

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 1



Key Passage, page before Part I

“It is sobering to recall that though the Japanese relocation program, carried through at such incalculable cost in misery and tragedy, was justified on the ground that the Japanese were potentially disloyal, the record does not disclose a single case of Japanese disloyalty or sabotage during the whole war...” page before Part I.

Writing Prompt

Explain this quotation by Henry Steele Commager in your own words. What assumption did the US government make about Japanese Americans in designing the relocation program? Do you agree or disagree with their assumptions?

Write an argument in which you agree or oppose the US Government’s assumption/claim against the Japanese Americans. Introduce a precise claim distinguishing it from opposing viewpoints. Develop a claim and counterclaim fairly. Use at least one example from today’s reading to help prove the assumption as true or false. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections of the text. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows form and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 2



Key Passage, p. 16

“This was the first time I had felt outright hostility from a Caucasian. Looking back it is easy enough to explain. Public attitudes toward the Japanese in California were shifting rapidly. In the first few months of the Pacific War, America was on the run. Tolerance had turned to distrust and irrational fear. The hundred-year-old tradition of anti-orientalism on the west coast soon resurfaced, more vicious than ever. Its result became clear about a month later, when we were told to make our third and final move.”

Writing Prompt

Jeanne returned to school in Boyle Heights. Her experience her first day at school was the first time she felt “different” and the victim of anti-orientalism.

Do you feel that educators and people who interact and work with the public should be more tolerant than others or is it acceptable for Jeanne’s teacher to treat her differently?

Write an argument in which you agree or disagree with the teacher and her role as a teacher during this time in history. Introduce a claim and distinguish the claim from alternate or opposing viewpoints. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections of the text to help create cohesion. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows form and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 3



Key Passage, p. 33

“Like so many of these women, Mama never did get used to the latrines. It was a humiliation she just learned to endure: *shikata ga nai*, this cannot be helped. She would quickly subordinate her own desires to those of the family or the community, because she knew cooperation was the only way to survive....”

Writing Prompt

In your own words or as a comic strip, re-tell (provide anecdotal evidence) the story of the latrines.

Write an argument in which you support your claim that cooperation is important. Introduce precise claims from alternate or opposing viewpoints. Use words or phrases to link major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 4



Key Passage, p. 38

“Soon after we were released I wrote a paper for seventh-grade journalism class, describing how we used to hunt grunion before the war. The whole family would go down to Ocean Park Beach after dark, when the grunion were running, and build a big fire on the sand. I would watch Papa and my older brother’s splash through the moonlit surf to scoop out the fish, and then we’d rush back to the house where Mama would fry them up and set the sizzling pan on the table, with soy sauce and horseradish, for a midnight meal. I ended the paper with the sentence: *“The reason I want to remember this is because I know we’ll never be able to do it again.”*”

Writing Prompt

Jeanne feels strongly about her family and feels the loss that came when her family unit “died” in Manzanar. Because of their internment, her family “lost” time, memories, and strong relationships that bond people together.

Do you agree or disagree that Jeanne’s family suffered a breakdown or loss of their family unit? Consider some questions as you write.

Is the family unit (regardless of how it is defined) important in society?

What will happen to cultures and traditions if they are not passed down in the family?

Think about family history—is there a risk of that being lost if there is not a strong family unit?

Write an argument to support your claim. Introduce the precise claim. Develop your claim and counter claim supplying evidence for each. Use words and phrases to create cohesion. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that supports your claim and follows form.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 5



Key Passage, p. 47

"I see it now as a sad, homemade version of the samurai sword his great-great-grandfather carried in the land around Hiroshima, at a time when such warriors weren't much needed anymore, when their swords were both their virtue and their burden. It helps me understand how Papa's life could end at a place like Manzanar. He didn't die there, but things finished for him there..."

Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Jeanne Wakatsuki and your life in Ocean Park has been grabbed from you and you are now a prisoner of war in an internment camp.

Write an argument to the president of the United States at that time, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Explain to him that your family does not deserve to be interned and that it is doing your family harm. Use your father as evidence. Describe how his life used to be (where he came from, what he believed in) and how it is now in the camp. Appeal to his emotions. Be sure to sign it respectfully and use proper letter writing format.

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 6



Key Passage, p. 58

“That’s how I remember him before he disappeared. He was not a great man. He wasn’t even a very successful man. He was a poser, a braggart, and a tyrant. But he held onto his self-respect, he dreamed grand dreams, he could work well at any task he turned his hand to: he could raise vegetables, sail a boat, plead a case, sing Japanese poems, make false teeth, carve a pig.”

Writing Prompt

As Jeanne remembers her father she does not remember him as being a great man. But she knows that he always had his self-respect and that he dreamed grand dreams.

How can keeping your self-respect help you in any situation? Why is it important to dream grand dreams? Can you think of other qualities one should have to live a great life?

Write an argumentative paragraph in which you support or oppose the need to maintain self-respect regardless of circumstances. Introduce your claim acknowledging the opposing viewpoint. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Use words phrases, and clauses to link the major selections of text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claims and support. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows form and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 7



Key Passage, p. 64

“When your mother and your father are having a fight, do you want them to kill each other? Or do you just want them to stop fighting?”

Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Ko Wakatsuki. Explain the above quote in terms of your relationship to both the United States and Japan. Describe your life in Japan and your life in America. Tell what each provided you. Argue how you can have loyalty to both countries without having to choose sides. Argue how you can simply want the fighting to stop without wishing for a winner.

Introduce your claim and distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesions between reasons and evidence. Establish formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports your initial claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 8



Key Passage, p. 71

“He kept pursuing oblivion through drink, he kept abusing Mama, and there seemed to be no way out of it for anyone. You couldn’t even run.”

Writing Prompt

The above vocabulary words and this quote serve to communicate to the reader the hopelessness of the internment situation. This quote, as well as many others, uses specific words and phrases in an effort to invoke emotion in the reader.

Pretend again that you are Jeanne Wakatsuki. **Write a follow-up letter to FDR in which you state that you and your family should be released from Manzanar. Introduce your claim. Develop your claim and counter claim fairly supplying evidence for each. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major selections of the text. Establish formal style. Close with a statement that supports your argument. As you write consider the following—the state of your father, how the anger at being falsely imprisoned is being misdirected towards his family. Appeal to his sense of emotions, specifically his love for his own family.**

Choose your words carefully. You may also wish to appeal to his fears by suggesting that your father is only one of many reacting in such a manner and that the camp may in fact be ready to boil over in anger. Use emotionally charged language.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 9



Key Passage, p. 82

“Early in February, the loyalty Oath appeared. Everyone seventeen and over was required to fill it out. This soon became the most divisive issue of all. It cut deeper than the riot, because no one could avoid it. Not even Papa. After five months of self-imposed isolation, this debate was what finally forced him out of the barracks and into circulation again.”

Writing Prompt

As long as politics have been around, so has dissension. There are always those who do not agree with the status quo or the current decisions of the government. Pretend you are one such dissenter who does not agree with the loyalty oath. Pretend you are of an ethnicity other than Japanese.

Write an editorial to your local newspaper explaining why you disagree with the loyalty oath. Create a logical argument. Give at least two examples. You may want to think about the logical examples provided between pages 82 and 87. Consider the implications of both a “No, No” answer and a “Yes, Yes” answer. Consider whether such an oath has the possibility of catching any real saboteurs or espionage agents.

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 10



Key Passage, p. 98

“Whitney reminded Papa of Fujiyama, that is, it gave him the same kind of spiritual sustenance. The tremendous beauty of those peaks was inspirational, as so many natural forms are to the Japanese (the rocks outside our doorway could be those mountains in miniature). They also represented those forces in nature, those powerful and inevitable forces that cannot be resisted, reminding a man that sometimes he must simply endure that which cannot be changed.”

Writing Prompt

“The world is not fair, we all must endure injustice. However, just because we made it through, doesn’t make it alright or excusable. “

Pretend you are Jeanne. List the injustices your family endured today. Then list *how* you endured them. In thinking about the things you endured, reflect upon what it is like to be imprisoned, away from home, and what your living conditions are like.

Think about the quote above. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

Write a one-paragraph argument in which you support your claim. Acknowledge the opposing claim. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections of the text. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows form and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 11



Key Passage, p.116

"I just hated Papa, for weeks, and dreamed of the white-gowned princess I might have become. Late afternoons, practicing my baton in the firebreak, angrily I would throw him into the air and watch him twirl, and catch him, and throw him high. Again and again and again."

Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Jeanne Wakatsuki. **Write another follow-up letter to FDR. Describe your recent days in camp, what you have done, what you have participated in. Reason with him that anyone so American as you could not possible be disloyal.**

Construct a one-paragraph logical argument questioning how any group so assimilated to American culture could have their loyalty in question. Introduce your claim acknowledge your counterclaim. Develop your claim and counterclaims fairly supplying evidence for each which pointing out strengths and limitations. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major selections of the text. Establish and maintain formal style. Conclude with a statement that follows form and supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 12



Key Passage, p. 123

“ . . .The 442nd Combat Regiment was famous now, full of heroes, fighting in Europe to help the Allies win the war, and showing that Nisei too could be patriots.”

Writing Prompt

Pretend that you are Jeanne. Do you think it is fair that you are still in camp? Do you think it is right the country that is keeping you prisoner is mandating that your brother go and fight?

Write a letter to FDR in the form of an argument letter to support or oppose the government mandate that Japanese American's be drafted into the war. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 13



Key Passage, p.126-127

“Next it was announced that all the camps would be closed within the coming twelve months and that internees now had the right to return to their former homes.

In our family, the response to this news was hardly joyful.”

Writing Prompt

Write yet another letter to President Roosevelt. In this one, argue that being released from the camps is not going far enough. Use the information provided on pages 127 -129 as evidence that life for you will not be the same that it will not be so simple for your family to “return to their former home.”

Use language that (politely) communicates your feelings to him. Appeal to his emotions and suggest that he must go further to make things right in light of the Supreme Court Ruling.

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 14



Key Passage, p.139

"We will get a loan from the government. At the block leaders meeting it was decided that they must provide low-interest loans for families returning from the camps. They cannot deprive us of our homes and our fishing boats and our automobiles and lock us up for three years and then just turn us loose into the cities again. They have to help us get a new start."

Writing Prompt

Continue your letter writing campaign to Roosevelt. **This letter should contain a list of what you believe you and your family ought to have coming to you from the government upon release from Manzanar. Argue that this is the right thing to do by reminding him about the principles this great nation is founded upon, such as: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Provide some examples of what, in those areas, have been wrongfully taken from you and what ought to be returned.**

Introduce your claim and acknowledge the counter claim. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Provide evidence for each as you write. Use words, phrases, and clauses that link to the major sections of text and create cohesion. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows form and supports the argument presented.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 15



Key Passage, p. 148

“Tell me about him, Auntie. Tell me how he dressed as a young man, how he walked, and what he did for amusement. Tell me everything you can remember.”

Writing Prompt

Woody has an opportunity to meet his father’s family. This meeting gives him great insight about his father. Pretend you are Woody and write a letter to your family. Using details from the chapter and from what you learned from your aunt, tell your family about “your father”. Give them details about his youth, the family home, and explain with details that the stories he used to tell you are true.

Write a one-sentence claim—that you would make to claim that your father’s stories are true.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 16



Key Passage, p. 152

“In the months to come, because one did have to keep on walking, one desperately wanted to believe nothing had changed during those years of suspended animation. But, of course, as we soon discovered, everything had.”

Writing Prompt

During Jeanne’s time in Manzanar the world continued to change and move forward. The one thing that didn’t change was the quality of the people interned there.

Write an argument in which you claim that the interned Japanese (hard working Japanese American people) are still hard working Japanese American people that want to be a part of the community. Try to convince your neighbors that the community is loyal and not to believe the propaganda.

Write an argument to support the claim that the interned are still good, hardworking people. Introduce your claim and acknowledge opposing claims. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Use words, phrases, and evidence from the text. Provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 17



Key Passage, p. 158-159

“They wouldn’t see me; they would see the slant-eyed face, the Oriental. This is what accounts in part, for the entire evacuation. You cannot deport 110,000 people unless you stop seeing individuals.”

Writing Prompt

Continue your letter writing campaign to the president. Do you agree or disagree with the statement above. Can a mass internment take place if people “knew” the individuals?

Write an argument in which you agree or oppose the author’s statement. Introduce a precise claim. Distinguish your claim from an opposing viewpoint. Develop your claim and counterclaim fairly. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link sections of the text, to create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claims and counterclaims. Establish and maintain formal style. Provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 18



Key Passage, p. 169

“That bow was from the world I wanted out of, while the strutting, sequined partnership I had with Radine was exactly how I wanted my life to go. My path through the next few years can be traced by its relationship to hers. It was a classic situation.”

Writing Prompt

Her three-year internment in Manzanar pressured Jeanne to want to reject her Japanese ancestry. How has hating the bow from her father, becoming a majorette, and running for Carnival Queen helped her reject all she knew? Do you think it is appropriate for her to want out of her world?

Write an argument. Introduce your claim and distinguish the counter claim. Develop claims fairly. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link sections of the text. Establish and maintain formal style. Conclude with a statement that follows from and supports your claim.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 19



Key Passage, p. 190

"We were alone out there, too far from the road to hear anything but the wind. I thought of Mama, now seven years gone. For a long time I stood gazing at the monument. I couldn't step inside the fence. I believe in ghosts and spirits. I knew I was in the presence of those who had died at Manzanar. I also felt the spiritual presence that always lingers near awesome wonders like Mount Whitney. Then, as if rising from the ground around us on the floor, I began to hear the first whispers, nearly inaudible, from all those thousands who once had lived out here, a wide, windy sound of the ghost of that life. As we began to walk, it grew to a murmur, a thin steady hum."

Writing Prompt

The year is 1972. You have just revisited Manzanar, which has brought back a lot of memories. **Write a letter to President Nixon. Explain to him who you are and remind him of the poor reflection on this nation's record. Tell him what the camp was like when you were sent there in 1941. Then tell him what you saw and felt upon your return. Explain to him why the camp is haunted by the whispers of 10,000 people. Remind him that this country still has not made right on the wrong it did to its loyal Japanese citizens.**

Write a statement-what do you think the United States government should do for the Japanese American citizens interned at any of the camps? Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

You will use this claim as the basis for your final writing product.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Day 20



Key Passage, pg. 192

“BUILT BY WADA AND CREW, JUNE 10, 1942 A.D.”

“The A.D. made me shiver. I knew that the man who inscribed it had foreseen these ruins and did not want his masonry identified with the wrong era. His words coming out of the stone became a voice that merged with all the others, not a murmur this time, but low voices muttering and chattering all around me....”

Read the Civil Liberties act of 1988 available on the website below.

<http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/civilact.html>

Writing Prompt

Think about how the injustices of internment and living in a society that saw American citizens as foreigners affected them. What reparations and restitution would be sufficient?

Define repartition.

Define restitution.

List three of each and state why that would be sufficient for you.

You will use this to assist you in writing your final writing project.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Farewell to Manzanar, Final Writing Product



The Human Minimum

Task: Write an argument essay in the form of a letter to President Clinton. Use at least three different rhetorical devices to convince him how wrong it was to imprison loyal Japanese Americans during World War II.

Directions: Pretend you are Jeanne Wakatsuki. It is October 1, 1993. You have just read the open letter to all Japanese Americans written by Bill Clinton.

<http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/clinton.html>

This prompts you to pull out all the old letters that you have written to presidents over the past 50 years (These are your 15 writing tasks, written over the past three weeks).

- Read them over.
- Divide them into three categories:
 - Life before the war,
 - Internment, and
 - Life after internment.
- Within each pile choose one or two that you feel are particularly strong paragraphs.

Gather the entries that you choose.

Use these entries to write a new letter to President Clinton in response to his.

Thank him for his letter and strongly reinforce how much it means to you. *You may do this by explaining to him that you have been in correspondence with many presidents over the past fifty years in response to the mistreatment of Japanese Americans during WWII by the United States Government.*

Reiterate to him by using examples from your own life (the information from your snapshots) how much this apology, the admission of wrong doing, and the reparations mean to you.

Your Letter will need a strong thesis.

Each paragraph that follows ought to provide strong evidence in the form of a rhetorical device in order to back up the claim of your thesis. **You must convince him that he has DONE THE RIGHT THING.** Choosing strongly written paragraphs that make good use of the rhetorical devices you have used will make your letter strong.

Remember that one paragraph must flow into the next. In order to produce this effect, you may have to re-write some sentences or paragraphs. You may also need to add leading or unifying sentences at the beginning or end of paragraphs to aid your reader in following the direction of your argument.

Your letter must end with a conclusion. In an argument essay, your final paragraph ought to strongly re-iterate your main points and appeal to the reader to make the right choice or decision. In this case you ought to reassure President Clinton

that he and his government have done the right things, finally, to correct this severe injustice.

Be sure to convey your gratitude and respect for his words and actions.

End your letter with a respectful farewell. Don't forget to sign it.

Format and Edit Your Letter

- Type your letter.
- Spellcheck it.
- Save it.
- Print and trade with a peer.
- Edit each other's letters by providing answers to the following questions:
 - List at least three rhetorical devices found in this letter.
 - I would like to hear more about...
 - I am not sure I fully understand...
- Revise your letter. Save and print again.
- Place this piece with your other exemplary writing samples inside your portfolio.