

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Writing Prompts

Part 2: Neighbors in Need

MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

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 class. 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 suits 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 intent 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. 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 it better.

Since students vary in their degree of comfort and skill in writing, 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 for correctness.

I HATE THIS ROAD. Ginny and her friend Thelma Mitchell drive the Mitchells' truck to the church and country store to complete Ginny's assigned chores. Ginny is only fourteen years old in Part 2. Currently in the United States, the minimum age able to obtain a driver's license is fourteen years, three months (in South Dakota). In New Jersey, the minimum age is seventeen, which is the highest in the country. At what age should you be able to legally drive a vehicle? What should the requirements be for getting a driver's license? Should age matter? Do Ginny and Frank seem more responsible to you than fourteen year olds today? Why?

DOING THEIR PART. Mrs. Dunn asks Ginny to drop off a bag of clothes at a Red Cross clothing drive. People in Dalhart are banding together to help those in need. Has there been a time in your life when you or your family supported a charity, or donated money or items to a cause you believe in? Why was it important to do so? If you were going to donate money to an important cause today, what would it be? Why would you pick this cause?

A FRIEND IN NEED. Thelma confides to Ginny that her family is having some financial problems, and she is worried they may have to leave town. If you have a problem, or if something is worrying you, who do you confide in? What makes this person the best person with whom to share your problems? What are the best things a person can do when you present a problem to him or her? What might Ginny be able to do to help Thelma and make her feel a little better?

NEEDS VS. WANTS. When Ginny arrives at the country store, she tries to trade her butter and eggs for coffee, baking soda, and other items, including pineapple for Thelma's special 4-H recipe. The butter and eggs are not enough to pay for all of the items Ginny wants, so she must make some choices about what to get, what to leave behind, and what to potentially buy on store credit. What items did you choose to get at the store? How did you pay for those items? Did you get the pineapple? Is the pineapple something you *needed*, or something you *wanted*? What is the difference between *needs* and *wants*? Is Mrs. Dunn's request for coffee a *need* or a *want*? Why?

CREDIT PROBLEMS. In Part 2, Ginny must decide whether or not she will buy groceries on credit at the country store. "Credit" is the idea that a person can buy items or services before



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payment, based on the trust that payment can be made at a future time. Credit can sometimes make life easier, since it enables you to purchase things before you have all of the needed money. However, anything purchased on credit will have to be paid for at some point. Did you choose to buy anything on credit? Why or why not? Why might purchasing on credit create difficulties for the Dunns in the future? Interview an older friend or family member about how credit can be used, and why it can sometimes create problems.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ. Frank Dunn is reading the novel *The Red Badge of Courage* in Part 2. He is very interested in the action and adventure of the story. Throughout the game, Frank has expressed interest in traveling and seeing new places. What sorts of books do you most like to read? What does your favorite book—or favorite type of book—reflect about you?

MARCH ON! The drifter Frank meets in the farmyard explains that he is trying to get to Washington, D.C. to meet up with the Bonus Army. What is the Bonus Army asking for? What group protest actions have you heard about or studied before? Do you think these actions are effective? Why or why not?

GINNY OR FRANK'S JOURNAL. Through either Frank or Ginny's eyes, think about your circumstances from the beginning to the end of this part of "The Hardest Times." Think about your emotions and feelings about life on the farm and with your family. Think about what might lie ahead. Think about the choices you made and the consequences of those choices. Now write a diary entry from either Frank or Ginny's point-of-view summarizing what happened to you in Part 2. You may choose to illustrate one aspect of your entry.