

Ycteen

September / October 2016

LESSON GUIDE

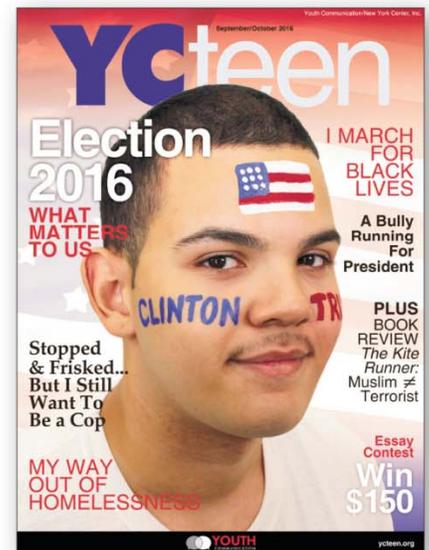
Dear Educators and Counselors,

Welcome to a new school year! As always, we truly appreciate you bringing *Ycteen* to your students.

In this fall issue, our teen writers explore the topics that matter most to them, including the presidential election, police brutality, and homelessness. We encourage you to use these thoughtful and timely stories in your classrooms as a way to engage your youth about current events. In “Black Lives and Blue Lives Matter,” Bryant Alston is both a member of the Police Explorers and a supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement. After personally experiencing racial profiling, he considers what it means to want a career in law enforcement while acknowledging racism exists in the NYPD. Hoa Vu, the writer of “Learning to Trust,” honestly relates her experiences of living in shelters with her family. School is a haven where she can exercise her control and work towards achieving goals that will lead her out of her unpredictable living situation.

As a former educator, I believe that building supportive and trusting relationships with your students at the beginning of the school year is the key to a comfortable and engaging learning environment. That’s why the two lessons in this guide examine the ways the student-teacher relationship can affect positive change, promote confidence, and ensure academic success. Selena Garcia’s story, “Don’t Push Me Out,” stresses the need for teachers to understand her and encourage her while David Hammer’s story, “I Stood Up to Bullies,” speaks to both the writer’s resilience when dealing with bullying and the need for teachers to be better allies. Discussing these stories with your students will lead to fruitful conversations about what they need from you to feel safe and like they belong.

We wish you all the best as you embark on your hard, and invaluable, work with students. Youth Communication looks forward to supporting you with our stories and social-emotional learning resources throughout the school year.



Sincerely,

Jillian Luft

Jillian Luft
Education Director

FREE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Effectively Engage Students with *Ycteen* Stories

An interactive workshop for educators and youth workers

Friday, October 21, 2016

10am-12pm

at Youth Communication

242 West 38th St., 6th floor, New York, NY 10018

Advance Registration is required

Youthcomm.org/YcteenPD



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Don't Push Me Out, Push Me Forward

Story to Use: “[Don't Push Me Out](#),” by Selena Garcia, p.21

Story Summary: Selena doesn't feel like she belongs anywhere as she moves from school to school and from foster home to foster home. Fed up with the chaos, she cuts class, curses at teachers, and starts fights with students. Selena wants to learn but her teachers' insensitive and sarcastic remarks compel her to act out even more. But if they tried to understand where her anger came from, she'd make more of an effort to succeed academically.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will recognize and describe their emotions and thoughts.
- Students will increase empathy with other youth's experiences.
- 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 you will be reading a true story by a teen who struggles with feeling like she belongs at school.
2. Introduce the **freewrite** activity by explaining that students will have about 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.
3. Share the **freewrite** prompt: “Divide your paper into two columns. On the left side, list all the ways your school makes you feel comfortable, motivated, and valued. On the right side, list all the ways that your school makes you feel unsafe, disengaged, or not valued.”
4. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a **pair share**. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. Facing each other and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing items from either of the two columns 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.
6. Thank students for sharing their writing and thinking.

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 group leader, 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 people in Selena's school offered her support, or made her feel like she belonged. When this occurs in the text, students should place a ♥ in the margins of the story. Then read for moments in the text when teachers in Selena's school made her feel like she didn't belong. When this occurs in the text, students should place a ☹ 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 ♥ and a ☹ 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 connections can you make to Selena's school experiences?
 - What are some ways her teachers and school staff could have engaged her, or made her feel like she belonged?
 - What could Selena have done to let her teachers know that they were wrong about her?

After Reading the Story (15 min)

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

1. Introduce the **writing** activity by explaining to the group that they will have an opportunity to create a supportive conversation between Selena and someone at her school.

2. Share the following **quote**, lifted from Selena's story: *"I went from a kid who doesn't care about classes and teachers to a kid who participates and focuses on her academics. Now teachers push me forward, instead of trying to push me out."*
3. Have students find a partner. Each pair should choose a part of the story where either of them placed a 😞, or create a new situation between Selena and another adult, or friend, at her school.
4. Have pairs write their conversations using these **guidelines**:
 - Write a conversation between Selena and a person who pushes her forward instead of pushing her out. You can write it like a text message conversation, or how it would look in a play.
 - Have the other person offer support to Selena and make her feel welcome in her school.
 - Have Selena explain why she acts out or isn't always in school.
 - Have both Selena and the other person explain what they want from each other to have a successful student-teacher relationship.
5. Give students about 10 minutes to write.
6. Invite pairs to volunteer to perform their conversations for the larger group. Once pairs have performed, you could debrief by asking the following questions:
 - Why do you think it's important for teachers and students to have these types of conversations?
 - What do you think would happen in your school if these conversations were happening all the time?
7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Serena's story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

The Strength in Standing Up

Story to Use: “[From Shy Boy to Ally](#),” by David Hammer, p.15

Story Summary: Shy David doesn’t raise his hand in class, but when a friend is bullied one too many times, he raises his voice in protest. Defending his friend makes him a target, but instead of backing down, David continues to stand up to the bullies and seeks support from school staff and administration. His tenacity pays off and he learns the power in speaking up even when it means standing out.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:

- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will have empathy for other youths’ experiences.
- Students will believe that their actions make a difference in their lives, and the lives of others.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.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. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who speaks up about bullying in his school.
2. Introduce the **opinion continuum** activity by explaining that it is an activity about sharing, and listening to, diverse perspectives. Together, they will notice and respect where others stand.
3. Then, explain to students that in this activity they will be exploring what they would do in certain situations. You will read the situation and then a possible way to respond. They’ll decide whether they agree or disagree that they would respond that way.
4. **Opinion continuum** directions: Clear a large, open space in the center of the room. On one end post a sign that reads “Strongly Agree” and on the other one that reads “Strongly Disagree.” Have students gather in the center of the space. Tell the group that for each statement you read, they should move towards the sign that matches their opinion. They can stand anywhere along the continuum. They should

stand somewhere in the middle if they are unsure. After each statement, they will pause to share, and listen to, their different reasons for where they stand.

5. Read the following statements and follow the directions above:
 - You notice a group of students in the hallway calling another student that you don't know "ugly" and "stupid." You would confront the group of classmates because no one deserves to be bullied.
 - A popular classmate writes a nasty Facebook comment about your best friend's appearance. You would stay silent and not respond because defending your friend would just create drama.
 - In your classroom, there's one classmate that is bullied more than others. Other students are constantly making rude comments behind her back, throwing pencils at her, and excluding her from group activities. The teacher sees this but chooses to ignore it. You would talk to the teacher after class about what you've noticed and ask for him to intervene the next time it happens.
 - In gym class, you're being harassed by a group of classmates. They take photos of you in your gym uniform and post them to Instagram, push you around while on the basketball court, and threaten more violence. You say nothing and hope that someone else says something, so they stop bothering you.
6. Define the following terms before facilitating a brief discussion about the activity:
 - **Bystander: A person who witnesses someone being bullied and does or says nothing to the aggressor.**
 - **Ally: A person who defends the target by standing up to the aggressor without resorting to violence or bullying tactics.**
7. Debrief with the group by asking the following questions:
 - What stood out to you about this activity?
 - Thinking about the situations in the activity, when does it feel more comfortable to be a bystander? When does it feel more comfortable to be an ally?
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 group leader, 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 David didn't give up on doing what he thought was right in his situation. When this

occurs, they should draw a ★ in the margins of the story. Then, ask students to read for moments in the text when others had opportunities to be allies for David. When this occurs, they should write an “A” 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 from each section of the room to share what they drew a ★ and “A” 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 **comic strip** activity by explaining to the group that they will be creating a comic. Like regular people transform into superheroes in comic books, they will transfer bystanders in David’s story into allies.
2. Share the following **quote**, lifted from David’s story: *“I also learned that if I believe something is wrong, I should speak up even if it means standing out. I also learned that even if adults or others in power don’t hear you or pay attention to you, you shouldn’t give up.”*
3. Then, ask students to imagine what would have happened differently if the adults in David’s life heard him or paid attention to him sooner. Give students some time to think about how these adults could have been an ally to David if they spoke up, as well.
4. Introduce the **drawing guidelines**:
 - Create a comic strip by folding a piece of drawing paper into four panels.
 - In the first panel, draw when David first acts as an ally for his friend.
 - In the second panel, draw David’s father as his ally.
 - In the third panel, draw David’s teacher as his ally.
 - In the fourth panel, draw David’s social worker as his ally.
 - Use speech bubbles, thought bubbles, and other important details to create your comic strip scenes.
5. Give students 10 minutes to create their comics.
6. When 10 minutes are up, ask for volunteers to share their comic strips with the larger group. As an alternative, students could do a Gallery Walk by laying out their drawings on a table or other flat surface. Then, students can get up, walk around, and take a closer look at one another’s drawings, noticing similarities and differences.
7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to David’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

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

CONTEST QUESTION #235

Write about a New Year's Resolution you either kept or wish you had

Why did you choose it? How were you able to be successful? If you weren't, what did you learn so you can aim for success next time?

Deadline: December 2, 2016