

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Writing Prompts

Epilogue

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

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 to respond to. You may assign one or more to the entire group. You might make one or more of the topics the basis for in-class discussions. Where there are multiple questions in a single prompt, choose the question or questions that best suit your students. 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 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. For these reasons, you might decide to use some of the prompts before students encounter the history, because thinking about them sets the students up to understand and relate to the material better.

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

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Read through all the topics first, and 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.

TROUBLEMAKER. Lena is able to go back to work because she was not considered a "troublemaker" by her boss at the Triangle Factory. Write about a time when someone labeled you negatively. How did it make you feel to be called the name? Were there ways that you could change the way people saw you?

WORST DAY. Lena calls the day of the Triangle Factory Fire the worst day of her life. What do you think made this day so terrible? Think about a time where you had a terrible day. Describe the circumstance of your worst day and how you were able to get through it.

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS. During the game, garment workers stand up for their rights as workers. Ultimately, their efforts help pass legislation that improves the conditions for all workers in America. Think about the issues of today. When you think about your own city, are there problems that you think need to be addressed? Write about an issue you think is important and what lessons you learned from Lena's experience 100 years ago that can help you to solve it.

LENA'S DIARY. Through Lena's eyes, think about your circumstances from the beginning to the end of this part of "City of Immigrants." Share your emotions and feelings about each step of the journey. Think about the people with whom you interacted, and what you learned from them. Think about the choices you made and the consequences of those choices. Now write a diary entry from Lena's point-of-view summarizing what happened to you in the epilogue. You may choose to illustrate one aspect of your entry.