

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Skin I'm In, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 5

“That’s when I made up my mind. Enough is enough. I deserve better than for people to treat me any old way they want. But saying that is one thing, making it happen is something else” (p. 5).

Writing Prompt

What do you think it’s like for Maleeka to be teased all the time? Have you ever known someone at your school that was teased a lot? Usually bullies are insecure and therefore need to tease others. **Write a paragraph, as if you were Maleeka’s friend, explaining that it takes great courage and integrity to be true to yourself and supporting her statement about not letting people treat her badly.**

When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Use examples from the text.
- Who in the novel thus far has courage and integrity? Who doesn’t?
- Why does it take courage to be yourself?
- Use examples from your own life, if you would like.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 21

"She's a big shot at an advertising agency downtown. A few months ago, her company and the school board came up with a new program that lets professionals take a leave of absence for a year to teach in inner-city schools..." (p. 21).

Writing Prompt

Miss Saunders shares a lot about herself with her students. What kind of courage does it take to tell people about yourself? Do you think Miss Saunders feels good about herself and is confident? **Write a paragraph explaining why or why not. Provide 2-3 examples from the reading to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Skin I'm In, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 30

“Char’s just standing there eating a candy bar like she’s at the movies. I’m eyeing her, hoping maybe she’ll jump in or at least say she was the one that was kissing Worm. She digs the chocolate out from between her teeth and takes another bite of candy” (p. 30).

Writing Prompt

How do you feel about Char’s words and actions? Char uses Maleeka to do her homework for her, she teases her, and now she has lied to another person and gotten her in trouble. **Write a paragraph explaining why you think Char is acting this way? What kind of integrity does she have? How does Char’s behavior impact the book?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 42

"I stare at myself for maybe twenty minutes in Daddy's mirror. I don't get it. I think I'm kind of nice-looking. Why don't other people what I see?" (p. 42).

Writing Prompt

"Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things."

Was cutting her hair a new thing? **Write a paragraph explaining how Maleeka's new haircut helps her look 'on the outside' like how she feels 'on the inside'. What does trying new things teach us? Is it possible to learn and grow without trying new things? What do the women at the salon mean when they encourage her to have *attitude*? Have you ever wanted to change your appearance so the outside matched the inside?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 50-51

"I push my way past that new shirt Momma made, and hope she don't ask me about it. I don't want to hurt her feelings, but one shoulder is higher than the other one. She fixed it three times already, but it just ain't working. I don't want to tell her that, though. Sweets asks me all the time why I don't just tell Momma I don't want to wear her stuff. But I can't. Momma needs to keep sewing. If she don't, I ain't sure what's gonna happen to her" (p. 50-51).

Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph explaining how Maleeka is a giving and *selfless* daughter. Provide three examples from the novel to support your answer. Write a second paragraph explaining what selfless things you have done for someone else.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Skin I'm In, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 60

"I reach into my book bag and pull out some papers. Char and them are in a different math class than me. It's a class for kids who don't have a clue what's going on. I hand the homework to Raise. 'I didn't have time to do the social studies,' I say lying through my teeth. The social studies paper is still in my bag. It's the first time I don't give Char what she's asked for" (p. 60).

Writing Prompt

Maleeka's character is taking specific actions that demonstrate a transformation. **Write a paragraph explaining Maleeka's transformation. State three examples from the text to show the changes. What predictions do you have about this character?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 73-74

“The more she sewed them clothes, the better she got. She started picking up after herself. Got a job and all. No, ain't nothing good come from loving somebody so much you can't live without 'em,' I say. 'No good at all'” (p. 73-74).

Writing Prompt

Do you agree with Maleeka who says that it's not good to love someone so much that if they die you can't function any longer? **Write a paragraph explaining why or why not. Should there be a limit on how much we love others? Romeo and Juliet were willing to die for one another; is that extreme? Where does self-love enter into this equation?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Skin I'm In, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 80

“Miss Saunders has really got all the other teachers stirred up...Every day, she’s coming to me with some new idea she came up with. Questioning why things can’t be done differently...You get her inline, Charles. She is disrupting everything” (p. 80).

Writing Prompt

Do you think Miss Saunders has really done something wrong or she just wants to do things better and people are resisting change? **Write a paragraph explaining why you believe she just wants to do things better and why you think people are resisting change.** When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Why would people want to keep things like they are and not change, even if change would improve the situation?
- What keeps people stuck in old patterns?
- Drawing on what you learned 2nd quarter in the unit *change requires effort*, what does the school need that would help promote positive change?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Skin I'm In, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 103

"Miss Saunders says we were cutting class in the bathroom, smoking, destroying property. Dag, I'm thinking, it wasn't like Char was ripping out the sink. She was just writing her name on the wall with a marker. Just letting people know she'd been there" (p. 103).

Writing Prompt

Maleeka seems to be struggling with who she wants to be. Char doesn't treat Maleeka well, yet Maleeka continues to defend her. **Write a paragraph explaining to Maleeka why she should stop hanging out with Char. Is Char a good influence who wants the best for Maleeka? Does Char act with integrity? How does Char help Maleeka become a better person? Do you surround yourself with people who truly want the best for you?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 114-115

“Then Miss Saunders says she always had to be better than everyone else at everything, because people always thought she was less-than due to her face. She says she’s always had to dress better. To get the highest grades and be the most creative” (p. 114-115).

Writing Prompt

Write 1-2 paragraphs explaining why Miss Saunders is a perfectionist? Answer the following questions in your writing. Does the new information you learn about Miss Saunders change your impression of her? Do you agree with Tai’s advice to her to lessen the pressure she puts on herself and others? Would people’s opinion of you be different if they knew your full story? What kind of pressure do you put on yourself to be perfect?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 124

“Brown, Beautiful, Brilliant, My my Maleeka is Brown, Beautiful, Brilliant, Mine” (p. 124).

Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph or two explaining the importance of family. How do you think it felt for Maleeka to find a poem about her by her dead father? What feelings and thoughts come to you when you read the poem?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 136

"My heart starts beating fast and wild. I know Char's plan ain't gonna mean nothing but trouble for me. But I got to go along, anyhow. Nobody ever turns their back on Char. Not unless they're tired of living or something stupid like that" (p. 136).

Writing Prompt

What would you tell Maleeka to do if you were her friend, especially because now Char is thinking about doing things that could really get Maleeka in deeper trouble.

Write an informative paragraph in which you explain why Maleeka should stay away from Char. Describe how Maleeka can use the problem solving steps to confront Char instead of going along with her?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 142

“She’s the first to run. I’m the last. I’m grabbing hold of the bag of clothes she brought me. When I pick it up, the bag rips and the clothes fall out. I’m shoving them back in and trying to run at the same time. Clothes are dropping with every step I take. I janitor is yelling my name...” (p. 142).

Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph explaining how the author creates suspense within these chapters? Think about word choice and sentence fluency. How does she make it sound? Provide 1-2 quotes from the chapter to support your explanation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 153

“‘Least you’re keeping your mouth shut,’ he says, chewing on the gum.
‘Squealing on your friends ain’t even cool’” (p. 153).

Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph to describe the irony between John-John’s statement to Maleeka and the actions that got him beaten up.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Skin I'm In, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 167

“Call me by my name! I am not ugly. I am not stupid. I am Maleeka Madison, and, yeah, I’m black, real black, and if you don’t like me, too bad ‘cause black is the skin I’m in!’ I yell. ‘No matter what you think, Charlese Jones, you’re ten times worse. I would never force someone to burn down a classroom, or pick on kids weaker than me, or say words so mean they make people bleed inside’” (p. 167).

Writing Prompt

Maleeka stands up for herself. How did it feel for you as the reader to finally have her speak up? **Write 2-3 paragraphs to explain what Maleeka had learned throughout the course of the novel? In what way does her story echo the integrity requires wholeness theme? *Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.*** Describe the ways Maleeka embodies this theme.