



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

## CURRICULUM GUIDE

for September 2009 issue

### “Going Bi”

In this article, Milanes Morejon shows that some bisexual teens are more willing to be out than they were in the past; the atmosphere has gotten safer especially for girls to be open about their sexual orientation. But the article also raises the question of whether some teens may be “acting bi” to seek attention. Robyn Ochs, who is interviewed in the article, suggests: “Always remember to be true to yourself. No one else has the right to define you or tell you what to do.”

### “Borrowed Character” Monologue

Have students read “Going Bi.” Ask them: What does it mean to be “true to yourself”? Can you be true to yourself but hide things from others? Does being “true to yourself” mean you *have* to be open with the world? Are there risks for some people to be 100% open about their real identity?

Have students think of someone who they believe is “true to herself or himself.” This could be someone *real or fictional*, like Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Melinda Sordino in the novel *Speak* or Celie in *The Color Purple*. It could be someone you know, in a different guise. *Don’t identify* the person if s/he is real.

Students write an interior monologue from the point of view of their chosen person. They will use “I.” Be prepared to define and model one for them. Have students use these guiding questions as they write:

- How do we know this character is “true” to her/himself? Reveal through the character’s words what s/he believes, thinks, does, likes or dislikes. What *defines* her/him?
- The character’s monologue should refer to examples that show how s/he is true—how s/he does not allow others to define her/his identity. Or, it can show how this character *stops* letting others define her/him.
- Show how this person struggles with her/his identity and whether to share it with the larger world. Or, just show how this person struggles period—because of who s/he is.
- Bring the monologue to some kind of conclusion. You need not “solve” the character’s struggle, but you need to bring the monologue to some kind of a close, some release of tension. Maybe the character makes a decision.

## **“Engineering a bright future,” “From high school to med school: paging Dr. Rocha,” & “All krumped up! Youths dance their way out of danger”**

### **Write a Recipe for Success**

Ask students to read these three articles and compile a list of qualities that are critical to success. Using these examples plus some of their own choosing, have students write a recipe poem taking these qualities into consideration.

- Bring in a pile of cookbooks to help students gather the language of recipes.
- Be sure to model a recipe poem (for something other than success) to help them think through the process.
- Students should list “ingredients” and their amounts. For example, if “failure” is one ingredient, how much “failure” would they include in their recipe for success? How much “determination”?
- They should then explain in a paragraph or two how to put all of the ingredients together to make “success.” Again they can play with cooking language like blend, mix, sprinkle, bake, marinate, etc.
- They can include special instructions like “set aside for a while” or “test for readiness” or “let cool.”
- What should success look like when it’s ready? How will you know when it’s done? How many does it serve?

Compile the recipes in a book to distribute around school, send them to *TiP*, or share them with an audience.

## **“Doze and Don’ts: Youth Need More Sleep”**

### **Write a letter to BPS**

If this article hits a nerve with sleepy students, ask them to write a letter to the Boston Student Advisory Council, the Boston Public School Committee and Superintendent Carol Johnson, petitioning for a solution to schools’ early start time and students’ lack of sleep. Be sure to review letter format and language with students.

1. Students should start by explaining the problem through a personal story to illustrate that they are not getting enough sleep.
2. Next, they can add in some statistics to support their argument that inadequate sleep leads to health problems and poor school performance.
3. Finally, they should explain exactly what they want changed and why that change would solve the problem.
4. They should thank the school officials for considering their letter.  
*Maybe the solution is not an earlier start time if students have jobs and after school activities they need to get to as soon as the last bell rings. Help students explore other ways that schools could be helpful in solving the problem of too little sleep for teens.*

## **“They’re Back! The `80s Rock Teens’ World in Music, Clothing, & Hair Styles”**

These four articles take note of the current trend that recycles `80s music and fashions. In more than one place, though, teens wonder if their generation is not making its own original mark. Kara Pierre-Charles, 17, asks in the story on flat-tops, “Do we really want to be looked upon as the generation that wasn’t unique at all and decided to swag the other generations?”

### **Write a Profile of an Original Teen**

Challenge students to write a story about a teen they know who is breaking new ground in music, poetry, fashion, art, sports, theater, or just about anything. They should interview the teen and write a focused story about him or her that highlights how s/he is unique and how what s/he does is unprecedented. They can send it to *Teens in Print* for possible publication.

## **“Kicks not kicked to the curb: some sneaker buys remain recession-proof”**

### **Write a Tribute to an Object**

Ask students to read this story and write an “Ode on My Sneakers” poem or a eulogy for a pair of retired sneakers. E-how.com or wiki-how have guidelines on how to write both. Ask students to read their finished odes or eulogies out loud at a publication party.

### **Understanding Voice**

Use this article to help students understand the concept of voice. Ask them to read the article and underline language that contributes to the overall voice. Have students share these words and phrases out loud. Ask them to characterize the voice with a title or nickname.

Ask students to experiment with developing a voice in their own piece of writing. Pick the same object for everyone but assign different voices. If the object is sneakers, for example, ask students to write about them in the voice of a five year old, a waiter, an NBA star, or a clown. What would the voice of a sneaker-eating dog sound like?

## **UPCOMING SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

**For the November 2009 paper:** October 1, 2009

*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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