

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 5

“Right after he came home from Rahway, I got up in the middle of the night to look at him. He’d been away for more than two years, and the guy sleeping across from me was a stranger. Some days he’d just sit on that bed with his hands hanging down between his knees. Just staring out the window and looking evil. But when he was asleep, his face spread out—all the frowns and scowls just kind of faded and he looked like Charlie again, ready to care about something, to be happy, or to cry about stray animals” (p. 5).

Writing Prompt

Has anyone in your life (friend, family member) ever changed in a “negative or positive” way? What was that like for you? What do you think caused the change? How do you wish the person would have acted and why? Was there any way to support this person in making positive choices?

Is change, positive or negative easy for others to cope with? Write a one paragraph argument in which you argue that change regardless of kind is hard for friends and family? State your claim. Give relevant details and information to support your claim. As you write acknowledge the opposing viewpoint. Conclude by supporting your opening statement.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 20

"Sometimes I wonder what happened to that lady and that dog my daddy saved. There's always stories about people getting saved and then giving the people who saved them money or people coming along years later and naming their kids after the people, but none of that ever happened to us..." (p. 20).

Writing Prompt

Do you think it's understandable that Lafayette has all these questions floating around in his head? What questions would you have? What answers would you want to hear if you were in his shoes? **Do you think the woman who was saved had an obligation to reach out to the family at some point?**

Based on your answer write a 1 paragraph argument in which you state your claim and acknowledge the opposing opinion. Give details to support your claim using language to transition clearly. Conclude using a statement that supports your viewpoint.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 25-26

"Ty'ree looked at me, a slow smile coming to his face. He had the best smile in the world. Everybody said so. When he smiled, it made me think about when I used to go to church, how I'd sit there staring at this stained-glass window of Jesus with all the kids around him. Jesus was smiling and everything seemed peaceful and right. That's what Ty'ree's smile was like. Peaceful and right." (p.25-26).

Writing Prompt

What does Lafayette mean when he says that Ty'ree's smile was peaceful and right? What does 'right' mean in this case? Is there a person in your life who you admire, whose presence or smile is peaceful and right? Ty'ree and Newcharlie are completely opposite personalities in Lafayette's life. If you had a choice, who would you rather be around and emulate?

Write a paragraph in which you explain who you would rather be around. Introduce your claim/choice with a logical argument and acknowledge the opposing viewpoint. Use relevant evidence to support your claim using credible evidence from the book or another source. Provide a concluding sentence that supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 33-34

“Once Mama has said to me that time is like a movie—something you watch real close wanting to catch every line, every action, every moment. Then it passes and you feel like no time passed at all. She said that when her parents died, time didn’t stop they way people always say it does. She said it just became more precise—every minute, hour, day mattered that much more. Charlie had been in Rahway for two months...There were four days between the time I found her and the day we buried her...And now years have gone by—like no time at all.” (p. 33-34).

Writing Prompt

What does Mama mean when she said that time became more precise and that every day mattered that much more? Do you appreciate every day, as if it’s your last? Why or how is time significant to you? Do you waste time or do you consider time precious?

Write a one paragraph argument in which you defend “precious time”. State how time is precious to you. Argue its worth why acknowledging the opposing viewpoint. Organize your writing logically. Give the reader evidence to support your claim. Use effective transitions and language to create flow in your writing. Conclude with a strong statement in support of your thesis.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 39

"They had let Charlie come to the funeral and stay with us for a few hours afterward. When Aunt Cecile saw him with those two guards from Rahway, she crossed herself and pressed her handkerchief against her mouth. Charlie stood real stiff while she hugged him, his eyes sweeping over everybody, checking us all out. There wasn't any feeling in them." (p. 39).

Writing Prompt

Look back up at the timeline. What event or group of events has really moved you so far? Why? Is the author doing a good job writing a realistic story?

Discuss what you like about the book so far. Make an argument defending the realism of the story for you acknowledge the opposing viewpoints. Use clear transitions and details to support your claim. Do you have any suggestions that would make it stronger? Conclude with a statement that supports your viewpoint.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 46-47

"Ty'ree had left up the flowered curtains Mama's bought downtown, and for some reason this was sadder than anything to me. It seemed wrong—a big, blue-plaid boy comforter on the bed and Mama's lady curtains at the window. I went over and rubbed the curtains against my face.

"This is all, huh, T? I whispered. "This all we got left of mama."

Ty'ree shook his head. "Nah, Lafayette," he said. "That ain't all." (p. 46-47).

Writing Prompt

Lafayette is sad at the changes. He would rather his brother still sleep on the couch and his mother was at home. He wishes her clothes were still there, but happy he can still smell her. He is sad that his brother moved into her room but left the curtains.

Do you think Ty'ree was right to move into mama's room and to get rid of her things? Write a one paragraph argument in which you defend him or Lafayette. In your thesis state your viewpoint and give the opposing viewpoint. Give reasons and evidence to support your thesis. Use logical flow and transitions. Conclude by supporting your viewpoint.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 58

"I know I told you this a lot of times," Ty'ree said. "And I know other people have said it too. But I'm gonna keep saying it, 'cause I know you need to keep hearing it. There wasn't anything you could have done, Lafayette." (p. 58).

Writing Prompt

Ty'ree and many others have to work to convince Lafayette that there was nothing he could have done to help his mother but he does not believe them. Write a 1-2 paragraph argument, directed at Lafayette trying to convince him he did everything he could for his mother. Use examples from the reading and facts you know from the novel to support your claim. Acknowledge the counterclaim. Use strong transitions to give your paragraph flow and continuity. Conclude with a strong statement that supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 8



Key Paragraph p. 67

"He couldn't go back to school. Not right now anyway. Because of me. Because of Newcharlie. He couldn't quit his job, and he couldn't go at night 'cause the caseworker would be on us talking about how me and Newcharlie would be home alone too much. The only way he'd be able to go to college was if me and Newcharlie went to live down south." (p. 67).

Writing Prompt

Lafayette feels a lot of responsibility for the choices and Ty'ree has had to make and Ty'ree feels a responsibility to keep the family together. They both want to move forward but feel like they are being help back. Do you think Lafayette and Newcharlie should go to live down south? Or do you feel that Ty'ree is doing the right thing to sacrifice his future to keep the family together?

Choose a side. Write a one paragraph argument in which you defend one of the boy's position. Use your experiences and facts from the novel to give evidence to your writing. Use clear transitions and clauses to give your writing cohesion. End your paragraph with a statement that supports your argument.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 81

"Charlie got the biggest monkey on his back, I can remember the last thing I said to daddy and you can remember the last thing you said to mama. Least we got to be there. But not Charlie. And I think he carries that around. It's more like a gorilla on his back than a monkey...and while he was gone, me and you had each other after mama died. And he had Rahway." (p. 81).

Writing Prompt

Ty'ree gives Lafayette a different perspective of Charlie and how he suffered the loss of his parents. Do you think Charlie has some reasons to be angry or should he deal like his brothers have?

Based on your answer write a one paragraph argument in which you show support for the opposite side of argument. Write a thesis in which you introduce your topic and thoughts, acknowledge the opposing viewpoint. Give evidence to support your claim. Use solid transitions in your writing to show cohesion. Conclude with a strong statement that supports your opening.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 91

"I sat there wishing Smitty and PJ were around even if Smitty was nosy. I hadn't changed like Ty'ree said. I just didn't want to answer a whole lot of questions. "Mama, "I whispered, "I'm still me. I'm still Lafayette."

Writing Prompt

Do you agree or disagree with Lafayette? Is he still the same person? Write a 1-2 paragraph argument in which you formulate an argument in which you defend your position. Give examples from the text or from a credible source to support your argument. Conclude with a strong statement to support your opening statement.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 105-106

"Then he showed me his colors. You had to fight somebody. I didn't want to do it, but..."

He started choking..." It makes you somebody. Aaron got all these other homeboys around him now. He don't really need me...it makes you somebody. It gives you people." (p. 105-106).

Writing Prompt

Newcharlie wants to be around Arron because he wants to be someone and have "people" why do you think he has that need? What role does he want the gang to fill?

Based on what you know about the characters write a one paragraph argument "letter" to Newcharlie. This letter will be written from his mama's perspective. Argue why he should not be considering being in a gang. Use examples from the reading to give your argument validity. Use coherent transitions. Conclude with a strong statement that supports your argument.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 109

"The function of freedom," Mama read, "is to free someone else." I shrugged and went back to my comic book. You ever thought about that, Laf? Mama asked me. That being free means you help somebody else get free?" (p. 109).

Writing Prompt

Write about what you think Mama is trying to get across to Lafayette. Are those people who have freedoms obliged to help out those that don't? Why or why not? **Write a 1 paragraph argument in which you state your viewpoint of the above argument. Acknowledge the other viewpoint. Give evidence to support your claim. Conclude by using a strong statement that supports your argument.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 118

Aaron glared at me. I looked back at him. Not frowning but not smiling either. Just looking. It seemed a long time ago I wanted him to like me, to be my friend. But it didn't matter anymore. I didn't need him. Charlie didn't need him either. (p. 118).

Writing Prompt

In what ways is Lafayette showing maturity through his actions with Aaron? If you were Mama, would you be proud of Lafayette? Do you think it was wise of him to stand up to him? Write a letter to Lafayette (from mama's perspective) do you think mama would support or condone his actions?

Write a 1-2 paragraph argument in which you defend your viewpoint in the form of a letter. Write a strong opening statement in which you introduce your claims. Organize your reasons logically. Acknowledge the opposing viewpoint. Use words and transitions to create cohesion. Provide a concluding statement that supports your argument.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Miracle's Boys, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 126

“Charlie bit his lip again and held it...I wish the last time had been something else. I wish it had been me sitting on the couch next to her making her laugh. I used to make her laugh all the time. I wish that was the way she got to remember me. Not with no handcuffs on.” (p. 126)

Writing Prompt

Why do you think Charlie felt badly when his mom's last memory of him was in handcuffs? Write a few paragraphs describing your thoughts about what Charlie was feeling and thinking. Why did he want his mom to remember something else?

Do you think Charlie's mom ever forgot her last image of him? Write a one paragraph argument in which you defend your position? Defend your argument with evidence from the reading or life experience? Conclude with a strong statement that supports your argument.

