

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 8

“She wasn’t really supposed to be outside at all. The Taliban had ordered all the girls and women in Afghanistan to stay inside their homes. They even forbade girls to go to school. Parvana had had to leave her sixth- grade class, and her sister Nooria was not allowed to go to her high school. Their mother had been kicked out of her job as a writer for a Kabul radio station. For more than a year now, they had all been stuck inside one room, along with five-year-old Maryam and two-year-old Ali” (p. 8).

Writing Prompt

Pretend that you have just arrived in Afghanistan and Parvana is your old friend. She is taking you around the market, showing you her house, pointing out the Taliban. She is talking about how as the war has gone on, each house she has lived in has been bombed and her family has had to move to smaller and smaller houses. They are becoming poorer and poorer. **Write a short letter to your family in the United States narrating the sequence of events of Parvana’s life in Afghanistan. Be sure to include the rules of the Taliban and use the nouns Afghanistan, Taliban, and Kabul in your letter to help explain Parvana’s life.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 2



Key Paragraph. p. 21

“Parvana knew she had to fetch the water because there was nobody else in the family who could do it. Sometimes this made her resentful. Sometimes it made her proud. One thing she knew—it didn’t matter how she felt. Good mood or bad, the water had to be fetched, and she had to fetch it” (p. 21).

Writing Prompt

With the Venn diagram activity, compare and contrast the fictional story of Paravana’s life in modern day Afghanistan with factual research of the circumstances for women and girls living in Afghanistan. **Write one informative paragraph that explains how Parvana’s life is similar to the true-life of some Afghan girls. Write a second paragraph that explains how Parvana’s life is different from the reality of some Afghan girls.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 38

“The prison was a long way from their home. Buses were not permitted to carry women who did not have a man with them. They would have to walk the whole way. What if Father was being held somewhere else? What if they were stopped by the Taliban in the street? Mother wasn’t supposed to be out of her home without a man, or without a note from her husband” (p. 38).

Writing Prompt

Have you ever been blamed for something you did not do? In this chapter, Father is arrested without having broken any laws. **Pretend you are Parvana, write a letter to the chief of the prison that explains the sequence in descriptive detail. In the concluding paragraph, request that the chief of the prison release your father from jail.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 61

“Nooria snatched it from her hands. ‘You are the stupidest girl! All we need now is for you to get sick! How could anyone so stupid end up as my sister!’ ‘That’s no way to keep up team spirit,’ Mrs. Weera said” (p. 61).

Writing Prompt

Parvana’s parents used to argue about whether or not they should leave Afghanistan. Parvana’s mother wanted to flee their homeland but Parvana’s father would argue, “We are Afghans. This is our home. If all the educated people leave, who will rebuild the country?” **Explain the father’s argument in an informative paragraph. What are the effects of fleeing the country? What is the father’s dream for his country? Provide 3 reasons why Parvana’s family should not leave Afghanistan. Peer review: Trade your paragraph with a classmate, edit your partner’s paragraph, and rewrite your paragraph.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 67

“As more and more hair fell away, Parvana began to feel like a different person. Her whole face showed. What was left of her hair was short and shaggy. It curled in a soft fringe around her ears. There were no long parts to fall into her eyes, to become tangled on a windy day, to take forever to dry when she got caught in the rain” (p. 67).

Writing Prompt

Parvana realized that her mother and Mrs. Weera can force her to cut her hair, but ultimately it would be her decision to pretend to be a boy and cooperate with their idea. **In an informative paragraph, explain why it is better to convince someone to do something rather than to force them. Provide 2-3 reasons to help support your explanation. Have you ever tried to force someone to do something? In a second paragraph, describe an example of when you were not able to force someone to do something they did not want to do.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 80

“Parvana took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Up until then, she had seen Taliban only as men who beat women and arrested her father. Could they have feelings of sorrow, like other human beings?” (p. 80)

Writing Prompt

On page 76, Mother states that Parvana, at age 11, has more education than most of the people in the country. What do you think it would be like if this were the case in the United States? What would change? Would things be better or worse? **In an informative paragraph, explain why it is important for a country to have educated citizens. Provide 3 reasons to support your claim. Peer review: Trade your paragraph with a classmate, edit your partner's paragraph, and rewrite your paragraph.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 93

“The man put his hand on her shoulder.

‘You seem like a fine boy. I’m sorry I am not your father.’ He paused then said in a lower voice,

‘Your father is in prison?’ Parvana nodded.

‘People are released from prison sometimes. Don’t give up hope.’ The man went on his way into the market, and Parvana went back to her blanket” (p. 93).

Writing Prompt

Why are children in Afghanistan working? **In an informative paragraph, explain why it is important for Parvana to work in the market? Provide 3 reasons why Parvana works in the market. Include 2-3 facts to support your claim from the background history. Trade your paragraph with a classmate, edit your partner’s paragraph, and rewrite your paragraph.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 100

“‘I’ve been thinking of starting up a little school here,’ Mrs. Weera said to Parvana’s surprise.

‘A secret school, for a small number of girls, a few hours a week. You must attend. Parvana will let you know when’” (p. 100).

Writing Prompt

Imagine you are also going to teach at Mrs. Weera’s underground school. What subject would you teach? What is an important lesson that you think Parvana and her siblings should learn? **Describe your lesson. What will you do first, second, and third? Include an activity to help explain your lesson.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 105

“Bombs had fallen on the cemetery, too. The explosions had shaken up the graves in the ground. Here and there, white bones of the long-dead stuck up out of the rusty-brown earth. Flocks of large black and gray crows cawed and pecked at the ground around the ruined graves of the newer section of the graveyard. The slight breeze carried a rotting stench to where Parvana and Shauzia were standing, on the edge of the cemetery’s older section. They watched the boys fan out across the graveyard and start digging” (p. 105).

Writing Prompt

Write another short letter to your family in the United States informing them the sequence of events of Parvana’s life in Afghanistan from this chapter. Describe the surrounding environment using a quote from the chapter. Paraphrase information from the background history information to explain the dangers of landmines. Provide 2 reflective sentences about how Parvana tried to make the most of an unpleasant situation

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 121

"All of a sudden one of the soldiers took out a sword, raised it above his head and brought it down on one man's arm. Blood flew in every direction. The man cried out in pain. Next to Parvana, Shauzia started screaming. Parvana clamped her hand over Shauzia's mouth and pulled her down to the floor of the stadium stands. The rest of the stadium was quiet. There was still no cheering" (p. 121).

Writing Prompt

In some cultures, people who were considered thieves were punished by having their hands cut off. **In an explanatory paragraph, describe why less people would steal with this law? Provide two reasons to support your answer. Create a new law that will positively encourage people from stealing.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 130

“Parvana was tired. She wanted to sit in a classroom and be bored by a geography lesson. She wanted to be with her friends and talk about homework and games and what to do on school holidays. She didn’t want to know any more about death or blood or pain” (p. 130).

Writing Prompt

What would you do in Shauzia’s situation? Help Shauzia write a pro/con list. Explain why Shauzia should stay in Afghanistan. Provide 3 reasons. Explain why Shauzia should go to Pakistan. Provide 3 reasons.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 136

“Nooria nodded.

‘Look at my life here, Parvana. I hate living under the Taliban. I’m tired of looking after the little ones. My school classes happen so seldom, they’re of almost no value. There’s no future for me here. At least in Mazar I can go to school, walk the streets without having to wear a burqa, and get a job when I’ve completed school. Maybe in Mazar I can have some kind of life. Yes I want to do this” (p. 136).

Writing Prompt

How are the circumstances of Nooria’s marriage different to the circumstances of marriages in the U.S.? **Explain the Nooria’s argument for getting married in an informative paragraph. Provide 3 reasons why Nooria decided to get married.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 154

“Parvana got out of bed and carried on as before. She did her work in the market, fetched water, listened to Mrs. Weera’s stories and got to know Homa. She did all these things because she didn’t know what else to do. But she moved through her days as though she were moving through an awful nightmare—a nightmare from which there was no release in the morning” (154).

Writing Prompt

Imagine you are Homa. **Write a journal update on the recent life changing events. Describe what happened to you and your family in Mazar. What happened first, second, and third? Describe the tense surrounding environment using a quote from the chapter. Provide 2-3 reflective sentences to express your feelings on the events of this chapter.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 157-158

"Parvana was filled with hope. In the market she chased after customers just like the real boys did. Mrs. Weera suggested some medicine for Father, and Parvana worked and worked until she had earned the money to buy it. It seemed to help."

'I feel like I'm working for something now,' she told Shauzia one day as they walked around looking for customers'" (p. 157-158).

Writing Prompt

Write another short letter to your family in the United States informing them the sequence of events of Parvana's life in Afghanistan from this chapter. Introduce Homa. Describe the tense surrounding environment using a quote from the chapter. Use transitional words to convey a sequence. Provide 2-3 reflective sentences to express your feelings on the events of this chapter.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Breadwinner, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 163

“Through the voices of derision came another voice.

‘Do none of you appreciate nature? This boy has undertaken to bring a bit of beauty into our gray marketplace, and do you thank him? Do you help him?’ An old man pushed his way to the front of the little gathering. With difficulty, he knelt down to help Parvana plant the flowers.

‘Afghans love beautiful things,’ he said, ‘but we have seen so much ugliness, we sometimes forget how wonderful a thing like a flower is’” (p. 163).

Key Paragraph, p. 145

“The plants are wilted. They didn’t stand up properly.

‘Are they dead?’ Parvana asked.

‘no, no, not dead. They may look scraggly and dying now,’ he said,

‘but the roots are good. When the time is right, these roots will support plants that are healthy and strong’” (p. 145).

Writing Prompt

What would you do if you were Shauzia? **In an informative paragraph, explain why it is wrong for Shauzia to desert her family or why Shauzia had the right to seek a better life. Provide 3 reasons to support your claim.**