

***New Youth Connections* Lesson Guide—Sept/Oct 2009**

(For more information about *NYC* go to the end of this file.).

Lessons in This Month's Guide

- 1. Writing Contest: Essay writing; learning to use lists for pre-writing**
 - 2. Practice for Regents Listening exam**
 - 3. Reading and Summarizing lesson (college story)**
 - 4. Discussion: Why go to college?**
 - 5. Reading, Discussion & Writing About Conflict in Literature (vegetarianism story)**
 - 6. Vocabulary Search (vegetarian story)**
- Plus: Attention Health Educators (a summary of health-related stories in the issue)**

1. Lesson: Writing Contest #197—Win \$150

Note: Many teachers send us class sets of contest entries. After they have written their pieces, collect them and send them to us.

Topic: “How do you think technology will change in the next 30 years? How will these changes influence our lives and behavior? Describe a day in the life of a typical New York City teen in 2039.”

Deadline: October 26, 2009

Objective: Students will learn how to use lists to help them get started on a writing assignment.

Before the lesson: Write the first three items from each list below on the board.

Hand out copies of the September/October issue of *New Youth Connections*. Tell your group that they can win up to \$150 by entering the writing contest on page 2. Or write the above contest question on the board.

Tell them that everyone—including professional writers—sometimes struggle to get started and put those first words on paper. One way to help you get started is to make lists about the topic you have to tackle.

Tell them you want them to write their entry as a letter telling a friend about an important event. Ask them to look at the items on the Event List and make other suggestions to add to the list. Repeat for the Activity List and the Gadget List. If they don't volunteer all the items on the lists, include them on your own.

Event List

Prom or big birthday party
 Graduation day
 School trip to Six Flags

First day back at school

Big game

Big date

Vacation trip

Shopping spree

Activity List

Personal hygiene

Eating at home or a restaurant

Transportation

Communication

Entertainment

Being at school or doing homework

Playing a sport

Listening to music

Watching television

Going to a movie

Device List

Computers

Television

Kindle or book reading device

Internet

Cell phone

Ipod

Stereo

Cars, buses, subway

Stove, fridge, etc.

Shower, toilet, sink

Sports equipment

Before they begin writing they will write some notes based on each list. Tell them notes can be lists, words, incomplete sentences, etc. The idea behind making notes is just to get your thoughts on paper.

- The Event List: Ask them to look at the Event List and pick a special event to write about. Make some notes about what usually happen on those special days?
- The Activity List: Make some notes about how these activities will be different in the future.
- The Device List: Make notes on how they might be using these and other devices during the special day.

Tell them to write their piece as a letter to a friend describing what happened to them on that day.

2. Lesson: Practice for Regents Exam Listening Section

Story: “State Lines, Waistlines,” p. 7

Objective: Students will improve skills needed to pass the Regents 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.

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 about obesity in the United States. 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.”

Step Three: Tell your students, “Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time.” Read the story *State Lines, Waistlines* on page 7 of the September/October issue of *New Youth Connections* magazine.

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.”

Step Four: Multiple Choice Questions

After reading the article for the second time give them the questions on the next page.

Here are the answers to the multiple choice questions:

1) b 2) c 3) c 4) d 5) b 6) d 7) c

State Lines, Waistline Test

Multiple Choice Questions

Directions: Use your notes to answer the questions about the story read to you.

1) What question or puzzle is the author concerned with?

- a) why American teens are getting fatter;
- b) why obesity rates vary from place to place;
- c) why more educated people are usually thinner than less educated Americans;
- d) how doctors treat obesity related diseases.

2) What do Massachusetts and California do to reduce obesity?

- a) They educate students about food choices.
- b) They tax high fat foods more than healthier foods.
- c) They make restaurants tell diners how many calories are in the menu offerings.
- d) They provide free health care to all citizens.

3) If you visited the writer's neighborhood, what would you be most likely to see?

- a) a playground;
- b) a health clinic;
- c) a Burger King;
- d) a gym.

4) According to the story, what is one reason Alabama might have a very high obesity rate?

- a) It is in the south.
- b) People there don't exercise enough.
- c) The schools don't educate people about food choices.
- d) People there are poorer than people in other states.

5) What does the work "compromised" mean in the sentence, "Our health shouldn't be compromised because we haven't obtained the right address?"

- a) to be improved;
- b) to be exposed to harm;
- c) to be taken for granted;
- d) to be ignored.

6) Why is one possible cause of obesity that the author doesn't mention?

- a) lack of places to run and exercise;
- b) education levels;
- c) income;
- d) the increase in the use of video games.

7) What statement sums up the author's attitude toward the obesity epidemic?

- a) It is bad but nothing to worry about in the long run.
- b) He doesn't have much hope people can change.
- c) He is very concerned but confident the trend can be reversed.
- d) He is confused and doesn't know what to think.

3. Lesson: Reading and Summarizing: Why go to college? (college story)

Thanks to Roderick Michael at DeWitt Clinton HS for this lesson format.

Story: “The Right Choice for Me: My family assumed I’d head to college, but I wasn’t so sure” p. 3

Objective: Students will strengthen skills in reading, summarizing, and answering questions about a text. They will also clarify some of their own feelings about college.

Before the lesson: Print out the question sheet below and have it ready to give to your students.

The lesson: Hand out copies of the September/October issue of *New Youth Connections* magazine or a printed version of the story downloaded from the Youth Communication web site. Tell your students they are going to read a story about young man who has to decide whether or not to go to college and then answer some questions in writing about the story. Ask how many of them are in this situation.

Give them as much time as you think they need to read the story silently. Then hand out the question sheet and a piece of loose-leaf paper. NOTE: The last question asks your group to write letters to the author of this article. We are eager to publish student letters in *New Youth Connections* magazine. Feel free to send your students’ letters to us.

Question Sheet/Reading Class Work

Directions: Answer the questions below in essay answer format. This means you should use parts of the question to start your answer. Write complete sentences. The answer for the first question has been started for you.

Question one: What is the full title of this story? Who wrote the story?

Answer: The full title of the story is...

Question two: Many stories and books describe problems that someone tries to solve or a conflict has to be worked out. What is the main problem or conflict described in this story? Is the problem solved? What does the solution, if any, look like?

Question three: What people in the story influenced the author and what did they do to influence him?

Question four: Why do you think Jonathan felt unsure about his ability to go to college? How did he overcome that feeling?

Question Five: Write a five-sentence letter to Jonathan telling him what you think about his college decisions and what your current plans are for college.

4. Lesson: Discussion—Why go to college?

Story: “The Right Choice for Me: My family assumed I’d head to college, but I wasn’t so sure,” p. 3

Objective: Students will actively explore reasons for going to college and become more clear about their own reasons.

If your students completed the above writing exercise they will be familiar with the story and be ready for a discussion about their possible college plans. If not, ask your group to read the story and then ask them some questions to be sure they know what happened. Here are some possible questions:

- What role did Jonathan’s family play in his college plans? (Note that his family includes his parents, his older brother and his younger brothers.)
- Why did he feel unsure about his ability to do well in college?
- What role did a stranger play in the story?
- How did he get his confidence back?
- What adjectives would you use to describe Jonathan?

The next set of questions asks them to relate their own experiences to the story.

- Jonathan lost his confidence twice in the story. Have you ever lost your confidence about your ability to do well in school or sports or other areas? What did you do about it?
- Do you think Jonathan’s parents put too much pressure on him? Do you ever feel pressured by your parents or other adults about school?
- Jonathan looked up to older brother but his brother let him down. Jonathan’s younger brothers look up to him. Who do you admire and who admires you?
- He doesn’t mention talking to anyone at school about his loss of confidence or his college plans. Is there anyone at school you can talk to about issues like these?

5. Lesson: Reading, Discussion, Writing About Conflict in Literature (vegetarianism story)

Story: “The Would-Be Vegetarian, p. 16

Objective: Students will have a better understanding of the role of conflict in literature by relating it to their own lives.

Before they read the story: Ask your group what the title of the story suggests to them. Just from reading the title, why do they think the author wants to become a vegetarian? What do they think stands in her way?

The first set of questions can help prompt discussion. The second can be used to stimulate short written responses as in lesson #4 above.

- Most works of literature depict conflicts between people. What conflict between what two people forms the main action in the story?
- What convinced Suzy she wanted to become a vegetarian?
- Why did Suzy’s mother want her to eat meat? How did she force her to eat meat?
- How did Suzy reduce the amount of meat she eats?
- Think about the conflict between mother and daughter. What was the most recent difference you had with your parents or other important adults? (Perhaps about schoolwork, dress, friends, dating, curfew, chores) Did you resolve it? How?
- Think about a time you gave up something you like to do. Was it hard?

Write 3-4 sentences in response to each of these questions.

- Based on the story, how would you describe Suzy? Include 2-3 adjectives in your description. Mention specific actions she took in the story that show what kind of person she is. For example, you can write “She was a brave person because she _____”
- Do the same thing for Suzy’s mother. What kind of person is she in the story?
- How does the conflict between Suzy and her mother make this story more interesting? Would it have been as interesting if there was no conflict? Think about other stories you’ve read, and movies or TV shows you’ve watched: Can you identify the central conflict in one or two of them? Why do you think almost all writers introduce conflict into their stories?

6. Lesson: Vocabulary Search (vegetarian story)

Story: “The Would-Be Vegetarian,” p 16

Objective: Help students improve their vocabulary by learning 16 words and phrases from this story.

You can use this lesson along with the previous discussion based on the vegetarianism story.

Before the lesson: Write these words and expressions on the board:

ethical
gruesome
castrated
carnivores
vengeance
viable
documentary
minuscule
abstaining
savory
craving
pescetarian
tolerate
essential
food chain
closet vegetarian

Split your group into smaller ones. Tell them to locate these words and expressions in the story. Tell them to work together to write definitions of these words. After a time limit ask each group to read their definitions out loud. Are there disagreements about meanings? Which ones did no one get?

7. Attention Health Educators

This issue has many stories that you can use to supplement your classes on food and nutrition. Consider clipping them for future use at the appropriate time in your curriculum. Here is a rundown of some of the stories:

Pages 6-8: **“Food Diaries”**-- Our summer writers kept logs of what they ate and wrote about their culinary experiences. A nutritionist reviewed their diaries and they included her comments in these short pieces. These offerings will give your students healthy perspectives on junk food, portion sizes, soda, peer pressure, sugar in cereals, and reading ingredient labels.

Page 9: **“Gluttony Getaway”**-- A writer describes the unexpected consequences of a vacation spent gorging on Oreos, gummy worms and other junk.

Page 5: **“State Lines, Waistlines”**-- How bad are the teenage obesity trends in the U.S.? This story offers some sobering facts and some possible reasons for the trends.

Page 10: **“Why is Bad Food So Good?”**-- Help educate your students about why some of them love fast food so much.

Page 10: **“Dreading the Lunch Lines”**-- Do your students cringe at the idea of eating in the school cafeteria? Read why. If they are curious about the planning and thinking behind school food, they should read our interview of the DOE’s head chef on page 11.

Pages 12-13: If you want to educate your students about the differences between mass-produced, processed food and locally grown fresh food, you will love this graphic. You can also have them read *“Food, Inc.: An Unappetizing Truth”* on page 17 for more information on what goes on at factory farms.

And the nutrition issue has several articles about how to eat better and where to buy fresh foods. See the table of contents on page 2.

ABOUT NYC AND YOUTH COMMUNICATION

NYC is one of several publications written by young people trained by Youth Communication staff. Youth Communication is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping young writers develop their literacy skills and share their work with thousands of peers and adults. www.youthcomm.org.