

# Ycteen

January/February 2012

## LESSON GUIDE

### Announcements

Issue Review: Topics for this issue include immigration and health

1. Writing Contest #211: “The ‘Occupy Wall Street’ protests have drawn attention 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? Deadline March 9, 2012
2. Writing Contest #212: “Describe a time when you got good advice from an adult but didn’t take it. Why didn’t you follow the advice? When did you realize you should have? How do you think things would have turned out differently if you’d taken the advice?”
3. Blaming Immigrants Won’t Solve the Problem—Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary and Writing Response
4. Overqualified for School? Reading Comprehension, Discussion, and Written Response
5. School Versus Work—Reading Comprehension, Discussion, and Written Response
6. Birth Control and Sex Education—Health education, Reading Comprehension, Discussion
7. Media Literacy—Reading, Discussion, Writing
8. Practice for English Regents—Reading, Test taking

**YOUTH**  
COMMUNICATION

*Read. Write. Succeed.*



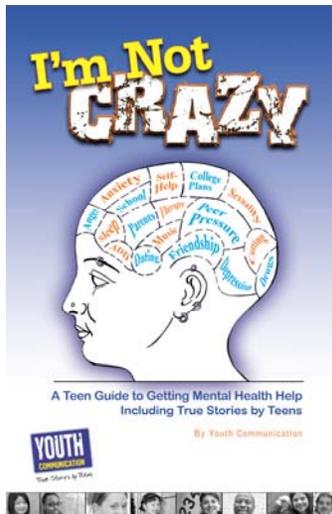
## *Announcements*

### **14th Annual Awards for Youth in Foster Care**

Twenty youth in New York City's foster care system will win cash prizes of up to \$1,000 in our annual essay writing contest. The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2012. For information and an application, go to:

[http://www.representmag.org/pdf/awards\\_for\\_youth\\_in\\_foster\\_care/14th\\_annual\\_represent\\_mag\\_awards\\_for\\_youth\\_in\\_foster\\_care\\_app.pdf](http://www.representmag.org/pdf/awards_for_youth_in_foster_care/14th_annual_represent_mag_awards_for_youth_in_foster_care_app.pdf)

### **A Gift: *I'm Not Crazy***



Our booklet, *I'm Not Crazy: A Teen's Guide to Getting Mental Health Services*, informs teens about how to get help from the mental health system and reassures them it's OK to ask for support from friends, family, and professionals. We wrote it in consultation with three clinical psychologists.

To receive up to 10 free copies of *I'm Not Crazy*, please email [lchan@youthcomm.org](mailto:lchan@youthcomm.org) with your name, title, school, mailing address, email, and number of copies you want. Good while supplies last.

## Issue Review

This issue focuses on immigration and also includes stories on health-related topics.

### Stories health educators can use:

#### **My BFF's Abusive Boyfriend, p. 24**

Mitzi's best friend is involved in an abusive relationship, but she keeps returning to her boyfriend — even after Mitzi convinces her to reach out to supportive adults for help.

Discussion points and writing topics: Healthy relationships, sexual health, domestic violence, family, friendship, seeking help

#### **SexEd: Bedsider.org Has Birth Control Covered, p. 12**

Breanna reviews a website, [bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org), that educates young women (and men) about contraception. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy created the site, which includes comprehensive explanations of various forms of birth control, frank discussion of sex and communication, as well as videos featuring real people talking about their experiences with specific types of contraception.

Discussion points and writing topics: Healthy relationships, contraception/sexual health, communication

### Stories English teachers can use:

This guide has several discussion, reading, and writing lessons, including a Regents test prep activity.

#### **One-Way Ticket to America? p. 7**

When Shahlo's family wins the green card lottery, they look forward to starting a new life in New York. But the challenges associated with being new immigrants make them question their decision to leave Uzbekistan.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, family, education, diversity, life transitions,

#### **Leaving Tibet, p. 8**

The author leaves her small village in Tibet to join extended family in India and later in New York. This is a beautifully written story about finding her place and understanding the political oppression and lack of opportunity that led her family to send her far from home.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, political oppression, family, education, life transitions

#### **American Ambitions, p. 12**

Shortly after arriving in New York from her native Uzbekistan, Shahlo faces resistance from her parents about her dream of attending college. They encourage her to work rather than returning to high school. Shahlo must convince her parents - and herself - that pursuing her dream of higher education will be worth it in the long run.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, family, employment, education, perseverance, developing independence

**Visiting Nigeria Made Me Proud of My Culture, p. 14**

Peace barely remembers her early years in Nigeria and considers herself fully Americanized. But when her parents plan a trip home, Peace and her siblings develop a new appreciation for their Nigerian roots.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, culture, family

**Learning to Love the Real Haiti, p. 16**

Edward is horrified by the poverty he sees in Haiti when his mother forces him to spend a vacation visiting relatives there. But the experience leaves him with a strong desire to help.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, culture, family, poverty

**Stories about current events and social issues:**

**How I Became an Illegal Immigrant, p. 3**

The author describes how her family crossed the border illegally and reflects on how that decision shaped her life.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration/Illegal immigration, family

**An Undocumented Immigrant Asks What It Means to Be American, p. 5**

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas, who immigrated from the Philippines at age 12, publicly revealed last year that he is an undocumented immigrant. In this interview with YCteen, he explains his decision and his efforts to start a national conversation about what it means to be an American.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration/Illegal Immigration, tolerance, stereotyping, social activism

**Making U.S. Immigration Work, p. 6**

This overview of how the U.S. immigration system works is a basic primer for understanding immigration policy and why people are calling for reform.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration/Illegal immigration

**Blaming Immigrants Won't Solve the Problem, p. 6**

Julietta Velazquez challenges common stereotypes about immigrants, questions the contention that immigrants are taking jobs from American citizens, and asks who really profits from illegal immigration.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration/illegal immigration, economics, stereotyping/scapegoating

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

**Overqualified for School? p. 10** *See lesson*

When Barry starts school in New York, he is surprised at how easy it seems compared to the strict approach to education in Guinea. He starts to slack off until he realizes that there are opportunities in this new approach to education that he didn't have back home. Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, political oppression, education, initiative, developing independence, college readiness, life transitions

**My Immigrant Parents Sacrificed; I Slacked, p. 18**

When he is 12, the author's parents move the family from Hong Kong to New York so that he can have a better education and get into a good university. He feels pressured to excel, but a lack of motivation interferes.

Discussion points and writing topics: Immigration, education, family, initiative/developing independence, college readiness, life transitions

## **Lesson 1. Writing Contest #212—Win \$150**

### **Objectives:**

Students will read and learn about some of the social and economic arguments fueling the Occupy Wall Street and related movements.

Students will analyze an argument and write a 400-500 persuasive response.

### **9-12 Common Core Standards:**

#### ***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### ***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

#### ***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening***

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Story to use:**

Contest question #212 (p. 2) Deadline: March 9, 2012  
 “What They’re Yelling About on Wall Street” from the Nov/Dec 2011 issue of *YCteen*  
<http://bit.ly/smNa33>

**Before the activity:**

Have students read “What They’re Yelling About on Wall Street” from the Nov/Dec 2011 issue of *YCteen* (see link above) about the Occupy Wall Street movement, to build background and understand the contest question. The article is a brief primer on the issues raised by the OWS protesters, such as income inequality.

After reading, discuss with students 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:**

Hand out the Jan/Feb 2012 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 first 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. 29<sup>th</sup> St. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 #212—Win \$150

### Objectives:

Students will analyze why teenagers sometimes react negatively to adults' advice rather than accepting/acting on it.

Students will write a 400-500 word response describing a personal experience with rejecting advice and later learning from it.

### 9-12 Common Core Standards:

#### *Anchor Standards for Writing*

Text types and Purposes

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2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

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#### *Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### Story to use:

Contest question #212 (p. 2) Deadline: April 16, 2012

### Activity:

Hand out the Jan/Feb 2012 issue of *YCteen* and ask them to open up to p. 2. Tell the group you are assigning them to write a one-page description of a time when they received good advice from an adult but didn't follow it. You are going to collect their pieces and send them in to the *YCteen* writing contest. Tell them that they have a chance to win up to \$150 by entering the writing contest.

Ask for a volunteer to read the writing prompt aloud. Check for understanding.

Lead a short discussion about how the reasons teenagers sometimes ignore or reject advice from adults. Ask for some examples of typical advice that adults give teens. Do teens agree with the adults' advice? Why or why not? What makes them reject good

advice sometimes? (Teens may offer reasons like rebelliousness, wanting independence, resistance because adults seem critical and unsupportive in the way they offer advice.) Point out that all people - not just teens - sometimes react to someone's tone or attitude before thinking about whether the advice they are offering could be helpful. Ask teens if that's ever happened to them; volunteers can share examples.

Assign them to write a 400-500 word essay (about one type-written page) for homework or for extra credit, using an example from their own life. 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. 29<sup>th</sup> St. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. Blaming Immigrants - Reading Comprehension and Persuasive Writing Response**

**Story to use:** “Making U.S. Immigration work,” and “Blaming Immigrants Won’t Solve the Problem”

**Objectives:**

Students will comprehend key vocabulary in context associated with a non-fiction text

Students will understand basic background information about how the U.S. immigration system works

Students will analyze an argument in defense of immigration

Students will practice writing short responses to questions that are based on reading

**Common Core 9-12 Standards:**

***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening***

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Before the lesson:**

**Vocabulary in Context** (Optional): All of the following words appear in the story. You may wish to do a pre-reading lesson in which students learn the definition and practice writing or discussing the words in context:

Immigration  
 Reform  
 Comprehensive  
 Document  
 Penalize  
 Oppression  
 Persecution  
 Stereotype  
 Fraud  
 Corruption  
 Restrictive  
 Productivity  
 Economy

**Prewriting:** Write the following writing prompt on the board:

*What are some of the reasons why people immigrate to the U.S.? What are some of the benefits of immigration? What might be some drawbacks?*

Have students share out responses. Encourage a diversity of responses:

Reasons for immigrating: employment, education, family ties, war/violence, crime, political pressures, etc.

Benefits: New/different ideas about art, music, politics/government, etc.; different/special skills and expertise to contribute to education and jobs

Drawbacks: Bad economy means more people create a burden on public services; might take jobs that citizens need; might be more crime

**Activity #1: Reading and discussion**

Introduce the lesson by saying something like, "A lot of people are confused about immigration, and it is complicated. There are legal and illegal ways to come to the

United States. We are first going to read about some of those different ways and talk about why people think the immigration system needs to be reformed.”

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

### **Discussion:**

Break students into partners or small groups to 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.

- What are some reasons why the U.S. can't accept every immigrant who wants to live here?
- What are some benefits of immigration?
- Think of at least three reforms to the immigration system that would make it better.

### **Activity #2: Writing**

This is a great opportunity to have students practice writing a persuasive essay, which would mean extending the lesson by several days, 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. Use the previous discussion activity to identify arguments and supporting statements to defend arguments. Possible prompt:

Julieta Velazquez argues immigrants do not harm the economy, as some anti-immigration advocates say. Write an essay in which you summarize Julieta's argument, and then say whether you agree or disagree, and why.

## **Lesson 4. Media Literacy Lesson: Is There An Immigration Problem? —Reading, Discussion About Evidence, and Reporting Assignment**

**Story to use:** “Blaming Immigrants Is Not Going to Solve the Immigration Problem,”  
p. 6

**Objectives:** Students will be able to identify different types of evidence that writers use in their stories. They will identify and reflect on some of the issues involved in America’s immigration debate.

### **Common Core 9-12 Standards:**

#### ***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
3. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
9. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

11. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### ***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
3. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

5. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

11. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening***

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Before the lesson:** Write this list on the board:

Type of evidence

- 1) References to studies, books, and reports issued by colleges, government agencies, and research institutions
- 2) References to newspapers, magazines, Web sites, and other news organizations
- 3) Interviews with experts such as college professors, government officials, and authors
- 4) Interviews with people affected by what's being reported on: flood victims, civilians in a war zone, immigrants, high school students, etc.
- 5) Interviews with people who know the people being written about
- 6) Eyewitnesses to an event or situation
- 7) Personal accounts by the author that describes his or her experience with the issue

Then write these headlines on the board. The first is from the November 24, 2011 *New York Times*. The second is from the *Times*' January 25, 2012 issue.

“In New York, Mexicans Lag in Education”

“Police Gang Tyrannized Latinos, Indictment Says”

**Warm up activity:** Tell them that the first thing they should do when reading a news story is look at the headline. This is a reading strategy that will offer important clues as to what the story is about. Then ask them to look at the headline of the *YCteen* story (“Blaming Immigrants Is Not Going to Solve the Immigration Problem”) and to take a few minutes to write a 2-3 item list that answers these questions:

Who do you think is blaming immigrants?

What do you think they are blaming immigrants for?

Take five minutes to ask for one or two volunteers to read their list items out loud. Ask the group if they agree with the items.

**Activity on sources:** Tell the group something like, “We are going to read a story by teenager Julieta Velazquez. She thinks it is unfair that some people stereotype (be sure they understand the word stereotype) undocumented immigrants and blame them for America's economic problems.”

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: There are three places in the story that mention sources of information: column #2 has *FactCheck*, (which is FactCheck.org); column #3 has the Associated Press, and column #4 has *The Nation* magazine. Also note that there are no other kinds of sources.

After they read the story, ask them to identify the sources for the article and see if any of them have heard of these organizations. Chances are few of them will have heard of them, so be sure to offer a brief explanation of each.

Then lead them into a discussion on sources of information. Here are some questions you can use based on the story they just read:

- Is it ok to trust a source if you haven’t heard of it? How can you find out more about an article’s source?
- What other kinds of evidence from the list on the board could the author have used? For example, could she have interviewed anyone? If she had a personal experience with immigrants could she have used it for the article? Would the interviews and quotes be trustworthy? How can a writer/journalist verify the accuracy of statements made by a source during an interview?
- What sources do *you* rely on for information about the things you care about? Have you ever read or heard something that you thought was true but turned out to false?

**Activity on the article’s arguments:** After a discussion on sources ask, say something like “Look at the lists you wrote down before about the headlines. Who is convinced by Julieta’s argument that undocumented immigrants don’t cause economic problems for American citizens? Raise your hands and tell me what in the story helped convince you.”

After the “convinced” have their say, ask if anyone is skeptical and does anyone believe that undocumented immigrants *are* a problem? What evidence in the story bothers them? What kind of evidence would convince them?

**Writing activity:** Then point to the two headlines and tell them they are from recent issues of *The New York Times*. Tell them one is for a story about the how Mexican students are doing in New York City schools. The other is a story about police officers in East Haven, Connecticut who have been charged with beating, harassing, and illegally arresting Latinos.

Their assignment (in class or at home) is to pretend they are an editor at a newspaper (you might have to explain what an editor does) and they have to write a memo to a reporter who is covering both stories. The memo should detail what kinds of evidence the reporter should gather and what the readers should know about the situation. Read an example out loud for them: “Be sure to interview at least three parents of Mexican students. Try to get a report from the Department of Education.” Each story should get a 6-8 sentence memo.

Collect and correct the memo. Choose one or two that you think do the best job of instructing the reporter. Read them out loud and guide a discussion about what makes the memos effective.

## **Lesson 5. Overqualified for School: Resisting the Urge to Slack Off— Reading Comprehension, Discussion, and Written Response**

**Story to use:** “Overqualified for School?” p. 10-11

### **Objectives:**

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

Students will learn strategies for staying motivated and getting support in classes

### ***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### ***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### ***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening***

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### **Before the activity:**

Ask students to raise their hand if they’ve ever struggled in a class because they didn’t feel challenged and so didn’t feel motivated to try. Ask them what got in their way of succeeding, and make a list of volunteers’ responses on the board.

**Activity #1: Reading and Discussion**

Tell students they are going to read a story about Barry, who immigrated from the West African nation of Guinea and initially found his classes in the U.S. to be too easy. As a result, he felt discouraged and didn't try. Tell them to pay attention to the things that got in his way of success, and what made him turn things around. (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 another column on the board with the heading "Obstacles," and another with the heading "Steps to Success." Ask volunteers to share aloud the things that stood in Barry's way, and how he changed. Record responses.

**Activity #2: Writing**

Here are two possible paragraph-writing prompts for students. This is a good opportunity to reinforce parts of/how to structure a paragraph.

1. Barry learns that there is a big difference between going through the motions and actually learning. In Guinea, he used his talent for memorizing information to pass tests without having to put in much effort or serious thought. But in New York, he is required to learn in a new way—which at first seems easy. Think about the two educational systems that Barry describes. Write a paragraph about which system is more effective, and why. Give at least three reasons.

2. Barry gets advice from two people about how to achieve success. At first, he ignores the advice. But later, he understands that they are right. Who gives Barry advice, and what advice do they give? Do you agree with the advice? Why or why not?

## **Lesson 6. School versus Work—Reading Comprehension, Discussion, and Written Response**

### **Story to use:**

American Ambitions, pp. 12-13

### **Objectives:**

Students will consider the pros and cons of higher education versus work

Students will propose and defend an argument

Students will consider the importance of audience in persuasive writing

### ***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### ***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### ***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening***

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Before the Activity:**

Direct students to complete this warm-up writing prompt:

Imagine you have just graduated from high school, and now you have two choices: You can start working right away and making money, but your job won't be very interesting, your salary won't be great—and it won't increase much over time. Your other choice is to go back to high school for two more years, and then apply to college. After college, you can work in whatever profession you would like. Which would you choose, and why?

**Activity #1: Reading and Discussion**

Preview Shahlo's story by telling students this is the dilemma she faces. Explain that, as recent immigrants, her parents are worried about financial security and thus pressuring her to go straight to work, but Shahlo has other ideas. Then, have students take turns reading Shahlo's story aloud to partners or to the entire class.

After the story, ask students to look over their warm-up. Did they also identify some of Shahlo's reasons for making the decision to go back to school? Or had they argued for going straight to work? After reading Shahlo's story, would they have made the decision she made? Why or why not? Ask volunteers to share their responses with the class.

**Activity #2: Writing**

Tell the class: "Persuasion means getting someone to believe what you believe, or do what you want them to do. When you try to persuade someone in writing, it's important to think about who you're writing for and to use arguments that will appeal to them, based on what you know about their interests, beliefs, and concerns. You must also defend your arguments by backing it up with evidence."

"Imagine you are Shahlo's friend, and you want to convince her parents that she'd be doing the right thing by going back to school. Keeping in mind her parents' concerns, write them a letter encouraging them to let Shahlo go back to school. Be sure to offer several good arguments that will appeal to them and address their concerns. Your letter should be at least three paragraphs long."

As a model for making an argument, write two headings on the board: "Argument" and "Evidence." Have students volunteer an argument for why Shahlo ought to go back to school rather than go immediately to work. Then, invite other students to defend the argument with evidence. (For example, one argument could be that going immediately to work will mean that Shahlo loses out on the opportunity to learn English, whereas going back to school would let her study English for free. Students could defend the argument with the evidence that working without knowing English well could cause her to make

mistakes and get fired, or that not knowing English may give Shahlo disadvantages if she wants to apply for a different, higher-paying job.

## **Lesson 7. Birth Control and Sex Education - Reading, Discussion, and Persuasive Writing**

**Story to use:** “Bedsider.org Has Birth Control Covered,” p. 19

### **Objectives:**

Students will identify and evaluate different sources of information about sexual decision making.

Students will read a review of a sexual health website and identify information and perspectives on sexual decision-making, birth control, STDs, and other sex education topics.

Students will write a persuasive essay that recommends what teens should learn about sex and how they should learn it.

### **Common Core Standards:**

Note: Activity #1 also aligns with the Guidance Document for Achieving the New York State Standards in Health Education, sections DM.C.3, SR.C.8, and AD.C.8.

### ***Anchor Standards for Reading:***

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### ***Anchor Standards for Writing***

Text types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

***Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening*****Comprehension and Collaboration**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Activity #1: Discussion and Analysis****Before the activity:**

Copy the chart below on board.

Tell the group they are going to read a story by a teen who visited a web site that has information about birth control and related topics so adolescents can make more informed choices about sex. This article is a review of the web site.

Say something like, "Before we read the story let's look at the board. The first column contains situations you might need advice about. Who would you ask or what web site would you visit or what book would you read to get information about the situations?"

As students name sources, write them on the board. Once you get a few boxes filled, ask if anyone disagrees with any of the responses. Discuss the pros and cons of some of the sources. Suggest possible answers if you think they've missed some.

You sometimes need info about:	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3
College application process			
Graduating from high school			
Fashion, what to wear			
Getting a job			
Sex			
What movies to see			

Then read the story with them (aloud taking turns or silently). After, ask them if the web site seemed like a reasonable one to visit. Why did the writer like it so much? Did any part of her description make you want to go there or want to avoid it? Have any of them visited other web sites? What are the advantages of using a web site to get information about birth control, etc., versus talking to friends or family or school staff? Are there any disadvantages?

## **Activity #2: Writing**

After reading the story, give them a writing assignment to argue for appropriate sex education for high school students. Explain that students may have differing opinions about what “appropriate” sex education is: Some may say that only parents/other family should be responsible for teaching teens about sex, while others may say that sex education should include instruction at school, and still others may think it ought to include information gained by other formal and informal methods, such as reading, talking to friends, etc.

Tell them you are going to read what points should be in their arguments (one paragraph for each) about “appropriate sex education.” Provide the following questions to students, and read through them aloud:

Why learning about sex is important.

What teens should know about sex.

What is positive about how teens learn about sex now.

What is negative about how teens learn about sex now.

What, in your opinion, are the best places/ways for teens to learn about sex?

Tell students the following:

“You will be making arguments in your essay. For at least one of these arguments, you must give the reader the opposing point of view and then explain why you disagree with it. [Note: Considering opposing arguments is an explicit writing standard].

“Some people believe that \_\_\_\_\_. I disagree, because \_\_\_\_\_.

[You may want to write this statement on the board for your students’ reference.] For example, if you argue that teens should learn about sex from their parents, then you have to warn the reader that some may think too many parents can’t or won’t talk to their kids about sex. Then you can give your reasons why those people are wrong.”

Tell them when the assignment is due. During the session in which the assignment is due, ask for volunteers to read any section of their assignment that they feel comfortable with. After each reading, ask the group if they agree with the points made.

## **Lesson 8. The Slacker: Practice for Regents Exam Reading Section**

**Story to use:** “Overqualified for School?” p. 10

**Objectives:** Students will learn about the differences between American schools and schools in other countries. They will contrast “slacker” behavior with industrious behavior. 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, and understanding the purpose of individual sentences.

**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.

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

### **Give Your Students Directions**

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.

Tell them, “Only read the story up until the sentence, ‘I was frustrated, and became afraid that I was going to fail.’ Don’t read beyond the word Slacker which is in dark or bold type.

Here are the answers:

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

# Regents Practice Question Sheet

(Linked to the story “Overqualified for School?,” in the Jan/Feb 2012 issue of *YCteen*)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**1) What is the best way get good grades in Guinea-Conakry’s schools?**

- 1) Listen to your teachers
- 2) Come to school every day
- 3) Do well on tests
- 4) Participate in class

**2) What is one difference between schools in the U.S. and in Guinea?**

- 1) African schools are not free
- 2) U.S. schools have smaller classes
- 3) U.S. schools are stricter
- 4) U.S. students are free to fail

**3) Becoming successful in Guinea depends on**

- 1) Hard work
- 2) Level of education
- 3) Friends
- 4) Intelligence

**4) What word best describes the writer’s expectation of coming to the U.S.?**

- 1) Fearful
- 2) Unrealistic
- 3) Pessimistic
- 4) Cynical

**5) Why was school so easy for him at first?**

- 1) He’s very smart
- 2) Teachers gave him special attention
- 3) He worked hard
- 4) He was old to be in his grade

**6) Why does he write about his uncle and his friend?**

- 1) To make himself more sympathetic
- 2) To show how he acted like them
- 3) To tell readers about his life
- 4) To contrast his attitudes to theirs

**7) Which answer best describes the writer’s main point?**

- 1) To tell readers they should never relax
- 2) To show how American schools are different than the schools in his Guinea
- 3) To show how being overconfident can have bad consequences
- 4) To show you need adult support to succee