Dear Educators and Counselors,

Greetings! We’re pleased to meet you and hope the return to school has been an invigorating one. We’re Janelle Greco and Tim Fredrick—the new Co-Directors of Education here at Youth Communication. We look forward to working with you this school year, coming up with engaging lesson plans you can use in your classroom, and introducing you to Youth Communication stories from students just like your own.

To give you some background about us: Tim has a BA in English and Creative Writing and an MA and PhD in English Education. In the past two decades, he’s taught reading and writing to students from age five to 65, and has worked with pre-service and in-service teachers at New York University, CUNY, New York City Teaching Fellows, and Teach for America. What’s the thing Tim’s most looking forward to about this new position? Validating student voices and helping you share them in your schools.

As for Janelle, she has a BA in English and Secondary Education and an MA in English. Over the past decade, she’s worked with marginalized students pursuing their high school equivalency diplomas as well as homeless and formerly incarcerated youth and adults in occupational training programs. Her favorite part about her new role is meeting some of you at one of our many workshops and getting to share best practices for using our student stories.

Please check out the three story-based lessons outlined on the back of this page that are inspired by YCteen’s back-to-school issue on education equality. We hope you find these helpful, and we hope to hear from you about how you’re using these stories with your youth.

Sincerely,

Janelle & Tim
Co-Directors of Education
jgreco@youthcomm.org
tfredrick@youthcomm.org

WRITING CONTEST FOR STUDENTS

We ask readers to write a letter to one of the writers. This will encourage close reading and writing. (See last page)
# Summary of Lessons

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ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

When Your Parents Just Don’t Understand

Story to Use: “Not a Girl at All,” by Anonymous, p. 8

Story Summary: The anonymous writer of this story is a bisexual trans boy, whose parents do not accept him. He lives as one person at home with his family and as another person at school with his friends (who are more accepting). With support from teachers and a therapist, he is on the road toward self-acceptance and learning how to manage his parents’ hostility—while still caring for and being himself.

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 (15 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. Tell them that before reading a story, you are going to do an activity that allows you to do some anonymous writing on a topic related to a story you’ll be reading together.

2. Introduce the Toss One, Take One activity by explaining they are going to do an activity that gathers everyone’s ideas and allows them to hear multiple perspectives.

3. Pass out pieces of scrap paper and pencils. Tell group members not to write their name on their paper. This is an anonymous activity.

4. Ask group members to write a response on their paper to this question:
   - What does it feel like when people understand you?
   - What does it feel like to be misunderstood?

5. Give group members three minutes to think and then write their responses. If some group members are struggling, ask them to write about why they find it difficult to answer the prompts.

6. Write your own responses to the prompts to model the activity.

7. After group members have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into balls and toss them into the middle of the circle, or a container you have available.
8. Model for the group how you expect them to crumple and toss their responses into the center of the circle.

9. After everyone has tossed, each group member should retrieve an anonymous response from and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the responses and have each group member blindly pick a paper ball. (If a group member happens to choose their own response, it’s okay because no one will know.)

10. Go around in a circle or ask for volunteers to read aloud the response from the paper.

11. Invite group members to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections to their peers’ responses.

12. 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 identify when they have a connection to something in the story, or when they have a question. When they have a connection, students should write a “C” in the margin. When they have a question, students 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 “C” 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. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.
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 write a letter to Anonymous giving him advice based on our personal experiences.”
   - “Your goal is to communicate your ideas and responses to the story, so don’t worry about spelling and grammar.”
   - “There are no right or wrong answers, just your ideas and how the story spoke to you.”

2. Read the Dear Teen Writer guidelines aloud from the chart paper you've prepared:
   - Greeting: Dear Anonymous, I just read your story, “Not a Girl at All.”
   - What were some details of Anonymous’s experiences that resonated or stuck out to you?
   - What were some connections you made with Anonymous’s experiences?
   - What sort of advice would you give Anonymous on dealing with negativity?
   - Closing: “Sincerely, (Your Name).”

3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.

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

5. When about eight minutes are up, tell group members to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.

6. 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 the parts of their letters that they feel comfortable sharing.

7. 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.

8. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking group members to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections 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.

9. Thank group members for sharing.
Before Reading the Story (15 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Before the group starts, post two signs on opposite ends of your space. One should read “agree” and the other “disagree.”

2. After welcoming the group, tell them 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. While the group is still seated, review the directions for the Opinion Continuum. 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.”

4. Clear a space and ask group members to stand somewhere between the two signs.
5. Read the first statement and ask group members to move to a spot between the two signs that reflects their opinion:
   - “I should speak up if I see something wrong happening.”
6. Once all group members have moved in response to the 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.)
7. 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.
8. After each question, have everyone return to the middle.
9. Repeat for each statement:
   - “If something doesn’t affect me directly, it’s none of my business.”
   - “When I disagree with someone, it’s important to let them know.”
   - “It takes a lot of people to really create a change in the world.”
10. Have everyone return to their seats and thank group members 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 identify times when the story raises a question for them. When this occurs, students 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 “?” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open-ended question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?” Additionally, during the reading, pause or wait until the end to ask students the following:
   - “What was being protested?”
   - “What kind of protest strategies are being used here?”
   - “What made the protest successful or unsuccessful?”
6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.
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 look at some protests from the past similar to how Christina analyzed the ‘Return the Children’ protest.”
   - “Your goal is to read and write about another protest and think about the following as we did in the reading:”
     - “What was being protested?”
     - “What made the protest successful and/or unsuccessful?”
     - “What kind of strategies were used?” (for instance, Christina cites having people of power present, having a clear message, etc.)

2. Use the links below to assign students or have them pick a protest to read about:
   - bit.ly/social-protests

3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.

4. Give group members about ten minutes to write down their thoughts and findings.

5. When about ten minutes are up, tell group members to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.

6. 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 their research.

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

8. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking group members to comment on what they learned. They can also discuss points they agree or disagree with, new ideas they’ve been given, and questions they still have.

9. Thank group members for sharing.
Extension Activities

1. This activity can be extended to have students do further research on their protests and present to the class or write a larger research paper on the topic.

2. Students can also read the stories “Flipping the Script” by Sashwat Adhikari on page 22 and “Brooklyn Teens Work to ‘Save Their Streets’ From Gun Violence” by Carolina Ambros on page 21 to learn about Youth Organizing to Save Our Streets (YO S.O.S.) and discuss alternatives to protesting.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

How Inequality Impacts Me

Note: This lesson will probably need to be split across two days, depending on your students’ understanding of the video, reading speed, and how much time they need to answer the post-reading activities.

Before Reading the Story (15-25 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Before the lesson, make copies of the “Causes of Educational Inequality Video Notes” and “Table Talk” worksheets found here after the lesson and cue up the video linked below.

2. After welcoming the group, tell students that they will be delving more deeply into the causes and effects of school inequality. Have them write individually in response to the following prompt: What do you think causes inequality in education? Do you think inequality in education impacts you? How?

Stories to Use:
- “I Learned to Love My Safety High School,” by Gabby Felitto, p. 10
- “Smart AND Black—My Teachers’ Worst Nightmare,” by Angie Carty, p. 6
- “Navigating Life in a White School,” by Christina Oxley, p. 3

Summary of Stories: This lesson uses three stories, in which all of the writers discuss how inequality in education impacts them. Gabby writes about overcoming the disappointment of not being accepted into a specialized high school. In Angie’s story, a teacher accuses her of cheating when she performs “too well” on a quiz. Lastly, Christina vividly explores her reactions to the burden of being one of the only people of color in her school.

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).
- Students will compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources (CCSS RH.9).
3. Ask for student volunteers to share what they wrote. Take notes on a piece of chart paper to display prominently during the lesson.

4. Tell them that they will be watching a video that explains the causes of school inequality in education.

5. Hand out the notetaking worksheet. (For students with limited English proficiency, an IEP, or very low literacy skills, consider giving them the teacher version of the worksheet, which follows the student copy in this document and is already filled out.)

6. Show the video, “Schools & Social Inequality: Crash Course Sociology #41 (bit.ly/sociology-41),” and have students fill in notetaking sheet as they watch. Stop the video at key points in order to give students time to take the notes and to clarify the points covered.

7. After the video, review the chart paper with the students’ causes and effects, and as a group, add any additional causes and effects mentioned in the video.

During Reading (20 min.)

Students will be put into groups to read a story by one of our youth writers that discusses how educational inequality impacts the writer. Your students will use in-text annotation to read actively.

1. Put students into groups of 4 to 6.

2. Assign each group one of the following stories:
   
   - “I Learned to Love My Safety High School,” by Gabby Felitto
   - “Smart AND Black—My Teachers’ Worst Nightmare,” by Angie Carty
   - “Navigating Life in a White School,” by Christina Oxley*

3. Share the expectations for the small group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like, it is okay for group members to skip, and because there are several groups reading at the same time, they should be mindful of their volume.

4. Reading for a purpose directions: Ask students to identify times when the story raises a cause or effect of school inequality. When this occurs, students should write a “C” in the margin for causes and “E” in the margin for effects.

5. As groups read, circulate around the room and listen in on the reading and remind students to annotate the text as they read.

6. When they finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the causes and effects they saw and any connections they make to their own life.

*Christina’s story is longer than the other three. Consider assigning it to faster or more proficient readers.
**After Reading the Story** *(20-25 min)*

*During this post reading activity, students will connect the story they read to larger issues of the causes and effects of education inequality using discussion and a graphic organizer.*

1. Introduce the activity by saying to the students:
   - “Now that you’ve read the stories, you are going to think about how the larger social factors that cause education inequality have directly impacted these writers.”

2. Pass out the “Table Talk” graphic organizer.

3. Give the group about ten minutes to talk about and take notes on the questions on the organizer.

4. Circulate to help students process the video and the story.

5. After all the groups have finished filling out the graphic organizer, have each group tell what their story was about and share their responses to one of the questions.

6. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking students their connections to the stories they read and reflect on how inequality in education has/has not impacted them.

7. Thank group members for sharing.

**Extension Activity**

Set up five stations around the room and, at each station, put a print-out of each of the following editorial cartoons:

- “For a fair selection . . .”
- “America’s Paths to the Top”
- “Fountain of Public Education”
- “Why can’t they ever . . .”
- “This is yours, son . . .”

Have students discuss the following questions: What opinion is being expressed in the cartoon? How does the cartoon connect with the video and stories from the previous lesson?
CAUSES OF EDUCATION INEQUALITY VIDEO NOTES

School Funding

- High-income neighborhoods → More property tax revenues → More funding for schools → Better education and opportunities
- Low-income neighborhoods → ___ property tax revenues → ___ funding for schools → ______ education and opportunities

Increasing school funding by ____% is associated with student earning ____% higher incomes as adults.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the valuable ____________________ and ____________________ that can be translated to forms of _________ and ___________ capital. (Capital is something you have that is valuable.)

Match:

- Parents who went to college . . .
  - . . . spend more time reading to their kids, which helps them start school ahead of their
- Parents who have more free time . . .
  - . . . expect that they, too, can go to college.
- Kids who have relatives who went to college . . .
  - . . . can help their kids navigate the complicated process of applying to college.
Racial Inequality

_____________ and ______________ students are more likely to be selected for honors, college-prep, and AP classes than ______________ and ______________ students—especially when it is the _____________ teachers who do the selecting.

_____________ and ______________ boys are more likely to be disciplined for minor classroom infractions and to be suspended and expelled. When this happens, they are not ________________, which affects their high school completion, which affects ________________, which impacts the amount of money they make as adults.

What is the prison-to-school pipeline? __________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Gender Inequality

**Match** the gender to the subject they are more likely to be tracked into higher-level classes and then to the career:

- **Boys**
  - Science and math
  - Lower-paid career

- **Girls**
  - Arts and humanities
  - Higher-paid career
School Funding

Increasing school funding by **10**% is associated with student earning **7**% higher incomes as adults.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is the valuable **cultural knowledge** and **experience** that can be translated to forms of **economic** and **social** capital. (Capital is something you have that is valuable.)

Match:

- Parents who went to college . . . .
  - . . . spend more time reading to their kids, which helps them start school ahead of their
- Parents who have more free time . . .
  - . . . expect that they, too, can go to college.
- Kids who have relatives who went to college . . .
  - . . . can help their kids navigate the complicated process of applying to college.
Racial Inequality

White and Asian students are more likely to be selected for honors, college-prep, and AP classes than Black and Hispanic students—especially when it is the White teachers who do the selecting.

Black and Hispanic boys are more likely to be disciplined for minor classroom infractions and to be suspended and expelled. When this happens, they are not in class learning, which affects their high school completion, which affects job prospects, which impacts the amount of money they make as adults.

What is the prison-to-school pipeline? For minority students, schools are most likely to escalate disciplinary issues to the juvenile justice system, putting students in contact with the criminal justice system at an early age.

Gender Inequality

Match the gender to the subject they are more likely to be tracked into higher-level classes and then to the career:
**TABLE TALK: EDUCATION INEQUALITY**

**Directions:** In your group, select a time keeper, facilitator, a first speaker, and a recorder. Then begin discussing the questions below.

- **Timekeeper:** make sure all questions are properly discussed in the time given.
- **Facilitator:** make sure everyone has a chance to contribute ideas to each question.
- **Recorder:** jot down notes that capture some of the key ideas that come up for your group on the note-taking document below.
- **First speaker:** choose the first question for the group to discuss and set the tone by being the first to share an idea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the causes of education inequality seems to be the most impactful in this writer’s life?</td>
<td>How did education inequality—and inequality across society—impact the writer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strengths did the writer use to fight back against the education inequality she faced?</td>
<td>What was one choice the writer made that helped her?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?
FREE Copies for Your School or Clinic

Educators, counselors and other professionals who work with teens are eligible to receive up to 25 copies of our 34-page booklet to help teens get mental health support. More than a dozen teens worked on this resource to assure that it is clear and respectful to their peers’ experiences.

Interested? Email your name, organization, and shipping address to eautin-hefner@youthcomm.org

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TOPICS INCLUDE:
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- Restorative Practices
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- Elevating Youth Voice
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- Understanding Trauma
- Supporting Youth in Foster Care/Homeless Youth
- Youth with Juvenile Justice Contact
- Managing Transitions
- Building Resiliency
- Conflict Resolution (for middle schools)

Engage your hardest-to-reach students

Let’s talk about how we can support your community’s needs.
Contact Betsy Cohen: bcohen@youthcomm.org

REMINDER TO SUBSCRIBERS
Don’t let this issue be your last!

Have you renewed your free YCteen subscription for 2018-19?
Go to: bit.ly/ycteen18

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FOR TEENS

Writing CONTEST
Make Your Voice Heard!

$150 First Prize
$75 Second Prize | $50 Third Prize
Deadline: Oct. 12, 2018

Enter online: bit.ly/yctcontest

Do you have a strong feeling about an article you read in this 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 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.

• Letters should be no more than 300 words.

• If you win, your letter may 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 writing contest.

• Letters may be edited by Youth Communication editors for brevity and clarity. All entries become property of Youth Communication.

TELL YOUR STORIES...

FALL WRITING INTERNSHIP AT

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.

REQUIREMENTS:

• You must be between the ages of 15 and 20

• You must live in New York City and commit to working a minimum of two days a week, two hours a day for three months at our midtown Manhattan office. (Our office is open to writers from 1-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.)

Apply now at bit.ly/ycteenapply

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2018

While we want to take 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