

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 1



Key Passage, p. 5

“‘You don’t understand,’ [Moshe] said in despair. ‘You can’t understand. I have been saved miraculously. I managed to get back here. Where did I get the strength from? I wanted to come back to Sighet to tell you the story of my death. So that you could prepare yourselves while there was still time. To live? I don’t attach any importance to my life anymore. I’m alone. No, I wanted to come back, and to warn you. And see how it is, no one will listen to me’” (p. 5).

Writing Prompt

What has been happening to Jews all over Europe, and what is now beginning to happen in Hungary, is so unimaginable to people that they refuse to believe it. **Write an argumentative paragraph that proves the Jews of Sighet were unwilling to accept the reality that they were being targeted unjustly. Develop a thesis statement and use at least two quotations to prove your point. You may use the following thesis statement: “The Jews of Sighet refused to believe or accept their fate, even though they had been warned.”**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 2



Key Passage, p. 15

“My father had accompanied the deportees as far as the entrance of the ghetto. They first had to go through the big synagogue, where they were minutely searched, to see that they were not taking away any gold, silver, or other objects of value. There were outbreaks of hysteria and blows with the truncheons” (p. 15).

Writing Prompt

The Jews of Sighet were not able to fathom their impending deaths; many did not realize what future injustices they would face. **Write an argumentative paragraph showing how the Jews of Sighet endured inhumane conditions. Provide a thesis statement and include three examples from today’s reading to support your argument. Think about life in the ghettos as well as conditions they faced while waiting for “evacuation.”**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 3



Key Passage, p. 24

“Once more the young men tied her up and gagged her. They even struck her. People encouraged them:

‘Make her be quiet! She’s mad! Shut her up! She’s not the only one. She can keep her mouth shut...’

They struck her several times on the head – blows that might have killed her. Her little boy clung to her; he did not cry out; he did not say a word. He was not even weeping now” (p. 24).

Writing Prompt

Injustice has a way of breeding injustice. In today’s reading, fear of Nazi reprisal turned prisoner against prisoner. **Write an argumentative paragraph that demonstrates that injustice leads to further injustice. Use the story of Madame Schächter as anecdotal evidence to support your case.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 4



Key Passage, p. 32

“Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never” (p. 32).

Writing Prompt

In today’s reading, Elie describes how, in one day, his soul and his humanity were taken from him. In the United States, our basic human rights have been described as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” **Write an argumentative paragraph that proves that Auschwitz, Dr. Mengele, and the selection process deprived Elie of his basic human rights. Support your claim with three examples from today’s reading.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 5



Key Passage, p. 42

“Take care of your son. He’s weak and very dried up. Look after him well, to avoid the selection. Eat! It doesn’t matter what or when. Eat everything you can. The weak don’t hang about for long here” (p. 42).

Writing Prompt

The gas chambers were not the only way people died at Auschwitz. People died because their bodies became weak. **In an argumentative paragraph, discuss how prisoners are also dying from lack of basic needs such as food and water. Provide three details to support your answer. Describe a day’s food ration in Auschwitz and explain what is physically happening to Elie and those around him.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 6



Key Passage, p. 52

"I had watched the whole scene without moving. I kept quiet. In fact I was thinking of how to get farther away so that I would not be hit myself. What is more, any anger I felt at that moment was directed, not against the Kapo, but against my father. I was angry with him, for not knowing how to avoid Idek's outbreak. That is what concentration life had made of me" (p. 52).

Writing Prompt

According to Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored in 1948, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person." **Write an argumentative paragraph that proves that "concentration life" has deprived Elie and his father of their human rights. Use three examples from today's reading.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 7



Key Passage, p. 57

"We were not afraid. And yet, if a bomb had fallen on the blocks, it alone would have claimed hundreds of victims on the spot. But we were no longer afraid of death; at any rate not of *that death*. Every bomb that exploded filled us with joy and gave us new confidence in life" (p. 57). (*emphasis added*)

Writing Prompt

According to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored by the United Nations in 1948, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." **Write an argumentative paragraph to defend the dignity and equality of Elie and all the prisoners of the concentration camps. Support your claim with three reasons.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 8



Key Passage, p. 62

“Behind me I heard the same man asking:
‘Where is God now?’
And I heard a voice within me answer him:
‘Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows....’
That night the soup tasted of corpses” (p. 62).

Writing Prompt

Elie and the other prisoners look for support and answers as they watch many men die. During such difficult circumstances, many look for comradeship for support. **Write an argumentative paragraph that proves that comradeship helps comfort people during tough times. Support your claim with three examples from the novel.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 9



Key Passage, p. 73

"These were terrible days. We received more blows than food; we were crushed with work. And three days after he had gone we forgot to say the Kaddish" (p. 73).

Writing Prompt

According to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored in 1948, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Think of the fate of Akiba Drumer. Describe how conditions of torture and cruel treatment in the camp eventually turned him from a man who found strength in his faith into a *musulman*. **In a letter to Akiba Drumer, write an argumentative paragraph to encourage him not to give up hope. Provide three reasons why we should keep positive and hopeful.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 10



Key Passage, p. 79-80

"The head of the block suddenly remembered that he had forgotten to clean out the block. He ordered four prisoners to wash the wooden floor...An hour before leaving the camp! Why? For whom?

'For the liberating army,' he cried. 'So that they'll realize there were men living here and not pigs.'

Were we men then?" (p. 79-80).

Writing Prompt

According to Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored in 1948, "Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law."

Buna dehumanized its prisoners. The tattooed numbers, the poor living conditions, the cold, the beatings, the starvation, the slavery, the murdering on a whim all worked to turn its prisoners into something less than human. However, there were people who, through their actions, attempted to reverse that process.

Pretend that you are Elie Wiesel. **Write a letter to the doctor who operated on your foot. Thank him for his kindness and tell him what it meant to you. Describe for him how the conditions of the camp and the threat of death wore on you. In an argumentative paragraph, explain to the doctor how his actions made a difference, however small, in reaffirming your humanity, keeping you from becoming a *musulman*. Provide three details to support your statement.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 11



Key Passage, p. 81

“Pitch darkness. Every now and then, an explosion in the night. They had orders to fire on any who could not keep up. Their fingers on the triggers, they did not deprive themselves of this pleasure. If one of us stopped for a second, a sharp shot finished off another filthy son of a bitch” (p. 81).

Writing Prompt

This unit is about justice—“The actions I take and the decisions I make must respect the rights of all.” Pretend you are an eyewitness to the death march as the prisoners of Auschwitz are marched through your village. **Write an anonymous letter to an American newspaper describing the horrors that you witnessed (death, starvation, trampling, freezing, etc.). In an argumentative paragraph, convince the reader that the Allied forces need to act quickly to prevent any more deaths. Provide three reasons to support your answer. Choose your words carefully, for maximum impact. You are appealing to the emotions of your audience.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 12



Key Passage, p. 95

“In the wagon where the bread had fallen, a real battle had broken out. Men threw themselves on top of each other. Wild beasts of prey with animal hatred in their eyes: an extraordinary vitality had seized them, sharpening their teeth and nails” (p. 95).

Writing Prompt

According to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored in 1948, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” According to Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.”

In an argumentative paragraph, explain how torture and cruel punishment by the Nazis has taken humanity away from the Jews on the death march. Provide three examples to support your claim. Include the anecdote of Meir and his father to prove your point. Use at least one quotation from the reading that invokes animalistic (rather than human) imagery.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Night, Day 13



Key Passage, p. 105

“Listen to me, boy. Don’t forget that you’re in a concentration camp. Here, every man has to fight for himself and not think of anyone else. Even of his father. Here there are no fathers, no brothers, no friends. Everyone lives and dies for himself alone. I’ll give you a sound piece of advice – don’t give your ration of soup to your old father. There’s nothing you can do for him. And you’re killing yourself. Instead, you ought to be having his ration” (p. 105).

Writing Prompt

Primo Levi, another Holocaust survivor, has suggested that life in Nazi Death Camps was like being on another planet. Human rules for living did not apply there. “There were no fathers, no brothers, no friends.” Morals and values that you and I have simply did not apply in the camps.

Write an argumentative paragraph that demonstrates how the Nazi regime prevented Jews and other prisoners from living by a moral code that affirmed their humanity. Provide three details to support your statement. Use Elie’s father’s death as one example. Think back to Day 11’s reading when Elie prays to God that he will not allow him to do what the Rabbi Eliahou’s son has done. Provide a quote from Elie to back up your case.



Night Final Project

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Speech

Justice Requires Restraint

There are things you cannot say or do to yourself, any other person, or the planet because justice demands it. The Actions I take and the decisions I make must respect the rights of all.

Everyone on the planet ought to have certain rights. The General Assembly of the United Nations authored a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, just three years after Elie Wiesel was liberated, first by the Resistance and then by the Americans.

Task:

Pretend you are on the Committee in charge of creating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. You are in charge of authoring at least one article. **In three argumentative paragraphs, convince** the UN committee to approve this article to be part of the document. In order to do this, you must provide three examples (in three separate paragraphs), quotes, and anecdotes from Elie Wiesel's account of the Holocaust to prove the article's importance. Each paragraph must support your thesis.

Instructions:

- Review daily writing task.
- Choose the article that seems best suited to make your case.
- Record your thesis at the top of the worksheet. [Sample thesis: Depriving a person or group of people the right to life, liberty, and security of person is inhumane and wrong.]
- Review your journal entries and choose your best three paragraphs to back up your thesis based on content and rhetorical device used.
- Put your paragraphs in order. These are the body of your essay.
- Write an introduction. In a speech, you want to open with something that will grab the audience's attention. A story about a horror of the concentration camps would do this well. Once you have their attention, explain your thesis.
- Write a conclusion. In your conclusion, you remind the readers of the importance of your topic and argue them to take the action you want them to.
- Type or neatly write your speech from beginning to end. Ask yourself, "Does this flow?" You may need to add a sentence or two to the beginning or end of your body paragraphs in order to seamlessly lead your audience from one topic to the next. You may also need to cut out information if it detracts from your point. Remember also that voice and word choice are important in a speech. You are addressing the United Nations. Have you used professional language?

- Practice your speech with a partner. Allow them to complete the same two editing statements as usual.
 - I could use some clarification on...
 - I would like to hear more about...
- Perform the speech in front of your class.