



High School Teachers: use BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT in class!

## CURRICULUM GUIDE

For March 2010

### ***Afterlife sentences: What does death look like to you?***

Ask students to read the *TiP* staff ideas of life after death on pages 3 and 4 and then write their own ideas about the “Great Beyond.”

You might ask them questions like these:

1. What do you think happens after you die?
2. What influences have shaped your vision of the afterlife? Religion? Literature? Movies? Family and friends’ beliefs?
3. What would you like to believe comes after this life?

Students should send their responses to *Teens in Print* care of Ric Kahn. [Ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov)

### **Relationships: Please advise**

Encourage students to read the two stories on page 5. Do they have an opinion about long-distance relationships? Do they agree that boys don’t want to be “tied down”?

Have students write some “Love Advice” for their friends, peers and *TiP* readers. Here is how they might want to do it:

1. Write a short paragraph describing a common relationship issue like jealousy, possessiveness, or “my boyfriend and my best friend don’t get along”—anything. The more specific they can be in explaining the problem, the better. It might even be something they have witnessed among their friends (but they should not use any names).
2. Then, write a response to the problem that gives advice. It should be thoughtfully written and it should consider the qualities of a healthy relationship like trust, respect, space, open communication, and consideration.

3. The response should also include specific suggestions for *how* to solve the problem. Students should think of these as action items. Readers will want to know *what to do* to address the issue.
4. Students should have an adult—a teacher, guidance counselor, or school nurse—read the advice and make sure it is helpful and wise.

Send it to *TIP*.

## **Anatomy of an Opinion**

### ***Underage and under the influence and Is fat the new phat?***

Ask students to read and respond to the two opinion pieces on pages 8 and 9 by Paige Carruthers and Gena White.

First, lead them through a deconstruction of the two pieces.

- What is the main argument? What are the main points to support that argument?
- What are the most persuasive phrases or lines? Underline them. Talk about what makes them persuasive.
- How do the writers make the reader *feel*?
- Do the writers spur the reader to a new opinion—or to take action? Why or why not?
- Find a weakness in each writer’s argument. What is it? How can readers respond in such a way as to refute that point? Students should try writing a refutation for practice.

Students may want to send their refutation to *Teens in Print*. Or, they may feel inspired to write their own opinion essay—using similar techniques of persuasion they identified in these two articles—on another topic or issue they feel strongly about. They should send them to [ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov](mailto:ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov)

## **Assimilation: Aggravation? Or how to be Me?**

Ask students to read Tom Leu’s article *Assimilation: the American way or a wrong root?* and write a “How-to” essay on their own hyphenated identity. If assimilation is not part of their experience, they can still write a “How to be me” essay.

This is called Process Analysis—the old “how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich” essay. Readers come away knowing how to do something, or in this case, be something. Students can write it in step-by-step style or in essay form.

Titles might be “How to be Cuban-Puerto Rican” or “How to be Chinese-Jewish-American”—or however they describe their identity.

1. Students can start by making a list of what makes them unique: who their parents are, where they have lived, what languages they speak, experiences they’ve had.

2. They might also consider what their daily life looks like: what they eat, what music floats through the house, what's on TV, what stories are told, what holidays are celebrated, what relatives come visiting, what special objects sit on the shelves.
3. Then they should think about their own passions and interests.
4. Finally, have them focus on the combination of these influences and experiences and what results from that combination.
5. The first four steps should generate a lot of ideas. Next, encourage students to sum it all up in a single metaphor if they can—or a dominant impression. They might arrive at this best through something concrete like a food or tradition or a family heirloom.
  - a. **One way to do this:** Have them practice writing titles until they can come up with something that captures this focus. It might be something like “Captain Crunch and Plantains” or “Christmas Tamales” or “I danced salsa at my bat mitzvah.”

### **Teen Pregnancy: turn an issue into advocacy!**

Two *TiP* writers were disturbed by what they learned about teen pregnancy. Ask students to read *Baby blues: no kidding around* and *A pregnant pause: the challenges of teen motherhood* and write a letter to *TiP* or the BPS school department demanding comprehensive sex education in school.

They should take these steps:

1. Open the letter with a short narrative or scenario (real or hypothetical) that illustrates the problem. They don't have to give names, but a personal story or observation will make the issue real and hook the reader.
2. Students use the opening story to lead into the problem, which is this next paragraph. Here, they spell out the problem. Students can site statistics, examples, and facts from reliable sources to help define the problem.
3. They should articulate in this paragraph what they want in a school-based comprehensive sex education program. What kind of sex education is provided in their school now? Where and how does it fall short? This might require an interview with the headmaster or school nurse.
4. Finally, they should sign the letter in a polite way and kindly request a response.

### **UPCOMING SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

**For the May 2010 paper:** April 9, 2010

*See submission guidelines in Teens in Print.*

We welcome your feedback about *TiP*. We also love to hear how you use it in your classroom.

Thanks for reading,

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