

Ycteen

September/October 2011

LESSON GUIDE

Lessons in This Guide

Announcements:	p. 2
Issue Review (Environmental issue and getting ready for college)	p. 3
1. Writing Contest #209: "Describe an embarrassing moment or experience you've had. How did you deal with it? What did it teach you?"	p. 5
2. Writing Contest #210: "Are there any stereotypes about teenagers that you think are generally true? Are there any that you think are unfair? If you can, tell us about a time when you encountered stereotyping of people your age. What happened? How did you react? Why do you think people hold the stereotype you came across? Can it be changed?"	p. 6
3. Are You Ready for College?—Reading Comprehension and Response <i>Includes worksheet</i>	p. 7
4. Health Lesson on Cyber Safety and Healthy Dating Relationships—Reading, Discussion, and Writing	p. 9
5. Job Skills and Attitudes—Reading, Discussion, and Writing	p. 11
6. Scam U.: Practice for Regents Exam Reading Section	p. 13
7. Media Literacy Lesson: Are You Prepared to Do College Work?—Reading and Discussion About Evidence, and Writing Assignment	P. 16



Read. Write. Succeed.

Announcements

1. New name We changed the name of *New Youth Connections* magazine to *YCteen*.

2. Writing contests: We run writing contests on page 2 of each issue, with prizes of \$150, \$75, and \$50. We publish the winners and the top honorable mentions in subsequent issues. We sometimes include a lesson plan on the contest writing prompts (see below in this guide). Please encourage your students to submit entries. Some teachers assign the contest as homework or extra credit and then send us class sets. You can submit entries online at ycteenmag.org/contests/ycteen.html.

NOTE: NOTE: We put the wrong deadline in the magazine for Contest #210. The actual deadline is January 13 and not October 21.

3. New web site for stories and lessons you can use: We built a new Web site that contains *YCteen* stories. We have attached lesson ideas to some of the stories that you can use in writing and reading classes, health education groups, and other settings. Some of the lessons contain short, simple discussion and writing prompts. Other lessons are more developed. You can search the stories by topic.

To start your story and lesson search, go to <http://www.ycteenmag.org/>. Click on the “Search stories by topics” button in the upper right corner. That will take you to a page with a topic index. Click on a topic and a list of stories will appear. A red apple “Lesson Available” icon next to the story means there’s a lesson idea linked to the story. For example, a search on the “body image” topic will bring you to “I Wanted to Be Pretty and Popular” which has the “Lesson Available” button next to its title.

If you have any questions about using the Web site, please contact Loretta Chan at lchan@youthcomm.org or at 212-279-0708 extension 115.

4. Delivery schedule: See the schedule below. Thanks again to the New York Times for again printing *YCTeen*.

5. *YCteen* named Periodical of the Year: The Association of Educational Publishers named *YCteen* as the best high school periodical of the year. We bested the classroom editions of the *New York Times/Scholastic* and the *Wall Street Journal* to win this coveted award.

YCteen delivery schedule

Issue	Distribution dates
November	11/7 thru 11/14
January	1/31 thru 2/6
March	3/26 thru 3/30
May	5/7 thru 5/11

Issue Review

This issue focuses on getting ready for life after high school and on environmental hazards that can make you sick.

Stories health educators can use

Dating and healthy relationships See *Lesson 4 below*.

Kiara Ventura posts a family picture on Facebook in which she's wearing a bikini. She receives positive reactions along with some unwanted attention from men and boys she doesn't know. This leads her to reflect on how boys focus too much on girls' appearance while ignoring girls' personalities. See "Showing Skin on Facebook" on page 6.

Discussion points and writing topics: Cyber safety, Facebook etiquette, respectful relationships, do boys have different expectations from dating than girls?

Fighting asthma Edward Francois reports on how environmental hazards trigger asthma attacks and how families can reduce these dangers. See "Asthma: It Attacks From Indoors" on page 10. Note: This story has special relevance if you work with students from East Harlem or the South Bronx, areas with very high asthma rates. **Discussion points and writing topics:** The home environment's impact on health, government role in protecting citizens.

Dangerous beauty aids Kiara Ventura examines lipstick, lotions, soap, and other things we put on our bodies to see if they contain harmful ingredients. See "Your Toxic Beauty Regime" on page 12. For a slide show on the toxic products mentioned in this article, go to <http://bit.ly/nh4TsB>.

There are two related stories in this issue. Paldon Dolma interviews a young activist who works for a group that educates people about toxic ingredients in beauty aids. See "It's Easy Being Green" on page 14. "Buyer Beware: 18 Ingredients to Avoid" on page 15 lists suspect ingredients and what products have them. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Dangerous substances in our daily lives.

Stories English teachers can use

This Guide has several discussion, reading and writing lessons, including a Regents test prep lesson— see Lesson 6 below.

Stories about current events and social issues that focus on the environment.

Hydraulic fracturing or "fracking:" Edward Francois uses a documentary film to help him understand the controversies surrounding how gas and oil companies shoot water,

chemicals, and sand into the earth to pump out natural gas. See “What the Frack?” on page 4. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Environmental dangers vs. economic priorities, government’s role in protecting citizens from possible environmental hazards, drilling in New York State.

The Gowanus Canal cleanup: Peace Titilawo describes one of the country’s most polluted waterways and what the government and local citizens are doing to clean it up. See “Gowanus Canal: The \$500 Million Makeover” on page 5. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Industrial pollution, environmental activism, government regulation. NOTE: We also produced a video on the Canal. You can watch it at <http://bit.ly/qMq6Ix>.

Garbage disposal: Jozina Campbell describes the impact of America’s throwaway culture and how she and her fellow writers kept track of the trash they generated during the summer. See “America: Trashing the Globe” on page 11. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Trash reduction, recycling, individuals making a difference.

Stories that guidance counselors, college advisors, transfer school staff, GED instructors, and others can use

Post high school training and work experience *See Lesson 5 below.*

Donald Moore describes how he learned the hard skills and “soft” skills that impress potential employers. See “How to Wow Employers” on page 7. **Discussion points and writing topics:** What employers look for in workers, taking advantage of opportunities, applying for a job, workplace behavior.

Remedial classes at CUNY *See Lessons 3 and 7.*

Neha Basnet explains why many high school graduates must take make-up or remedial classes at CUNY schools and how this can influence their chances of getting a college degree. See “What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You” on page 8. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Working harder in high school; what it means to be “college ready,” applying to CUNY schools.

For-profit college scams: *See Lesson 6.*

Marco Salazar reveals how for-profit colleges use hard sell tactics to convince unsuspecting high school graduates to enroll in often worthless degree programs that cost far more than CUNY charges for a legitimate course of study. **Discussion points and writing topics:** researching college opportunities, how to choose a college.

Leaving home to go to college: Kelly Colon describes how her mother encouraged her to go to college, but hesitated when Kelly decided to attend a school outside New York City. See “Hello Campus, Goodbye Mom?” on page 22. **Discussion points and writing topics:** Leaving home, developing independence, Latino families, mother-daughter relations.

SAT worries: Allison Hazel describes her struggles with the dreaded test, including her test day experiences. See “Taming SAT Anxiety” on page 23. **Discussion points and writing topics:** How colleges look at your application, test stress.

College application graphic: Writer Christina Gee and artist Terrence Taylor sketch a picture of the college application steps. See page 24.

Lesson 1. Writing Contest #209—Win \$150

“Describe an embarrassing moment or experience you’ve had. How did you deal with it? What did it teach you?”

Objectives: Write a 400-500 word chronological description of an event. Realize the value of using lists as a pre-writing activity.

Story to use: Contest question (p. 2) (Deadline: October 17, 2011)

Before the activity: On the board, write “List of occasions” and under it list these items: Party, visit to relatives, a game or sports event, a date, a day at school, a day at a summer or after school program, a day at work.

Create another list on the board with the heading, “Got caught” and under it write: Lying, stealing, cheating, slacking off, making a mistake, saying something stupid or inappropriate.

Put a third list on the board with the heading “What happened.” Under it write: Who, where, when, what I did after I felt embarrassed, what I learned from the experience.

Write 4-5 sentences describing an embarrassing experience you yourself have had—one that you would feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Activity: Hand out the September/October issue of *YCteen* and ask them to open up to page 2. Say that they have a chance to win up to \$150 by entering the writing contest. There are two options. Ask for a volunteer to read the first writing prompt aloud.

Ask them to read the first two lists. Ask them if any of the items remind them of an embarrassing experience they’ve had. Share the experience you yourself wrote about.

Ask them to look at the third list. The essay they write should answer those questions.

Assign them to write a 400-500 word description (about one type-written page) of their embarrassing experience for homework or for extra credit. Ask them to copy the lists from the board and use them when they write their entries. Remind them to put their name, address, school, age, phone, and e-mail on the essay or to fill out the coupon on

page 2. Collect the essays and send them to Youth Communication, 224 W. 29th St. 2nd Floor, NYC 10001. Please include your name and school.

Lesson 2. Writing Contest #210—Win \$150

“Are there any stereotypes about teenagers that you think are generally true? Are there any that you think are unfair? If you can, tell us about a time when you encountered stereotyping of people your age. What happened? How did you react? Why do you think people hold the stereotype you came across? Can it be changed?”

Objectives: Reflect on how young people might be stereotyped in our society. Write about a personal experience of being stereotyped.

Story to use: Contest question (p. 2) and “Showing Skin on Facebook” on page 6.

Deadline: NOTE: We put the wrong deadline in the magazine. The real deadline is January 13 and not October 21.

Before the activity: Write down a definition of “stereotype” on the board. Here’s one you can use: “Characteristics ascribed to groups of people involving gender, race, national origin, age, and other parts of a person’s identity.”

Read the story “Showing Skin on Facebook” on page 6. Note the second paragraph in the third column, the one that begins, “That’s when the reality really hit me.” You will use this paragraph later in the lesson.

Activity: Tell the class that you want them to write about a time when they felt someone stereotyped them and that they have a chance to win a cash prize for their writing. Point out the definition on the board and ask for a volunteer to read it. Give an example, noting the difference between saying an individual exhibits a trait and saying that all members of that individual’s group have the same trait. For example, ask them to about the difference between saying “Juan is a great dancer” and saying “Puerto Ricans are great dancers.”

Hand out the September/October issue of *YCteen* and ask them to turn to page 6 to read a story written by a girl who has some strong opinions about boys. Ask them to note where in the story the author may be stereotyping a group of people. (You can have them read the story silently or ask for volunteers to read portions aloud. Tell them not to read the shaded sidebar entitled “The Not-So-Sexy Statistics.”)

NOTE: As an added twist to this activity, you can ask them to read the first two paragraphs of the story and then take a vote on whether they think posting the picture is a good idea. If you have time you can ask the group in favor of the posting to come to one side of the room while those opposed go to the other. You can then lead a short discussion after the vote on the pros and cons of posting pictures on social media site and then ask them to continue reading the story.

When they are done, ask them if they detect any stereotyping in the story. The group should pick up on the author’s sense that most boys—maybe all—are just interested in girls’ appearances rather than their personalities. Point out the paragraph in the third column to emphasize this point.

Ask them if they think the author is stereotyping boys and if so, do they agree with her?

As a homework or extra credit assignment, ask them to write a one-page description of a time when someone stereotyped them based on their age. Remind them to put their name, address, school, age, phone, and e-mail on the essay or to fill out the contest entry coupon on page 2. Collect the essays and send them to Youth Communication, 224 W. 29th St. 2nd Floor, NYC 10001. Please include your name and school.

3. Are You Ready for College?—Reading Comprehension and Writing Response

Story to use: “What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You” on page 8

Objectives: Students will practice writing short responses to questions that are based on reading an essay.

Students will learn about the remedial policies of CUNY and other schools. They will reflect on whether they think they will have to do remedial work when they enter college.

Class work or homework: You can assign the writing response as homework after you run the activity with the group.

Before the activity

Note: It is always easier for students (and adults) to understand what they read when they know something about the topic. It also helps to do a pre-reading exercise that researchers and pedagogues call “activating prior knowledge”—reminding ourselves of what we know about a topic before we begin reading related articles. That is one of the reasons peer-written stories help students—especially reluctant readers—grasp content more easily and become more receptive to reading. This pre-reading activity may help them “activate” what they know about making the transition from high school to college. If they don’t much about this, you can help them by giving them simple definitions of the terms on the list.

Put the following list on the board or easel pad:

City University of New York (CUNY)	Placement exam
Regents exams	Associates degree
Remedial classes	Summer enrichment programs
SATs	College Now

Underneath the list, write:

Do I know what these items mean?

What in my personal experience will help me understand a story that contains the above expressions?

Activity: Hand out the worksheet on the next page along with a copy of the September/October 2011 issue of *YCteen*. Tell the group they are going to read a story by a teenager about how a lot of New York City high school graduates must take remedial classes in college before they get to take regular courses.

Ask them to look at the list for a minute and tell them these items will be in the story. Ask for volunteers to define or explain the terms. Then ask them to look at the two questions. Tell them to keep the questions in mind as they read the story. Then tell them they will write short responses based on their reading.

.

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the story "What You Don't Know Can Hurt You" on p. 8. Answer the questions in essay answer format. (This means you should use parts of the question to start your answer.) Write 3-5 complete sentences for each question. The answer for the first question has been started for you. NOTE: You can complete any question on the back of this paper.

1. What is the title? Who wrote it? Why do you think she thought it was important to write it? What audience do you think she is trying to reach? [Example: The title of the story is... FOLLOWED BY: The writer wanted to tell readers about...]
2. What does the title of the story mean? How does it relate to the writer's ideas in the story?
3. What is the author's main idea or theme? What is she most concerned about? Do you think it is an important topic?
4. What evidence does the writer present to make her argument?
5. What is one thing you know after reading the article that you didn't know before?

4. Health Lesson on Cyber Safety and Healthy Dating Relationships—Reading, Discussion, and Writing

Story to use: “Showing Skin on Facebook,” p. 6

Objectives: Students will:

- Identify the risks of posting photos on Facebook or sending photos to someone privately.
- Discuss what makes up a healthy relationship.
- Discuss what boys find attractive in girls and vice versa.
- Discuss stereotyping.

Before the lesson: Write these words and phrases from the story on the board. They are meant to soften students’ possible resistance to reading the story.

Coney Island
Bikini
Bodies on Facebook
Sexy photos
Guys drooling
Real relationship

Read the story yourself.

Activity #1: Reading and discussion

Introduce the lesson: Say something like: “We are going to read a story written by Kiara Ventura, a teenager who posted a picture of a family outing on her Facebook page. Her experience made her think about what she values in dating relationships and how boys focus too much or even exclusively on girls’ appearances rather than their personalities.”

Then point to the list on the board and say something like, “There are some hints of what’s in the story.”

Then say, “Let’s read the first part of the story, up to where it says, “Unexpected Attention.” NOTE You can have them read the section silently or ask for volunteers to read parts of it aloud.

When the reading is done, ask the group to vote on whether she should have posted the picture. Ask for reasons from both sides. This should take about ten minutes.

Ask them to read the rest of the story.

Discussion: Here are some discussion prompts.

- Why did Kiara decide to post the picture? Why did she hesitate?

- Who is Jason and what part does he play in the story?
- Why was she disturbed by the attention she received?
- What are some of the possible bad things that can happen if you post a picture on the Internet or share a photo with someone directly?
- What opinion does she have about boys' interest in girls?
- Kiara uses the phrase, "real relationship" when writing about the bonds between males and females. What does mean by this? How do people treat each other in a real relationship? Are there "unreal" relationships?
- Do boys and girl have different ideas about how people should treat each other in relationships?
- Do you think Kiara is fair to boys? Does she stereotype them when she writes, "I wondered if there were any boys who would talk to a girl because they are interested in who she is, and not just in what she looks like in a bikini." Does she think all guys are jerks and if so, is she right?

Activity #2: Writing

After the reading and discussion, ask them to write a letter to Kiara about the article. There are two possible themes for the letters. They can write to her about posting the picture OR they can write to Kiara about her attitudes toward boys.

If you have time, show them one possible organization of the letter assignment:

- A statement of opinion:** "Dear Kiara: I agree/disagree with your posting of your picture." Or they can be more forceful, "I think you were crazy to do what you did."
- Two reasons for their opinion.** Ideally, the letter should mention a negative or positive Facebook experience they've had—or personal experiences related to the "boys are jerks" theme.

Tell them you are going to collect the letters and send them to the magazine for possible publication in the next issue.

5. Job Skills and Attitudes—Reading, Discussion, and Writing

Story to use: “How to Wow Employers,” p. 7

Objectives: Students will:

- Identify the differences between “soft” and “hard” job skills.
- See how a teen displayed the maturity and hard work needed to improve his job prospects.
- Identify what employers look for in job applicants.

Before the lesson: Write these phases of Donald Moore’s educational trajectory on the board. Notice that they are not in chronological order.

- 1) Hired by Bloomberg LP
- 2) Starts a four-month classroom program at Year Up
- 3) Graduates high school
- 4) Applies to Year Up
- 5) Enrolls in night school
- 6) Enrolls in a computer course
- 7) Gets an internship at Bloomberg LP
- 8) Completes the application process to Year Up

Read the story yourself.

Activity #1: Reading and discussion

Introduce the lesson: Hand out the issue and ask them to turn to page 7. Say something like: “We are going to read a story written by Donald Moore. It is about how he got the training and experience he needed to get a good job.”

NOTE: You can divide the group into smaller ones and have them work as teams.

Then point to the list on the board and say something like, “I put most of the events in the story on the board. However, they are not in the right order. Your job is to read the story carefully and list the events in chronological order, the order in which they happened.”

After they are done reading the story, ask them what items from the list occurred first, second, etc. Assemble a correct chronology on the board.

Discussion: Here are some discussion questions.

- Why did Donald apply to Year Up?
- What is an example of a hard skill? A soft skill? What is a hard skill for a lawyer? What is a soft skill for firefighter?
- Why does Donald think soft skills are so important?
- What does he mean when he writes, “...the workplace demands more than just competence”?

- Why would an employer not hire someone who makes grammatical mistakes, sends informal e-mails, mispronounces words, or doesn't pay attention?
- What is networking? Give an example.
- Why do you think the Year Up application process was so hard? Do you think it is fair for employment programs to ask people to jump through so many hoops? Do you think you would be accepted to Year Up?
- Why does Donald feel it is necessary to go to college night school while working full time?

Activity #2: Writing

After the reading and discussion, ask them to write a summary of Donald's article for homework. Tell them the summary should include what he did and why he did it. The summary should end with how you feel about Donald's accomplishments.

Activity #3 Before reading the story, put this chart on the board. You can change the professions. After you read the story, ask them to complete the chart. Ask for volunteers to read out their answers. Do any skills or traits show up for more than one profession?

Profession	One soft skill or trait	One hard skill
Lawyer	Is very organized	Can write well
Police officer		
Nurse		
Clerk at Macy's		
English teacher		
Rapper		
Security guard		

6. Scam U.: Practice for Regents Exam Reading Section

Story to use: “Scam U.” p. 16

Objectives: Students will learn how some for-profit colleges rip off high school students and how to avoid that problem. They will improve skills needed to do well on the Regents reading section.

What the teacher needs to know to use this lesson: The Regents English exam has a reading section that requires students to read a passage and answer six multiple-choice questions. This passage here is slightly longer than the typical Regents passage and there are more questions.

Give Your Students Directions

Put these directions on the board or read them slowly:

Read the story. Then circle the correct answers on the sheet.

Here is are the answers to Lesson #7:

1) 2 2) 4 3) 4 4) 2 5) 4 6) 3 7) 4 8) 1

Regents Practice Question Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

1) What is one difference between a for-profit and a nonprofit college?

- 1) For-profits are more expensive
- 2) For-profits try to make money for their owners
- 3) Nonprofits don't recruit students
- 4) Nonprofits don't expect students to take out loans

2) What word best describes the recruiter's visit to Marco's school?

- 1) Educational
- 2) Sensitive
- 3) Fun
- 4) Aggressive

3) What is one reason to go to a CUNY community college rather than a for-profit school?

- 1) Admissions requirements are lower
- 2) You don't have to take out loans
- 3) You can live at home
- 4) Graduation rates are higher

4) Why did the DeVry representative choose the author's school for a recruiting visit?

- 1) To educate students about the college application process
- 2) The school's students fit a certain profile
- 3) The school invited him
- 4) He visits all city public high schools

5) In the phrase, "preempt my English class," the word preempt means

- 1) Make better
- 2) Make worse
- 3) Make longer
- 4) Take the place of

6) The author thinks that an employer might hire a community college grad rather than a for-profit grad because

- 1) Community college grads work hard
- 2) For-profit grads have too many loans
- 3) Going to a community college shows good sense
- 4) For-profit grads want too much pay

7) What would the author suggest you do before you agreed to enroll in any college?

- 1) Find out how many students graduate in four years (two for community colleges)
- 2) Make sure they offer classes you want to take
- 3) Google the school's name for news items
- 4) All of the above

8) What would be another appropriate title for this story?

- 1) The Careful College Consumer
- 2) Applying to College
- 3) The Dangers of College Loans
- 4) It Pays to Get a College Education

7. Media Literacy Lesson: Are You Prepared to Do College Work?—Reading and Discussion About Evidence, and Writing Assignment

Story to use: “What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You,” p. 8

Objectives: Students will be able to identify different types of evidence that writers use in their stories.

Students will learn about the remedial policies of CUNY and other schools.

They will write a personal essay on whether they think they will have to do remedial work when they enter college.

Before the lesson: Write this list on the board:

Type of evidence

- 1) References to studies, books, newspaper articles, and reports issued by well-regarded sources (colleges, internet sites run by colleges, government agencies, major newspapers, research institutions)
- 2) Interviews with recognized experts such as college professors, government officials, and authors
- 3) Interviews with people most affected by what’s being reported on, for example, flood victims, soldiers in a war, a student being affected by an educational policy, etc.
- 4) Interviews with people who know the people being written about
- 5) Personal accounts by the author that describe his or her experience with the issue being written about

Read the story yourself.

Activity: Tell the group, “We are going to read a story by teenager Neha Basnet. She writes about how some colleges require new students to take remedial or make-up classes before they begin regular college work. The colleges thinks that many high school graduates don’t have the basic English and math skills to start college work right away.”

Then say something like, “Look at the list on the board. As you read the story, your job is to identify the type of evidence that the author provides. Notice that each type of evidence on the list is numbered. Write the appropriate number next to the text that has that kind of evidence.” NOTE: You should mark up your copy of the story and show them 2-3 examples. So write “1” next to the last paragraph of the third column where the writer quotes the *New York Times* quoting a CUNY professor. Write “3” next to the second paragraph in the fourth column where a college freshman is interviewed by the author about his remedial college experience.

After they read the story and mark up their copies, ask them something like, “Are you convinced that Neha accurately portrayed the situation facing many high school graduates? If you are convinced, what parts of the story were important in convincing you?”

After the “convinced” have their say, ask if anyone is skeptical. What evidence in the story bothers them? What kind of evidence would convince them?

Reflection and writing activity: Direct them to read the story again at home. As they read they should think about their grades, the number of demanding classes they have taken and are taking, and how hard they are working. They should then write a one-page essay that answers these questions, “Will I have to take remedial classes or attend a summer prep program when I go to college? What can I do to improve my chances of being prepared for college?”

When the group meets again, ask for volunteers to read their essays or summarize them. Lead discussions based on the responses. At the end of the discussion, hold up page 9 and point to the box entitled, “Worried? CUNY Can Help.” Tell them the box describes programs that help students get ready for college. Invite them to talk about these issues with you or other appropriate school staff.

Published by Youth Communication • 224 W. 29th St. • NY, NY 10001

www.Youthcomm.org