

The Westing Game



ISBN-10 0-14-034991-X
 ISBN-13 978-0-14-034991-7
 Author Raskin, Ellen
 Publisher Puffin Books
 Copyright 1978
 Lexile 750L
 Genre Mystery
 Synopsis A bizarre chain of events begins when sixteen unlikely people gather for the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will. And though no one knows why the eccentric, game-loving millionaire has chosen a virtual stranger—and a possible murderer—to inherit his vast fortune, on things for sure: Sam Westing may be dead...but that won't stop him from playing one last game!
 Themes Family, Perseverance
 Protagonist Male,
 Note Over the years, these books have been published in multiple editions. The page numbers in your book may be different than the ones on the lesson plan.

More Information www.scu.edu/character



Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt The Westing Game, Day 1



Key Paragraph, pg. 9

They didn't need drapes on the special glass windows here in Sunset Towers. He could see out, but nobody could see in. Then why did he sometimes feel that someone was watching him? Who could be watching him? God? If God was watching, then why was he like this? (9.)

Writing Prompt

Leadership Requires Engagement in our communities, whatever those might look like. Throughout this novel, we will be discussing the community formed by Sunset Towers, and how that community extends to the outer world within the novel. So far, we know little about the characters in the novel, but the last few pages give us a look into Chris Theodorakis's mind and talents.

Based on what you know so far, **write a paragraph describing Chris's potential to be a leader. What are his talents? How might he put those talents to use in his community? Does he have any limitations that would inhibit him as a leader? How might he be a leader despite his limitations?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 2



Key Paragraph, pg. 17

Turtle squinted into the blackness that lay within the open French doors. Open, as though someone or some *Think* was expecting her. There's no such thing as a ghost; besides, all you had to do was speak friendly-like to them. (Ghosts, like dogs, know when a person's scared.) Ghosts or worse, Otis Amber had said. Well, not even the "worse" could hurt Turtle Wexler. She was pure of heart and deed; she only kicked shins in self-defense, so that couldn't count against her. She wasn't scared; she was not scared (17).

Writing Prompt

Leadership Requires Engagement. To that end, how does one go about developing one's talents to promote the common good? Precisely what does that mean for individual, and how might he or she go about developing those ideas?

Write an advice column to Turtle Wexler. Describe the qualities she currently has that can be molded into leadership qualities as she grows and matures. What specific steps can she take to become a leader in her community? How can she engage her focus to better those around her?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 3



Key Paragraph, pg. 24

Grace Windsor Wexler was no longer surprised at the odd assortment of heirs. Household workers, all, or former employees, she decided. The rich always reward servants in their wills, and her Uncle Sam was a generous man. “Aren’t your parents coming, she asked the older Theodorakis boy as he wheeled his brother into the library (24).

Writing Prompt

Leadership Requires *positive* Engagement. You can be involved in the community for the wrong reasons, and as a result hurt those around you. What constitutes *positive* engagement as opposed to *negative* engagement?

Grace Windsor Wexler reveals much of her character through her comments, thoughts, and attitudes toward those around her. **Write a paragraph discussing her potential as a leader, focusing on examples of her *positive* and *negative* engagement in those around her. Based on what you know so far, would she be a good leader? Why or why not? If not, what would she have to change to become a good leader?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 4



Key Paragraph, pg. 36

Only one pair had not yet seen their clues. At table eight Sydelle Pulaski placed one hand on the envelope, raised a finger to her lips, and tilted her head toward the other heirs. Just watch and listen, she meant (36).

Writing Prompt

While Leadership Requires Engagement, it also often requires planning and purpose. What else is required to make leadership truly effective? In this chapter, Sydelle Pulaski's personality and skills begin to emerge, and we see her in a slightly different light.

At the will reading, Sydelle Pulaski emerges as a leader in ways that her fellow tenants probably didn't suspect. **Write a paragraph that claims that Sydelle Pulaski is the strongest leader in Sunset Towers. Be sure to support your claim with relevant evidence showing how Ms. Pulaski has shown leadership thus far in the novel.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 5



Key Paragraph, pg. 47

The game: a tricky, divisive Westing game. No matter how much fear and suspicion he instilled in the players, Sam Westing knew that greed would keep them playing the game. Until the “murderer” was captured. And punished (47).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires positive civic engagement; often times, that means ensuring that justice is fairly served to members of your community. In what ways does Judge Ford exemplify that element of positive civic engagement?

Write a paragraph explaining how Judge Ford’s plan to play Westing’s game is an example of exemplary leadership. How is her plan different from the other players’? In what ways is she trying to make her community better through her actions?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 6



Key Paragraph, pg. 56

“Angela and I are going together; we’re partners, you know.” Sydelle had it all planned. They were to appear in identical costumes; tonight was the night they would discover if one of the heirs was a twin (56).

Writing Prompt

Leadership Requires Engagement. In order to be a leader in the community, a person must participate in the events that surround them. If that person is a mere observer, is he or she a leader?

Angela Wexler is still a mystery at this point in the novel. We see in her thoughts that she makes interesting observations about those around her, but has yet to take action. Assuming that she has interest in becoming a leader, today’s writing product will be a plan of action. **As Angela, create a chart or table illustrating at least three steps you will take to become a leader in the Sunset Towers Community. Use the table below as an example to guide you.**

Action I’m going to take	Result I hope to achieve

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 7



Key Paragraph, pg. 65-6

Clink, clink. Theo tapped a spoon against a glass for attention. “Thank you for coming. When the meeting is over you are all welcome to stay for a chess tournament. Meanwhile, I’d like to explain why my partner and me...my partner and I...called this meeting. I don’t know about your clues, but our clues don’t make any sense.” The heirs stared at him with blank faces, no one nodded, no one even blinked. “Now then, if no two sets of clues are alike, as the will says, that could mean that each set of clues is only part of one message. The more clues we put together, the better chance we have of finding the murderer and winning the game. Of course, the inheritance will be divided into equal shares” (65-6).

Writing Prompt

Leadership Requires Engagement. Leadership often involves working for the benefit of your community at some personal expense. What is good for an individual’s personal goals or finances may not be the best thing for the community.

Theo is the first person who has suggested sharing both the clues and the inheritance with all of the other heirs. If they work together, there is a good chance that they could solve the puzzle and receive a very large sum of money as a group. However, none of the other teams agree. **As one of the other heirs, write a formal note to Theo thanking him for his offer, and congratulate him on his leadership. Provide specific examples of how he is showing true leadership.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 8



Key Paragraph, pg. 71

“She used the word *crutch* as a symbol. She meant, you know, that people are so afraid of revealing their true selves, they have to hide behind some sort of prop” (71).

Writing Prompt

Leaders choose to spend their time and effort to promote the common good. Sometimes people are so distracted by their own lives and personal problems that they don’t use their time to help their communities.

Angela’s analysis of the Turtle’s casual use of the word “crutch” is insightful. She observes to herself that Turtle’s crutch is her braid. However, *all* the characters in the novel have some kind of crutch, either physical or mental.

Today, write a paragraph describing the “crutches” of at least two of the other characters in the novel (not Sydelle or Turtle.) Be sure to clearly define a crutch, and provide concrete details of why each character’s crutch could prevent her or him from becoming a leader.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 9



Key Paragraph, pg. 85

All the intern wanted was half of the ten thousand dollars. "I hear your brother suggested sharing clues. Sounds like a fine idea." No response. Maybe the kid thinks I'm the murderer. The tenants must think so, the way they peered over their shoulders; and that delivery boy shouting like that. Why me? I'm a doctor; I took an oath to save lives, not take them. "I'm a very busy man, Chris, I have lots of sick people depending on me. Oh well." Plowing his fingers through his stringy moue-brown hair to keep it out of his eyes (when would he find time for a haircut?), he seated himself next to the wheelchair. "The clues are in my locker. What were they? 'The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain'?" (85).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires 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. Why is it important for leaders to improve themselves as well as their communities?

Although Denton Deere has taken an oath to help his fellow human beings, his personal character seems to suffer from that effort. **Write a paragraph that describes how Denton Deere is and is not engaged as a leader in his community. Be sure to include a concluding statement about whether he, in your estimation, is a leader.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 10



Key Paragraph, pg. 95

“Oh no.” Sandy was certain of that. “Angela and her intern seem happy enough with each other. At least, I hope so. I mean, if Sam Westing wanted to replay that terrible drama, Angela Wexler would have to die” (95).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires positive civic engagement. Is it possible for the opposite – negative civic engagement – to be true? What role does gossip play in civic engagement?

In this novel, Sandy McSouthers is the king of gossip. He seems to know every detail about every person in the building, and every member of the Westing family. When Judge Ford uncovers further details, Sandy always seems to be able to add some embellishment. **Using the novel as your source, conduct a mini research project into whether you think Sandy’s gossip qualifies as positive or negative civic engagement. Find quotes and specific examples to back up your assertion. You can present these in a paragraph or a table, but you must include a statement that summarizes your conclusion. An example of a possible table is below.**

Gossip Example	Page #	Positive or negative?	Reason for your conclusion
Concluding Statement:			

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 11



Key Paragraph, pg. 102

Sandy was proud of the notebook he bought, with its glossy cover photograph of a bald eagle in flight (sort of appropriate, he explained to the judge; fits in with Uncle Sam and all that). In it he painstakingly entered the information culled from reports the private detective delivered each day to Judge Ford's office: Photostats of birth certificates, death notices, marriage licenses, drivers' licenses, vehicular accident reports, criminal records, hospital records, school records. To these the doorman added the results of his own snooping (102).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Least Likely to be a Leader. Which character in the novel do you think is the least likely to develop leadership skills? Why? What makes this person a poor leader? Do you think he or she has the capacity and willingness to change?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. Write on the pentagram only; when you've finished all twelve sides, you can fold on the straight lines and glue them together to make a large ball. So you can plan your bloom ball, a full list of categories is below. You may make a list today, but remember that it's okay to change your mind!

Leadership Bloomball Award	Character
Least Likely to be a Leader	
Most Improved as a Leader	
Best Dedication to Others	
Best Leadership as a Parent	
Best Use of Talents	
Best Problem-Solving Skills	
Best Example of Civic Engagement	
Best Leader of Youth (Mentor)	
Best Example of Beating the Odds	
Best Leader Overall (may be a winner of a category above)	

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 12



Key Paragraph, pg. 112-3

“No operation. Did you hear me, Chris? No operation. The doctor thinks a new medicine may help, but he has to examine you, make some tests. I have your parents’ permission, but no one will touch you unless we talk it over first, you and me, together. I promise” (112).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Most Improved Leader. **Which character in the novel has shown the biggest change thus far? Who has gone from a person with few leadership skills to one who might actually turn out to be a pretty good leader? Be sure to describe this person before and after the change, and keep in mind our definition: Leadership Requires Engagement.**

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 13



Key Paragraph, pg. 118

In spite of having Turtle by her side, Flora Baumbach still stared at the ever-changing endless tape from the edge of the chair, chewed what remained of her fingernails, and uttered, “Oh, my!” each time WPP went by. At two o’clock Westing Paper Products sold at fifty-two dollars a share, the highest in fifteen years. “Now Baba, SELL!” (120).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Dedication to Others. Which character in the novel is most dedicated to others? Why do you think so? What is this person’s motivation for being good to others? Do you think this dedication and service to others will continue throughout this person’s life? Why?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 14



Key Paragraph, pg. 128

Grace grabbed the theme and shook it at her daughter, who was being rocked in Flora Baumbach's arms. "Somebody stole this from you, didn't they, Turtle? You couldn't have done such an awful thing, not to Angela, not to your own sister, could you Turtle? Could you?" (128).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Leadership as a Parent. Which parent in the novel is the best leader and role model for her or his child/children so far? Keep in mind that some of the characters are parents even though their children don't appear in the novel. What makes your choice a strong parental leader?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 15



Key Paragraph, pg. 139

“College teams from five states competed in the first indoor track meet of the season, but the big event, the mile run, was won by a high-school senior” (139).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award Best Use of Talents. From what you know so far, which individual has developed her or his talents to the best of her or his ability? Are these talents being used to promote the common good? How do these talents help this person be a better leader?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 16



Key Paragraph, pg. 147

Their clues: a chemical formula for an explosive and the letters *o-t-i-s*. Doug, basking in glory, didn't care. Theo stood, turned to the man he was about to accuse, and saw the scene in the soup kitchen, saw Otis Amber cooking soup for the dirty, hungry men. "No answer," Theo said sitting down (147).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Problem-Solving Skills. A leader is often required to find creative and innovative solutions for problems in the community. In your opinion, which character in the story has the strongest problem-solving skills? Who has best applied them to make sure that her or his community is better because of them? Be sure today to apply concrete details and/or quotes to back up your choice.

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Westing Game, Day 17



Key Paragraph, pg. 155

“Poor Sandy you should say,” Turtle responded angrily. “Sandy’s the one who’s dead. Sandy was my friend” (155).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Example of Civic Engagement. Which character is most engaged in the community? How does he or she make the community better?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 18



Key Paragraph, pg. 164

“One more question, Intern Deere. Do you swear that Sandy had a bruise on his shin resulting from a kick? Absolutely, I should know, having been the recipient of such a kick myself” (164).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Leader of Youth? Which character do you think has made the most impact on the young people in her or his community? Which is the best mentor? Why is it important to include youth when you are trying to improve your community?

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 19



Key Paragraph, pg. 173

Turtle rose and walked to the side window, seeking the Westing house, which stood invisible in the moon-clouded night. (Hurry up, Uncle Sam; I can't keep up this act much longer. The candle must have burned through the last stripe by now) (173).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Example of Beating the Odds. Several characters in this book had seemingly insurmountable obstacles to overcome before they could reach their personal and public goals. Which character do you think beat the odds to become a leader? Did this person become more engaged in the community as a result? Give concrete details and facts to support your choice.

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Westing Game, Day 20



Key Paragraph, pg. 184

No one, not even Theo, knew her secret. T.R. Wexler was understandably sad over the death of the chairman of Westing Paper Products Corporation. She had been his legal advisor; she would inherit his stock and serve as the director of the company until the day she, too, would be elected chairman of the board (184).

Writing Prompt

Leadership requires engagement. Perhaps most importantly, 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.

Over the next 10 days, you will be creating a Leadership Awards Bloom Ball to illustrate a number of different kinds of leadership, as portrayed in the novel, as well as examples of poor leadership.

Today, you will focus on the award for Best Leader Overall. Which character in this novel best exemplifies Leadership? Who is most engaged in the community? Who promotes the common good? Who best exemplifies positive civic engagement? Be sure to use several examples to back up your choice.

After writing and editing a rough draft, you will copy this writing task, along with an illustration, onto a Bloom Ball side. See Day 11 for a full list of the awards.

Now is the time to complete your Bloom Ball. Did you change your mind about any of the awards? Take the time to edit and illustrate each category's side, create a side with the title and author, and another with a definition of Leadership, and connect them to make one amazing Westing Game Leadership Bloom Ball.