

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 1



Key Paragraph-pg. 4

“Here she comes, Miss America!” Yolanda clasps her brow and groans melodramatically as expected. The chorus labors through the first phase and then rushes forward with hugs, kisses, and from a couple of boys—fake karate kicks.”

Writing Prompt

Yolanda struggles to fit in as an American and as a Dominican. Pretend you are Yolanda. Write a journal entry explaining your first impressions of the Dominican Republic since you have returned. Include 2-3 **narrative paragraphs** about your adventure searching for guavas. Provide two examples of wrong assumptions you had made. Conclude your entry with a reflection on these false assumptions. Lastly, determine your reasons for these assumptions.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 2



Key Paragraph- pg. 41

“The mother had devised the color code to save time. With four girls so close in age, she couldn’t indulge identities and hunt down a red cowboy shirt when the third daughter turned tomboy or a Mexican peasant blouse when the oldest discovered her Hispanic roots. As women, the four girls criticized the mother’s efficiency.”

Writing Prompt

Sofia and her father have a falling out over her trip to Colombia and for marrying a German man. Why is Papi upset with Sofia’s dating history? How are her dating choices different from cultural expectations? In an **explanatory paragraph** describe Sofia’s dating history and explain why her dating choices displease her father. Provide three examples to support your statement.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 3



Key Paragraph-pg. 57

“The young man smiles at his daughter. Mine is a girl too. The grandmother congratulates him. Good bulls sire cows, you know.”

Writing Prompt

Every person goes through difficult circumstances. Many people have stories they are not proud of. All difficult moments have a silver lining. In an explanatory paragraph describe how Mami finds a positive prospective of difficult moments. How do these stories create a new history of their family’s past? How does retelling a story with a positive prospective help redefine past events? Explain your answer using one of Mami’s stories.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 4



Key Paragraph-pg. 85

“The words tumble out, making a sound like the rumble of distant thunder, taking shape, depth, and substance. Yo continues: “Doc, Rock, Smock, Luck,” so many words. There is no end to what can be said about the world.”

Writing Prompt

Since Yolanda is a poet, words are very important to her. In an **explanatory paragraph** describe the importance of names. How are names linked to a person's identity? How do nicknames show affection or redefine a person. Describe how Yolanda is affected by her nicknames- Yolanda, Joe, Joey. Include three details from today's reading.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 5



Key Paragraph-pg. 87

“By then, I was lapsed Catholic; my sisters and I had been pretty well Americanized since our arrival in this country a decade before, so really, I didn’t have a good excuse. Why I didn’t just sleep with someone as persistent as Rudy Elmenhurst is a mystery I am exploring here by picking it apart the way we learned to do with each other’s poems. And stories in the English class where I met Rudolf Brodermann Elmenhurst, the third.”

Writing Prompt

Rudy and Yolanda have different attitudes towards sex. In an **explanatory paragraph**, describe how each character views sex. Why do you think Yolanda and Rudy have different viewpoints on relationships? Do you think it is because of their gender, religion, parental influence, culture? Provide three reasons to justify your statement.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 6



Key Paragraph-pg. 121

"We nicknamed him M.G., a make of car we consider slightly sleazy. A car one of our older cousins might get his Papi to buy him to impress the Island girls. We rev up imaginary motors at the mention of his name. He's such a tyrant! Rrrrrmmm. He's breaking Fifi's spirit! Rrrrrmmm-rrrrrrmm."

Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Sofia. You have moved from your home to a boarding school in America to your the Dominican Republic. Write a reflective journal entry about these transitions. How is each culture different? What struggles and challenges do you face in each location? In an informative paragraph, explain some of your decisions while living in each new home. Provide three details from today's reading.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 7



Key Paragraph-pg. 149

“But Laura’s inventing days were over just as Yolanda’s were starting up with her school-wide success. Rather than the rolling suitcase everyone else in the family remembers, Yolanda thinks of the speech her mother wrote as her last invention. It was if, after that, her mother passed on to Yolanda her pencil and pad and said “okay, Cuquita, here’s the buck. You give it a shot.”

Writing Prompt

Laura and Yolanda seek new identities as they strive to assimilate into American culture. Laura, transitions from being a high class Dominican woman to an immigrant mother in the United States. Yolanda works to find her identity as she grows up between two cultures. In an explanatory paragraph, describe how Laura uses her inventions and Yolanda uses her speech- to find their voice in their new society. Provide three facts to support your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 8



Key Paragraph-pg. 167

“Snow,” I repeated. I looked out the window warily. All my life I heard about the white crystals that fell out of American skies in the winter. From my desk I watched the fine powder dust the sidewalk and parked cars below. Each Flake was different, Sister Zoe had said, like a person, irreplaceable and beautiful.”

Writing Prompt

As the oldest of all the sisters, Carla had spent more years in the Dominican Republic and therefore, had a more difficult time adjusting to her new home in America. Pretend you are Carla. Write a journal entry that describes your difficult transition. Include an **explanatory paragraph** about how other people treat you as an immigrant and how this makes you feel. Provide three details from today’s reading.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 9



Key Paragraph-pg. 190

"You are much too kind," her mother said to Mrs. Fanning and then in a hard voice with the promise of later punishment, she addressed the four girls, "What do you say?"

Writing Prompt

Despite Laura's attempt to ensure her daughters are well behaved, the family dinner with the Fannings turns out to be an awkward and embarrassing evening. Pretend you are a reporter for a gossip magazine; write an article about the evening. You can choose one character (Mrs. Fanning, Carlos, Laura, or Sandra) to write about and explain why the evening was embarrassing or awkward for them. Write an informative paragraph that explains their embarrassing situation. Provide three details from today's reading to add to your article.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 10



Key Paragraph-pg. 214

“Pupo sits among these strange white people, ashamed and cornered. Already he is feeling the whip coming down like judgment on his bared back. They are all strangely quiet. Listening to Checo’s voice full of disclaimer, and when he falls silent only to their own breathing as the hand of God draws closer. Whether it will pick up the saved or cast out the lost is unclear yet to Pupo, who picks up his empty glass and for comfort, tinkles the ice.

Writing Prompt

The Garcia family experiences a dramatic event before leaving the Dominican Republic. This incident still deeply affects each individual family member in different ways. In an explanatory paragraph, describe how the Garcia family survived the near death experience with the Dominican Republic dictator police. Provide three details to support your descriptions.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 11



Key Paragraph-pg. 219

“But here is what I do remember of my last day on the Island. Chucha came into our bedrooms with this bundle in her hands, and Nivea, who was helping us pack, said to her in a gruff voice, “What do you want, old woman?” None of the maids liked Chucha because they all thought she was kind of below them, being so black and Haitian and all. Chucha, though, just gave Nivea one of her spelling looks, and all of sudden, Nivea remembered that she had to iron our outfits for wearing on the airplane.”

Writing Prompt

Yolanda and her sisters are very close to their family, especially their cousins. Pretend you are Yolanda and write you cousins a letter describing your move to the U.S. In an explanatory paragraph describe Yolanda’s first impressions of her new home. End the letter with 3-5 questions Yolanda would ask her family.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 12



Key Paragraph-pg. 249

"I wanted to find out something secret about Dona Charito. At my age, that is what I knew of revenge. What someone kept in a bedside drawer? What color was someone's underwear? What did someone look like squatting awkwardly on a small chamber pot. Then, when that someone fell upon me with violent discipline, I could undo with a gaze: I know you, I know you."

Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Don Jose, struggling to create the face of the Virgin Mary on your sculpture. From your prospective, describe the moment when you unexpectedly saw Sandra's face. In an explanatory paragraph describe what you were doing before Sandra appeared, what you were thinking when you saw her, and how this moment influenced your arts. Include three details to create a descriptive story.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 13



Key Paragraph-pg. 272

"I gave it to her," I confessed.

My father looked up at me, then exchanged a glance with my mother.

"Next time your father brings you a gift—" my mother began to scold, but Papi cut her off.

"We're just going to have to get better presents, Mami," he said. Winking at me. "I don't see the dancing dolls being left out in the rain or given away to the maid!"

Writing Prompt

Carla had built a close relationship with Gladys. Carla's gift to Gladys led to Gladys being fired. As Gladys, write a letter to the Garcia family to explain the misunderstanding. In an explanatory paragraph, kindly describe the situation from your point of view. Include one reason why you would never want to harm the Garcia family. Also provide two reasons why you need the job working with the Garcia family.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 14



Key Paragraph-pg. 282

"I needed, therefore, to question an adult who might know everything and between lightning and chickens, I could slip in a question on kittens. But whom could I ask who would be sure to know about kittens? And whom could I ask who would be sure to know about kittens but would not suspect my secret."

Writing Prompt

Yolanda's new drum from Mamita becomes annoying to Mami. As Mami, write a letter to Mamita explaining thanking her for the gift but explaining why Mamita shouldn't buy her children noisy gifts. In an **explanatory paragraph** kindly describe the headache the drum has brought. Provide three details from today's reading to support your statements.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Day 15



Key Paragraph-pg.289

“Then we moved to the United States. The cat disappeared altogether. I saw snow. I solved the riddle of an outdoors made mostly of concrete in New York. My grandmother grew so old she could not remember who she was. I went away to school I read books. You understand I am collapsing all the time now so that it fits in what’s left in the hollow of my story?”

Writing Prompt

Yolanda’s story about the kittens continues to haunt her in her adulthood. As Yolanda, write two stories about Yolanda’s experience with the kittens.

Write one explanatory story from Yolanda’s perspective as a child and one story as Yolanda’s perspective as an adult. In both stories describe how you feel about the situation. (Remember, as an adult Yolanda has different feelings about her actions.)