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Farewell to Manzanar
Jeanne Wakatsuki and
James B. Houston

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Farewell to Manzanar

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James B. Houston**



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Forward

1. Before beginning the story, you are exposed to much information about *Farewell to Manzanar*. After reading the back of the book, the “About the Authors” page, the quotations at the front, and the forward, generate a list of words or phrases that stuck in your head. Use this list to predict the plot of the story.

Part 1

Chapter 1 **“What is Pearl Harbor?”**

2. The author describes the return of the fishing boat fleet as an eerie and worrisome event. In all her years of watching Papa sail from port, she had never seen such an event occur. The author and the other women have many unanswered questions as the ships approach. Write a conversation that may have occurred between the author and her mother on this day. It may begin as follows:

Jeanne: Look, Mother, I think the ships are returning!

Mother: This is very strange . . .

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7. Of all of the changes occurring as a result of the move to Terminal Island, the most memorable to Jeanne is the differences between her old teacher in Ocean Park and her new teacher. Her Ocean Park teacher was an active part of the community, “grandmotherly,” and loving. Jeanne’s new teacher, on the other hand, is cold, “remote,” and unwilling to help her when she has questions concerning her schoolwork.

Pretend that you are Jeanne and write a letter to an old friend who is still living in Ocean Park telling her about your new school, new teacher, and what you miss about your own home.

8. The Wakatsukis had to part with many of their favorite material possessions as they shifted from home to home after Pearl Harbor. One of Mama’s most valuable possessions was her set of blue and white china. As the family is forced to move from Terminal Island, Mother considers selling her china for some extra money. When a man starts to barter for her set, she ends up throwing the whole set, piece by piece, on to the floor, breaking every piece.

Explain to a classmate who is confused why Mama would violently destroy her most valuable possession piece by piece.

9. When the family chooses to move to Manzanar to avoid the constant relocation from ghetto to ghetto, they are tagged and put on a long bus ride. It is a solemn ride out of Los Angeles County, and very few people are talking on the bus. As the transportation arrives at Manzanar, herds of residents approach the bus to see the new arrivals.

Jeanne lightens the mood as the bus arrives by opening the window and yelling to the residents, “Hey! This whole bus is full of Wakatsukis!” Envision a photograph taken of little Jeanne yelling out the crowded bus window to the worried residents of Manzanar. Write a caption for this picture that might have appeared in the Manzanar newspaper. Try to cover all of the five W’s (who, what, when, where, why) when writing your caption. If you can, include the one H, (how).

Chapter 7

Fort Lincoln: An Interview

22. In this chapter, we get a glimpse of what life was like for Papa when he was taken for interrogation at Fort Lincoln. Papa's true personality is revealed with this interviewer as he arrogantly dodges questions and frequently reverses the roles, asking the questions rather than answering them himself. The chapter ends with Papa answering the question of where his allegiances lay in the war, with Japan or with America. He answers in a metaphor: "When your mother and your father are having a fight, do you want them to kill each other? Or do you just want them to stop fighting?"

Put yourself in the role of the young interviewer for the American government. How does Papa's answer make you feel? How does it help you realize the dilemma of so many Japanese Americans? What is your reaction to Papa in general? Compose a report to your supervisor telling them about your day's interview and your assessment of Papa's loyalty.

Chapter 11

Yes Yes No No

26. One of the big issues in this chapter is that of the Application for Leave Clearance of 1943. In it, Manzanar residents are asked if they would be willing to serve in the Armed Forces for the United States and if they will “swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America ...forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese.” One character who particularly has to address this application is Woody. Answering a Yes Yes has severe consequences, as does answering a No No.

Create a pro and con list for the Yes Yes and the No No response that Woody may have formed prior to his argument with Papa. List the consequences associated with each answer. Then make a choice as to which answer, Yes Yes or No No, would be the best to check on the application. Use the list to defend and support your choice.

27. In the chapter, Papa’s character changes from a drunken recluse to an active member of the community. He feels a social responsibility to share his opinions and experience at a meeting discussing the Yes Yes and No No vote for the Application for Leave Clearance. His high aspirations of changing the attitudes of the residents for their own good backfires when he ends up fighting another resident for whispering “Inu.” Papa is pulled off the other man, and the sandstorm hits before the meeting solves any of the issues.

Though the reader does not know exactly what went on at the meeting, many speculations could be made using Papa’s life experiences and outspoken opinion as support. Speculate what ideas or words Papa may have used when speaking to the residents of Manzanar about the Yes Yes or No No vote. Write out the possible speech that Papa gave on this night.