

Pygmalion

Writing Prompts



ISBN-13	978-1503290907
Author	George Bernard Shaw
Publisher	Black & White Classics
First Published	1912
Print Year	2014
Lexile	1340L
Genre	Comedy and Social commentary
Synopsis	Eliza Doolittle was selling flowers when her speech is overheard by Henry Higgins. Higgins proclaims he can transform Eliza from a flower merchant to a lady of a higher social class simply by teaching her phonetics. Eliza seeks Higgins's teachings and embarks on a transformation of language, class, and identity.
Themes	Power of words, identity, language, relationships, social class

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 8–9

"I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the gentleman. I've a right to sell flowers if I keep off the kerb. I'm a respectable girl: so help me, I never spoke to him except to ask him to buy a flower off me...Oh, sir, don't let him charge me. You dunno what it means to me. They'll take away my character and drive me on the streets for speaking to gentlemen. They—."

EXTEND

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

Identity is a central theme of *Pygmalion*. For each ACT, you will write 1–2 paragraphs in response to the prompt about identity. Utilize the book for examples and provide either personal or external examples as well to defend your view. On the last day you will use what you have written to complete an essay.

Today, please write a thesis statement for your essay. Reflect on the following questions for inspiration; what is identity? Why is it important? What forms of identity can we control?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 18–19

Higgins “Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I’ll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We’ll start today: now! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won’t come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?”

Mrs. Pearce [protesting]. “Yes; but—“

Higgins [storming on] “Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her in brown paper till they come.”

EXTEND

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

Today, please write one or two paragraphs about sense of identity. Prejudice and stereotypes can affect people’s self-identity. Utilize the book for examples and provide either personal or external examples as well to defend your view.

Consider these questions: How do Liza’s speech and appearance impact the way she is treated compared to the others around her? What assumptions do people make about her? Is the identity a person perceives you to have always correct?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 42

Mrs. Higgins “You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.”

Higgins “Playing! The hardest job I ever tackled: make no mistake about that, mother. But you have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It’s filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul.”

EXTEND

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

Today, please write one or two paragraphs about the ways a person can effectively communicate about their identity to others. Utilize the book for examples and provide either personal or external examples as well to defend your view.

Consider these questions: In what ways is Liza’s identity being manipulated to conform to the expectations of others? How has Liza’s change in attire changed her attitudes towards her former identity?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 46

Liza [breathless] “Nothing wrong—with YOU. I’ve won your bet for you, haven’t I? That’s enough for you. / don’t matter, I suppose.”

Higgins “YOU won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! / won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?”

Liza “Because I wanted to smash your face. I’d like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn’t you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it’s all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you?” [She crisps her fingers, frantically].

EXTEND

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

Today, please write one or two paragraphs about the reasons a person may choose not to express their identity to some or all people around them. Use the book or real-world events for examples.

Consider: At the completion of the bet Liza confronts Higgins, expressing her status as that of a flower merchant. What does this say about the way Liza views herself?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 58

Liza “I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn’t it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn’t do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she’s treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.”

EXTEND

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

Today, please write one or two paragraphs about social identity—self-concept resulting from one’s socio-demographic characteristics, such as ethnicity, gender, or family’s income. Utilize the book for examples and provide either personal or external examples as well to defend your view.

Consider: How much control does a person have regarding this form of identity? How does this form of identity impact the way an individual is treated? How does being a member of a group shape the ways an individual views themselves and is viewed by others?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Pygmalion, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 72

"It exasperated her to think that the dungeon in which she had languished for so many unhappy years had been unlocked all the time, and that the impulses she had so carefully struggled with and stifled for the sake of keeping well with society, were precisely those by which alone she could have come into any sort of sincere human contact."

EXTEND

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

Final Writing Product

Your final writing product will be an argumentative essay in response to the following questions:

How do personal and social identity influence opportunities to live a good life?
What power do people have over their identity, and therefore their opportunities?

Your essay should include at least 750 words (three pages double-spaced). You may use your thesis statement and previous writing responses for parts of the essay.

The essay should be concise – avoid repetition and redundancy in statements. Use the following checklist to evaluate your work:

- The essay begins with a clear argument.
- The essay provides examples to clarify on the reasoning.
- The essay includes good transition sentences and phrases.
- The essay thoughtfully presents counterarguments.
- There is a topic sentence in each paragraph.
- There is a logical progression from one paragraph to the next.
- The essay ends with a strong conclusion.