

Duration: 2 class periods of 45-55 Minutes

Adaptations: Upper Elementary (4-5), “A Person You Admire” Prompt, Expository Writing

An Admirable Woman in History Prompt:

Throughout our history, there have been many admirable women who have had an important impact on our lives. Whether they were great leaders, writers, or individuals who broke new ground and gender barriers, the roles of many women throughout history are to be admired. What woman in history do you admire most? What did she contribute to the world or accomplish in her life that earned your admiration?

In a detailed essay, write about a famous woman in history that you admire. Include facts and details about her life to support your choice.

As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you:

- Develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates your controlling idea to the audience.
- Support your controlling idea with meaningful examples, reasons, and information based upon your research or readings.
- Organize your essay in a clear and logical manner, including an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- Edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Teacher Background: The central character of *The Cemetery Keepers of Gettysburg* by Linda Oatman High is a historical figure named Elizabeth Thorn. Thorn had three young children and was six months pregnant with a fourth when the Battle of Gettysburg came to her doorstep. Her husband, the cemetery keeper at Evergreen Cemetery in Gettysburg, was away fighting in the Civil War. Following the three-day battle, Thorn, whose home was destroyed by the fighting, dug graves for and buried 103 fallen soldiers. Linda Oatman High honored Thorn’s story in *The Cemetery Keepers of Gettysburg*. Since the book’s publication, a bronze statue has been erected at Evergreen Cemetery to honor Elizabeth Thorn. For more information, read [Elizabeth Thorn’s Battle Narrative](#).

Day One: *The Cemetery Keepers of Gettysburg* (offline)

- 1) Teacher asks, “What kind of person do you admire?” In their writers’ journals, students make a list of admirable character traits. Students can also list the names of people they admire. (3 minutes)
- 2) In groups of three or four, students share their lists and discuss admirable character traits.
- 3) One student from each group reports on the group’s findings, focusing on common characteristics they listed as well as any debates that arose from their discussion. As each student reports, teacher constructs a [concept map](#) on the board as he/she guides students toward a class consensus of what is worthy of admiration (what it means to be an admirable person). (10 minutes)
- 4) Teacher reads *The Cemetery Keepers of Gettysburg* aloud to the class. (12 minutes)
- 5) Students respond to the following questions, referencing the class concept map for admirable traits.
 - a. Would you classify Elizabeth Thorn as admirable based on our class concept map? Why or why not?

- b. Why do you think years passed before Elizabeth Thorn received any kind of recognition?
 - c. How has Linda Oatman High helped the legacy of Elizabeth Thorn?
 - d. Why do you think Linda Oatman High chose to write about Elizabeth Thorn? (10 minutes)
- 6) Teacher plays audio file(s) from an interview with Linda Oatman High available at [Author Series: Interview with Linda Oatman High](#). (10 minutes)

Day Two: Researching an Admirable Woman (online)

- 1) Teacher introduces students to the prompt. Students brainstorm admirable women in history and choose the woman they will research.
- 2) Students use the following resources to help them research a woman as the subject for their response:
 - a. [National Women’s Hall of Fame](#)
 - b. [Scholastic: Women Who Changed History](#)
 - c. [Discovery: Women of the Century](#)
- 3) Students use the above [K-W-L Chart](#) to organize their research by reflecting on what they know, what they want to learn, and what they have learned from their reading.
- 4) Students keep their research, notes, and K-W-L chart nearby as they login to MY Access! and begin drafting their essay.