

# Ycteen

January/February 2015

## LESSON GUIDE

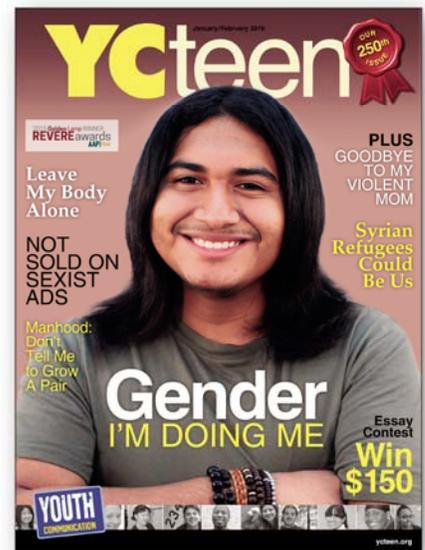
Dear Educators,

When I was a teacher I sought out opportunities to engage my students in difficult conversations about issues that matter to them. While it wasn't always easy to find time in my core content teaching, I believed it was essential to provide a safe space to explore the complex terrain of equity and justice. Then, as now, Youth Communication's true stories by teens are an invaluable tool in navigating the intersection of who we are and the world we live in.

The writers in this issue of *Ycteen* share their experiences with gender stereotypes and roles. They demonstrate clearly how the work of forming our identities—the key task of adolescence—is shaped by the messages we receive about gender. The writers' insights, when discussed in a facilitated group, can make room for the diverse gender identities and experiences your students bring with them and support their personal empowerment and collective empathy.

I recommend beginning with the paired interview activity on the next page, "Our Gendered Experiences." It brings the conversation from the pages into the classroom, giving your students an opportunity to weigh in.

As always, I welcome your feedback and would love to hear your stories of learning.



Sincerely,



Elizabeth Johnson  
Education Director

**Don't let this issue be your last!**

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## Group Activity: Paired Interviews

(Speaking and listening practice, 20-30 min)

### ***Our Gendered Experiences***

*This activity contributes to an inclusive classroom community where students learn from one another's diverse experiences. After reading the "Gender Portraits" on p. 3 of YCteen with your group, introduce this activity as an opportunity for them to explore similar questions. Beforehand, decide on how to group students so they interview someone they do not know very well. Frame the activity as a chance to share, and listen to, personal experiences with gender-based messages and expectations.*

**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. If you choose to pass in responding to a question, be sure to be a good listener for your partner. 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. Who are some adults in your life who step outside of traditional/strict gender roles? What do they do that is different? How do people respond? What do you think?
2. When has someone made an assumption about you based on your gender (or perceived gender)? What was the assumption? How was it different from your truth? What happened?
3. One writer in the *Gender Portraits* section described being bullied with the phrase "man up." Have you ever experienced, or observed, bullying that includes gender-based stereotypes? What happened? How did you feel? What do you think about it now as you reflect on it?
4. Have you ever experienced, or observed, families holding double-standards about dating expectations based on their children's gender and/or sexual orientation?
5. Reflecting back on your childhood experiences, what messages did you receive through toys, media, and your family about gender roles and expectations? What did you think about those messages then? What do you think now?



## COMMON CORE

### ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

### *The Positive Power in Speaking Up*

**Story to Use:** “No Violence, No Silence,” by Anonymous, p. 8

**Story Summary:** A young man decides he isn’t going to “be a man” like his father who uses physical violence in order to feel powerful. Instead, he decides that, for him, being a man is about asking for help when you need it, expressing your feelings, and communicating respectfully with others to resolve conflicts.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students reflect on sense of self and identity.
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (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. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them they will be reading a true story by a teen who learns what being powerful and respected means to him.
2. Introduce the **freewrite** or **quick draw** activity by reminding students that it is an opportunity to freely express their thoughts on paper without worrying about spelling, grammar, or anything else. Students will have about four minutes to write or draw in response to the prompt. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes or draws, without stopping, for the full time.
3. Share the following quote, lifted from Anonymous’s story: “*I like feeling powerful either by speaking up for something I believe in or by playing basketball—not by being physically abusive. I want to be respected because I show respect, not because people are afraid of me.*”
4. Freewrite prompt: “Write or draw your responses to the following statements:
  - I feel powerful when...
  - I earn respect when I...

5. After students have completed the freewrite or quick draw, transition to a **pair share**. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.
6. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing. The listener should not respond, but should actively listen to the speaker. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
7. Thank students for sharing.

### **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 story 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 **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.
4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when the writer shows that he is powerful or deserves respect (breaking up the fight between his mom and dad, calling his sister for support, expressing his emotions to James, seeking help from his principal, etc.) When this occurs in the text, students should put a plus sign in the margins of the story.
5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a plus sign next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”
6. Next, ask the group to further consider these questions:
  - What do you think people, like the writer’s father, mean when they say “be a man”?
  - How is the writer’s idea of being a man different from his father’s?
  - Do you personally connect with the writer’s story? How?

### **After Reading the Story** (15 min)

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

1. Introduce the **dear teen writer** activity by explaining to the students that they will write a letter to the writer giving him advice based on their personal experiences. Remind them that the goal is to communicate their *ideas* about and *responses* to the writer’s story. They shouldn’t worry about spelling or grammar.

2. Explain to students that they should refer to Anonymous's story as they write.
3. **Have students write their letters using these guidelines:**  
In your letters, include the following:
  - Greeting: "Dear Anonymous, *or* Dear Teen Writer,"
  - Parts you connected to in the writer's story and why
  - Your own thoughts about writer's idea of what it means to be a man
  - Any advice you would give him based on your personal experiences
  - Closing: "Sincerely, Your Name"
4. Give them about 10 minutes to write their letters.
5. If they wish, students can share their letters with the rest of the group. Letters can also be mailed to the *YCteen* office at this address:  
242 W. 38th St., 6th floor  
New York NY 10018
6. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group, working to make connections to Anonymous's story, reflecting on their own lives, and sharing with one another.



## COMMON CORE

### ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

### *False Advertising*

**Story to Use:** “[Not Sold on Sexist Ads](#),” by Nahian Chowdhury, p. 7

**Story Summary:** A young woman notices that most television and print advertisements depict men and women in unrealistic ways. She explores this further and uncovers both the prevalence of gender stereotypes in media and ways for youth to combat them.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will listen to and take the perspectives of others from diverse backgrounds.
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (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. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them they will be reading a true story by a teen who takes a stand against advertisements that send out inaccurate messages that reinforce gender stereotypes.
2. Introduce the **opinion continuum** activity by explaining to the group that they will be doing an activity where they move around while learning more about what they and their peers think about a topic.
3. Review the **opinion continuum** directions with the group:
  - On either end of the room, there are signs that read “agree” and “disagree.”
  - I (the teacher or facilitator) will read a statement and then you (students) will decide whether it’s true for you (agree) or not (disagree). You (students) will move somewhere in between the two signs that best reflects your opinion. (If you’re unsure, you should stand somewhere in the middle.)
  - Once everyone has moved, I will invite volunteers to share why they chose to stand where they are.
4. Next, have students stand up and move to the open space that you’ve created in the room.

5. Read the first statement and have students move to a space between the two signs:
  - When I see women or men on TV or in magazines, I always think, “I know men or women who act just like that.”
6. Once everyone has moved, ask students to notice where their peers are standing. Ask volunteers to share why they are standing where they are. Students may change their position if they're influenced by a peer's opinion.
7. Repeat for these other statements:
  - The media (television, magazines, and websites) sexualizes men and women equally in advertisements.
  - Men and women learn how to look and behave through what they see on TV or in magazines.
  - There is a definite difference between how the same product (yogurt, for example) is advertised to men and how it is advertised to women.
8. Thank students for sharing their opinions.

### **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 story 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 **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.
4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when they have a *question*, they *agree with the writer*, or they *disagree with the writer*. In the margins of the story, students should place a question mark (?) if they have a question, a plus sign (+) if they agree, or a minus sign (-) if they disagree.
5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a question mark (?), plus sign (+), or minus sign (-) next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

## After Reading the Story (15 min)

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

1. Introduce the **journaling/draw it** activity by explaining to the group that they will be doing an activity where they represent the experiences and interests of men and women that advertisements often get wrong.
2. Share the following quote, lifted from Nahian's story: "*Once I started paying attention, I noticed many ads...only reinforce dated stereotypes (men work, women take care of the home)...*" In her story, Nahian talks about taking action against the messages that advertisements send about gender roles. One way to do this is to share the truth of our own experiences or those of people we know.
3. **Read aloud journaling/draw it guidelines that you've posted in the room:**  
Think about someone you know, a man, woman, or yourself, who doesn't fit the stereotypical mold that advertisements use.
  - Write about (or draw a picture of) a woman doing something she loves *outside* of the home **or** write about (or draw a picture of) a man doing something he loves *inside* the home.
  - If you write, explain how the activity your person enjoys challenges the gender stereotypes found in advertising.
  - If you draw, include a caption at the bottom of your drawing that describes what your man or woman is doing and how it challenges the gender stereotypes found in advertising.
4. Give students about 10 minutes to write or draw.
5. Invite students to share their writing/drawings, as time allows.
6. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group, working to make connections to Nahian's story, reflecting on their own lives, and sharing with one another.



## COMMON CORE

### ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

### **#AgainstSexualHarassment**

**Story to Use:** “My Body, Not Your Business” by G.G., p. 5

**Story Summary:** A young woman experiences sexual harassment at school, speaks up about it, and takes a stand against it.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will make choices based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms.
- Students will have empathy for other youths’ experiences.
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (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. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them they will be reading a true story by a teen who takes a stand against sexual harassment.
2. Introduce the **freewrite** activity by reminding students that it is an opportunity to freely express their thoughts on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar. Students will have about four minutes to write in response to the prompt. 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.)
3. **Share the definition of sexual harassment** that you’ve posted in the room: “Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual comments or actions. That includes unwanted touching, gestures, insults that have to do with sex, and persistent compliments that have to do with physical appearance. It also includes spreading sexually oriented rumors. Comments or actions directed toward a person or group that make witnesses uncomfortable can also be sexual harassment. Sexually harassing comments can be spoken or written. They can be made using graffiti, text messages, social media, or emails—or through other forms of communication.”

4. Ask students to imagine the following scenario where sexual harassment is occurring: “At school, a crowd forms around another student and comments on this student’s body. One person asks to take a picture of the student undressed. Another touches the student and then whispers something to their friends.”
5. Freewrite prompt: “Thinking about the scenario, how do you think the target of this harassment might be feeling? How could experiences like this make the target feel about him/herself?”
6. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a **pair share**. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.
7. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing. The listener should not respond, but should actively listen to the speaker. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
8. Thank students for sharing.

### **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 story 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 **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.
4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Students are going to identify parts in the text when the writer, boys, or bystanders could do something to prevent or take a stand against sexual harassment. Divide the room into three sections. Have each section read for one of the following and mark the margins of their story accordingly:
  - W** – Moments when the **writer** could (or does) do something to stop sexual harassment
  - H** – Moments when the harassing **boys** could do something to stop sexual harassment
  - B** – Moments when it’s possible for **bystanders** to do something to stop sexual harassment
5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers from each section of the room to share what they wrote a **W**, **H**, or **B** next to and ideas of what the writer, harassing boys, or bystanders could do to stop sexual harassment.

## **After Reading the Story** (15 min)

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

1. Introduce the **social media post** activity by explaining to the group that they will be using their imaginations to create a social media post that shares their reasons for standing up to sexual harassment.
2. **Social media post** directions:  
Using what you learned from G.G.'s story, and drawing on your own experiences or connections to the story, write/draw a Facebook-type post where you take a stand against sexual harassment. Try to use language and ideas that would make your post go viral!
  - You may include: how sexual harassment affects its targets, the school community, or society as a whole, as well as ideas on how to prevent sexual harassment.
  - You should include a reason why you're sharing your post.
  - Optional: Include a hashtag in your post to spread awareness about sexual harassment.
3. Have students create their social media posts on blank sheets of paper.
4. Once most students have completed their writing/drawing, have students begin to pass around their posts to peers and have them "like" them by responding with at least one positive comment that adds to the discussion. Try to have as many students comment on one another's posts as possible in the time allotted.
5. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group, working to make connections to G.G.'s story, reflecting on their own lives, and sharing with one another.

**Optional: If your class enjoyed sharing their posts with one another, let them know that they can also share them with us by sending a message to our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/youthcomm](http://www.facebook.com/youthcomm)) or sending a tweet to @youthcomm!**

## 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?



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

Enter online at [bit.ly/ycwritingcontest](http://bit.ly/ycwritingcontest)

### **CONTEST QUESTION #232**

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 25, 2016**

*[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.]*