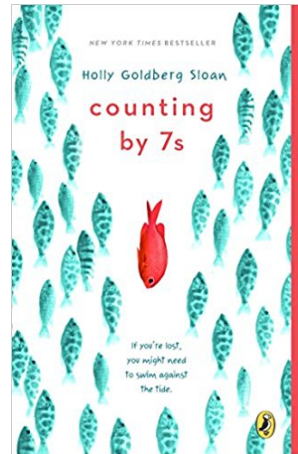


Counting by 7s

Writing Prompts



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Synopsis

Twelve-year-old genius and outsider Willow Chase must figure out how to connect with other people and find a surrogate family for herself after her parents are killed in a car accident.

Themes

Special needs; Trauma

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 14

“If plants made sounds, it would all be different. But they communicate with color and shape and size and texture. They don’t meow or bark or tweet. We think they don’t have eyes, but they see the angle of the sun and the rise of the moon. They don’t just *feel* the wind; they change directions because of it. Before you think I’m crazy (Which is always a possibility), look outside. Right now. I’m hoping that your view isn’t of a parking lot or the side of a building. I’m imagining you see a tall tree with delicate leaves. You catch sight of swaying grass in a wide field. Weeds pushing up through a crack in the sidewalk are in the distance somewhere. We are surrounded. I’m asking you to pay attention in a new way and view it all as being Alive. With a capital A.”

EXTEND

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

An Educational consultant evaluated Willow as being “highly gifted.” Immediately, Willow asked herself if people could be “lowly gifted,” “medium gifted,” or just “gifted.” What are some positive outcomes to labeling or categorizing people in such a way? What are some negative outcomes? Why are these discussions important?

Write a 2-3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 22

“When Fallen was finally strong enough to fly, I reintroduced him back to his flock. It was incredibly rewarding. It was also heartbreaking. It has been my experience that rewarding and heartbreaking often go hand in hand.”

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

If the principal of your school were accusing you of plagiarism – as Willow’s principal did – what would you do? What would be the pros of standing your ground? What would be the cons? Would you involve other people, or try and face it alone? What do you think Willow will do?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 44

“Labels were important. And they were very effective. It was just too crazy to think of these kids on an individual basis...Weirdos were fingernail-biters and liked to scratch themselves. They had secrets and were probably late to be toilet trained. The bottom line was that Weirdos were just plain weird because of their unpredictability. And in Dell’s opinion, they could be dangerous. It was always best to simply let a weirdo be.”

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

In what ways could Dell’s approach be considered efficient and positive? In what ways could it be interpreted as negative and hurtful? Do you agree with Dell’s labels and his definition of “Weirdos?”

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 69

“Mai had true confidence. Or as she liked to see herself, she was born strong-willed, while a lot of the world was wishy-washy. Adults didn’t intimidate her, and neither did strangers of any age. Because Mai, as her mother reminded people, was born in the year of the dragon; and that meant nobility and power and strength.”

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

Why do you think Willow is fascinated by Mai? What characteristics do they have in common? How are they different? What do you think their relationship will be like going forward, especially with Willow having difficulty with people her age?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 109–110

“The shadows get longer. I sit on the front steps. The tears will not stop. And I almost never cry. But I’m not myself. I will forever be someone else now. The two people I need to get in touch with, the two people who most need to hear this most horrible news, are not here. My teeth start to shatter. I want to shut my eyes and make everything stop. I no longer care if my heart pounds in my chest or if my lungs move.”

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

What do you think will happen to Willow next? How do you think she can use her smarts, and her ability to adapt to situations to get through this difficult time? Use specific examples of Willow’s past behavior to give an idea of how she might cope in the future.

Write a 2-3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 134

"Everyone, I now realize, lives in a world of pain. But I'm certain that mine is greater than hers. The woman with the bad back talks up front to Pattie. I have no idea for how long. I'm done measuring things. I only hear parts of the conversation. Although it is about me, it doesn't matter. Nothing that they say will change the fundamental fact of my life, which is so overwhelming that I cannot give voice to it."

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

In order to be resourceful, we must take some initiative. Willow prefers to take this kind of initiative by herself. How might accepting help from people, even if they don't understand her pain, be beneficial to her? How might it be problematic?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 174

"I'm surprised, but a lot of the people who I think might be homeless (from the amount of things they are forced to leave downstairs at the front desk) go online. I can see that they check their Facebook pages. I watch these people click through pictures and view the same kind of videos as the bored-looking teenagers who show up once school is out. I'm not sure why this is reassuring, but it is."

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

Mai tried to squish an acorn, but it was tough, and in her mind, a survivor. In what ways is Willow like the acorn? How is she being resourceful and tough during this difficult time? In what ways could she be even stronger and more resourceful?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 224

“I think now about how small birds often move in large flocks. From a distance, it can even look like smoke. It is unclear why they suddenly shift directions. The birds appear to have lost their individual intention. They are part of a bigger organization of life. And they accept that. Something inside them gives in. Scientists don’t know what that is. Right now I’m in a flock. And so is Dell Duke. Whether he likes it or not.”

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

Why might it be helpful for Willow to be “in a flock?” When was the last time that you felt a part of a community or a flock of your own? How was it helpful? How was it problematic?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 9



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 278

"That's why this running matters. I think that the effort put forward in matters of physical exertion is more important than the outcome. And I'm not just saying that because gym teachers have told me this in the past. A new reality is emerging. I actually like my pink-and-purple flamingo shoes. So maybe the jarring movement of jogging is clouding my judgement. Even though my exercise regime only takes sixteen minutes, I find that I'm thinking about it when I'm not doing it. I know that vigorous exercise changes brain chemistry. In my current situation, there is nothing more I could ask for."

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

Willow uses her initiative to tap into local resources and eventually build a garden. This resourcefulness requires her to step up and do things she doesn't often do. Describe a time in which you used your initiative to utilize resources and make a change? If you cannot think of a time, describe a change to your community you would want to make.

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Counting by 7s, Day 10



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 359

“All of us are all those things. I’m no genius. I’m as much of a lone wolf or a misfit or a weirdo as anyone.

When it came to the garden, I was a dictator.

If there is anything I’ve figured out in the last months it’s that you can find labels to organize living things, but you can’t put people in any kind of group or order. It just doesn’t work that way.”

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

In which of Dell’s categories do you feel you fit? Is it possible to be just one thing? When was it helpful for you to identify in a certain way? When does it become unhelpful?

Write a 2–3 paragraph narrative. Use as much detail as you can.