logical order. Use transitions, phrases, and vivid details. Conclude by telling the reader what happened and how it affected you.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 133

"I felt a little like that myself. Sometimes this whole college thing seems so strange to me. I'm supposed to think that I'll be a big time ballplayer, or at least finish school. There's only one thing that makes it even possible to believe any of it" (p. 133).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you felt discouraged, or weren't sure what you wanted to do, or weren't sure what to believe in. Or imagine yourself making the above statement – how would you finish the statement? What would be that one thing for you?

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Introduce your paragraph by describing the situation and the people or things involved. Use vivid language and details to describe what happened. Tell how the situation concluded and reflect on the outcome.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 136

“Montclare was not the world I knew, and I felt that it wasn’t the world I belonged to either. But I knew it was a world that had some things in it that I wanted, and that I had a slim chance of making it after all. I told myself that I wasn’t ever going to give up. I wasn’t going to shoot myself, or run away, or let anybody push me out. If I had an outside shot, I was going to take it” (p. 136).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you were telling yourself you could succeed; a time when you knew success was possible if you kept working at it. Or a time when you were telling yourself not to give up.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what was happening. Introduce your subject and characters. Who was involved and what was the situation. Use dialog (internal or external) to help you tell your story. What lesson did you learn from this experience?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 152

“I tried to think about what The Fat Man had said to me about betting on the game, and doing him a personal favor. I thought about it until my head began to ache. Then I began to check myself out. Here I was, sweating bullets in a john thousands of miles from home trying to figure out if I was cool or if I wasn’t. I didn’t need this mess. I didn’t need it at all” (p. 152).

Writing Task

Sometimes we do things that are questionable. We try to justify them in our own mind to prove that we are right. But that bad feeling won’t go away. Our conscience won’t let it drop, until we admit we were wrong or we make our best attempt to fix it. Write about a time that you experienced this inner struggle between right and wrong.

Write a narrative paragraph that describes the situation you were in. Give the background details. Using a logical order of events, explain the situation. Give vivid details to show your reader what happened? Conclude by reflecting how the situation affected you.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 156

“Teufel put us through twice-a day practices for the next week. One practice we would run through plays and the other we would scrimmage and have pass drills. They were hard, but I worked them with everything I had. What I was thinking was that I wanted another year at Montclare. I think the shock of the place was wearing off a little and I wanted to take another look at it” (p. 156).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you changed your mind. Maybe you decided you do want to be somewhere you did not like at first. Maybe you decided to be friends with someone you at first did not. Maybe you decided a school, sport, hobby, place or person was okay that you initially disliked.

Write a narrative describing the situation. Give details about what happened and who was involved. Explain with vivid details and logic what changed for you. Reflect what you learned in the process.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 165

“‘You ain’t out the woods yet,’ Rashid said. ‘So stay worried’” (p. 165).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you were facing problems or in trouble, but had the solution to your problems or troubles. Can you think of a moment when you weren’t out of the woods yet – it was still possible for things to go wrong?

Write a narrative paragraph. Describe the situation and who was involved. Tell your story in a logical order. Use vivid language and details to show your reader what happened.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 17



Key Paragraph, p. 171

“Was I wrong? Was the game straight all the way? I didn’t know. I thought it was over, but I wasn’t sure. I knew that at the end of the game it had been Larson who had iced it for us” (p. 171).

Writing Task

Have you ever had a moment in your life when you thought you knew what was happening, and now you are not sure? Think about a time in your life when you suddenly realized you might be wrong.

Write a narrative paragraph describing what happened. Introduce your readers to the characters and the situation. As you tell the story put your events in logical order. Use strong transitions and phrases to move from one area to the next. Reflect on the situation; what did you learn and take away from it?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Outside Shot, Day 18



Key Paragraph, p. 185

"We were doing okay, me and Eddie, I thought as Sherry took my arm. It wasn't going to be easy and maybe neither of us would make it in any big way, but that's the way it was. Nothing we could do about that. But Eddie had a chance, a good chance, to live the way he'd want to live. And for the first time in my life, I felt that I did, too. And somehow it was about a lot more than playing ball. It was about knowing what was out there, what to go for, and what to walk away from. I figured Eddie to play it to the bust if he had half a chance, and so would I. That was all for the long run, though. But for then and there, we were both doing okay" (p. 185).

Writing Task

Think about a time in your life when you felt things were really going okay – things were working. A time when you felt something like Lonnie when he tells himself: It was about knowing what was out there, what to go for, and what to walk away from. Think of something specific that took place.

Write a narrative paragraph in which you tell a story about one thing that went right for you. Who was involved? What was the situation? Introduce your topic and detail what happened in order. How did it make you feel? What happened? Use clear and concise language that tells a story.