

The Red Badge of Courage



THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE



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Synopsis	Deserting his battalion, 18-year-old Henry Fleming escapes into the woods. He finds a group of injured soldiers and is embarrassed that he is healthy and whole. Find out how Henry proves his courage as a man on the battlefield.
Themes	American History; War and Conflict

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 4

“From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be some sort of a play affair. He had long despaired of witnessing a Greeklike struggle. Such would be no more, he had said. Men were better, ore more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions.”

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Henry's attitudes towards fighting changed over time. Write two paragraphs that describe Henry's thoughts, hopes, and fears. Support your arguments with quotes from the text.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 24

“He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at the menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was part—a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country—was in crisis. He was welded into common personality which was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Henry deserted his fellow soldiers, thinking that the Union Army cannot fight this battle. Did he do the right thing? Why or why not? Write two paragraphs that include a thesis statement and supporting arguments.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 37

“At times he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Review the US Army values at <https://www.army.mil/values/>

Write 2–3 paragraphs comparing Henry’s behavior and his justification of his behavior to the army values.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 46

“A defeat of the army had suggested itself to him as a means of escape from the consequences of his fall. He considered, now, however, that it was useless to think of such a possibility. His education had been that success for that might blue machine was certain; that it would make victories as a contrivance turns out buttons. He presently discarded all his speculations in the other direction. He returned to the creed of the soldiers.”

Instructions

In your analysis of the key paragraph, clarify on the meaning of the following phrases:

- “his fall”
- “blue machine”
- “the creed of the soldiers”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Henry had a moral problem. On the one hand, he wanted to wish victory to the Union Army. On the other hand, he knew that a defeat would be better for him because many other soldiers will likely desert the regiment and flee from the battlefield. He will not be the only dishonorable soldier. Write one or two paragraphs about Henry’s moral struggle. Use quotes from the text.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 58

“His self-pride was now entirely restored. In the shade of its flourishing growth he stood with braced and self-confident legs, and since nothing could now be discovered, he did not shrink from an encounter with the eyes of judges and allowed no thoughts of his own to keep him from an attitude of manfulness. He had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man.”

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Given Henry's high sense of virtuous sense of self, the reader should ask the question – is Henry's self-perception accurate? Is he a highly moral person? To address this question, we will use Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. This theory postulates three main stages of development:

- Stage 1: People choose a moral action to avoid punishment and negative public opinion.
- Stage 2: people choose a moral action based on the good intentions of the doer and the amount of resulting damage.
- Stage 3: People choose a moral action because of genuine compassion and willingness to protect and promote the well-being of others. They recognize universal ethical principles for moral behavior.

Write 2–3 paragraphs expressing your opinion. Support your arguments with evidence from the text.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 64

“His fingers twined nervously about his rifle. He wished that it was an engine of annihilation power. He felt that he and his companions were being taunted and derided from sincere convictions that they were poor and puny. His knowledge of his inability to take vengeance for it made his rage into a dark and stormy specter, that possessed him and made him dream of abominable cruelties.”

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Over the course of the battle, Henry experiences a range of intense emotions: fear, shame, pride, anger, and pity. His emotions drive his action. For example, his shame leads him to avoid the truth or to tell lies. His anger drives him to fight fiercely at the front line. Write a paragraph about the relationship between emotions and moral behavior. Use examples from the text.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 77

"The youth in this contemplation was smitten with a large astonishment. He discovered that the distances, as compared with the brilliant measurings of his mind, were trivial and ridiculous. The solid trees, where much had taken place, seemed incredibly near. The time, too, now that he reflected, he saw to have been short. He wondered at the number of emotions and events that had been crowded into such little spaces."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Henry discovered that, in battle, time stretches and distances seem larger than they really are. Write two paragraphs about the illusions of time and space that Henry has experienced. Did these biased sensory and cognitive perceptions affect his judgement? Use evidence from the text.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Red Badge of Courage, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 87

"He saw that he was good. He recalled with a thrill of joy the respectful comments of his fellows upon his conduct.

Nevertheless, the ghost of his flight from the first engagement appeared to him and danced. There was a small shouting in his brain about these matters. For a moment he blushed, and the light of his soul flickered with shame."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Your final writing assignment is to write a letter from Henry to his mother. Use a first-person voice and try to share your experiences while providing reassurance that you are doing well. Your letter should be at least 250 words long and include some of your thoughts, emotions, and opinions, based on the story.