Freedom Writers

1. At the beginning of the school year, Erin is deeply disturbed by a racial caricature of one of her students that she finds being passed around the room. Why does Erin compare this drawing of an African-American student to the drawings of Jewish men during the Holocaust?

2. Why are the students so unwilling to associate with anyone outside their ethnic/racial groups? Where does this intolerance come from?

3. Respect and trust issues are not only problems among the students. The teachers and administrators at Wilson High do not support Ms. Gruwell’s teaching methods. Why do they refuse to trust her?

4. Miep Gies, the woman who hid Anne Frank, is a hero to Ms. Gruwell’s students. What does Miep Gies mean when she tells Ms. Gruwell’s students, “You are heroes everyday”?

5. Why is Eva so affected by the ending of Anne Frank’s diary?

6. Describe how writing in journals helps transform the lives of the students. How does writing “free” the students from their pain?

7. Do you think it’s more important to “protect your own” or do what’s right?

8. Have you ever had to overcome a significant problem? Who did you turn to for

support?