



OAKLAND
PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND



**OAKLAND
SCHOOL
VOLUNTEERS**

6th - 12th Grade Writing Prompts

Alienation, Isolation, and Persecution

- Have you ever experienced any of these feelings?
 - If you're unsure, feel free to look up the definitions of alienation, isolation, and persecution using a [dictionary](#). Start by writing those definitions at the top of your paper.
 - In what situations have you felt alienated, isolated, or persecuted?
 - What/who helped you work through those feelings of alienation, isolation, or persecution? In other words, how did you eventually feel empowered, included, and respected?
 - Write about the examples of these themes that you saw in the book(s) you read. What was your reaction when these things came up in the book while reading?
- Why do you think kids tease each other? Is teasing always mean, or can it be friendly too? How can you tell the difference? Please feel free to think about real-life examples of teasing that you have witnessed or been a part of.
- [Look up](#) the words fear, bigotry, and hatred and start by writing those definitions down.
 - Now think about a time that you witnessed or have been confronted by someone's expressed fear or bigotry. What did you observe and how do you know that it was an expression of fear, bigotry or hatred?
 - What would you want that people involved to know, now that you have some distance from the situation?
 - Would you react differently if you observed the situation today, and if so, how?

Community

- A community is a group of people who share something in common. Members of a community are unified by a feeling of caring about others in their group. Communities support each other in everyday ways, but they are also mobilized when disasters occur around them.
 - What communities do you belong to?
 - How do people in your community express their care for each other in everyday ways?
 - How have you seen your community come together in the face of challenges, disasters, or conflict?
 - What do you appreciate about your community? What makes your community special to you?
- Write about an item or article of clothing that has been handed down to you or someone in your family.
 - Why is this item important to your family? What makes this item valuable for your culture or community?
 - What sort of memories or emotions does it evoke for you? Do you envision handing anything down to future generations and if so, what is it and why would you want to share it this way?

Diversity

- Think about the term we are celebrating this week (ex: “Asian Pacific American”, “African American”, “Latinx” or “LGBTQ+” and what groups belong under the umbrella terms. If you’re unsure, feel free to do some research.
 - Consider: Is being Indian American the same thing as being Korean American? Explain your thoughts about this.
- So much of what we know about the way the world works is shaped by what we learn within our own families, cultures, and societies. That’s why it’s so exciting to learn about other communities’ traditions, practices, and beliefs.
 - Write about something new and interesting you learned about the group we’re celebrating.
 - Why were you excited to learn about this?
 - What would you be most excited to teach others about your own culture or family?
 - Why is it important to share about the things that make us unique and different?
- How are characters in the book you read unique? In other words, what qualities do they have that affect the way others perceive them?
 - What quirks or attributes do you have that have ever made you feel different from other people?
 - Do such traits actually make people “different”?

Immigration

- Compose a short story as if you are leaving your home for a new one. You may take only one small suitcase with you. Consider the following:
 - Where would you go? What items would you take with you? Who would you want to accompany you on this journey?
 - Why would you want to go to this new place? How would you feel about leaving home?
 - What kind of problems might be encountered in the process? (consider language/communication, cultural differences, ethnic and racial intolerance)
- There have been several anti-immigration laws in the US, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Research the various decrees and write a brief report in which you compare and contrast them.
 - How have these laws affected various races and cultures in the US?
 - How have they affected the population and the percentages of races in the US?
- Interview someone who has immigrated to the United States. This can be someone in your household, or you may arrange to call or video conference a friend or family member that you know has immigrated. Make sure that the person you are reaching out to is aware that you are interested to hear about their immigration story. Ask such questions as:
 - Why did you leave? Was your decision voluntary? If so, why did you choose to move to the US?
 - What were some of the emotions you felt? Did you have any preconceived ideas about the US? How were these ideas different from what you encountered?
- Angel Island is a historically significant point of entry to the United States. Research that point of entry.
 - How many immigrants came through there?
 - What were the similarities and differences to the more well-known Ellis Island?
 - Was the experience varied among immigrants from different countries?

Innovation and Legacy

- What questions would you ask of your ancestors if they were here to tell you the answers?
 - Write the questions, followed by why you'd like to know these details about their lives.
 - Which of these questions will your ancestors want to know about you and your life?
 - What would you be most excited to share about your own life?
- What of your perceptions, knowledge, experience, wisdom, or goals would you leave as a gift for others (for your future children, extended relatives or best friends)? What gifts have others shared with you that you'd like to pass on?

Transition

- Write about a significant transition or period of change that you have experienced. What was difficult to come to terms with during this transition?