Throwing Stones at the Moon Curriculum

Curriculum Map

Themes	Fight or Flight: Displacement Monologues	Exploring Text through the Five Senses	Critical Reading Log
Language	English	English	English
Standards	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Language L.9-10.5. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4	Reading History 9-10.2, RH 9-10.4, RH 9-10.10
Recommended Narrator(s)	Danny Cuervo	Emilia Gonzalez	Sergio Diaz
Student Objectives	Students will develop critical thinking, literacy, and communication skills through reading and discussing Danny Cuervo's narrative, analyzing military recruitment posters, and crafting and sharing original monologues.	Through analysis, discussion, and a written visual imagery exercise, students will be able to develop a deeper, empathic understanding of the text and the realities of being a displaced person.	Students will build reading comprehension and critical thinking skills through personal reflection on first person narratives.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	● Institutional violence ● Militarism ● Praxis	● Occupation ● Oppression ● Narrative	● Cultural Hegemony ●

© Voice of Witness | voiceofwitness.org

VOICE OF WITNESS

Lesson One: Fight or Flight: Displacement Monologues

Time Needed: 2 class periods

Materials: Danny Cuervo's narrative from *Throwing Stones at the Moon*, military recruitment posters, white poster board, markers, copies of Danny's monologue (p. 302)

Objective: Students will develop critical thinking, literacy, and communication skills through reading and discussing Danny Cuervo's narrative, analyzing military recruitment posters, and crafting and sharing original monologues.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4

Connections: Other Voice of Witness narratives that can be used for this lesson: Khine Kyaw, Hla Min and Saw Moe from *Nowhere to Be Home,* and Aaron from *Hope Deferred*.

Narrative Excerpt: "The whole way [to Ecuador], on the seventeen-hour-long bus ride, I kept telling myself I would return. I thought, Maybe in a month, maybe in two months or a year. But I have to go back. I left without saying goodbye. But I had to leave, damn it—I was thrown out by the violence in my country." –Danny Cuervo

Overview

In this lesson, students will deepen their empathic understanding by examining Danny's narrative as a group, and relating Danny's refugee experience to something in their own lives. Students will use critical thinking to compare international military techniques with domestic ones, explore what it means to be a refugee, and will sharpen their literary skills through writing monologues.

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will discuss U.S. military recruitment tactics. Students will read Danny Cuervo's narrative together. Students will pair up and analyze the imagery found on old military recruitment posters.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompt: (5 minutes)

Drawing on your knowledge and experience, how does the U.S. military recruit soldiers? What types of tactics do they use to attract volunteers, and what do they have to offer young people?

Step Two: With the chairs arranged in a circle, pass around a talking piece for students to share their answers with the group *(teacher can bring in an object—an arrowhead, a rain stick, a snow*

globe, or anything that can be passed around—to use as a talking piece, or ask a student to lend something to the group to use as a talking piece). Other than the person with the talking piece, class members should be encouraged to demonstrate active listening. Students may pass if they do not want to share. (10 minutes)

Step Three: Read Danny's narrative as a class using popcorn reading.* (30 minutes)

Step Four: Assign each student a partner and give the pair an old military recruitment poster. Students work together on the Military Recruitment Handout (see attached). Collect handouts when the students are done. (15 minutes)

A NY Times slideshow of military recruitment posters can be found here: https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2005/09/23/business/20050925_RECRUIT_SLIDESHOW_1.html

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will read Danny's monologue and discuss his values. Students will compare and contrast Ecuadorian and American sentiments toward Colombian immigrants. Students will write their own monologues modeled off of Danny's.

Step One: Distribute copies of Danny's monologue (p. 232) to revisit as a class, and call on one student to deliver Danny's monologue. Students are to follow along as he or she reads (5 minutes). Monologue printed below.

My name is Danny. I'm not from here, I'm from the neighboring country of Colombia. But thank God I've been a refugee for more than three years, naturalized in this beautiful country, which has given me beautiful opportunities.

I'm an artisan; I didn't come empty-handed. I've made this beautiful necklace. It's made out of nylon and stone. I won't be the one who puts a price on it. If you think that my creativity could be worth $1 or $1.50, I'll take it, whatever the necklace is worth for each person.

I'm also going to do something nice for those people who don't have money. I'm going to give one as a gift, but with a commitment. The commitment isn't with me, but with your conscience, your heart. If tomorrow you find a kid or an elderly person on the street, don't discriminate against him for the condition that they're in. Rather, give them something. Maybe it seems strange to you and you'll ask why I say that. I do it and say it because I believe in the law of compensation. That beautiful law that has taught me that if we act correctly toward other living beings, tomorrow we won't lack anything. I won't inconvenience you anymore. Maybe you'll like this beautiful art and you'll want to buy it.

Step Four: Group discussion: What does Danny's monologue say about his character? Do you believe the statement "if we act correctly toward other living beings, tomorrow we won't lack anything?" Why or why not? (10 minutes)

Step Five: Write the following quote from Danny's narrative on the board *(context: Danny is in Ecuador after being driven out of Colombia due to paramilitary threats)*:
"Shut up and have some respect," they told me. "You're not in your country. If you have work and eat it is thanks to our country. You come here to take the jobs of Ecuardorans."

Create a T-chart on the board with "SIMILAR" on one side and "DIFFERENT" on the other. On one side, class compares this Ecuadoran sentiment about Colombian immigrants/refugees to American attitudes toward immigrants in the U.S.; on the other side, class contrasts this sentiment with prevailing American attitudes toward immigrants. For additional context, see Media Option for the ACLU's Rights of Immigrants Position Paper. (10 minutes)

Step Six: Drawing from Danny's monologue on the bus, students create their own monologues given the following prompt:

If you had a captive audience, such as passengers on a bus, and you were desperate for help, what would you say to your fellow bus riders? What message would you want to convey to the people around you about your life and your principles? (30 minutes)

Step Seven: If there's time, collect monologues from students, shuffle them, redistribute to the class, and have students read each other's monologues to the group, without names attached. (10 minutes)

Step Eight: As homework, ask students to write one page on the following prompt:

If you were in charge of military recruitment for your country, what would your policies be? For example, would you institute a draft? If not, how would you recruit volunteers? Defend your position with supporting arguments.

Media Option: Documentary Film:
Leaving La Floresta (dirs. Caleb Collier, Dan Roge) Whisper Productions, 2011: *Leaving La Floresta* is a feature-length documentary that chronicles the story of Abelardo Joya and his family as they are forced to leave their farm and struggle to find a new way of life.

Organizational Website: ACLU Rights of Immigrants Position Paper:
https://www.aclu.org/documents/rights-immigrants-aclu-position-paper

*To use popcorn reading, call on a student to begin reading aloud, and ask her to read as long as she wants to. When she's ready to pass the reading onto someone else, she'll say "popcorn" followed by another student's name.

VOICE OF WITNESS

Military Recruitment Posters

What recurring images do you see in the posters?

What are some of the messages the posters are conveying?

How would you describe the men and women who appear in the posters?

How have the posters changed over the years?

© Voice of Witness | voiceofwitness.org

VOICE OF WITNESS

Lesson Two: Exploring Text through the Five Senses

Time Needed: 2 class periods

Materials: Emilia Gonzalez narrative from *Throwing Stones at the Moon* (p. 25-44), or excerpt (p. 32-35), four pieces of butcher paper with quotes from the text, markers, dry erase board/pens

Objective: Through analysis, discussion, and a written visual imagery exercise, students will be able to develop a deeper, empathic understanding of the text and the realities of being a displaced person.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Language L.9-10.5. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4

Connections: Other Voice of Witness narratives that can be used for this lesson: Any narrative from *Out of Exile,* Zenzele, Amos, Violet, Boniface, John and Alice from *Hope Deferred,* and Tan Htay, Saw Moe, and Khine Su from *Nowhere to Be Home.*

Narrative Excerpt: "We spent the whole night with the doors open, as the paras had told us to. We talked about what had happened, tried to account for other villagers and count the dead but we spoke quietly since the paras were passing by all the houses. The paramilitaries came by the houses and threw live chickens at us and said, 'Here, eat this, it's yours.' We asked ourselves, What will become of us? Where will we go?" —Emilia Gonzalez

Overview

This lesson encourages students to develop deeper empathy with the narrators in *Throwing Stones at the Moon* by recalling a time in which they, themselves, felt isolated, displaced, or disempowered. Students will read and analyze the narrative through a lens of visual imagery while honing their literary skills through a poetry exercise. By crafting precise, detailed images, students will connect more personally to the issues they are writing and reading about.

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will read Emilia Gonzalez's narrative aloud, paying special attention to imagery. They will discuss how her use of imagery strengthens the narrative.

Step One: As a warm up activity, students respond to the following written prompt (5 minutes):

When you see police, military, or government officials, how do you feel—safe, protected, threatened, something else? Explain.

Step Two: Pair Share: Assign each student a partner, with whom they will share and discuss their responses to the prompt. (5 minutes)

Step Three: Using popcorn reading or another reading strategy that meets the needs of your class, read Emilia Gonzalez's narrative aloud. Ask students to highlight/underline exceptional imagery as they are listening to the text. At the end of the excerpt, check for understanding, and ask students if the passages they highlighted emphasized the emotion of the narrative. (40 minutes)

Step Four: On the board, give a brief lesson on imagery in writing *(see attached handout).* (10 minutes)

Step Five: As a closing discussion, ask the students how Emilia's narrative was strengthened through the use of visual imagery. (10 minutes)

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will respond to specific instances of imagery from Emilia's narrative. Students will write their own poems using the five senses about a moment where they felt displaced or unprotected. Students will debrief after writing with a discussion of the themes in their poetry.

Step One: Have a piece of butcher paper on each of the four walls, each with a short excerpt from Emilia's narrative that is rich with imagery. Suggestions:

- *Later, the villagers learned that the paramilitaries had killed five people in the park. They'd killed a teacher who was still in her nightgown, a man and his son, and another boy.*
- *During the three nights I stayed there with Alberto, we made a fire at the door for light, and to fight off the mosquitoes. I couldn't sleep. I heard things. I thought I heard gunshots.*
- *One of them grabbed [the girl's] long hair and wrapped it around his hand, like you wrap a towel, and they dragged her away. They took her to an orange tree away from the court and killed her.*
- *The first to be killed was a friend of Carlos's, who was sitting next to him. The paras grabbed him and lopped off his ear, and then they put a black bag over his head and started stabbing him and asking questions. When he died, he fell into my son's lap.*

Divide students into groups of four, and have them walk around the room and respond to each piece of imagery on the butcher paper. Give them the following prompts (15 minutes):

- How does this make you feel?
- What comes up for you when you read this excerpt?
- Which type of imagery is exemplified here?
- Does the imagery make you feel more connected to the narrator and/or the story?

Step Six: After each group has visited all four pieces of butcher paper, ask students to return to their seats. Have each student write a short poem—composed solely of lines of imagery—about a time in their life when they felt threatened, displaced, or unprotected.

If they are stuck, suggest that they write a poem of five stanzas *(a group of lines within a poem, set off from other groups of lines by a space),* each stanza drawing on one of the five senses *(I saw* _____*, I heard* _____*, I felt* _____*, I smelled* _____*, I tasted* _____*).* (30 minutes)

Step Seven: Ask for volunteers to share their poems with the class. (10 minutes)

Step Eight: After students have shared their poems, facilitate a closing discussion based on the following prompts: (10 minutes)

- Did your poems connect to the theme of displacement in Emilia's narrative?
- Do you feel that your home, and/or your ideas about home, contribute to your sense of identity?
- How does strong, visual imagery strengthen the message of the poems?
- Do you feel more empathy for the narrator when you are presented with imagery that enables you to see *(hear, taste, smell, touch)* what she is going through? Describe.

Step Nine (optional): As homework, challenge students to collect five examples of word-images *(descriptive things people say, word-images they find in books or magazines, etc.)* related to themes of displacement, and bring them in to share with the class the following day.

Possible Oral History Projects:

1. Students identify refugees, immigrants, and/or anyone who has faced civil war or government corruption *(possible guest speaker opportunity).* Working in groups, students brainstorm a list of initial questions for the narrator, and work toward a group interview/oral history narrative.

2. Students identify a family member or friend to interview about a time in their life when they felt isolated, displaced, or disempowered. Teacher leads students through a full oral history project: interview, transcription, narrative editing, and final presentation.

VOICE OF WITNESS

Using Imagery in Poetry Writing

Imagery can be defined as *the use of descriptive language to form mental images in writing.* Imagery makes writing memorable and unique. Think about the five senses— seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling—and how you can use them to incorporate imagery into your writing.

Be as specific as you can! Below is an example of a five senses chart using the following prompt:

Describe being at a state fair on a summer evening.

SEEING	HEARING	TASTING	TOUCHING	SMELLING
the ferris wheel is a kaleidoscope of color	*the ride operator's voice sounds like car wheels driving over gravel*	*my funnel cake is thick with warmth as I bite through its sugary crust*	*I sit on a worn, sun-faded bench, tracing a hole in the wood with my finger*	*the night air smells bitter and sweet, like pennies and sugar*

Using the following prompt, fill out your own five senses chart:

Describe being lost in the aisles of an old library.

SEEING	HEARING	TASTING	TOUCHING	SMELLING

© Voice of Witness | voiceofwitness.org

VOICE OF WITNESS

Lesson Three: Critical Reading Log

Time Needed: One homework assignment and one class period

Materials:
- *Throwing Stones at the Moon* (Sergio Diaz's narrative)
- copies of the Critical Reading Log

Objective: To build reading comprehension and critical thinking skills through personal student reflection on first person narratives.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading History 9-10.2, RH 9-10.4, RH 9-10.10

Preparation: Assign students to read Sergio Diaz's narrative from *Throwing Stones at the Moon* the night before class. Make sure that all students have read the narrative before beginning this lesson.

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will write a concise summary of Sergio's narrative, selecting two important quotations. Students will connect Sergio's narrative with what they have read elsewhere. Students will draft oral history interview questions to fill in the gaps in Sergio's story.

Step One: Hand out Critical Reading Logs. Ask students to write a 150 word summary of the people and/or events that occurred in Sergio's narrative (20 minutes).

Step Two: Instruct students to select two quotations from the reading that they feel are important or interesting, and write the quotations on their Critical Reading Log sheets, making sure to explain why they chose each quotation (10 minutes).

Step Three: Students are to make a connection/reflection between what they have read and what they have seen, experienced, heard about, or read in another book, film, newspaper, etc. Ask them to address the following questions:

- What did it remind you of?
- Why is this story/account important?

Remind students to write about *both* parts of the connection—something specific from the oral history narrative (Sergio's story), and something specific from outside the narrative (20 minutes).

Step Four: Students create 3-5 oral history interview questions they would ask Sergio Diaz if they were to conduct an interview with him. Encourage them to "strive to find the holes" of the story and ask questions that can help clarify his story and experience (10 minutes).

VOICE OF WITNESS

Critical Reading Log Format

Name:

Class/Period:

Date:

Title of book/story/narrative:

Author:

Summary:

Quotations:

Explanation of Quotations:

Connections/Reflections:

Oral History Questions:

© Voice of Witness | voiceofwitness.org