



# Freedom Writers Diary

Journal entries

# Diary 1

- o In diary 1, the student describes what he/she thinks of Mrs. Gruwell's class.
- o Write what you think of our class/school in an honest and thought-provoking way. What were your first impressions? What have you learned? What do you love or hate about this class/school?

# Diary 2

- Cliques, groups, stereotypes— segregation— that is what is described in Diary 2 and 3.
- What are the different “groups” at WCHS?  
How do feel about the “segregation” at our school?



# Diary 3

- o Diary 8 is about a girl pledging a sorority to try to fit in at school.
- o What are your thoughts about the importance of being accepted by people at school? How far do you go to fit in?

# Diary 4

- o In Diary 24 the student comes to understand what home means to him in an unconventional way.
- o What does “home” mean to you? Where are the places where you feel at home?

# Diary 5

- o In Diary 29 a student faces prejudice based on the way he dresses.
- o What are your thoughts on how much we judge people by what they wear? How has this affected you?



# Diary 6

- o In Diary 31 the student describes Mrs. Gruwell's "Toast for Change" activity.
- o What is the one thing you want to change about your life? What do you "toast" for change?

# Response to Habit #1

- What are some of the things in the “circle of no control” for the students in the Freedom Writers Diary?
- What is in your circle of no control?  
What do you usually think you can control when really you can't?



# Being a Change Agent

- o In “7 habits...” it states, “You have the power within to rise above whatever may have been passed down to you... no matter how bad your predicament is, you can become a change agent and create a new life for yourself and whatever may follow.”
- o What are the students in Freedom Writers Diary doing to become change agents? Response should include specific example and be in paragraph form. Turn in.

## o CHANGE

- o I was ... (a description of who you were)
- o I remember... (describe a sad memory from your past)
  - o I heard... (something you wish you didn't hear)
  - o I saw... (something you weren't supposed to see)
  - o I worried... (something that troubled you)
- o I thought... (a description of where your life was headed)
  - o But, I want to change.
- o I am... (an accurate characteristic of who you are)
  - o I think... (how you perceive the world)
  - o I need... (a goal you wish to fulfill)
- o I try ...(something that will help you improve yourself )
  - o I feel... (describe an emotion)
- o I forgive.... (someone or something that caused you pain)
  - o Now I can change.
- o I will... (a positive prediction of who you will be)
- o I choose... (something you want to do differently)
- o I dream... (something you dare to dream about)
  - o I hope... (something positive you strive for)
- o I predict... (how you see yourself in the future)
  - o I know... (a description of your future self )
- o I will change



# Diary 7

- o In Diary 43 Ms. Gurwell has the students read the poem “Moment” and asked the question: If you could live an eternity and not change a thing or exist for the blink of an eye and alter everything, what would you choose?
- o What is your answer? Are you capable of becoming a change agent?



# Diary 8

- o In Diary 50, the student describes being addicted to drugs and not knowing how to change herself.
- o What are some of the choices in your life that you have regretted? Have you had the will-power or chance to change or fix those choices?

# Diary 9

- o In Diary 55 the Junior level students are reading American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. His ideas are powerful enough to add to our “inspiration wall”
- o We will not read all of his poetry– that is for your Junior year 😊– but what do you think about the two quotes from the Diary “Who so should be a man, must be a nonconformist” and “To be great is to be misunderstood” How do they relate to our other poems?

# Diary 10

- o In Diary 61, the student realizes that racism and prejudice also relates to gender roles. There are double-standards for men and women.
- o Have you ever felt like you were judged because you were a guy or girl? What are some of the stereotypes for guys and girls at our school?



# Diary 11

- o In Diary 74 and 75, the students speak directly of being what we now know is called a Change Agent. They understand Habit # 1 and #2
- o Thinking back to your “toast for change”, what are your plans and goals for becoming a change agent in your life? What ways of thinking, habits, plans are you changing?

# Diary 12

Do you think the Freedom Writers students would have made a change in their life or become Change Agents if they had never met Mrs. Gruwell? How much of an impact on their lives has this one teacher made? Would any of them have made the decisions they made without her influence? Discuss your answer in paragraph form and gives reasons for your answer. Use specific details from the book to support your answer.