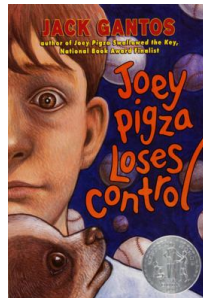


Joey Pigza Loses Control



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Author Gantos, Jack

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Genre Historical Fiction

Synopsis When Joey Pigza meets his dad for the first time in years, he meets a grown-up version of his old out-of-control self. Carter Pigza is as wired as Joey used to be -- before his stint in special ed, and before he got his new meds. Joey's mom reluctantly agrees that he can stay with his dad for a summer visit, which sends Joey racing with sky-high hopes that he and Carter can finally get to know each other. But as the weeks whirl by, Carter has bigger plans in mind. He decides that just as he has pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, Joey can do the same and become as normal as any kid, without the help of a doctor's prescription. Carter believes Joey can do it and Joey wants to believe him more than anything in the world.

Themes Family Relations, Special Education

Protagonist Male, Attention Deficit Disorder

Setting USA

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

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 1



Key Paragraph

Page 8:

“I’m not sending you because I like him,” she replied. “I’m sending you because you might like him and because I think—not with my heart—that it is a good thing for you to have a relationship with your father. And now that he claims to have stopped drinking and has a job and has gone to court to get some visitation, I’m sending you to him because I think it’s the right thing to do. But don’t ask me how I feel about all this.”

Writing Prompt

What information and inferences can you gain from this paragraph? What are some of your thoughts about Joey’s life? What predictions do you have about how his time with his father will go?

Think of a situation or snippet in your life that you chose to do the right thing in a difficult situation; this can be real or imagined. Write a narrative paragraph that introduces this situation to your reader. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and the situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 2



Key Paragraph

Page 18:

So it was my turn to help her out. I reached for her hand and when she glanced over at me I winked our giant eye-squishing secret wink, which was a reminder to chill out. She smiled and instead of going off the deep end, she stooped down by my side, fixed the hair back over my getting-better bald spot, then gave me a hug.

Writing Prompt

Even though Joey can be off the wall, he and his mom do have a good connection. In what ways does Joey try to take care of his mother? In what ways does she care for him? Is there someone in your life you have a connection with? What factors contribute to that care and connection?

Example: as a parent when I say goodbye to my son, we give each other a head butt. This is our way of being connected and knowing we love each other.

Write a one paragraph narrative in which you describe a person in your life you have a care/connection with. Engage your reader by establishing a context. Use narrative technique to describe the relationship and what you do that shows that care/connection. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Final Writing Product:

The Ordinary World: As you start to write about your HJ set a setting. What is the ordinary world you or your character is stuck in? Describe this with relevant details.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 3



Key Paragraph

Page 29:

I knew how Dad felt about everything. But Dad didn't know how I felt about anything. All the way to the photo booth he kept pointing out storybook characters and he had something important to say about each one, but after awhile I stopped listening because he didn't know if I listened or not.

Writing Prompt

How does Joey feel about his dad doing all the talking? In what way does it hurt a conversation when one person does all the talking? Have you ever had that happen to you? What happened and how did it make you feel?

Write a one paragraph narrative in which you describe and moment in time when someone did not let your speak (this can be real or imagined). Introduce the situation. Who was involved? Use precise details and dialog to expand on the situation. Provide a conclusion that follows form and continues the narrative technique.

Final Writing Product—Call to Adventure

As you continue your HJ. Think about your situation. What significant event was your call to adventure or the plea for help.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 4



Key Paragraph

Page 40:

Maybe Dad had done some bad things in the past, I thought as I opened my shirt and reached around the back of my shoulder and ripped off the patch. But just like me, he deserved a second chance, and I wanted to make up my own mind about him. Then I put the new patch on in a slightly different spot and rubbed it a minute to heat it up and get it going.

Writing Prompt

In what way does it take courage to give someone a second chance? Think of a time you have had a second chance given to you or you gave a second chance to someone else (this can be real or imagined).

Write a one paragraph narrative in which you engage your reader in the situations. Use dialog to develop the situation and the characters. Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence. Use precise words and relevant details. Provide a conclusion that follows forms and reflects on the narrated experience.

Final Writing Product: Reluctant, Refuse the Call.

In each HJ the main character is reluctant to start their journey. In some cases they will even refuse the opportunity.

Write a paragraph which details how you were reluctant to “do the right thing” in your situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 5



Key Paragraph

Page 54:

...you know Joey, I know you want to have long father-to-son talks with me, and it's not that I don't want to have long talks with you but you have to realize I really only want to talk about the future with you. Not the past. My past is not good, Joey, so I don't have the good ol' days to feel all warm and fuzzy about...I'd just rather have, you know, the new times to talk about...work on making new memories.

Writing Prompt

Why do you think Carter doesn't want to focus on the past? Do you feel the same way about things you have done in the past? Think of a time where you did something you are not proud of (real or imagined).

Write a one paragraph narrative in which you introduce your characters and establish point of view. Use precise words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal events. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the narrated experience.

Final writing product: Mentor

Who is your mentor in this situation? Who did you go to for assistance and guidance? Describe your relationship and how they helped you.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 6



Key Paragraph

Page 72:

I was wondering if when you got married you always told the other person the truth all the time. Because it seemed to me that I could only tell Mom some of the things about Dad, and I could only tell him some of the things about her. Then I thought, maybe that's why their marriage broke up, because they couldn't tell the whole truth to each other.

Writing Prompt

How important do you think it is for people in significant relationships to tell the truth to one another? Are you honest in your relationships with people?

Write a narrative describing a time you were completely honest with another person. Engage the reader by establishing context and point of view. Use dialog, pacing, and description to develop the experience, events, and characters. Use a variety of transition words and phrases to convey sequence in the event. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the narrated experience.

Final Writing Product—Cross the Threshold

At some point in time you have to begin the journey. Write a statement about making the decision to start your journey. Why is it important to you?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 7



Key Paragraph

Page 89:

“There’s no reason to get excited and tell you-know-who because you know how she can get. And we don’t want her getting all worked up and ruining our father-son fun just because of a little beer.”

Writing Prompt

In what way is Joey’s dad triangulating or gossiping? Why is it unhealthy to ask someone not to tell another person something? What kind of bind does this put Joey in? Have you ever been in a situation where someone asked you not to share information they told you?

Write a narrative about a time where someone told you information and asked you not to share it (real or imagined). Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant details, and sensory language to capture action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Final Writing Product—Test, Allies, and Enemy’s

In your quest to do the right thing during a difficult situation you were met with different tests, you met allies, and enemies.

Describe the test. Who are your allies, and your enemy’s?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 8



Key Paragraph

Page 94:

I wanted him to stop telling me who I was when I knew better. He wanted me to be something I wasn't, and I wanted him to be something he wasn't. We were so far apart. And yet, even though I knew he was wrong, he was my dad, and I wanted him to be right. More than anything, I wanted him to have all the answers.

Writing Prompt

How do you think Joey felt when his father flushed his patches down the toilet? He knew he needed them but had a hard time standing up for himself? Have you ever been in a situation where you couldn't defend yourself?

Write a one paragraph narrative in which you detail the situation. Engage and orientate your reader. Who was involved? What was the situation? Use narrative techniques to convey sequence. Use a variety of transition words and phrases to convey sequence. Use precise words and phrases to convey relevant details. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the events.

Final Writing Product—Approaching the Innermost Cave

When you approach your innermost cave you are starting to approach your biggest fears. Describe your biggest fears of doing the right thing in a difficult situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 9



Key Paragraph

Page 115:

This is what it is like to be normal, I guessed. You don't have problems. Only messed-up people have problems, and since I wasn't messed up anymore I was free as a bird. I could just leap off the balcony, spread my arms, and soar through the Chicken Little sky which was not falling.

Writing Prompt

What do you think about Joey's statement? Do 'normal' people not have any problems? What is a 'normal' person? Is there such a thing?

What does normal mean to you? Write a narrative paragraph in which you describe your "normal" day. Who is involved? What do you do? Who do you see? Describe your day with as many details as possible.

Final Writing Product—Ordeal

In your Heroic Journey you will face and ordeal, a horrible mess.

Describe the ordeal you faced when you were doing the right thing in a difficult situation. Give as many details as possible. If your ordeal involves another person, include dialog.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 10



Key Paragraph

Page 129:

Everything that would make me feel better would make everyone else feel worse. Ever since I lied to Mom, I hadn't felt good about myself. "Can I use your phone?" I asked her. "I want to call home."

Writing Prompt

Describe Joey's conflict. Why is it difficult for him to tell his mother the truth? What pressure does Joey feel from his dad? Is the secret Carter is asking Joey to keep a fair request?

Have you ever had to lie to someone you loved? Write a one paragraph narrative that describes that interaction (real or imagined). Who was involved? What was the situation? What did you tell them? How was their response? How did you feel? Include dialog if appropriate. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another.

Use precise words and phrases, relevant details, and sensory language to capture action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Final Writing Product—Reward

Once you complete your heroic journey you finish and get some reward. Write about the reward you received from doing the right thing in a difficult situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 11



Key Paragraph

Page 137:

He unscrewed the cap and drank it all down. Then he tossed the bottle to the man. “Can you put this in the trash?”

“You need a bigger bottle,” the man said, and tossed it into a bucket. “Especially if you’re trying to work up some courage.”

Writing Prompt

Why did Carter take a drink? Does true courage come from a bottle? Why or why not? Where does true courage come from? Have you ever had to be truly courageous?

Write a 1 paragraph narrative in which you describe a time you had to show courage (real or imagined). Describe the event. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant details, and sensory language to capture action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Final Writing Product—The Road Back

In the heroic journey you have to travel back to “normal” life after you complete the journey. Write about your road back. Detail what it was like to return to your “norm”.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 12



Key Paragraph

Page 160:

“You just won’t learn,” she kept saying. “That’s your problem in a nutshell. Everybody tries to fix you up but you. Maybe you can’t be fixed,” she continued. “Maybe you’re one of those broken things that stays forever broken.”

Writing Prompt

Is Joey really broken? What does he need to do to solve his problem? Are all of his problems related to the medicine or is some of it normal?

Think of a time when you didn’t learn your lesson the first time (real or imagined).

Write a narrative describing the process it took you to learn a lesson. a.)

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant details, and sensory language to capture action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Final Writing Product—transformation

In any Heroic Journey there is a transformation or a lesson learned. What did you learn in your journey? Write a sentence or two describing your learning.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 13



Key Paragraph

Page 165:

I wanted to tell him that I thought we were a lot alike and we were both hyper and needed medicine and we shouldn't live together since I wanted to live only with Mom, but that I loved him, yet liked living with her more and he shouldn't hate me for that but there didn't seem to be anyway of saying so because, even though I knew how I felt, the words were all piled up against the door in my throat and when I tried to speak I couldn't and it made me sick that I felt less like me and more like something I was becoming but didn't know yet.

Writing Prompt

In what way does telling the truth take courage? How is Joey's dad just living for a thrill? Describe how Joey does want to be courageous and take his meds and get his life back together.

Think of a time you had to have courage to do something (real or imagined). Write a narrative in which you describe that event. Engage your reader by establishing the scenario and introduce who was involved. Use description to develop the events and the characters. Use precise words and phrases to capture action and convey events. Provide a conclusion that follows forms and reflects on the experience.

Final Writing Product—Return with the Gain of Experience

It is not enough to learn from your experience you need to know how to apply your learning for future use. Write about how you were able to internalize your journey.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 14



Key Paragraph

Page 185

“It was an accident.” I said.

“Don’t ever say you are sorry.”

Writing Prompt

Joey hit the batter and apologized. Do you think he did the right thing? Does his dad have the right to tell him not to apologize?

Think about a time you needed to apologize for something.

Write a narrative. Introduce the event you were apologizing for. Describe what happened and who was involved. Use dialog and write the apology. Provide a conclusion that follows form and supports your event.

Final Writing Product—Outcome

In the simplest terms what did you learn? Write about your learning and the effect it had on you.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 15



Key Paragraph

Page 196:

Mom's driving got all curvy again and she pulled the car over on the side of the road. "Family hug," she said, and put her arms around me and Pablo. She never could do two things at once, which was good, because when it came to hugging me I wanted her all to myself.

Writing Prompt

What are your thoughts and feelings about how the book ended? Do you like the resolution? Would you have done anything differently? What message do you think Jack Gantos' is trying to send to kids who read his book?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Joey Pigza Loses Control, Day 16



Final Writing Product

Write a 5 paragraph narrative. This is your personal heroic journey and should focus on one specific event or snapshot in time. The theme or focus is, “Doing the Right Thing in a Difficult Situation.”

You have been given an opportunity during each day of the lesson to fill out a portion of the Heroic Journey Chart.

Take these elements and examples and string them together to finalize your essay.