

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 10

“Our people agreed never again to fight against the United States and they were allowed to go back home. But even though the white men allowed us to come home, we now had to live under their laws. We had to learn their ways. That is why some of us must go to their schools. We must be able to speak to them, tell them who we really are, reassure them that he will always be friends of the United States. That why you must go to school: not for yourself, but for your family, for our people, for our sacred land” (10).

Writing Prompt

The theme for this unit is, “Leadership Requires Engagement.” This theme states, “Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good. This is where they choose to spend their time and effort. Leadership requires positive civic engagement. It is making sure that the communities I am part of are better because I am in them. And that I am better because of the communities I choose to be part of.”

In an informative text, explain how Kii Yazhi is choosing or being forced to be a leader. How is he being or not being a leader for his Navajo community by going to a white school? Will his community benefit from his actions? Do you think he will benefit from going to this school? Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 18

“Although the teachers at the school spoke in quieter tones than our principal, they all said the same. It was not good to speak Navajo or be Navajo. Everything about us that was Indian had to be forgotten” (18).

Writing Prompt

According to our theme, “Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good. This is where they choose to spend their time and effort. Leadership requires positive civic engagement. It is making sure that the communities I am part of are better because I am in them. And that I am better because of the communities I choose to be part of.”

In an informative text, examine the role of a leader. What is a leader? How do you think Kii Yazhi, a Navajo, would describe a leader? How do you think the principal and/or staff at Rehoboth Mission would describe a leader? How are their descriptions alike or different? Use concrete examples or quotations from the text to support your explanation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 27

“So I held on to my sacred language while learning the words and the ways of the whites. But I had no idea, even in my wildest dreams, that the very language those *bilagaanaa* teachers tried to erase—the way you wipe words from a blackboard—would one day be needed by important white men” (27).

Writing Prompt

The CBL theme Leadership Requires Engagement definition reads: Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good. This is where they choose to spend their time and effort. Leadership requires positive civic engagement. It is making sure that the communities I am part of are better because I am in them. And that I am better because of the communities I choose to be part of.

In an informative paragraph explain Ned’s decision to follow the rules at school. Why does he follow the rules? Is he showing leadership qualities by following the rules? Is he staying true to his culture? How so? Is it still being a leader if he is choosing to follow the rules because he is forced to? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 38

“Poor as we were, we Navajos really did want to help. Our tribal council met at Window Rock and declared war on Germany, Japan, and Italy. Navajo men took their guns, packed supplies, and rode their horses in to report to the Indian agent. They did not know how far away Pearl Harbor was, but they were ready to go and fight the enemy” (38).

Writing Prompt

After hearing the recruiter, Ned wants to enlist in the war efforts. **In an informative paragraph explain how Ned’s feelings towards wanting to join the war represent the theme of Leadership Requires Engagement. Is he doing this for his community, for himself, or for his parents? Use examples from the text to show how Ned’s feelings are aligned with the theme.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 49

“I did not sign up that day, but my mind was made up. Even though I was now sixteen and even though I was still small for my age, I knew in my heart that it was my time to serve as a warrior. I would wear a beautiful uniform and go to see strange places. I would wait no longer. Soon, very soon, I would finally become a Marine!” (49)

Writing Prompt

Ned is proud to join the Marines. **In an explanatory paragraph compare how Ned feels with people who join the Marines today. Look online or interview active Marines or veterans to gather more information. How does joining the Marines represent the theme of Leadership requires Engagement? Gather information from different sources to support your comparison.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 67

“All through Indian school we had been taught that white men knew everything. That day, for the first time, I realized several things. The first thing was that *bilagaanaas* are not born knowing everything. The second was that in many of the most important ways, white men are no different from Navajos. The third? That no matter who they are, people can always learn from each other” (67).

Writing Prompt

The CBL theme Leadership Requires Engagement definition reads; Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good. This is where they choose to spend their time and effort. Leadership requires positive civic engagement. It is making sure that the communities I am part of are better because I am in them. And that I am better because of the communities I choose to be part of.

In 1-2 informative paragraphs discuss the key realizations Ned made about himself and others during boot camp? What were some similarities and differences between the white recruits and Navajo recruits? How do these key realizations help Ned become a better leader? How has his boot camp community made him a better leader? How will this help him become a better member of his community? Do you think Ned is using his talents to promote the common good for his boot camp community? Provide evidence from the text to support the key realizations.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 68-69

“Many years later, I know I was right about the first thing. We Navajo Marines were tough and determined, perhaps even more so than most of the non-Indian Marines who later served by our sides. Why was this so? It may have been because we remembered the suffering and courage of our grandfathers who fought as warriors to protect our land and our people. We were not just fighting for the United States. We were going into battle for our Navajo people, our families, and our sacred land” (69).

Writing Prompt

Ned has been given a special assignment where he is allowed to use what he holds dearly, his language. **In a paragraph, describe how Ned feels about this assignment. Why is he honored to take on this assignment? By taking this assignment, how is Ned going into battle for the Navajo people, their families, and their sacred land? Use examples from the text to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 81-82

"I nodded. Those few words of his said it all. It was so good. It was good to have our language respected in this way. It was good to be here in this way. It was good that we could do something no one but another Navajo could do. Knowing our own language and culture could save the lives of Americans we had never met and help defeat enemies who wanted to destroy us" (82).

Writing Prompt

In an informative paragraph, compare and contrast how the Navajo language was seen in the beginning of the story and how it is seen now. How has the view towards the language changed? Has it changed for everyone? Has Ned's feelings changed towards it or have his feelings always remained consistent? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 87

“As far as I know, not one Navajo Code Talkers was ever raised above the rank of corporal, just as none of us were ever given any kind of official recognition or honor from the time we enlisted until the surrender of Japan. In fact, most of us never even got to wear one of those dress blue uniforms like that first one I saw on the Marine Corps recruitment poster. We were kept invisible. It was partially because our true duty was kept secret from so many. But I still, even in the Marines, a white man’s world. It was easy to forget Indians” (87).

Writing Prompt

Navajo Marines were not recognized for their contribution to the war. **In an informative paragraph example the two reasons Ned gives for why the Navajo Marines contributions were not recognized.** Should leaders be recognized and/or expect recognition? Why or why not? Does it make you more or less of a leader if you are not recognized for what you have done? Defend your answer with examples from the reading or real-life.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 103

“He understood that the land of my own heart was there, far across the wide ocean. He placed his left hand on my chest and I did the same. We stood there like that for a while feeling each other’s hearts beat with love for our sacred homelands. It was one of the best conversations I ever had” (103).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Gene-gene, a native on the island is introduced. **In an informative paragraph, explain how Gene-gene represents the theme, leadership requires engagement?** How is he a leader to his people? What characteristics do him and Ned have in common? Support your answer with examples from the reading.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Code Talkers, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 119

“As I drifted off to a fitful, exhausted sleep late that night, I thought about what was the strangest thing of all the first day of combat. All that fighting had happened without seeing even one Japanese soldier” (119).

Writing Prompt

In an informative paragraph summarize the events in the reading. Be sure to emphasize events that represent the theme leadership requires engagement. Choose relevant and sufficient events from the text to write a well-written summary.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Code Talkers, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 130

“Those two months on Bougainville were so hard and strange. It wasn’t just the Japanese attacks. The earth itself seemed displeased at the warfare being waged upon it. The deep mud that sucked at our feet, the swarms of insects, the eruptions of the volcano were like messages of the island’s unhappiness. On December 6, the whole place began to quiver underfoot like a giant animal trying to shake fleas from its back” (130).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Ned’s Marine group is very unified. Together they are trying to be leaders and fight for their country. **In an informative paragraph explain the soldiers in this reading exemplify leadership qualities? Reflect back on the meaning of the theme, and use examples from the reading to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 139

“Another of the hard thing about being in a war, grandchildren, is that although there are times of quiet when fighting has stopped, you know you will soon be fighting again. Those quiet times give you the chance to think about what had happened. Some of it you would rather not think about, as you remember the pain and the sorrow. You also have time to worry about what will happen when you go into battle again” (139).

Writing Prompt

Ned has grown to trust Georgia Boy and Smitty, and now considers them his friends. **In an informative paragraph, compare and contrast how Ned feels about Georgia Boy and Smitty now compared to when he first met them. As a leader, do you think it is an important quality to trust others? Why or why not? Is Ned following the definition of Leadership Requires Engagement by trusting others and working as a team? Be sure to include specific reasons to support your opinion.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 154

“It was heartbreaking for me to hear the stories and to see the little children whose families were dead. What happened to those Chamorros and the people on the other islands made me think yet again of what has been done to our Navajo people during the time of the Long Walk. I wanted to weep for them. It was just as bad for the Chamorros as it had been for us Indians” (154).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Ned realizes all people are human beings and should be treated with respect. He does not like how the Japanese treat the native people of Guam. **In an informative paragraph, explain why people argue that Ned is being a hypocrite by being a Marine.** How might people criticize him? Do you think criticism impacts leaders? How should leaders respond to criticism? Use examples from the reading to defend your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 165

“Because our code was used for top-secret messages, I knew about a lot of things. I even had heard mention of new giant bombs being prepared. But I told no one. Our code was only one of the many secrets I kept. That was just the way it had to be during wartime. In fact, every serviceman in the Pacific knew secrets that had to be kept from his civilian friend and relatives back in the States” (165).

Writing Prompt

This reading mentions that Japanese Kamikaze pilots are viewed as martyrs and heroes. They could also be considered leaders. **In a paragraph, explain if you agree with this viewpoint.** Why or why not? Use the definition of Leadership requires Engagement and the reading to defend your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 175

“The *sennimbaris* didn’t work for the Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima, either. By the end of the battle, more than 20,000 were dead. But so were many of our men” (175).

Writing Prompt

Throughout the book, numbers of deaths are reported to the reader. **In an informative paragraph, summarize how many deaths on both sides occurred during this war.** If possible, research the total number of deaths that occurred in this war and how those numbers progressed throughout the war.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Code Talkers, Day 17



Key Paragraph, p. 191

"I had many friends—too many friends. I say “too many” because having a lot of friends during war can be a painful thing. It’s not like having friends at home in peacetime. If you have a good buddy, grandchildren, do you not look forward to seeing him when each new day dawns? If you have many friends, your life is full. When you are young and are living in peace, it seems a friend will always be there with you” (191).

Writing Prompt

In an **informative paragraph** explain the important life lesson Ned learned about in this reading. Think about the battle itself, his views on friends, Georgia Boy, the American flag, and Ira. How do all these things affect Ned, and what do they teach him? How does the life lesson relate to the theme Leadership requires Engagement? Use examples from the reading to explain your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Code Talkers, Day 18



Key Paragraph, p. 202

“It seems that Emperor Hirohito did not know what was truly happening much of the time. Any Japanese defeat was too embarrassing for the military leaders to admit to their immediate superiors, much less to their divine power. The Supreme Military Council, who assured the emperor that their decisions were best for their nation, held the real power in Japan during World War Two. While we kept secrets from our enemies, our enemies kept secrets from each other, lying to their own people about what was truly happening” (202).

Writing Prompt

Some may argue that Emperor Hirohito was a bad leader. **In an informative paragraph, explain if you agree or disagree with this statement.** Use the definition of leadership requires engagement to support your answer. Also, refer back to the reading where to use examples from the text to support your position.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Code Talkers, Day 19



Key Paragraph, p. 214

“So, my grandchildren, that is the tale this medal has helped me to tell. It is not just my story, but also a story of our people and of strength that we gain from holding on to our language, from being Dine’. I pray that none of you will ever have to go into battle as I did. I also pray that you will fight to keep our language, to hold on to it with the same warrior spirit that our Indian people showed in that war. Let our language keep you strong and you will never forget what it is to be Navajo. You will never forget what it means to walk in beauty” (214).

Writing Prompt

In an informative essay of 2-3 paragraphs, track Ned’s progress towards becoming a leader. In what ways did he progress in becoming a strong leader? By the end of the story, how does his life reflect the definition of the theme leadership requires engagement? Mahatma Gandhi once said, “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

In this reading, Ned realizes what he wants to see changed. As a leader, Ned immediately starts moving towards making this change. What is this change? How does he make it? How does this change reflect the theme? Use examples from the book to support your answer.