

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 3

“In the morning I’d be okay and follow along in class. But after lunch, when my meds had worn down, it was nothing but trouble for me” (p. 3).

Writing Prompt

If you look at the KWL chart you will see many things that already help to define ADD. **Write a paragraph or two about what you already know about ADD and add some questions you would like answered about the topic. This paragraph will be used later to introduce the topic. The answers to your questions will be used to add information to the *Body* of your paper. Write two explanatory paragraphs to a formal audience (teachers/adults) discussing what ADD is and its specific characteristics.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 28

“Then we clinked glasses and I took my pill. I was so happy to take it. I could feel it going down my throat like a little white round superhero pill on its way to beat up all the bad stuff in me. Everyone said it would help...So I stayed home and felt like a normal kid for a while. But then my old self started to sneak up over me” (p. 28).

Writing Prompt

Write two paragraphs describing how the medication works and what happens when it begins to wear off. According to the key paragraph, **write two explanatory paragraphs on why Joey should or should not take the medication? Justify your answers with two points on the importance of Joey’s medication use. Remember the goal of an explanatory essay is to make something clear to the reader.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 31

"I was trying to train myself to swallow the key so I could slowly pull it back up from inside my belly, up my throat and into my mouth, like I was fishing for bottom feeders. It hurt to do it because sometimes the key got sideways down my throat, but when it did that I just gave it a little tug and straightened it out" (p. 31).

Writing Prompt

Have you ever not been paying attention and suffered some serious or humorous consequences? Were you being responsible? What was getting in your way? What could you have done to act more responsibly? **Write a narrative paragraph on one incident that you had. Make sure to use descriptive details, sensory language, as well as transitional words to make your story lively to your audience.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 51-52

"I can have good days. Entire days when I wake up and I'm calm inside like water when it's not boiling, and I just plant my feet on the floor like every kid in America. I think it then I do it" (p. 51-52).

Writing Prompt

In one to two paragraphs explain specific examples that show evidence that Joey struggles with ADHD? Use events in the text that supports your idea. Be detailed and specific. Consult your KWL chart for key ideas.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 66

“It’s just that there is always a difference between what you think you are doing and what happens to you and everyone else” (p. 66).

Writing Prompt

Do you feel like Joey is doing these things to be malicious? Or is he trying to hurt other people? If you were his friend, what would you tell him to do after his stunt in the barn? **Write at least two paragraphs describing the advice you would give Joey about his irresponsible behavior. Explain with concrete facts from the book how ADD/ADHD affects the people around the person experiencing ADD/ADHD. What are some strategies to cope and assist the person? Give some examples of what works for Joey and what does not.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 76

“Our eyes met and I said, ‘I’m a good kid. I just got dud meds’ (p. 76)

Writing Prompt

Have you ever been in a situation where you knew you were not supposed to do something and you did it anyway, thinking the consequences would not turn out badly?

In two paragraphs explain what happened and discuss what steps you could have taken to stop yourself from making that decision in the first place. What would have been the “responsible” thing for you to do?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 81

"All this time I thought she was on my side, because I was on her side. But maybe she had given up on me too. So I didn't say anything more because I was scared she was going to be against me like everyone else" (p. 81)

Writing Prompt

Joey thinks his mother has given up on her but she really hasn't. **Write about a time you felt like you had disappointed someone and thought they may have given up on you but hadn't. What did you learn from that experience? Was the other person justified in their feeling? If you were in their shoes would you give up on the person?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 84

“Then he stepped toward me.

‘They shouldn’t let messed-up kids go to school with regular kids,’ he said” (p. 84).

Writing Prompt

In two paragraphs explain how you would feel if someone told you that you should not be allowed to go to school with regular kids. How would you have reacted if you were Joey? Is it okay for Maria’s dad to have reacted the way he did and have said those things to Joey about him and his mom? Do you think that he was being honest?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 99

“In fact nothing was scarier than me knowing something was wrong inside me, something I couldn’t see silently eating away at me like termites, and it was going to ruin me even when I was being good. I was scary to myself” (p. 99).

Writing Prompt

Have you ever been scared of yourself? What happened? What did you do? What support do you have if you ever feel that way again? Who can you turn to for support? **In two paragraphs explain the story in detail.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 107

“‘That you drink,’ I said.

‘You do.’ I pointed at the bottle in her hand.

‘See? And Special Ed said that if I didn’t tell the truth I wouldn’t get better’” (p. 107).

Writing Prompt

Have you ever known anyone who needed to shift gears and did? **Write about their success story. If you haven’t known anyone like that, write about what you think is stopping someone you know from switching gears and getting their life back together.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 124

“And by then I’d be crying and crying because I hated myself so much for not being able to sit still and keep my hands in my lap” (p. 124).

Writing Prompt

After reading this chapter, make a new K-W-L chart. You have learned a lot about ADD and ADHD by now. What other questions do you have about this condition? Make a class list and decide on your top three questions.

Write a paragraph or two explaining one of those questions that the class came up with from the class discussion. Include that as one of your “middle paragraphs” of your Final Essay.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 12



Key Paragraph. p. 133

"I grabbed the wire postcard rack with one hand and spun it around as fast as I could just as some old lady was about to pluck one out, and I almost chopped her finger off...I kept spinning the rack faster and faster until it was a postcard tornado and the cards were sailing out of their holders and skidding across the floor" (p. 133).

Writing Prompt

Jack Gantos does a terrific job of writing in a way that mirrors the feelings and actions that are going on with Joey. **In two paragraphs of your own explain what Jack does he do in the above paragraph that makes you feel like you are right there experiencing this? Use specific evidence from the novel.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 137

“I know you’d like to meet your father,” she said. “I know it would be good for you to meet him. What trouble me is how he’ll be. He could be drunk, he could be sober, he could be nice, or mean as a snake...I can’t take a chance that he won’t upset you more than love you” (p. 137).

Writing Prompt

Joey tells his mom that he doesn’t think there is anything wrong with wanting to meet his dad. Why do you think she is hesitant? **Write a paragraph or two from the mother’s perspective that explains about why she does not think it is a good idea that they meet. In what way does she think that is the most caring thing to do for Joey? How does her alcoholism factor into this decision?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 141

“Now that I was getting better, people could like me more” (141).

Writing Prompt

In what new ways are you seeing Joey and his mother take responsibility for getting their lives together? **Write two paragraphs where you explain how they are taking responsibility, use examples from today’s reading.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 153

“And it was amazing to me that she said what she did because I never thought someone would ever point to me and say I gave them hope that someday their kid would be like me” (p. 153).

Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph summarizing 3 of the most important things you have learned about ADD and ADHD.