



Tips for Teachers

A Guide for Using *New Youth Connections*
in the Classroom

November 2001

Thank you

We extend a special thank you to the teachers who submitted class sets, and otherwise encouraged their students to enter last month's Special Writing Contest on the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center. We got an overwhelming response (400 entries)-the most essays we've received in the last 15 years. See pps. 8-11 for the winning and honorable mention essays, and the lessons below for leading a discussion.

And Thank You to the teachers who encouraged students to enter last month's regular Writing Contest ("If You Could Have Any Super Power, What Would it Be and Why?"). See the winners and runners up on p. 25.

THIS MONTH'S THEME:

Teens React to Terror in New York City

In this issue of *NYC*, our writers examine their reactions to the devastating attacks on the World Trade Center. Several were eyewitnesses to the attack; one writer's father was a firefighter on the scene. They reflect on their new insecurity, rethinking priorities, the threat of hate crimes, and what an appropriate U.S. response should be.

Rethinking Priorities (p. 3)

In "My Heart Fell," p. 3, Allajah Young describes how she watched the destruction of the World Trade Center from the window of her high school. The attacks made previously important things in her life seem insignificant, and caused her to reevaluate her priorities. She now values relationships with friends and family much more than before.

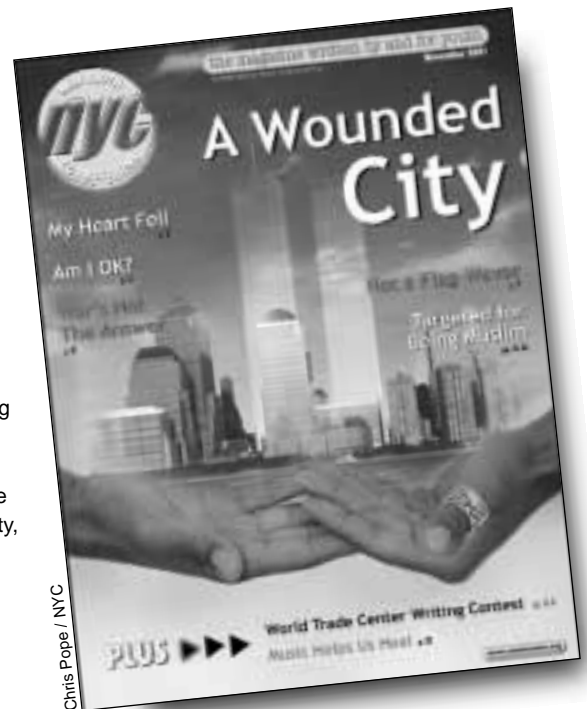
After they read the article, either aloud or to themselves, assign the following writing assignment.

GOAL: To encourage students to read about another teen's experience of the WTC attacks, and to reflect on their own changes by writing a 5-paragraph expository essay.

Students will:

- Do a close reading of Allajah's story;
- Understand how she changed;
- Become more conscious of how they've changed;
- Write a 5-paragraph essay which describes the changes they've gone through.

You could have students make a chart



Chris Pope / NYC

Writing Contest— \$150 in Prizes

"What's the Hardest Thing You've Ever Had to Do?"

Encourage your students to enter this month's Writing Contest, which offers \$175 in prizes: "What's the Hardest Thing You Ever Had to Do?" You may want to devote part of your class to discussing this topic, before turning to the writing. Point out to your students that the hardest thing they did could be a physical activity-such as running a race or participating in an AIDS walk, for example-but that it also could be the way they changed a behavior or attitude, or dealt with a difficult emotional experience in their lives.

A note on the lessons

The following lessons are designed to promote reflection on issues raised by the stories in *NYC*. Each story is summarized briefly, followed by prompts that can be used to initiate discussion and/or brief writing assignments. In addition, role plays and group exercises are sometimes suggested for more active learning experiences.

A note on the roleplays

You will need two or three teens to act out the suggested roleplays in front of class. Make sure the young people understand their roles by briefly reviewing the characters in the stories. Each participant has to try to convince the other of her point of view as described in the roleplay. Let the roleplay go on for about five minutes. Then have the class discuss what they've seen and relate it back to the themes in the story.

A note on the group exercises

These activities are designed to have students work together in pairs or small groups. They can then share their work with the larger group in a general discussion.

Before	After	The Future
Late to class Casual Daily life insignificant Argue with mom Ignore mom	Scared Cherish family and friends Let go of petty arguments Do dishes Call mom Check in on brothers and sisters Need to know where everyone is Realize tomorrow isn't guaranteed Farfetched thoughts (Manhattan destroyed) No more attitudes on train	Be more responsible Spend time with family.

with three columns, "Before," "After," and "The Future," showing what Allajah did before the attack and how she's changed:

This could be a group exercise. You can put a blank chart on the board. The students could shout out answers, or they could copy the columns into their notebook and complete.

Then, after they've completed the chart for Allajah, they can do one for themselves. They should write down at least three things that have changed in their thinking, their emotions, their behavior, their relationships, etc.

Finally, the students should write a 5-paragraph essay about how they've changed. The format is:

1st para: Their first reactions to the attack;

2-4 para: Each paragraph describes one change they've gone through;

5th para: Will the changes be permanent in their lives? Do they want them to be permanent? For example, if a change was for the worse, such as nightmares, they would want them to stop. If it was for the better, such as being a more caring person, then how will they keep that up over time?

A New Insecurity (p. 4)

In "Am I OK?," p. 4, Fan Yi Mok describes how the terrorist attacks caused her to have a new-found sympathy for people she had previously ignored or dismissed. At the same time, her sense of invulnerability is gone forever, replaced by insecurity and anxiety.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—How does Fan Yi see the world differently after the attacks?

—Name three people she sees differently, and how she sees them differently.

—How have you changed your views of any one person or group of people (e.g., cops, Muslims, teachers, parents, etc.) after the attacks?

—Fan Yi feels that something has changed forever since Sept. 11th. Do you

agree? If so, what has changed? Is the change permanent? Why or why not?

—Fan Yi finds it hard to think clearly, concentrate, or remember things since the attacks. Have you experienced anything similar? If so, write a short note describing how you've been affected.

—One of Fan Yi's teachers says that people may not have been horrified by the attacks because they're used to seeing violent movies and TV shows. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

—Write a short letter to Fan Yi, telling her what you liked or disliked about her article.

No to the Red, White, and Blue (p. 7)

The anonymous author of "The Flag's Not for Me," p. 7, discusses why he refuses to fly the flag in this period of renewed patriotism: he feels that the gap between American ideals of liberty and justice for all and the reality of discrimination and injustice is just too great.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—The writer won't fly the flag because he believes too many people are treated unfairly in this country. Do you agree or disagree with his position? Why or why not?

—The writer points out that when a White man blew up the federal office building in Oklahoma City, there were no hate crimes against White people, but that Muslims have been victimized following the World Trade Center attacks. What is your reaction to this?

—If you are against flying the flag, what would have to happen in this country to make you proud of flying it?

—If you are for flying the flag, what are your reasons for flying it?

—Although minorities have suffered discrimination in this country, the writer admits that they are "in a better place socially and economically than ever before." Do you agree that conditions have gotten better for minorities in this country? If so, how does that affect your attitudes toward being patriotic?

—Describe an incident that caused you to feel either more patriotic or less patriotic than you once were.

Roleplay

Two students, playing the writer and his friend. The writer believes too many people are treated unfairly in the U.S. for him to fly the flag. The friend believes that, despite its problems, the U.S. is a fairer nation than most and worth being proud of.

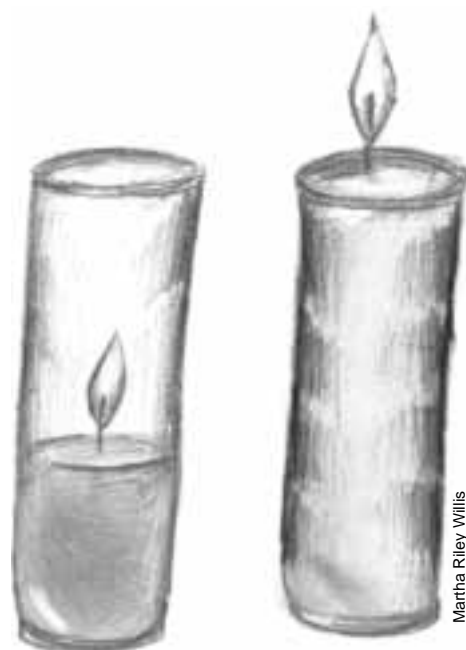
Group activity

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Ask the groups to come up with a definition of patriotism that all group members can agree with. Then have the groups share their definitions in a general class discussion.

A Muslim Youth Fears Bias Attacks (p. 14)

In "Looking Over My Shoulder," p. 14, Abanty Farzana talks about how the attacks have made her self-conscious and fearful as a Muslim. She worries that she and her family will be the targets or revenge. And in a sidebar, ("Muslim Youth Unfairly Targeted"), Arbanty interviews Muslim youth about the bias they've experienced.

After your students read the article, have them fill out the following worksheet (see next page). It takes readers through the story, helps them understand where Abanty (and many other Muslims) is coming from, and tries to engage them in a principled defense of Abanty. Use it as the basis for a class discussion.



Name_____

Date_____

1.What is Abanty's religion?_____ Where was she born?_____

2. What was her first fear when she heard that the WTC towers were hit by the plane?

3. What was her reaction when she learned that the attackers were Muslim?

4. After Abanty found out that her family was safe-and that the hijackers were Muslims-she became afraid. What was she afraid of? What events did she hear about that made her more afraid?

5. Abanty's uncle was attacked on Church Avenue. Why do you think he was attacked?

6. In your own words, how would you define a "bias-related" crime?

7. Pretend you have a class with Abanty. As you walk into the classroom, you see another student talking to her in an angry and threatening voice, telling her that Muslims attacked America, and since she's Muslim, she's partly responsible. You join the conversation. What do you say? Why?

Roleplay

Two students, playing two teens. Teen #1 is angry at all Muslims for the attack and doesn't care if they get beat up or killed by Americans. Teen #2 argues that it's wrong to blame an entire group of people for the actions of a few.

Justice or Revenge? (p. 6)

Lucas Hartstone-Rose, in "War Is Not the Answer," p. 6, discusses his opposition to U.S. attacks on Afghanistan, which he sees as an act of revenge that will solve nothing, and perhaps make things worse.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Right after the attack Lucas wants to bomb those responsible. What makes him change his mind? Do you think he changes his mind for good reasons? Why or why not?

—Lucas sees the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan as "revenge." Do you agree or disagree? Why? How do you define revenge?

—Name three things that Lucas worries will happen if we continue to bomb Afghanistan. Are you also worried about these things? Why or why not?

—Name three things that Lucas feels the U.S. should do to fight terrorism. Do you agree or disagree with his suggestions? Why?

—Find the quote Lucas uses from the parents of a World Trade Center victim to reinforce his argument against taking revenge. What is your reaction to that quote? If you were those parents, would you have the same reaction? Why or why not?

Roleplay #1

Two students, playing Lucas and friend. The friend thinks the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan is an appropriate response and not revenge. Lucas thinks the bombing is revenge and will only make the situation worse.

Group activity #1

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Have the groups circle the following vocabulary words in Lucas's article: revenge, justice, speculating, rationale, reprisal, retaliation, carpet-bomb, coalition, antagonize, alleviate, plight, humanitarian. Then have the groups define the words and/or use them in a new sentence. List on the board and discuss.

Group activity #2

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Have the groups pretend that they are top officials in the U.S. government, and have to decide what actions to take in response to the terrorist attacks. For example, they have to decide whether to continue the current bombing campaign as it is, expand it, stop it, or take different action altogether. They may want to pursue some of the actions Lucas suggests, such as increasing humanitarian aid or changing our foreign policy. They also should take into account that continued bombing may lead to new terrorist attacks in the future. Have the



Duran Rivera

groups share and compare their ideas in a general discussion with the class.

Contest Responses: Teens React to the Attack (pps. 8-11)

On pps. 8-11, we publish the winning and honorable mention essays to our Special Writing Contest on the World Trade Center disaster. The essays deal with a wide variety of themes: shock at witnessing the attack or having family members caught up in it, divided feelings about what action the U.S. should take, pride in the surge of patriotism shaping the country. The essays are grouped by theme. Ask your students to choose a theme that appeals to them most, and read one or more of the essays in that group. Then:

—Ask the students why that theme appealed to them the most.

—Ask them to write a short note to the writer, explaining what they liked most about the essay(s).

—The students can also write a note pointing out how they disagreed with the writer.

—Ask the students to underline a sentence or a passage that stood out for them in the essays. Ask them to share with the class why it stood out.

—Or ask the students to write a short essay on one of the topics addressed by the contest essays: being an eyewitness to the attacks, knowing someone who was caught up in the attacks, patriotism, the U.S. response, fear of bias-related crimes against Muslims, etc.

Soothed by Music (p. 16)

On p. 16, Abanty Farzana, in "No Longer An Ordinary World," writes about how she hears music lyrics in a new way after the Sept. 11th attacks, and finds solace by listening to her favorite songs.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Abanty says that loud dance and party music doesn't suit her emotions now. Do you find certain kinds of music—or TV shows or movies—inappropriate after Sept. 11th? Why or why not?

—Abanty says she hears song lyrics in a new way after the attacks, that they sound more profound. Have you had the same experience? If so, what is the song and how does it sound differently now?

—Abanty says that music soothes her after the recent terrorist attacks. What has helped to calm you during this time? Why do you think it calms you?

—Write out a song lyric that has a new meaning for you or that you especially like listening to, after the terrorist attacks.

—Have you turned to creativity to deal with your feelings after the attacks (for example, painting, writing, music, etc.)? How have you used your creativity, and how has it helped you?



Ming Tong Pang

OTHER STORIES

The Pain of Drug Addiction (p. 12)

In "Losing My Life to Drugs," p. 12, the anonymous writer starts out by smoking marijuana, and then moves on to LSD and ecstasy. He has to hit rock bottom before he enters a rehab program.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—The writer says he was scared by anti-drug TV commercials and drug prevention programs in school, but still did drugs anyway. Do you take anti-drug TV commercials seriously? If so, why? If not, why not? Would any kind of drug prevention program be effective in stopping teens from doing drugs? If so, what kind of program? If not, why not?

—Why does the writer do drugs? Was his drug use inevitable? What else might he have done in his life, instead of turning to drugs?

—The writer starts with marijuana, and moves on to LSD and ecstasy. Based on your knowledge, do most teens go from marijuana to more powerful drugs?

—How big a problem is drug use among your peers? Is it something you worry about? Why or why not?

—The writer says he did drugs to escape from emotional pain. Is it possible to escape from emotional pain by doing drugs? Why or why not?

Roleplay

Two students, playing the writer and a friend. The friend wants to try marijuana, thinking it's no big deal. The writer, based on his experience, wants his friend to know why it may be more of a big deal than he thinks.

Group activity

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Have the groups draw up plans for a drug prevention campaign that will be effective among their peers. The campaign can include TV commercials, guest speakers in schools, visits to rehab clinics, or anything else they can think of. Have the groups share and compare their campaigns in a general discussion with the class.

Searching for Family History (p. 19)

In "Tracing My Family Tree," p. 19, Hazak Brozgold writes about his father's efforts to research their family's history by using the Internet to track down long-lost relatives. As a fourth-generation Jew from Lithuania, Hazak

has a new-found appreciation for his identity and his father's curiosity.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Hazak is proud to learn about his family history. How much do you know about your own family's history? What part of your family's history do you like the most? What would you like to learn that you don't know? What are your biggest questions?

—Every family tells stories about the past. What is one of your favorite family stories? (You can ask students to write this story if you have time.)

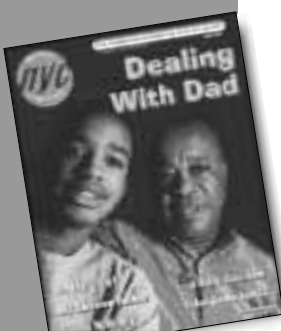
What stories will you tell to your children? (You could ask students to describe how they

will tell their children about the WTC attacks: Where were they? How did they feel? How did it affect them and their families?)

—His father's research has helped Hazak to see his father in a new light and appreciate him more than before. Describe a time when a parent or a friend did something that made you see them in a new, more positive way. What did the person do, and why did you see them in a more positive way than before?

Group activity

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Have the groups draw diagrams of their family trees. Have the groups share their diagrams with the class.



TEACHERS

(And After School Staff)

Subscribe to NYC!

For the rest of the school year

Our
22nd Year



Yes, send me NYC for the rest of the school year.

Name _____

Title _____

School _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- 5 copies/\$25 10 copies/\$35
 50 copies/\$60 Payment enclosed

Return to:

Youth Communication
224 W. 29th St. 2nd Floor
New York, NY, 10001

Questions: 212-279-0708 ext. 100

11/01tips

Running to Awareness (p. 20)

Sabine Maura, in "On the Right Track," p. 20, writes about her devotion to running track. At first hesitant to join the team, running changes her life by teaching her commitment and perseverance.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Sabine is very shy, and it takes her a month to gather her courage and join the track team. But later she feels good that she did. Is there something in your life you now enjoy doing, that you were once afraid or nervous about trying? What is it, and why were you afraid to try it? How did you get the courage to get over your fear or shyness?

—By finishing a race, Sabine accomplishes something she didn't think she could do. Describe a time you accomplished something that you didn't expect to accomplish. What lessons did you learn from this experience? How does the experience help you today?

—Running helps Sabine get her mind off things that are bothering her, "like a bad grade or an annoying comment." What do you do to get your mind off things that are bothering you? Why do you think this interest or activity helps you?

—Write a short letter to Sabine, telling her what you think of her dedication to running track.

Roleplay

Two students, playing Sabine and a friend. The friend is shy about trying out for a school sport. Based on her experience, Sabine tries to talk her into doing it.

Group activity

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Have the groups list interest or activities that they feel have made them more well-rounded and confident. Go around the room, list on the board, and discuss.

Car Trouble (p. 22)

Sharon Feder, in "Going for My License Drove Me to Tears," p. 22, describes her struggle to pass her road test. She fails twice, leaving her a nervous wreck. Maybe she should have worn her glasses.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Sharon longs to drive a car, but fails her test twice. Is there something you've really wanted to do, but that you failed at before you accomplished it? What was it you wanted to accomplish? How did it feel to fail at it? What

eventually helped you to reach your goals?

—If you were Sharon's parents, would you have done anything differently to help her pass her road test? If so, what? If not, why not?

—What might Sharon have done to better prepare herself to take the road test?

Remembering Her Old Country (p. 28)

In "My Window to Jamaica," p. 28, Shalene Wilson, an immigrant from Jamaica, writes about her loneliness and difficulty in making new friends. The cafeteria at her community college becomes the place where she reminisces about the country she left behind.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—What do you think of Shalene's efforts to make friends? If you were in her shoes, what would you have done to try to make friends?

—What part of Shalene's story do you relate to the most? Why?

—The college cafeteria is a special place for Shalene—she can gather her thoughts and daydream about her old life in Jamaica. Is there a special place in your life, where you can relax and feel at ease? What is that place, and why do you feel so comfortable there?

—Shalene has many fond memories of growing up in Jamaica. Is there a place you grew up that you remember fondly? Describe what the place was like, and what you remember most about it.

The Good Old Days (p. 26)

In "Coney Island Memories," p. 26, Vicky Zajac describes her love of Coney Island and its rides, and interviews older people who recall its glory days.

Prompts for discussion and/or writing

—Coney Island is one of Vicky's favorite places. Describe your favorite place in New York City. When did you first go there? What do

you like most about it? What are its sights, sounds, and smells? How has it changed since you've been going there?

—If you've been to Coney Island, do you agree with Vicky's description of it? Why or why not?

—Do older people in your family or neighborhood ever talk about what New York City used to be like? If so, what do they talk about? Does it make you wish to live in the city back then? Why or why not?

Group activity

Assign your students to interview older people about their memories of New York City. The students, as a group, can brainstorm the kinds of questions they want to ask. The students should then write a short essay, like Vicky's, based on their interviews.

A Quick Way to Get Everyone Writing: Letters to the Editor:

We welcome letters to the editor and publish most of them. This is an easy way to involve everyone in a short writing assignment (and they will get the satisfaction of seeing their names in print). Writing letters can be an ideal "Do Now" exercise after your students prompts to get your students started (a few sentences on one or more of these points will be sufficient for a letter):

"I liked/disliked the article because..."

"A point I really agree with in the article, based on my experience, is..."

"A point I really disagree with, based on my experience, is..."

"A solution to one of the problems in this article might be..."

Visit us on the web at:
www.youthcomm.org



Tips for Teachers is written for the bulk subscribers to *New Youth Connections* to help them use the magazine more effectively with teens in their classes and programs.

For more information, contact:
Youth Communication
224 W. 29th St., 2nd fl.,
New York, NY 10001
212-279-0708 ext.100
www.youthcomm.org