

Ycteen

November/December 2011

LESSON GUIDE

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Announcements

1. New name: This is the second issue of the school year. Just a reminder: We used to be *New Youth Connections*. We changed the name of the 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

4. Videos: We have produced several videos showing our teen writers talking about how they wrote a particular story. Showing a "From the Author" video might engage students before they read the accompanying story. Unfortunately we don't have a video for this issue, but you can go to <http://bit.ly/tFHv2O> to see videos for past stories. There is a link to the printed story at each video button so you can print the story for your group.

3. New Web site for stories and lessons you can use: We recently launched 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 simple discussion and writing prompts. Others are more developed. You can search the stories by topic.

To start your story and lesson search, go to <http://www.YCteenmag.org/> and 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.

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

5. The Real Men Program: Our *Real Men* anthology explores the challenges facing young men of color as they strive to succeed in school and beyond. An extensive *Leader's Guide* helps teachers and after school staff use the 32 stories in the anthology. The package helps young men improve their skills, recognize their strengths, and get the help they need. For more information go to http://store.youthcomm.org/miva/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=YCE&Product_Code=YD-RM&Category_Code=YD

YCteen delivery schedule

January/February Issue	1/31 thru 2/6
March/April	3/26 thru 3/30
May/June	5/7 thru 5/11

Issue Review

This issue focuses on anxiety in teens and on cyber bullying.

CYBER-DRAMA AND CYBER BULLYING

- “The Facebook Fight That Fractured My Face,” p. 5. Catherine Cosmo writes about a Facebook exchange that escalates into a physical fight at a party.

Discussion points and writing topics: Cyber safety, social media etiquette and boundaries, self-control, empathy

- “Teens Talk About Online Abuse,” p. 7. Here’s a roundtable discussion with *YCteen* writers about their experiences and opinions regarding online abuse.

- “Standing Up to the Cyberbullies,” pp. 20-21.

YCteen writers highlight prominent individuals and organizations that have taken action to combat cyberbullying.

Discussion points and writing topics: Cyber safety, social media etiquette and boundaries, self-control, empathy

- See also:

“Smut Page Survivor,” p. 6

“Username: Hater,” p. 8

“Standing Up to the Cyberbullies,” pp. 20-21

NOTE: There are descriptions of these three stories in the English teachers section and the current events section below.

MENTAL HEALTH STORIES

- “Sexonomics 101”, p. 28. Kelly Colon discovers that the ratio of boys to girls in a high school affects the rate of sexual activity: when there are more girls than boys, the rate of sexual activity increases as girls compete for scarce resources (boys). Kelly doesn’t think girls should feel pressured into sex as a way of “securing” a relationship.

Discussion points and writing topics: Sexual health, healthy relationships, peer pressure

- “Panic Attack,” pp. 14-15. The writer describes the sudden onset of her recurring panic attacks and how she sought help.

Discussion points and writing topics: Anxiety, coping skills, family communication

- “Always On Guard,” pp. 16-17. Edward Francois was a very anxious child while his younger brother was fearless. Edward reflects on how his childhood fears hindered him and how he’s learned to cope with his anxieties.

Discussion points and writing topics: Anxiety, coping skills, family communication, handling change and new experiences

- “Burdened by My Future,” pp. 18-19.

When Abdouramane Barry leaves his native Guinea in West Africa to join his father in the United States, he is concerned about how hard his father has to work to support the family back home. He feels inadequate about his own contribution to the family, and develops an anxiety disorder for which he eventually takes medication.

Discussion points and writing topics: Anxiety, coping skills, family communication, immigration, handling change and new experiences

- “What Are You So Afraid Of?” pp. 26-27

YCteen writers describe their phobias—some humorous, some serious.

Discussion points and writing topics: Anxiety, coping skills

STORIES ENGLISH TEACHERS CAN USE

- “Smut Page Survivor,” p. 6. *See Lesson 3 below.* Destiny Smith’s close friend becomes depressed and isolated after she is the victim of a “smut page”—a Facebook page dedicated to embarrassing, ridiculing, and attacking people just for the fun of it. The experience makes Destiny examine and decrease her own social media use.

Discussion points and writing topics: Cyber safety, social media etiquette and boundaries, self-control, empathy, depression, peer pressure, friendship

- “Username: Hater,” p. 8. When they enter the school talent show, Kiara Ventura and her friends become the targets of an anonymous cyberbully who threatens to harm them after the show. They eventually report the harassment to school officials.

Discussion points and writing topics: Cyber safety, social media etiquette and boundaries, self-control, empathy, friendship

- “Sexonomics 101”, p. 28 *See the Regents reading section Lesson 5 below.*

- “What Are You So Afraid Of?” pp. 26-27 *See Lesson 6 below.*

- Writing contests: *See Lessons 1 and 2 based on the two writing contests below.*

CURRENT EVENTS

- “What They’re Yelling About on Wall Street,” pp. 12-13. This story functions as a teen guide to the Occupy Wall Street movement, explaining the financial inequality that activists are protesting. This story can be used in combination with Contest #211. Note: Our website now contains two videos featuring interviews with OWS protesters about why they are demonstrating, and the impact of online versus in-person protests. These can be used in lessons to start a discussion or as a pre-writing activity.

Discussion points and writing topics: Income inequality, social activism, media coverage of the OWS movement

- “My Dad the Politician,” pp. 10-11. For *YCteen* writer Alice Markham-Cantor, politics is part of family life: her dad is Dan Cantor, founder and executive director of the Working Families Party. Alice talks about the challenges and rewards of being part of a family immersed in politics.

Discussion points and writing topics: Political activism, family relationships

STORIES FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

- “College Prep Stress Fest,” pp. 9-10. When Jozina Campbell is selected to participate in a competitive college prep program for minority students, she doesn’t know if she can handle the pressure and added workload. Her anxiety makes her want to give up, but encouragement from friends and family, and the realization that she’s not alone in her struggle, inspires her to persevere.

Discussion points and writing topics: College readiness/application, developing independence, coping with anxiety, overcoming insecurities, positive peer support, family relationships

- “How I Conquered Physics—With Unexpected Help,” pp. 4-5. *See Lesson 4 below.* When Neha Basnet starts failing physics, a dedicated teacher helps her get back on track. At first, Neha is skeptical and reluctant to accept help, but eventually she grows to trust her teacher and turns to him for help and encouragement.

Discussion points and writing topics: College readiness, developing independence, overcoming insecurities, the importance of mentoring relationships/building trust with supportive adults.

Lesson 1. Writing Contest #210—Win \$150

Here is the writing prompt:

“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).

Deadline: January 13, 2012

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.”

Also write down these two lists on the board:

Music	Graduate
Clothes	Employee
Sex	Student
Crime	Athlete
Drugs	Helper
Drinking	Caretaker
Loud	Performer
Dropouts	Volunteer

Activity

Tell the group you are assigning them to write a one-page description of a time when someone stereotyped them based on their age. You are going to collect their pieces and send them into the *YCteen* writing contest.

Read the contest prompt. Point out the definition on the board. Then point out the lists. Which column depicts how adults think about teens? Lead a short discussion about how adults think about teenagers. Do they think adults prejudge teens based on the behavior of a few teens? Or do most adults give teens credit for the good things they do?

Assign them to write a 400-500 word essay (about one type-written page) for homework or for extra credit. Remind them to put their name, address, school, age, phone, and e-mail on the essay or to fill out the coupon on p. 2. Collect the essays and send them to Youth Communication, 224 w. 29th St. 2nd Floor, NYC 10001. Please include your name and school. You can also enter the contest online by going to <http://www.YCteenmag.org/contests/YCteen.html>

Lesson 2. Writing Contest #111—Win \$150

Here is the question prompt:

The “Occupy Wall Street” protests have drawn attention to the fact that about 40% of wealth in the United States is controlled by the richest 1% of the population. (See story on pp. 12-13). Do you think taxes on the rich should be raised? Should government do more to help people who are struggling financially? What personal experiences or observations make you feel this way?

Story to use: Contest question #211 (p. 2) Deadline: March 9, 2012

Objectives

Write a 400-500 word opinion essay in response to reading an informational text.

Activity #1: Reading and Discussion

Assign your students to read Youth Communication’s “What They’re Yelling About on Wall Street” (pp. 12-13), about the Occupy Wall Street movement, to build background and understand the contest question. The article is a brief primer on the issues being raised by the OWS protesters, such as income inequality. (Note: If you wish to expand this lesson, please see the online version of this article that includes links to teen-written stories about related topics:

http://www.YCteenmag.org/issues/NYC228/What_They%E2%80%99re_Yelling_About_on_Wall_Street.html?story_id=NYC-2011-09-Wall-Street)

After reading, students should be able to answer the following questions:

- Who are protesters referring to when they talk about “the 99%?” What does that mean?
- How do corporations influence politics? Why does the article say that teens should care about that?
- Why are protesters saying that taxes on the rich should be raised? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Activity #2: Written Response

Hand out the November/December issue of *YCteen* and ask them to open up to p. 2. Tell them 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 writing prompt aloud. Check for understanding.

Assign them to write a 400-500 word essay (about one type-written page) for homework or for extra credit. Remind them to put their name, address, school, age, phone, and e-mail on the essay or to fill out the coupon on p. 2. Collect the essays and send them to Youth Communication, 224 w. 29th St. 2nd Floor, NYC 10001. Please include your name and school. You can also enter the contest online by going to

<http://www.YCteenmag.org/contests/YCteen.html>

Lesson 3. Dealing with Online Drama—Reading Comprehension and Writing Response

Story to use: “‘Smut Page’ Survivor,” p. 6

Objectives:

- Students will practice writing short responses to questions that are based on reading
- Students will discuss online harassment and the consequences of using social media to create “drama”
- Students will understand how social media sites can fuel hate speech and lack of empathy for others
- Students will discuss the positive role of real-life relationships in standing up to online harassment and supporting its victims

Before the lesson:

Write this list of words from the story on the board. You may wish to do a pre-reading lesson in which students learn the definition and practice writing or discussing the words in context:

Sullen
 Withdrawn
 Secluded
 Exaggerate
 Reckless
 Compassionate
 Belittle
 Anonymous
 Resurface
 Hermit

Write the following writing prompt on the board:

“Describe one or more examples of cyberbullying/online harassment that you’ve heard or encountered. How does that kind of harassment affect the person who’s being targeted? Why do you think people participate in online harassment?”

Activity #1: Reading and discussion

Direct students to spend five minutes responding to the writing prompt on the board. Then have them discuss responses with a partner or call on volunteers to share responses with the group:

Then, introduce the lesson by saying something like, “We are going to read a story by Destiny Smith, a teen whose friend was the target of online harassment. Watching a good friend go through this made Destiny realize that cyberbullying and harassment can have serious emotional effects on the victim. She began to question whether spending so much time on social media sites was a good idea.”

Have students read silently or take turns reading short passages of the story aloud to the class. For reinforcement, ask them to underline the key vocabulary words as they read.

Have students work in partners or small groups and discuss the following questions. Have students write out their responses during the discussion. Alternatively, assign a note-taker for each group and a speaker who will report back responses to the entire class. This will ensure that all students participate in the discussion.

- How did Jessica change as a result of the harassment? Look for places in the story where the author describes Jessica's appearance and behavior before and after the incident.
- What would motivate someone to make a page like that? What do they get out of it? Aside from the risk of getting caught, are there any other drawbacks for the perpetrator in making a page like that?
- What about the people who add comments? Are they thinking about the impact their words have on the victims? Why or why not? Does making those kinds of statements about other people have a negative effect on the person writing those words?
- How do people communicate differently on Facebook and other social media sites than they do in real life? What's the effect of that?
- Think of at least three things teens can do to discourage online harassment.

Activity #2: Writing

This is a great opportunity to have students practice writing a five-paragraph persuasive essay, which would mean extending the lesson into a second and possibly third day, depending on whether you wish to have students do a full revision. Alternatively, you can have students respond to the questions as a freewrite/journaling exercise. Here's a possible prompt:

Online harassment and cyberbullying can have serious effects on the people involved. Write an essay in which you describe the adverse (negative) effects of online harassment for both victims and participants, and suggest ways to decrease its prevalence among teens.

Lesson 4. Succeeding in Tough Classes—Reading Comprehension, Discussion, and Written Response

Story to use: “How I Conquered Physics—With Unexpected Help,” p. 4

Objectives:

- Students will practice writing short responses to questions that are based on reading an essay.
- Students will learn strategies for getting academic support with challenging classes

Before the activity:

Ask students to raise their hand if they’ve ever failed—or at least struggled with—a class. Ask them what got in their way of succeeding, and make a list of volunteers’ responses on the board under the heading “Obstacles to Success.”

Activity #1: Reading and Discussion

Tell students they are going to read a story from the Nov/Dec issue of *YCteen* about a teen who felt discouraged when she started failing her physics class. Tell them to pay attention to the things that got in her way of success, and what actions she took that were helpful. (You can choose volunteers to read aloud, have students read in pairs/small groups, or have them read silently to themselves.)

After reading the story, start a second column on the board with the heading “Steps to Success” and ask volunteers to share steps that Neha takes to become successful in her physics class. List their responses.

Activity #2: Writing

Neha worked hard to turn things around and succeed in physics, but she didn’t do it alone. Some students will have identified in the previous activity the role that Mr. Stevens, her teacher, played in her success. Probe further with the students about specific things Mr. Stevens did to help Neha, and how they contributed to her success.

Then, ask students if they have ever misjudged a teacher or other adult who turned out to be supportive and helpful. Direct students to write 2-3 paragraphs describing the person and how they helped, and how their feelings about the person changed over time. Prompt them to pay special attention to the role that trust played in the relationship, and what the adult did to build that trust over time. Direct them to conclude by writing about how those trusting relationships with mentors and other supportive adults can help them reach future goals, such as college, career plans, etc.

Lesson 5. Sexonomics 101: Practice for Regents Exam Reading Section

Story to use: “Sexonomics 101” p. 28 (back page)

Objectives:

- Students will learn about how the ratio of girls to boys at schools can influence dating behavior and sexual decision-making.
- They will think about what makes for a healthy dating relationship.
- They will improve skills needed to do well on the Regents reading section: making inferences, recognizing key facts and the main point in a text, understanding the purpose of individual sentences, etc.

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. The passage here is slightly longer than the typical Regents passage.

Before the session: Make copies of the question sheet below.

Activity

Put these directions on the board or read them slowly: “Below each passage, there are several multiple choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and circle the correct answers.”

Here are the answers to Lesson 5:

- 1) 3 (See the second paragraph, first column)
- 2) 2 (Irate means very angry, almost out of control. Exasperated means irritated or annoyed.)
- 3) 1 (See second paragraph whole paragraph, column 2. Point out the question stipulates “according to the article.” Other answers might be correct in reality but the article did not mention them.)
- 4) 3 (See first paragraph, last column)
- 5) 4
- 6) 1 (See first full paragraph, column 2)
- 7) 2
- 8) 3 (See last paragraph, last column.)

Regents Practice Question Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

1) What was the author's original reasoning about how girls would act in a school with mostly girls?

- 1) Girls would be more likely to have sex
- 2) Boys would be choosier about dating
- 3) Girls would be choosier because there were fewer guys worth dating
- 4) Girls would be more likely to date boys from other schools.

2) What word best describes the overall tone of the piece?

- 1) Placid
- 2) Exasperated
- 3) Accepting
- 4) Irate

3) According to the article, what would you expect to find in a school with more boys than girls?

- 1) Girls having less sex
- 2) More fights among boys about girls
- 3) Boys dating girls from other schools more often
- 4) Boys becoming less interested in having sex

7) What is one reason the writer wrote the story?

- 1) To warn girls about boys who cheat
- 2) To describe how unfair dating situations and social attitudes can influence girls' behavior
- 3) To scold boys for cheating and lying
- 4) To argue that schools should have the same number of each gender

4) What views does the writer have about infidelity in a relationship?

- 1) It's OK for girls to accept cheating by boys if there aren't many boys around
- 2) It's OK for boys to accept cheating by girls if there aren't many girls around.
- 3) Having to accept cheating by your partner poisons the relationship
- 4) It's OK to cheat if both partners agree

5) In the phrase, "there have been a few altercations because of girls wanting certain boys," the word altercation means

- 1) Compromises
- 2) School expulsions
- 3) Arrests
- 4) Heated disputes

6) According to the study referred to in the story, how do girls differ from boys in how they think about dating?

- 1) Most girls are less interested in having sex than boys
- 2) Boy and girls are equally interested in being in a relationship
- 3) Most boys think it's OK to cheat
- 4) Girls are pickier about who they date

Lesson 6. Phobias: Treasure Hunt, Small Group Work, and Writing Exercise

Story to use: The short passages under the collective title “What Are You So Afraid Of?” on p. 26 and 27

Objectives:

- Practice cooperating in a small group.
- Practice finding information, listening, and taking notes.
- Practice making inferences.
- Practice for reading and listening parts of Regents exams.
- Complete a short writing assignment.

Before the activity: Read the pieces yourself. Think of one thing you fear.

Activity #1: Reading and Discussion

Divide the group into smaller ones. Give each student a copy of *YCteen*. Ask them to turn to pages 26-27. Tell them something like:

“We are going to read some short passages by teens on what scares them. Look at the title. What is a phobia? Can you name some things or situations that many people fear or at least find unpleasant?” Does anyone here have something they fear or really don’t like? NOTE: Name your fear if you feel comfortable doing so.

NOTE: You can suggest the following phobias if they don’t bring them up: fear of spiders, snakes, heights, dogs, thunder and lightning, injections, flying, and germs or dirt. Then say something like, “Each group will have 10 minutes to read the passages. I will then quickly read 16 statements. Each statement will identify a teen on the page. For example, I may read, “This teen is probably less likely to get the flu than the other teens.” After I read the statement your group will write down the initials of the teen associated with that statement. Write the letters large enough so the class can read them when you hold them up.” NOTE: You can extend the reading time depending on the skills of your students or time availability.

Say something like, “Take three minutes to discuss how your group is going to divide up the work so you will have enough time to complete the assignment as a group.”

Read these statements after the 10-minute reading period is up. Count to ten between questions to provide sufficient wait time. The answers are in parentheses. Some have more than one answer.

- A. This person should not paint bridges for a living. (EL)
- B. This teen is probably less likely to get the flu than the other teens. (BK)
- C. This teen is very likely to go to college. (LS or AS)
- D. This teen fears furtive felines. (SD)
- E. This teen is 18 years old. (AS)

- F. This teen was born outside the United States. (PD)
- G. This teen describes a medical emergency. (MF and DS)
- H. This teen is now more willing to accept that she can't control everything. (LS)
- I. This teen should not become a zoologist. (SD)
- J. This teen's phobia almost killed her. (DS)
- K. These three teens are afraid of situations, not of things. (PD, AS, and LS)
- L. This teen worked hard to overcome her fear. (PD)
- M. This teen probably doesn't like to go to the park. (SD)
- N. Who would like to stay a high school student forever? (AS)
- O. Who doesn't start her or his story by directly telling you what his or her fear is? (SD)
- P. This teen probably shouldn't become an eye, nose, and throat doctor. (BK)

Call time after you read the last statement. Read the statements again and ask each group to hold up the initials they picked. Keep track of how many correct answers each group gets. Congratulate the group that wins. NOTE: If you have time you can ask how they divided up their work during the activity. Did one person take notes? Did members of the group divide up the pieces to read so they could read them more carefully?

Activity #2: Written Response

Before the activity: Write the sentences labeled a, b, and c from the list below on the board.

Assign the group to write a short piece about one thing that scares or disgusts them. Make it part of homework.

Tell them something like, "Here's one strategy for writing the piece. Notice the pattern Malik used in the "Big, Bad Dogs" story. Then point to the board and go over the steps.

- a) He clearly stated his fear in the first sentence. (main idea)
- b) He described one event connected to the fear. (supporting details)
- c) He wrote about what he did to control his fear and avoid the source of his fear. (conclusion)

As part of the assignment, they should choose one of the passages to model their piece on.

Lesson 7. Facebook Fight: Reading, Short Writing Exercise, and Vocabulary Development

Story to use: “The Facebook Fight That Fractured My Face” on p. 5

Objectives:

- Reinforce the main components of a story or article.
- Give students practice in developing mental pictures about a story before they start reading.
- Learn the meaning of some unfamiliar words.

Before the activity: Do the activity yourself: read the headline, look at the drawing, complete the sheet (see below), read the story, and see if your predictions agreed with the story.

Write these words on the board with the heading: “Words in the story”

irrational	mutual
unprovoked	surreal
virtual	immense
confrontation	escalate
embolden	tendencies
intensify	audacity
desensitized	perilous

Underline these words in your copy of the story.

See the table on the next page. Put it on the board. Or if you can, make copies of it to hand out.

Activity #1: Reading and Discussion

Tell the group they are going to read a story by a teen who was assaulted by someone she had words with on Facebook.

Give each student a copy of *YCteen*. Ask them to turn to page 5. Tell them to read the title of the story, look at the picture of the author, and look at the illustration picture but not to read the story yet.

Then ask them to look at the questions on the board (or on handouts). Tell them the first column contains the main elements of most stories: setting, characters, plot, conflict, and some ending or resolution.

Ask them to read the headline again and ask themselves what will happen in the story.

They have five minutes to write 2-3 sentences or phrases for each question. Stress that this is not a quiz or test. It is a way of “warming up” before they read the story. What they write are notes to themselves and don’t have to be grammatically correct.

After 5 minutes, read the story as a group. You can do this silently or ask for volunteers to read sections.

After the reading, ask them to look at their predictions. Ask for volunteers to say what they got right and what surprised them. After a few minutes of discussion, ask them if doing the pre-reading exercise helped them enjoy the story. Did knowing a little bit about what might happen make it easier to read?

Ask for volunteers to state their unfamiliar words. Quickly locate the word in the story and read the sentence out loud—or just the phrase the word appears in. Ask the group if they can think of a substitute word or phrase the author could have used instead. Give them an example of a substitution: “Someone had the audacity to record it on their phone” could be “Someone had the nerve to record it on their phone.” Reinforce each example, saying something like, “Audacity means boldness or daring or nerve.”

Activity #2: Story Elements and Written Response

Give them a homework assignment. They are to write a one-page response to the story. They should summarize what happened and then—most importantly—give their opinions on how the story ended. Were they happy with the resolution? Did they think justice was done? Did they approve of how the writer handled the situation?

Table for Lesson 7, Activity #1
Predictions about the story I am about to read

The Setting	Where will the events take place?
The Characters	What will the people in the story be like?
The Problem or Conflict	What might the characters want that leads to a conflict?
The Plot, or Actions	What might happen in the story?
The Resolution	“Resolution” means how things worked out. How might the story end? Will anyone get what they want?
Words on the board	Look at the lists of words on the board. Write down three words that you know the meaning of and three words that are unfamiliar

Lesson 8. Cyber Hatred: Reading and Discussion

Story to use: “Username: Hater” on p. 8

Objectives:

- Discuss what to do in case of threatening cyber drama that’s linked to school activities.
- Understand the elements of a good story that is told chronologically.
- Understand the use of analysis or examination of what happened in writing a story.

Before the activity: Read the story yourself. Ask if your school has a policy to handle cyber drama or bullying linked to school activities.

Write this list of events that occur in the story. They are out of chronological order.

- a) Kiara, the author of the story, blocks “hoehoe91” from sending her messages.
- b) The dance group goes into the principal’s office.
- c) The group has mini panic attacks back stage.
- d) Hoehoe91 sends her first threatening message.
- e) A friend tells her mom about the ominous messages.
- f) The group performs.
- g) Everyone blocks out hoehoe91.
- h) The messages stop coming.
- i) School aides escort some of the dancers home.
- j) A group of girls forms a dance group.
- k) The group feels relieved once they know school officials will help them.
- l) Kiara’s dad gives her flowers.
- m) Kiara analyzes (or thinks about) what happened.

Activity: Reading and Discussion

Tell your group they are going to read a story written by a teenager about a group of girls that started receiving threatening instant messages from an anonymous harasser.

Ask if any of them have ever been in a similar situation. What did they do about it?
Allow about 5 minutes for comments.

Hand out the issue of *YCteen* and ask them to turn to page 8. Ask them to read up to the subhead (or mini headline) ‘I’m Going to Hurt You’ in the first column. After they reach that point in the text, ask them what they think will happen in the story. Discuss for 5 minutes.

Before they read the rest of the story, point out that the story is told chronologically, with the events described as they happened. Tell them that Kiara stops telling the story this way in the last column, starting with the subhead “Bullies in Hiding.” There she tells the reader what she thinks about the events. This is called analysis or examination.

Then have them read the story. Depending on your group's skill level, you may want to read part of it to save time. (The story is very well written in an engaging, simple style that lacks convoluted sentences and difficult vocabulary words.)

After the reading, pair off the group and ask the pair to reorder the list from the board. Allow 5 minutes for this activity. Ask for volunteers to reconstruct the order.

Ask them to reread the analysis section under the subhead "Bullies in Hiding." Ask the group if they agree with Kiara about these points:

- a) hoehoe91 acted out of jealousy
- b) the best way to handle a situation like this is to block the sender and not engage him or her
- c) cyber bullying makes some people feel powerful
- d) being anonymous enables bullies to do what they do.

Sum up: If your school has a policy of helping students in these cases, let the group know that. Tell them specifically who to approach to get help.

Lesson 9. Media Literacy Lesson: How Gender Ratios Influence Sexual Decision Making

Story to use: "Sexonomics 101" on p. 28

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify different types of evidence that writers use in their stories.
- Students will consider how having more girls than boys (and vice versa) in a school or college might influence how girls and boys view dating relationships.

Students will write an opinion essay.

Before the activity: Read the story yourself. When the writer cites a source, put a number next to that passage or sentence. Here are the sources mentioned:

Column 1: Students at her school. (Note that she uses the word "sources" here.)

Column 1: An online article published by salon.com

Column 1: The study that the online article discusses

Column 2: The study and article again

Column 2: Her personal experience, at the place where she writes, "I know girls often feel..."

Column 3 and 4: *New York Times* article

Last column: Make a note that this column contains the writer's analysis or examination of the gender ratio impacts

ANOTHER NOTE: Notice that the writer did not quote anyone at her school about this issue. She might have spoken with her classmates but has not quoted any of them.

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

Activity #1: Reading and discussion

Lead a short discussion about what a “source” is in reporting. Tell the group, “We are going to read a story by teen writer Kelly Colon about how the numbers of boys and girls at high schools and colleges influence dating decisions and decisions about having sex. Note that at the end of the first paragraph, she writes, “...it was easy to check sources.” Ask the group, “What is a source? Give some examples of sources in newspaper, magazine or online articles.”

After the discussion, tell them, “Look at the list on the board. As you read the story, your job is to identify the types 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.” You can give them an example from the exercise you did.

After they read the story and mark up their copies, ask them something like, “Are you convinced that Kelly accurately portrayed the situation facing many girls at school where females outnumber males by a large margin? And what about situations where boys outnumber girls? If you are convinced, what parts of the story were important in convincing you?”

NOTE: Try to work the question of lack of interview quotes in the story. Would quoting one or two students at her school have made any difference in convincing anyone?

Activity #2: Reflection and writing

Direct them to read the story again at home, especially the last column where Kelly examines the gender ratio situation. As they read they should think about the dating situation at their school. They should write 400-500 word essay—one type-written page—about whether the story accurately describes the situation at their school.

When the group meets again, ask for volunteers to read their essays or summarize them. Lead discussions based on the responses.

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