

Ycteen

November/December 2019

LESSON GUIDE

Dear Educators and Counselors,

As autumn marches on, so do our students, for causes big and small—from climate change to equal rights for all. This issue, “**Making School Better**,” and the lesson guide included, showcase stories that honor this advocacy. The lessons encourage students to think about how they show up for the things they are passionate about, such as **addressing racism** in our schools and making sure that the faculty are as diverse as the student body.

This lesson guide contains three lessons to help your students explore these and other themes. First, in “LGBTQ People Have Always Existed” by Adrian Mora, students dive into the history of **transgender and nonbinary** people across the globe—a history that is typically left out of high school curricula. Then, in “Students Around the World March for Our Future” writer Zachary Macpherson writes an opinion piece about **climate change** and suggests how they can take action. With Amber Perez’s story, “Trying to Trust,” students think about how their past plays a part in affecting their future, if they let it. In addition, there are three stories that follow a strong **theme of advocacy**, and so we’ve included possible activities to accompany the reading of one or all three on the last page.

Part of figuring out how to make school better is supporting our students in speaking about their passions. We’re excited about the many opportunities this issue and lesson guide give for doing so. As always, please reach out about your experiences using Ycteen in your work with young people. We’re eager to hear how this issue and the lessons encourage students to use their voice.

Sincerely,



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Summary of Lessons

LESSON	STORY	SUMMARY	ACTIVITIES	SUBJECTS
<p>Seeing Ourselves in History</p> 	<p>"LGBTQ People Have Always Existed" by Adrian Mora</p>	<p>Students read about trans and nonbinary people throughout time and across geography. They share their thoughts through writing and discussion.</p>	<p>Freewrite and Pair Share; Group Talk</p>	<p>ELA; SS</p>
<p>Taking Climate Action</p> 	<p>"Students Around the World March For Our Future" by Zachary Macpherson</p>	<p>Students read an opinion piece about taking action on climate change. They then write a letter to an elected representative to argue for action.</p>	<p>Toss One, Take One; Journal Jot</p>	<p>ELA; SS; Science</p>
<p>When the Past is Present</p> 	<p>"Trying to Trust" by Amber Perez</p>	<p>After reading a story about a young woman who realizes she has to trust others, students will reflect on what experiences from their past they want to let go of.</p>	<p>Freewrite and Pair Share; Letting Go, Holding On</p>	<p>ELA; Health</p>

Seeing Ourselves in History

SEL FOCUS: SOCIAL AWARENESS

Story Title: "LGBTQ People Have Always Existed" by Adrian Mora

Story Summary: Adrian resents people telling them that being nonbinary is something new. In fact, nonbinary people have existed—and been celebrated—by cultures all over the world for ages. They describe three such cultures.

Learning Objectives

Youth will build their SEL by:

- Explaining the impact of seeing—and not seeing—marginalized communities in history classes on those in and out of the community
- Actively listening and responding to peers' responses to the story

Youth will increase their literacy by:

- Making meaning of text through class read-aloud and discussion
- Writing to express personal connections and insight

Important Vocabulary

- nonbinary
- transgender
- cisgender
- indigenous
- colonialist

Materials

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #269 for each student
- Journals or notebook paper, pencils

Preparation

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Write the Freewrite prompt (**in bold**) on chart paper.
- Write the Group Talk prompts (**in bold**) on four separate pieces of chart paper. Post them around the room.

GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: Seeing Ourselves in History

- **Opening Activity: Freewrite and Pair Share**
- **Read and Discuss: "LGBTQ People Have Always Existed" by Adrian Mora**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Group Talk**
- **Closing Circle**

OPENING ACTIVITY — FREEWRITE AND PAIR SHARE

(8 minutes)

This activity helps students activate background knowledge.

1. Welcome students to the class. Introduce the lesson by telling them that they will be reading a true story by a teen who wants others to understand that nonbinary people have existed and been celebrated all over the globe for ages.
2. Introduce the Freewrite activity by reminding students that this is an opportunity to freely express their thoughts on paper without worrying about spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Students will have four minutes to write in response to the prompt. The goal is to express their thoughts freely. The expectation is that everyone writes for the full time without stopping.
3. Share the following quote, lifted from Adrian's story: "*When people keep telling you that your identity isn't real, it can make you feel delusional and weird, even though you know you can't be any other way.*"
4. Tell students they will have four minutes to respond to the following prompt:
 - **Why do you think it is important to see who you are reflected in your school classes, whether it be in the books you read in English or the cultures you study in social studies?**
5. After students have completed the Freewrite, 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 (e.g., making eye contact, asking clarifying questions), 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.

READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY (20 minutes)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 3 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a class read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
 - What's standing out to you about the story?
 - Why do you think it is so important to Adrian to see themselves reflected in their history lessons?
 - Which cultures and communities are left out of the curriculum in our school?
4. Thank the class for reading and sharing.

EXPLORE THE IDEAS — GROUP TALK (12 minutes)

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

1. Introduce the Group Talk activity by explaining to the class that they will do an activity where they move around and share their thinking about parts of the story in a small group.
2. Tell students to locate the following four quotes in their copy of the story and underline them:
 - **Quote 1: " A lot of people in the book...were people I'd learned about in school, but their queerness was left out of the lessons."**

- **Quote 2: "Two-Spirit people were highly respected. They held important duties and were considered gifted by their Creator..."**
 - **Quote 3: "But the colonialist legacy lingers. As most people won't hire them, hijras can typically only earn money through sex work, dancing at temples, and begging."**
 - **Quote 4: "But just like Indians and Native Americans, Native Hawaiians had homophobia and transphobia thrust upon them by colonizers."**
3. Give students 60 seconds to decide on their own which quote out of the four above is the most thought-provoking or stands out to them the most.
 4. Direct students to move to the chart paper with the quote of their choice.
 5. Once they have gathered at each spot, ask students to face the people around them and share their thinking about why they chose this quote.
 6. Debrief by having someone from each group share a few highlights from their discussion and one new thing they learned about someone else in their group from their conversations.
 7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the class and working to make connections to the story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER



Conversations about gender identity can be challenging conversations for young people to have. Circulate while groups are talking to ensure that everyone is engaging in positive and inclusive conversations.

CLOSING CIRCLE (5 minutes)

In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.

Guide students in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in Adrian's story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "Seeing myself in my classes, in books, and in TV and movies is important to me because..."

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:

- YCteen has featured several stories by trans and nonbinary youth. Read and discuss these stories with your students:
 - ["Beyond the Binary" by Andrew N.](#)
 - ["My Name is Mason Martinez" by Mason Martinez \(w/ lesson plan\)](#)
 - ["Not a Girl at All" by Anonymous \(w/lesson plan\)](#)
- Watch, read, and discuss [this video and article from NPR](#) on an important event in trans history in the United States.

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER



For more information on how to support trans and nonbinary students in your school and on LGBTQ history:

- ["How to Support Trans and Gender-Diverse Students" by Anonymous in YCteen](#)
- [GLSEN's Educator Resources](#)
- ["Six Ways Teachers Can Support Trans Students" by Jayson Bijak, GLAAD](#)
- [Incorporating LGBTQ History in Your Classroom by Teaching Tolerance](#)

Taking Climate Action

SEL FOCUS: RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Story Title: "Students Around the World March For Our Future" by Zachary Macpherson

Story Summary: Zachary reports on his experience at the September 20, 2019, climate strike. He calls for young people to hold their elected representatives

Learning Objectives

Youth will build their SEL by:

- Considering what, if any, moral obligation they have to demand change from elected representatives
- Analyzing the problem presented by climate change and clearly communicating their analysis

Youth will increase their literacy by:

- Making meaning of text through group read-aloud and discussion
- Writing a letter to an elected representative about their views on climate change

Important Vocabulary

- carbon emissions
- fossil fuel
- renewables
- accountable

Materials

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #269 for each student
- Scrap paper, pencils, and a large waste basket, box, or bin
- Journals or notebook paper, pencils

Preparation

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Write the Toss One, Take One prompt (**in bold**) on chart paper.
- Write the Journal Jot guidelines (**in bold**) on chart paper.

GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: Taking Climate Action

- **Opening Activity: Toss One, Take One**
- **Read and Discuss: "Students Around the World March For Our Future" by Zachary Macpherson**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Journal Jot**
- **Closing Circle**

OPENING ACTIVITY — TOSS ONE, TAKE ONE

(8 minutes)

This activity helps students activate background knowledge.

1. After reviewing the agenda, tell students that they are going to do an activity that gathers the ideas of everyone in the room and allows them to hear multiple viewpoints.
2. Pass out pieces of scrap paper. Tell students *not* to write their names on the papers. This is an anonymous activity.
3. Ask them to write a response to the prompt you prepared on chart paper:
 - **The key to addressing climate change is...**
4. Give students three minutes to think and then write their responses. (If some are struggling, ask them to write down why they find it difficult to finish the prompt.)
5. After they have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into balls and toss them into the waste basket, box, or bin in the middle of the circle.
6. Then tell them they should each retrieve an anonymous response from the container and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the container and have each student blindly pick a paper ball. (If a student happens to choose their own response, it's OK because no one will know.)
7. Either by going around in a circle or asking for volunteers, each student reads the response on their paper.

8. Invite students to make observations about what they heard, such as similarities, difference, or personal connections they had to their peers' responses.
9. Thank the class for sharing.

READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY (20 minutes)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 8 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a class read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
 - What's standing out to you about the story?
 - What fact that Zachary uses in his story is the most convincing to you?
 - Zachary says he feels hopeless about the future because of the inaction by politicians. What advice would you give him about this feeling?
4. Thank the class for reading and sharing.

EXPLORE THE IDEAS — JOURNAL JOT (12 minutes)

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

1. Introduce the next activity by saying to the class:
 - "Now that we've read a story by a writer who argues that our elected representatives need to act on climate change, we're going to write a letter to an elected representative to give them our opinion about what should be done to address climate change."
2. Read the Journal Jot guidelines aloud from the chart paper you've prepared:
 - **Greeting: "Dear elected representative, I'm writing to discuss climate change."**
 - **Give your opinion about what the country should do in response to climate change.**
 - **Use a statistic from Zachary's story to help make your point.**
 - **Closing: "Sincerely, (Your Name)"**
3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.
4. Give students seven minutes to write their letters. Move around the room offering encouragement and support.
5. When seven minutes are up, tell students to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.
6. Explain to the class that they are now going to do a Group Share.
7. Ask a few volunteers to share parts of their letters with the whole class.
8. After several students share, thank the class for being thoughtful members of the class and working to make connections to the story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

CLOSING CIRCLE (5 minutes)

In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.

Guide student in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in Zachary's story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "In order to address climate change, we need..."

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:

- Read and discuss [Cindy Gu's "Climate Change Hurts the Poor First,"](#) and have students use information from the story in their letters.
- Have students workshop their letters and revise them based on the feedback they get. Then, have them [find an elected representative](#) they want to address their letter to, create a final copy, and send the letter via email or post.
- Visit the National Education Association's [Climate Change Education](#) page. There are many resources for teachers.

When the Past Is Present

SEL FOCUS: SELF-AWARENESS

Story Title: "Trying to Trust" by Amber Perez

Story Summary: After being abandoned by her father, Amber has a hard time trusting others, even Craig who tries to show her that he's here to stay.

Learning Objectives

Youth will build their SEL by:

- Explaining how past relationships affect present ones
- Considering what to let go from the past and what to keep

Youth will increase their literacy by:

- Making meaning of text through class read-aloud and discussion
- Writing to express personal connections and insights

Important Vocabulary

- confided
- dictate

Materials

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #269 for each student
- Journals or notebook paper, pencils
- Scrap paper, pencils, and large waste basket, box, or bin

Preparation

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Write the Freewrite prompt (**in bold**) on chart paper.
- Create a model for Letting Go, Holding On.

GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: When the Past Is Present

- **Opening Activity: Freewrite and Pair Share**
- **Read and Discuss: "Trying to Trust" by Amber Perez**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Letting Go, Holding On**
- **Closing Circle**

OPENING ACTIVITY — FREEWRITE AND PAIR SHARE

(8 minutes)

This activity helps students activate background knowledge.

1. After reviewing the agenda, tell the class that they are going to do a freewrite that helps them make personal connections to the story they're going to read. Remind students that this is a chance to express their thoughts and feelings without stopping or worrying about spelling and grammar. The expectation is that everyone writes for the full time.
2. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils
3. Read aloud the following prompt from the chart paper you prepared:
 - **How do you think what has happened to us in the past affects us in the present?**
4. Give students three minutes to respond to this prompt (They can have the option of writing lists and/or drawing with labels. This supports diverse learners.)
5. When three minutes are up, ask students to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.
6. Explain to the class that they are now going to do a Pair Share. (Remember: Even in a Pair Share, students have control over how much they share from their writing.)
7. Ask students to turn to the 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. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
9. Thank students for sharing.

READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY (20 minutes)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 13 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a class read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
 - What's standing out to you about the story?
 - How is the writer protecting herself? How is she holding herself back?
 - What advice would you give the writer if you were her friend?
4. Thank the class for reading and sharing.

EXPLORE THE IDEAS — LETTING GO, HOLDING ON

(12 minutes)

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

1. Introduce the next activity by explaining to the class: "Now that we've read the story, we're going to do an activity where we consider what to hold on to and what to let go from the past. Just like Amber had to let go of thinking that all men would be like her father, and had to hold on to the lesson she learned from her experience with Craig."
2. Using a piece of drawing paper, model for the class how to fold the page in half and then open it back up.
3. Next, model for them how to label one half of the paper "Letting Go" and the other half "Holding On."
4. Ask students to consider specific habits, memories, and self-talk from their past they would want to let go of [such as the effects of low self-esteem as the result of emotionally abusive parents, etc.].
5. Next, ask them to consider what specific habits, memories, and self-talk from their past they would want to hold on to [such as the reassuring words of a beloved relative, etc.].
6. Explain that on each half of the paper, students should list as many things as they can.
7. Pass out drawing paper and pencils. Have everyone fold their paper and label it using the teacher's as a model.
8. Give the class some silent think time, and then tell them to begin writing. Move around the room offering support and encouragement.
9. After about five minutes, tell students to rip the page in half, separating the two sides.
10. To symbolize "letting go," have students crumple up that half and toss it into a basket in the middle of the circle.
11. Next, ask students to look at their "holding on" list and share some of the items from their list with the person next to them. Have them take turns sharing their responses, including how the

items on their list will help them make the changes needed to achieve their goals.

12. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
13. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the class and working to make connections to the story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

CLOSING CIRCLE (5 minutes)

In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.

Guide students in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in Amber's story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "One thing from my past that gives me strength is..."

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:

- Read and discuss "[Am I Ready for Love?](#)" by Hattie Rice with your students, and compare the two stories using a Venn diagram.
- Have students create a vision board for what they want their futures to look like. Tell students, "While we don't have control over what's happened in the past, we can envision and set goals for the future." Provide students with a variety of magazines, which they'll use to cut out images and words of affirmation that represent what they want for their futures. Volunteers can present and share aspects of their vision boards, and their work can be displayed around the classroom.

Speaking Up & Sharing Out

SEL FOCUS: RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Stories: "Microaggressions Are Actually Major" by Asa Khalid; "Black Students Deserve More Black Teachers" by William Lohier; and "How We Got an All-Gender Bathroom" by Sydney Henriquez

Story Summaries: Asa tries to ignore a friend's racist comments and behavior, but it snowballs and soon she must confront not only her "friend" but also the principal. Will asks a trusted principal about the lack of black teachers in his school and explains why this lack is problematic. Sydney is part of a club that makes fighting for an all-gender bathroom in their school a priority. All three writers find powerful ways to advocate for themselves and others.

HOW TO USE THESE STORIES

Assign students to read one or all of these stories and to complete one of the following activities to bolster communication and advocacy:

- Students write a speech about a topic or issue they feel passionately about. Volunteers can share with the class.
- Community advocacy scavenger hunt: Students research local advocacy groups and organizations. What is each organization's mission? What events do they put together? How do they advocate for a group or cause?
- Students choose an issue or cause in their school they feel strongly about (for Will it was having more teachers of color in his school, for Asa it was fighting racism, and for Sydney it was getting a gender-neutral bathroom). In groups, have students create a poster or flyer designed to spread awareness about the issue and recruit others to join the cause.
- Students write a letter to the dean or principal about a topic or issue of concern. Use this as an opportunity for students to practice advocating for themselves and others, as well as communicating a need, writing formally, and including a call to action.
- Students create a piece of art (e.g., a drawing, painting, or sculpture) that represents a prevalent issue in their home or community. They then write a short description of their piece and what it symbolizes.