Dear Educators and Counselors,

We hope you’ve had a restful summer break. Here at Youth Communication, writers in our Summer Workshop were busy exploring the question, “What does it mean to be an American?” They visited protests, interviewed professional journalists, and wrote pieces that explored this topic.

As made clear by the tragic events in Charlottesville, Virginia, and elsewhere, who we consider to be an American is a relevant and contested national question which many of our young people are confronting.

We encourage you to use the stories in this issue as an entry point into urgently-needed conversations with your students about American culture, identity, and history. Some of the pieces take a stand on current debates surrounding American identity. For example, Atl Castro criticizes the president’s decision to ban transgender individuals from military service.

Other stories such as “I’ll Work Hard so America is Safer for All,” recount personal journeys surrounding belonging in America and coming to terms with what it means to be a young person of color living in a nation where racism still exists.

The two lessons in this guide reflect these two different strands of narrative and opinion, and are designed to provoke thoughtful and reflective dialogue among you and your students.

Lastly, this issue introduces a new feature, “Righting History,” in which teens write about learning an aspect of American history that challenged what they had been taught before. If your students have experienced something similar, encourage them to write up a paragraph and email it to us at ycteenmail@youthcomm.org. YCteen editors may run it in an upcoming issue.

Sincerely,

David Heller
Education Director

WRITING CONTEST
We ask readers to write a letter to one of the writers. This will encourage close reading and writing.
Protesting From the Sidelines

Story to Use: “Colin Kaepernick: Punished For His Politics,” by Toyloy Brown III, p.17

Story Summary: Colin Kaepernick became a divisive figure in sports by refusing to stand during the national anthem prior to his NFL football games. After leaving the San Francisco 49ers, at the time of this writing, no team has been willing to pick him up. The writer questions why such a talented athlete remains off all NFL rosters as the 2017 season gets underway.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- 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 you will be reading a true story by a teen who questions why Colin Kaepernick remains absent from NFL teams at the start of the 2017 season.

2. Introduce the Opinion Continuum activity by explaining that they will be doing an activity that allows them to move around while learning more about what they and their peers think about a topic.

3. Post two signs on either end of the room. One should read “agree” and the other “disagree.”

4. While the group is still seated, review the directions. Tell them:
   - “On either end of the room, there are signs that read ‘agree’ and ‘disagree.’”
   - “I will read a statement and you will decide whether it’s true for you (agree) or not (disagree). Then you will move somewhere in between the two signs that 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.”

5. Clear a space and ask group members to stand somewhere between the two signs.
6. Read the first statement and ask group members to move to a spot between the two signs that reflects their opinion:
   - **There are right ways and wrong ways to protest against injustice.**

7. Once all group members have moved in response to a statement, ask them to notice where other group members are standing. (You can support minority positions by moving closer to someone who is alone at one end of the continuum.)

8. Ask at least one group member standing on either end of the continuum to share why they are standing where they are. Tell group members they may change their position if they are influenced by another group member’s opinion.

9. After each question, have everyone return to the middle.

10. Repeat for each statement:
   - **Celebrities have a responsibility to use their fame for good.**
   - **Being patriotic means supporting what your country does, no matter what.**

11. Have everyone return to their seats and thank group members for sharing their opinions.

12. 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 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 they agree with a point that is being made. When this occurs in the text, students should write a “+” in the margin. When they read a point they disagree with, they should write a “-” in the margin.

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 “+” or “-” 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 was Kaepernick protesting?
   - Do you think he was protesting appropriately? Why or why not?
   - Do you agree with the NFL owners for keeping him off their teams? Why or why not?
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 NFL Owners activity by explaining to the group that they will write a letter to NFL Owners giving them advice based on their personal experiences and opinion about the topic.

2. Tell the group:
   - “Your goal is to communicate your ideas and responses to the writer’s story, so don’t worry about spelling and grammar.”
   - “There are no right or wrong answers, just your ideas and opinions.”

3. Write the Dear NFL Owners guidelines on the board, or read them to the group:
   - **Begin with the greeting:** “Dear NFL Owners, I just read the story, “Colin Kaepernick: Punished For His Politics.”
   - **Outline some of the key facts on this issue and describe your understanding of what’s happened.**
   - **State whether or not you agree that NFL owners should keep Kaepernick off their teams.**
   - **Provide supporting evidence to make a convincing argument.**
   - **Closing:** “Sincerely, (Your Name).”

4. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.

5. Give group members about eight minutes to write their letters. Move around the room offering encouragement and support.

6. When about eight minutes are up (use a timer), tell group members to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.

7. Explain to the group that they are now going to do a Pair Share. Tell them to turn to the person next to them and take turns sharing parts of their letters that they feel comfortable sharing.

8. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Cue partners to switch roles after the first minute. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

9. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking group members to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections they had to their peers’ responses. They can also discuss points they agree or disagree with, new ideas they’ve been given, and questions they still have.

10. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Toyloy’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Embracing Your Roots

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. After welcoming the group, explain that they will be doing an activity where they will talk and hear different perspectives on a topic.

2. While the group is still seated, review the activity procedure. Tell the group:
   - “We will form two standing circles, one inside the other.”
   - “Each person will be facing a partner.”
   - “I will read questions aloud and everyone will have a chance to respond while their partner listens.”

3. Divide the group into two. One way to do this is to have group members count off 1-2. (If you don’t have two equal groups, you can join one.)

4. Clear a space in the middle of the room and have the 1s stand and form a circle facing outward.

5. Have the 2s stand and form a second circle around the first one, facing inward.

6. Explain to the group that the person they’re facing will be their first partner.

Story to Use: “Raising My Voice Against Racism: What’s More American Than That?,” by Winnie Kong, p.8

Story Summary: Winnie is Chinese and falls victim to acts of microaggression and overt racism, causing her to feel ashamed of her culture and shun certain parts of it. After moving to a new school, she develops more pride in her roots and begins to speak out against the kind of toxic discrimination she faced in the past.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- 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).
7. Tell them:
   - “Partners will take turns responding to a question that I ask.”
   - “When one person speaks, the other listens.”
   - “Each person should speak for about one minute. Make sure both of you get a chance to talk.”
   - “When time is up, I will ask one circle to rotate and everyone will have a new partner.”

8. Pose this question to the group:
   “What does it mean and look like to show pride in your culture?”

9. After two minutes are up (you might want to use a timer to keep track), ask the inside circle to move two people to the right while the outside circle stands still. There should be new pairs formed.

10. Repeat the process using these other questions:
    “Why can it sometimes be hard for people to accept certain parts of their culture?”
    “What are some things that people do when they want to hide parts of themselves or their culture from others?”

11. Have everyone return to their seats.

12. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking group members to describe some of the good points that were made during their pair conversations. They can also share times they agreed or disagreed with their partner, new ideas that their partner gave them, or questions they still have about the topic.

13. Thank group members 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 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 the writer shows pride or shame in her culture. When she shows pride, students should write a “P” in the margin. When she shows shame, they should write an “S.”

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 “P” or “S” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”
Next, ask the group to further consider these questions:

- What do you think about the way the writer dealt with microaggressions and racist comments she received because of her Chinese identity?
- How important is it for a person to show pride in their cultural roots?
- Do you personally connect with the 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 this activity by saying to the group:
   - “Now that we’ve read the story, we’re going to do a journaling activity about staying connected to our cultural roots.”
   - “This is a chance to express your thoughts and feelings without worrying about spelling and grammar.”
   - “There are no right and wrong answers to these questions, just your own ideas.”
   - “If you don’t know what to write or get stuck, just keep your pencil to paper and keep writing the last word you thought of over and over until a new idea comes.”

2. Then read the prompts aloud or write them on the board or chart paper:
   - **What is a cultural identity you have other than “American”?**
   - **How do you or others show pride and stay connected to these cultural roots?**
   - **How important do you think it is to stay connected to your cultural roots?**

3. Explain that in addition to writing, group members may create a list, draw, or represent their thinking in a way that works for them. They may do whatever helps them express their thoughts and feelings.

4. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils, if you haven’t already.

5. Give group members about eight-ten minutes to write. Move around the room offering encouragement and support.

6. When eight-ten minutes are up, tell group members to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.

7. Explain to the group that they are now going to do a Pair Share. Tell them to turn to a person next to them and take turns sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing.

8. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Cue partners to switch roles after the first minute. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before getting everyone’s attention.

9. Lead a discussion by asking group members to describe some of the highlights of their pair conversations. They can share connections they made with their partners’ writing, new ideas that their partner gave them, or questions they still have about the topic.

10. Thank group members for sharing and listening.
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?
Enter online: bit.ly/yctcontest

Do you have a strong feeling about an article you read in the current issue of YCteen? We’d like to hear about it.

YCteen is written by a staff of teen writers who work in our New York City newsroom. But writing is a form of conversation, and we want you to join in.

We invite you to submit an essay in the form of a letter to the writer, responding to their story. This is an opportunity to express your opinion or present your own point of view on a story you’ve read.

Start your letter with “Dear [writer’s name]” and reference the article by the title. End it with “Sincerely” and your name, address, high school, and age.

CONTEST RULES:
- You must be between the ages of 14 and 19.
- Your essay must respond to a story in our current issue only.
- Essays should be no more than 300 words.
- If you win, your essay will be published on our website and in our print issue. Tell us if you want it to be printed anonymously—but you should still type in your full name and complete address so we know where to mail your check if you win.
- Current YCteen or Represent writers may not enter the essay contest.
- Essays may be edited by Youth Communication editors for brevity and clarity. All entries become property of Youth Communication.

Here are some prompts to inspire you:
- What stood out to you about the story you chose?
- Did the story change your opinion or influence your actions?
- Can you relate to what the writer experienced? How is your own experience similar, or different?
- Are there aspects that the writer has not considered?
- If you disagree with the writer, explain why you think differently or how you might have handled the situation.
TELL YOUR STORIES...

...GET PUBLISHED

FALL 2017 WRITING INTERNSHIP AT YCteen

Do you love to write personal stories and want to be a voice for teens? Apply for our fall writing internship, which begins in October. YCteen is an award-winning, teen-written magazine that’s read by thousands of teens in print and online. YCteen articles have been republished on the New York Times Learning Network and Huffington Post. Writers are guided and supported by a professional editor as they learn memoir-writing and journalism skills.

OUR REQUIREMENTS ARE:

• Writers must be between the ages of 15 and 20.
• We’re open to writers from 1-6 p.m., Mon.-Thurs. Within that time frame, writers must commit to a minimum of two days a week, two hours a day (for a total of at least 4 hours per week).
• Writers must commit to participating for a minimum of 3 months.

Apply now at bit.ly/ycteenapp

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 29

While we want to take on as many writers as possible, we have a limited capacity, so apply right away.

Questions? Contact YCteen editor Holly St. Lifer at 212-279-0708 ext. 116 or hstlifer@youthcomm.org
EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH YCteen STORIES

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2017
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
at Youth Communication, New York City

This free Youth Communication workshop provides concrete strategies for effectively using YCteen magazine’s award-winning true stories in the classroom.

You’ll learn how to use Circle protocols and open-ended questions to target students’ reading comprehension in a way that’s both successful and engaging. Our Story-Based Approach bolsters social and emotional learning, enhances literacy engagement, and builds trust and community in the classroom setting. You’ll also learn more about ways Circle creates a safe and comfortable space for students to share their personal connections to and questions about the stories they read.

Participants in this workshop are eligible to receive a free YCteen group subscription for their school or youth program.

Registration is required:
youthcomm.org/ycteenpd
Girls’ Empowerment Program Wins “Best Curriculum”

*Real As Me* recognized as best educational resource in SEL category

We’re thrilled to announce that our new girls’ empowerment curriculum, *Real As Me*, won a prestigious REVERE Award from the Association of American Publishers in May, 2017. It was named best out-of-school educational resource in the social and emotional learning category.

*Real As Me* is being used by Girls Inc. at Young Women’s Leadership School in the Bronx, and in several New York City youth-serving agencies and juvenile justice settings.

Our professional development helps staff implement the stories and activities from *Real As Me* with youth to deepen their understanding of gender issues. It also strengthens their ability to lead safe and supportive groups, promotes literacy, and builds the decision-making skills that help girls grow into confident young women.

**Reserve Your Seat**

Educators and youth service professionals can join us for the

**Leaders Workshop:**

**October 20, 2017**

at Youth Communication, New York City

Registration is required.
For more information (including fee structure) visit:

[youthcomm.org/RAM-Workshop](http://youthcomm.org/RAM-Workshop)