

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Part 2: "Finding a Way"

### Writing Prompts

#### MISSION US: "Prisoner in My Homeland"

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*A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR: You will need to decide how best to share these writing prompts with your students. You might share them all and ask students to choose one for a response. You might assign one or more to the entire group. You might make one or more of the topics the basis for in-class discussions. Make your decisions according to the needs of your group.*

*You may notice that many of the topics contain some version of the phrase, "Write about a time in your life..." The intention of these prompts is twofold: first, since students remember the content of their own lives, they can more easily respond to the questions and they are more likely to want to express themselves if they feel competent to do so; second, these questions can form a meaningful bridge between what happens in the lives of ordinary people today and the lives of people in history or in historical events themselves. For these reasons, you might decide to use some of those prompts before students encounter the history because thinking about them sets the students up to understand it and to relate to it.*

*Since students vary in their degree of comfort and skill in writing, you should decide when students write and how much students should write. We do suggest, though, that since students need to share their writing with each other to make personal and historical connections, you encourage them to focus on content rather than on mechanical skills. Pieces can be revised and edited later if you decide they should be shared more formally (such as on a bulletin board or newsletter).*

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Read through all the topics. Then choose one of them to write about. Write the title of the piece at the top of your page. Write in complete sentences. After you are finished, proofread your work for correctness.

#### **TEACHERS.**

During Part 2 of the game, Henry Tanaka is nervous about a history test. He arrives early at school and has a conversation with his teacher, Ms. Nelson, who has newly arrived at Manzanar from Berkeley, California. Henry and Ms. Nelson talk about him going to college and the rising tensions in camp over a potential military draft. Why do you think Henry has such an easy time talking to Ms. Nelson? Have you ever had a teacher that you've been able to confide in? Write about an influential teacher in your life. Describe why this teacher was important to you. You might want to write about a teacher who, like Ms. Nelson, supported you during a difficult time.

#### **RESEARCHING A HERO.**

As a class assignment, Ms. Nelson assigns an essay about a hero of American democracy as an extra credit assignment. Meiko Yamamoto and Henry go to the library and research Mitsuye Endo. Endo is a Japanese American woman who, like Henry and Meiko, is incarcerated in a camp with her family. Endo is the lead plaintiff in a legal case that will challenge the U.S. government's decision to imprison its own citizens. Why do you imagine Henry and Meiko are drawn to Endo's story? If you were assigned the same essay, who would you choose as an American hero? Describe this person's life, characteristics, and why you consider them to be a heroic person.

#### **TAKING ACTION.**

During Part 2, you had the option of helping Harry Ueno research the possible theft of the sugar rations by administrative staff at Manzanar. Harry Ueno asks Henry to go to each of the mess halls and record the sugar deliveries. While Henry finds the task a bit boring, he believes it is one small task he can do to challenge potential wrongdoing in the camp. Consider a time in your own life when you learned about an unfair situation in your school or community. Write about the situation in detail: What made it unfair? Who were the people involved? Finally, describe what you did (or hoped to do) to approach this problem.

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##### REUNION.

In Part 2, Henry reunites with his father, Kinzo Tanaka, who has been under arrest at a Department of Justice prison. What do you think went through Henry's head when he realized it was his father standing inside of the barrack? What do you imagine it was like for Henry to see his father after a period of separation? Write a first-person essay from Henry's perspective about reuniting with his father. What are some of his joys? His worries? His hopes for the near future?

##### JUDO.

In Part 2, Tadashi, a friend of Henry's at Manzanar, comes by his barrack. Henry and Tadashi then try to recruit Henry's father, a former sensei in Bainbridge Island's Japanese Hall, to come to practice judo at the dojo. Kinzo Tanaka is reluctant to go with the two young men. Why do you think that Kinzo protests going? And why do Tadashi and Henry try so hard to get him to accompany them? In your own experience, has a recreational activity such as judo helped you in a challenging time in your life? Write about the benefits of judo in camp for Tadashi, Henry, and Kinzo. Then, write about a sport, hobby, or activity that you pursue outside of school and work. Discuss the role of this activity in your life and why it is important to you.

##### ESTABLISHING NORMAL LIFE.

Throughout Part 2, you learn about some of the ways that the prisoners attempt to establish normal routines and activities inside of the prison camp. Henry goes to school, studies for a test, and talks about baseball games. His sister, Lily, has joined the Glee Club and pesters Henry to take her to the camp dance. Why do you think prisoners have gone to such great lengths to re-establish these institutions and activities? Do you think it is possible to experience a "normal" life inside the camp? Why or why not?