

Lesson Guide

For use with the May/June 2010 issue of *New Youth Connections* magazine

THANK YOU

This is the last issue of the 2009-2010 school year. Thank you to the 611 New York City teachers and counselors who make *New Youth Connections* magazine available to the teens in your schools and programs—and to all of the adults nationwide who download the stories and lessons to use with teens.

Lessons in This Month's Guide

1. Writing Contest #202 (Revenge, sweet or not) Win \$150
2. Writing Contest #203 (Change your life) Win \$150
3. Health Lesson: The teen brain—reading comprehension/writing response
4. Juvenile Justice Lessons (including a mock trial).
5. Regents Exam Reading Practice
6. Regents Exam Listening Practice
7. Snitching Role Play
8. Treasure Hunt (Careers)
9. Department of Health Ads: Mental Health Help & Free Condoms

1. Lesson: Writing Contest #202—Win \$150

Contest question (p. 2):

Tell us about a time when you were tempted to seek revenge on someone. What did the person do to you? How did you finally respond? How do you feel now about what happened?

Deadline: June 25, 2010

Objectives: Students will explore their values by examining how they feel about revenge. They will understand the importance of reading a writing prompt question carefully. They will use the five Ws (who, what, where, when, why) to help them organize their writing.

Before the lesson: Write this simple chart on the board:

How I was hurt	How I responded
What actions the person took	What I did or thought about doing
Why the person did it	Why I did it or why I thought about it
Where it happened	Where I did it or where I thought I would do it
When it happened	When I did it or when I planned to do it
Who was there	Who was there

Introduce the lesson: Tell your group there are three prizes in the *New Youth Connections* writing contest: \$150, \$75, and \$50.

Tell them that on tests, it is important to read any writing question very carefully so your written response will answer the question. Ask them to read the contest question carefully. When they are done read it aloud. Ask them what they notice about the prompt. You are looking for them to realize that the question is asking them to write about three things: what happened to them, how they responded, and how they feel about it now.

Tell them that another very important thing to notice is the word “tempted” in the question. They can respond to the question even if they just thought about taking revenge.

Activity: Then tell them that one way of organizing their thoughts is to use the five W’s: what, why, where, when, and who. Ask them to look at the first column of the chart. Point out that each cell has a W question about what happened to them. Ask them to take out pen and paper and spend one minute writing notes for each question in the cells. After five minutes ask them to do the same thing for the second column.

Tell them there is one more note making exercise and that it will help them write about how they feel about what happened as they look back. Tell them the key word is “feel.” Stand at the board and ask them what emotions they associate with revenge and wanting revenge. Write down the answers. If they miss some of the ones below, add them to the list.

Anger	Hatred	Satisfaction	Insecurity
Pride	Jealousy	Frustration	Humiliation

Then ask them to name some attitudes or emotions that would prevent someone from taking revenge. Here are some possible answers:

Forgiveness	Understanding
Acceptance	Self-confidence

Ask them to look at these emotions and attitudes. Then tell them to complete, in writing, the following prompt, “The most important thing I learned from this event was _____.”

Tell them to write their essays at home, using their notes. You can encourage them to send them to the contest address on their own or you can collect them and send them as a group. Each entry must have the writer's name and address attached to it.

2. Writing Contest #203—Win \$150

Contest question (p. 2)

**If you could change three things about your life, what would they be?
Why?**

Deadline: Oct. 18, 2010 [But encourage your students to submit essays NOW, before the end of the school year.]

Objective: Practice writing the five-part essay. NOTE: This exercise doesn't have to be about writing the five-paragraph essay—each part can have multiple paragraphs. If a lot of teens in your group are struggling writers, you might want to keep each section to one paragraph.

Before the lesson: Write the 5-part outline (below) on the board.

Introduce the lesson: Tell your group there are three prizes in the *New Youth Connections* writing contest: \$150, \$75 and \$50. Tell them you want them to enter the contest and win some money.

Activity: Ask them to copy down the outline from the board. Then ask them to write the essay at home, using the outline.

Part 1. Introduction. Introduce yourself to the reader. Tell them what your goals are and what might be preventing you from reaching them. End this section by listing the things you would like to change.

Part 2. Write about the first thing.

Part 3. The second thing

Part 4. The third thing

Part 5. Write about how your life would be different if you made these changes.

3. Health Lesson: Reading comprehension/writing response

Note to health teachers: There has been a lot of research in the past decade that identifies differences between teen and adult brains. Researchers are beginning to suspect that these differences help to account for why teens lag in moral development and impulse control. This research was cited by the Supreme Court in the recent decision that life imprisonment without parole constitutes cruel and unusual punishment when applied to juveniles (except those who commit murder). Following is a worksheet that teens can use to explore one writer's experience with his own "teen brain." (You may also want to review the "vocabulary check" following the worksheet.)

The Teen Brain

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Answer the following questions about “Crazy Kids?”, page 9, in essay answer format. (This means you should use parts of the question to start your answer.) Write 3-5 complete sentences for each question. The answer for the first question has been started for you.

1. What is the full title of this story? Who wrote the story? Why do you think the writer thought it was important to write the story? [Example: The full title of the story is... FOLLOWED BY: The writer wanted to tell readers about how the brain and teen behavior...]
2. Stories and articles often describe problems that people have and how they try to solve them. What is the *main problem* described in this story? Is the problem solved?
3. What kind of evidence or facts did the writer present to the reader? What does the story at the start of the article have to do with the article? What about the story at the end?
4. Name some emotions the writer expressed in the article. What events caused these emotions?
5. What does the illustration have to do with the story?
6. What change does the writer go through in the article?

Vocabulary check

As your group reads the story, ask to look for these words. Do they know what they mean? If not, ask them to use a dictionary to find the meanings so they know what the writer is talking about.

scorching	coerced	impulsivity	escalated
cognizant	lethal	outlaw	prevails
redeem	surreal	consequences	provoked

4. Juvenile Justice Lessons

Our teen writers produced several articles on the juvenile justice system. Here are some lesson ideas based on those stories.

Olivia Rosenthal, a high school student, wrote these lesson ideas. She also wrote stories for this issue.

Juvenile Justice Activity #1

Objective: Students will learn about what to do if they are stopped or arrested by the police.

Tell the group: You are walking home one night and the police stop you. What should you do? What shouldn't you do? List responses on the board.

Then say to them: You are arrested for stealing sneakers. As the police tell you that you are under arrest, handcuff you and steer you to the patrol car, what should you do? What shouldn't you do?

Make a list of responses on the board.

Then ask them to read "Know Your Rights" on page 18. When they are done, ask them if answers on the board match the advice in the article

Juvenile Justice Activity #2, parts A and B

Part A: Read and discuss

Objective: Students will learn what circumstances should be taken into consideration when sentencing a young person.

Read "Who Gets a Second Chance?" on page 20.

Ask the group, "What facts did the judge in this story take into account when deciding how to treat a youth convicted of a crime?" List the responses on the board. Your list should look something like this:

- Prior record or lack of record
- Age
- Who does the young person live with? Is his or her family able to help the young person change his or her behavior?
- What crime has the young person allegedly committed?
- Is the juvenile a threat to people?

Tell the group you will read statements by two juvenile offenders. Urge them to listen carefully and take notes because they will write a short essay on what they are about to hear.

Read these descriptions very slowly and carefully:

Juvenile #1: I have been arrested two times. I am 16 years old. The first time I was arrested I was only 13 and sold marijuana outside my school in the Bronx. An older brother of my friend asked me to sell the drugs for him. The judge required that I go upstate to a detention facility. It was horrible and the guards treated me badly. I was beaten up by other inmates and got hardly any help on my school subjects.

When I came back to the Bronx, I was way behind on my classes and had to repeat a grade. I lived with my grandmother who is very old, but just this past week moved in with my father and new wife. I like living with them. It finally feels like a real family. I admit that I jumped the turnstile and violated my parole but I had lost my subway pass and needed to go to school.

Juvenile #2: I am 15 and have just been arrested for robbing the local deli. I did not mean to shoot the gun, just to scare the owner. In fact the gun is not mine, one of the boys with me gave it to me to hold. My mom is a single parent and has three young children. I wanted to help her by bringing home some food. When I heard the gun go off, I was so scared but then relieved that it didn't hit the owner. I have gotten in with some bad kids but I get really good grades at school. I want to go to college. My mother needs me to help her with my younger brother and sisters.

Homework assignment: The students must write a one-page paper that explains why the juvenile in their case should either:

- a) do time in a juvenile detention center or;
- b) be sentenced to an adult jail.

They will take the magazine home and read the two stories on page 20 again. They will use the information from them to support their argument.

The next day take a poll. Which option won? Does anyone have a third option? Ask for volunteers from each group to argue their cases.

5. Lesson: Practice for Regents Exam Reading Section

Story: “Who Gets a Second Chance?” p. 20

Objective: Students will improve skills needed to do well on the Regents Reading Section.

What the teacher needs to know to use this lesson: The Regents English exam has a reading section that requires students to read a passage, answer 8-10 multiple choice questions and then write an essay based on the passage. (Note on time allowed: Students have three hours to do session one of the Regents. This reading and writing exercise should take them 1.5 hours on the day of the test. You could divide this lesson in two parts: answering the multiple-choice questions and then doing the writing part on another day.)

Step One: Give Your Students Directions

Put these directions on the board or read them slowly:

Read the story on page 20, answer the multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. Most of this story is based on comments from a former judge who decided many juvenile justice cases. His comments begin with the second column but you have to read the entire article.

The Situation: You have been asked to write policy suggestions for a New York State Senator about how the law treats teens if they are convicted of a crime.

Your task: Using information from the story, write an article in which you discuss whether teens or minors should be treated differently than adult offenders and kinds of punishment they should receive.

Guidelines:

- Use specific and accurate information from the text to support your discussion.
- Use a tone and level of language suitable for parents.
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner.
- Indicate any words taken directly from the text by using quotation marks or referring to the author.
- Follow the conventions of standard written English.

Step Two: Hand Out the Magazine, and the Multiple Choice Test on the next page

[Answer key: 1) b 2) d 3) a 4) c 5) c 6) a 7) c 8) b]

Directions: Select the best suggested answers. The questions may help you think about ideas and information you might want to use in writing your article.

Juvenile Justice Quiz from “Who Gets a Second Chance?” story

Multiple Choice Questions

1) Why was the Willie Bosket case important?

- a) It was the first case tried under a tougher sentencing law
- b) It helped pass a law that allowed for harsher sentences for teens
- c) It was decided by Judge Corriero
- d) It ended probation for teens

2) What did the new tougher law introduce?

- a) Guilty teens automatically go to prison
- b) Judges could no longer give probation
- c) Teens could be put in prison with adults
- d) Teens could get a permanent criminal record

3) What was Judge Corriero’s main sentencing strategy?

- a) Putting teens in programs, not prisons
- b) Giving them probation
- c) Sending them to prisons with schools
- d) Writing a book to change how other judges sentence teens

4) In the sentence, “Because if you have a felony record, your life is so curtailed,” what does curtailed mean?

- a) Improved
- b) Destroyed
- c) Limited
- d) Inspected

5) Why was Loretta arrested?

- a) She stole earrings
- b) She jumped a turnstile
- c) She helped a perpetrator
- d) She urged her friend to steal

6) What is the main reason the judge gave Loretta a second chance?

- a) She had never been arrested before
- b) She didn’t actually steal anything
- c) She needed special services
- d) She answered the social worker’s questions

7) What does the judge think helps teens resist negative peer pressure?

- a) Friends who don’t get into trouble
- b) Alternative to incarceration programs
- c) Hope for a better future
- d) Good mental health services

8) What fraction of teens did the judge put in alternative programs?

- a) Less than 1/2
- b) More than 3/5
- c) Almost 9/10
- d) About 1/3

6. Lesson: Practice for Regents Exam Listening Section

Story: “A Victim’s Story” p. 27

Objective: Students will improve skills needed to do well on the Regents Listening Section.

Practice Lesson for Regents Exam Listening Section

What the teacher needs to know to use this lesson The Regents English exam has a listening section. A proctor reads the students an **Overview** (see below). The proctor then reads a passage to the students, *twice*, during which time the students can take notes. The students then answer some multiple-choice questions.

NOTE: This lesson omits the report writing section of the Regents exam. It only contains the listening part.

Step One: Read the Overview

(Note: During the real test the students have a printed version of the Overview in front of them as the proctor reads the story. If you can’t make copies of the overview consider writing it on the board or just reading it to them.)

Read this to your students:

Overview: You will listen to an article written by a teenager who was the victim of a crime. You will then answer some multiple-choice questions. You will hear the article twice. You may take notes.

Step Two Tell your students, “Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time.

After reading the story once, say:

“You make take a few minutes to look over your notes. (Pause) Now I will read the story again.”

[Answer Key: 1) b 2) c 3) a 4) d 5) c 6) d 7) b]

“A Victim’s Story” Quiz

Multiple Choice Questions

1) What did Catherine do right after being attacked?

- a) She went to the hospital
- b) She went to her boyfriend’s house?
- c) She called an ambulance
- d) She fainted

2) Why did she file the police report?

- a) Her mother made her
- b) The police made her
- c) She wanted Sara to be put in jail
- d) The hospital made her

3) What did people at the party do when Sara attacked her?

- a) They took pictures
- b) They rooted her on
- c) They left the party
- d) They beat up Sara

4) In the sentence, “The hospital said it was mandatory to file a police report...” what does mandatory mean?

- a) Legally correct
- b) Optional
- c) Illegal
- d) Required by law

5) What was the police’s reaction to Catherine’s story?

- a) They doubted her story
- b) They doubted whether they would catch Sara
- c) They were confident they could catch Sara
- d) They already knew Sara

6) What does Catherine think about treating young criminals differently than adult ones?

- a) All juvenile offenders should be treated like adults.
- b) They should never be treated like adults.
- c) She doesn’t voice an opinion
- d) Violent juvenile offenders should be imprisoned whether they are juveniles or adults.

7) What could be different title for this story which is called “A Victim’s Story?”

- a) Facebook and Violence
- b) My Quest for Justice
- c) Sara and Me
- d) Violence Doesn’t Pay

7. Lesson: Snitching Role Play

Story: “To Snitch or Not to Snitch?” page 26

Objective: This role play will stimulate thinking about reporting illegal activities.

Before lesson: Write each item on an index card.

- I know who stole your aunt’s car.
- I know who raped Mary.
- I know who fired the gun at the party.
- I know who mugged John and sent him to the hospital.
- I know who’s selling drugs to the basketball team.
- I know which cop is taking bribes from dealers.
- I know who stole money from the prom fund.
- I know who cheated on the math test.
- I know who snitched on you.

Write these three options on the board:

1. Tell me who did it.
2. Keep it to yourself. Don’t snitch.
3. Tell the police (or a teacher).

Have your group read the story. After they are done, ask why people do or don’t talk to police about crimes. Lead a discussion for five minutes.

Then set up the lesson. Divide into pairs or threes so you have 9 groups. Let each pair pick an index card out of a box.

Tell the group you are going to go around to each small group one by one. Tell them that the person who picked the card should read it to the other member(s) of the group. The other members have to pick one of the above options on the board to start a conversation. The reader of the card has to argue with them—to say something like, “I just can’t keep it to myself. I have to tell someone.” Give each group 3 minutes to argue back and forth. Move on to the next group.

Closing Question:

Who benefits if people won’t snitch? Who suffers? [Note: There is no one right or wrong answer to these questions.]

8. Lesson: Treasure Hunt

Story to use: The contest winners and runner-up short essays on pages 22, 23, and 25.

Objective: Practice cooperating in a small group. Practice finding information across several essays. Stimulate thinking about career paths and career requirements.

Before the lesson: Write the following list on the board.

Runways	Self-scheduling
Shorts	Laboratory
Bodyguards	Office in Cairo
Helping mom	Drug counselors
Grease	Anorexia
Corpse	Drafts
Anesthesia	Chalk

Activity: Divide the group into smaller ones. Give each student a copy of *New Youth Connections*. Tell them they will have ten minutes to complete their jobs and that they might want to figure out how divide up the work so they can finish on time.

Tell them their first job is to look at the list on the board and determine what items on the list are associated with the professions mentioned in the essays on pages 22, 23, and 25. Some items may be linked to more than one job.

Their next job is to select which professions require a college degree and which ones require just a high school diploma.

Call time. Go through the list and have each group call out their answers. Are there any disputes? Then ask them which jobs require a college degree.

8. Department of Health Ads: Attn: Health Teachers

The New York City Department of Health has an ad for its Teen Mindspace program on the back cover (www.myspace.com/nycteen_mindspace). If you have not visited this site, it is well worth a look. It consists of fake MySpace pages in which teens talk about mental health challenges like depression, anger, suicidal ideation, etc. There's also a story about unprotected sex. The pages are very well done and got great reviews from teens here at Youth Communication. Each story shows a teen facing a challenge, and then taking effective and appropriate action to deal with the challenge.

Free Condoms: The Dept. of Health also advertises its free condoms program on page 6.