

Activity
3

IRA/NCTE
Standard 1

Directions: Read the passage below, then complete the writing activity that follows.

Keiko the killer whale, was the star of the *Free Willy* movies released in the 1990s. In 1996, it was revealed that Keiko was living in a cramped tank of warm water at an amusement park in Mexico. He was very sick. He captured the hearts of thousands of young people and environmentalists, who banded together to help him regain his freedom. He was moved to the Oregon Coast Aquarium to be rehabilitated. Once healthy, he was moved to an open-water pen in Klettsvik Bay off southern Iceland in 1998. The goal was to release him as soon as he was prepared to return to the wild. His crew of caretakers took him on several ocean “walks” to get him ready for his return to the sea.

When Keiko was finally granted his freedom, he refused to swim away. When his caretakers escorted him to the open seas, Keiko always returned. Because he has depended on humans for 20 years, Keiko had trouble readjusting to life in the wild. Hallur Hallsson, a spokesperson for the organization that cares for Keiko said, “It is likely that he will remain in captivity until the end of his life.”

What is your reaction to Keiko’s plight? Do you think people were justified in helping him win his freedom? Do you think they were disappointed when they learned he did not want to return to the wild? Write three personal journal entries that might have been written by someone who was involved in the “Free Willy” campaign.

1. The first entry should be written on the day that person decided to join the campaign.
2. The second entry should be written after Keiko’s successful relocation to Iceland.
3. The third should be written after it was announced that Keiko showed no desire to return to the wild.
