

Ycteen

January/February 2015

LESSON GUIDE

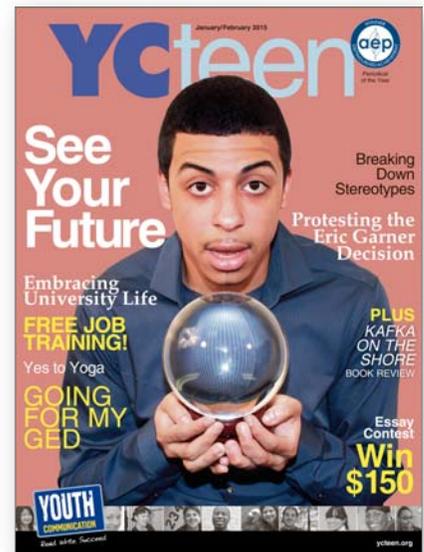
Dear Educators,

When I was a teacher returning to school after a restful winter break, I entered the classroom with renewed energy—but that energy wasn't usually shared by my students. Impacted by the different struggles in their lives away from school, many were absent in the first days or weeks after break, and many of those present felt disconnected. That's a tough way to start the second half of the school year, with graduation, Regents tests, college applications and FAFSA deadlines looming.

As students are thinking more seriously about life after high school, they may feel excited, alienated, and scared. So how can we hold close the teens who are already on a path to success while trying to bring in those who are not? My approach is to embody the belief that college is for everyone, but also to open up the conversation so all students feel invited in and no one can say "that's not for me," and tune out from the essential work of finding their path into adulthood. I hope this issue of *Ycteen* can help you in these efforts. The stories offer what many teens lack: models of different options and authentic portrayals of what it feels like to travel down them.

You'll read about teens overcoming self-doubt, discovering hidden strengths, taking academic risks, learning through experience, and finding their voice in shaping a future they want to be a part of. The writers are first generation college students and second generation immigrants. They are English language learners and youth in foster care. Their paths are not straight, but they are filled with agency and hope.

I recommend beginning with the Paired Interviews activity, which allows all students to try out their ideas and sends the message that everyone has a stake in the conversation. As always, I welcome your feedback and would love to hear your stories of learning.



Best wishes for a great 2014-15 school year,

Elizabeth Johnson

Elizabeth Johnson
Education Director



Group Activity: Paired Interviews (20-30 min)

This activity helps to build a classroom community where students learn from each other. Beforehand, decide on how to group students so they interview someone they do not know very well. Introduce the activity as a chance to share, and listen to, different perspectives on life after high school.

Paired Interview directions: Sit next to your partner and make eye contact. Take turns asking each other questions from the list, and providing details in your responses. Communicate that you're actively listening through body language. Afterwards, thank your partner and ask permission to share one thing you learned with the class.

1. When you were younger what did you want to be when you grew up? Why? Has this dream changed as you've gotten older? Why?
2. As high school graduation gets closer, what are you excited about? What are you worried about?
3. Tell me about an adult in your life who is a role model for you when it comes to higher education and/or career.
4. What are your education and career goals for after high school? What will help you to meet those goals? What could get in the way (and how will you overcome it)?
5. How will a college education (two or four year) help you to reach your goals?
6. Do you see yourself staying close to home or traveling away after high school? Why?
7. When you think about living independently away from home, what do you picture? What is exciting about this? What is scary?
8. What kind of work environment do you think will be the best fit for you? What kind of college environment?
9. What is one personal decision you think is essential for you to make in order to reach your goals and fulfill your dreams?
10. What is a belief, value, or passion you hold that will shape your future (and the world around you)?



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Making Dreams Into Reality

Stories to Use: “[Good Enough to Be a Lawyer](#),” by Damia Mendoza, pp. 6-7.

Story Summary: Damia’s dream of becoming a criminal lawyer and her fear of confronting dangerous defendants collide when she moves to New York City from Ecuador. Then she lands an internship at the Queens District Attorney’s office where she learns she has the skills and courage to succeed.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students are willing to reflect on their sense of self and identity.
- Students recognize their strengths and challenges.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10)
- Students will write routinely for a range of tasks (CCLS W.10).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Introduce **freewriting** by explaining that students will have four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts *freely* without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (*Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.*)
2. **Freewrite** prompt: What is a dream you have for your future? What is a fear that could hold you back? What if you could overcome your fear and achieve your dream? What would that take, how would it feel, and what would it mean?
3. **Partner Share** directions: Students should select a partner and/or turn to the person next to them. Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing their responses to the freewrite prompt. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. After two minutes, direct partners to switch roles.

During Reading (20 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud; volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **text coding**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.
4. **Text Coding** directions: While reading aloud together, identify Damia’s dreams, fears, and your personal connections to her story. In the margins, write the following:
 - D** (Damia’s **dreams** for her future)
 - F** (Damia’s **fears** and worries)
 - C** (Personal **connections** you make to Damia’s story from your life)
5. While still sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop and discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they have text coded and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question like, what stands out to you in this section and why?

After Reading the Story (30 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. **Text-based Discussion** directions: Write two columns on chart paper or your white board. Title one “Damia’s fears” and the other “Damia’s dreams”.
 - Have students volunteer examples from the text and record them in the correct column.
 - Have students identify fears she overcomes through her internship experience. Circle those.
 - Have students identify fears that she discovers are strengths instead of obstacles. (For example, being bilingual.) Draw a star next to those.
 - In small groups or pairs, have students discuss this question: “How did Damia’s internship experience help her to overcome her fears, discover her strengths, and take steps towards her dreams?”
 - Invite volunteers to share with the larger group highlights from their discussion.
2. **Personal Reflection** directions: Reflecting on what we learned from Damia’s story, think about different places that could help you to overcome fears, discover strengths, and realize dreams. Write a brainstorm list of professions, settings, and issues you would be interested in exploring through an internship.



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

An Open Mind to the Future

Stories to Use: “[I Expected to Fail](#),” by Orlando Hawkins, pp. 8-9

Story Summary: As an African-American male who grew up in foster care, Orland feels double stigma. But a professor's comment makes him determined to succeed in college.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students have an expanded sense of agency and believe that their actions can make a difference in their own lives.
- Students are able to recognize how they can shape their identity and future.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10)
- Students are able to use textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says, as well as drawn inferences (CCLS R.1).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. **Go-Round Share** directions: Invite students to think about a behavior, belief, or attitude they used to have, but have changed, and what the impact of this change has been. After some think time, have student go around the circle completing the following sentence in a way that is true for them:

I used to _____ but now I _____ and so _____.

During Reading (20 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud; volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

- For the first part of the story, have students read for examples of **obstacles** Orlando faces (people, situations, events, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes). Instruct students to draw a star next to these examples.
- Stop before the section “Proving Him Wrong.” Invite students to share examples of obstacles. Next, have them make predictions about what they think will happen in college for Orlando.
- For the second part of the story, have students read for examples of **shifts** that happen in Orlando’s thinking and behavior.

After Reading the Story (20 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. **Double Entry Journal** directions: On a piece of paper, or in a journal, have students draw two columns as shown below.

Examples of Orlando’s SHIFTS...	My thoughts and questions...
<i>Quote from text...</i>	

2. On the left, have students write specific quotes from the story that show shifts in Orlando’ thinking and behavior. These are the turning points that occur for him in college.
3. On the right, have students write their responses to the text. These can include opinions, personal connections, questions, and inferences.
4. Finally, bring the group together and invite students to share examples from their journals. Facilitate a discussion that highlights how Orlando’s growth mindset about his future enabled him to see himself and others differently. With an open mind to new experiences he was able to take risks in new situations that ultimately led him to build a connection to college and his future.



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Finding Your Own Way

Stories to Use: “[Not a Stretch](#),” by Eliza Dubisz, pp. 12-13

Story Summary: Eliza’s parents moved to the U.S. from Poland partly so their children could go to college, but that’s not what Eliza wants for herself. She navigates around her parents’ wishes and finds a career path that feels right.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students are willing to reflect on their sense of self and identity
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10)
- Students will write routinely for a range of tasks (CCLS W.10).
- Students practice participating in a discussion and responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL. 1.c).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Introduce the **Opinion Continuum** by explaining that it is an activity about sharing, and listening to, diverse perspectives from your peers on a common question. All viewpoints are welcome.
2. **Opinion Continuum** directions: Clear a large area in the center of the room. On one end post a sign that reads “Having a job where you earn good money is most important.” On the other end post a sign that reads “Having a meaningful job that makes you happy is most important.” Have students gather in the center of the room and follow these steps:
 - “Thinking about what success means to you and the values you personally hold for your future, decide which statement is most true for you.”
 - Read the statements out loud.
 - “Move along the continuum based on where you stand in relationship to the sign. If you strongly agree, stand next to the sign. Stand closer to the middle if you are unsure or neutral.”
 - Invite students to volunteer share their reasons for why they are standing where they are on the continuum. Remind students the purpose is to listen to different perspectives, not to debate. There is no right answer.
 - “Now, think about how your parents would respond and move towards the sign that reflects their perspective.”

- Invite students to share and discuss similarities and differences between their values and their parents' values on the topic.

During Reading (10 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud; volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. While still sitting in a circle, have volunteers read aloud.
4. Ask the group to further consider the differences between Eliza's expectations for her future and her dad's. What role does their different experiences as an immigrant (dad) and a first generation American (Eliza) play? Invite students to share personal connections to the dilemma Eliza faces.

After Reading the Story (20 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Introduce the activity by reading aloud the following quote from the middle of Eliza's story (posted up): *"I don't know what I'm interested in or who I am. I want a meaningful life."* Invite students to think about what this quote means for them.
2. **Freewrite/draw** directions: On a blank piece of paper ask students to represent in writing or drawing these three things:
 - Who I am.
 - What I'm interested in.
 - What a meaningful life means to me.
3. Support students in getting creative and encourage them to capture the questions they have about things they are unsure of, like Eliza. This activity lends itself well to poetry and art. Close the lesson by having students share their work. Listen to what new things you can learn about your students in this activity. Follow-up by finding connections to students' interests, questions, and passions.



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Coming Together

Stories to Use: “[Speak Out: Black Lives Matter—Protesting the Eric Garner Decision](#),” reporting by *YCteen* Staff, pp. 3-4

Story Summary: After the decision not to indict Daniel Pantaleo, the white police officer accused of killing Eric Garner, who was black, five *YCteen* writers went to their first-ever protest and wrote about the experience.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students develop an expanded sense of possibility and belief that they can make a difference.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely for a range of tasks (CCLS W.10).
- Students practice participating in a discussion and responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL. 1.c).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Introduce **Freewriting** by explaining that students will have four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts *freely* without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (*Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.*)
2. **Free write** prompt: “Think of a time when you took a stand for something you believe in. What was the issue? What was your stand? What happened?”
3. **Partner Share** directions: Students should select a partner and/or turn to the person next to them. Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing their responses to the freewrite prompt. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. After two minutes, direct partners to switch roles.

During Reading (10 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud; volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. **Active Reading** directions: While reading, underline phrases that stand out to you as powerful, capturing a feeling, and/or painting a picture.
4. While still sitting in a circle, have volunteers read aloud

After Reading the Story (30 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. **Spirit Read** directions: Together, lift out and share the powerful phrases from the text that were underlined during the reading. Do not go in any specific order. Instead, take turns reading the phrases out loud. If two people speak at once, one person should back down and read after. Everyone should read at least one phrase they underlined. There is no discussion during the activity.
 - Guide the group by beginning with a phrase you underlined and listening for how and when to close the spirit read.
 - Be patient if there is quiet in between readings. You will find that a “found poem” emerges in the group.
 - Thank them for their participation and transition to the next activity.
2. Introduce **Table Talks** as an opportunity for small peer group discussion of the bigger issues raised in this text about the protests in NYC after the decision in the Eric Garner case. Encourage students to think about how activism is a way to help shape our communities and create the kind of world we want to be a part of.
3. **Table Talk** directions: Have students form small groups of 3-4 students at a table. They should have their copies of the story with them so they can respond specifically to the text. To encourage equal participation, direct students to take turns in a go-round with each person having time to respond without interruption to each question. Afterwards, students may wish to open up the discussion to share their thoughts and questions.
 - What is one point of **connection** you can make to the story? (Something that you agree with or that reminds you of your own experiences.)
 - What is one point of **departure** you can make from the story? (Something you disagree with or see in another way.)
 - What is one **question** this story raises for you?
 - What is one thing in society that you feel has to **change** in order for you to build the future you want for yourself and others? Why?

4. Listen closely to your students' discussions, intervening only if needed to ensure everyone's voice and perspectives are being shared and listened to thoughtfully. If you are interested in following up with further inquiry into the issues raised in the *YCteen* article "Black Lives Matter," we encourage you to explore these resources shared on #FergusonSyllabus and www.teachingforchange.org/teaching-about-ferguson.

Open-ended questions you can use with any story in *YCteen*:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer's shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn't know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? *This reminds me of.... (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)*
9. What surprised you in this story?
10. Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?

***YCteen* Essay Contest**

\$150 First Prize | \$75 Second Prize | \$50 Third Prize

Enter online at bit.ly/ycwritingcontest

Contest # 227

Write a letter to your parents telling them what's going on in your life that they should know about-and don't.

Deadline: March 27, 2015

[**Note:** The cash prize winners for our "Letters to Parents" contest are picked at random. To protect the identities of the writers, we won't publish any real names or list honorable mentions. All names and some details in the letters may be changed.]