

Educator Overview

My America: Immigrant and Refugee Writers Today



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| Audience | Grade levels 6-8 ▾ | Subject English Language ... ▾ | Topic Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking |
| Guiding Questions | How do writers draw on their identities and lived experiences to creatively express their ideas? | How does the rhetorical situation impact writing strategies and techniques? | |
| Background Knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing Identity• Creative Expression• Rhetorical Situation | | |
| Content Topics | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Building Classroom Community2. Exploring Complex Identities3. Understanding the Intersections of Migration4. Immigration5. Social Justice | | |
| Student Engagement | <p>Part 1-Building a Writing Identity</p> <p>Significant Objects</p> <p>Objective: Use a strategy to produce writing connected to the theme of identity</p> <p>Learning Experience: Students can select a video to view independently or with a partner. Students may take notes as they watch the video, which may include: connections, similarities, questions, ideas that resonate with them. Once students have viewed the video, have them share in small groups what they gained from listening to the author(s).</p> <p>Finally, students will select their own significant object to write about.</p> | | |

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| | <p>Students can begin by describing the object in detail, its significance, and then write a narrative story connected to that object.</p> <p>Part 2-Using the Power of the Pen</p> <p>Why Writing?</p> <p>Objectives: Develop understanding of a variety of purposes for writing.</p> <p>Learning Experience: Students will list their favorite movies, music, and/or shows. Once they list them, students will choose one movie/song/show to discuss in small groups. They can discuss why they chose the movie/song/show and the impact it has made on them. Students can also discuss the author's purpose for creating the movie/music/show. This will support students in thinking about the people who create their favorite media and WHY they create. What impact are they hoping to have on their audiences? What messages are they hoping to resonate with their audiences? Why do these authors create? What motivates them?</p> <p>Optional Extension Activity: Use the text Pet by Akwaeke Emezi. Students can read this excerpt and think about WHY the author chose to write this book? Why this genre? Why this story? What do students like about this excerpt that they can use within their own writing? Students can share their ideas in response to these questions via small group discussion, Padlet, or carousel brainstorm. Students can also choose any of the videos that showcase writers talking about why they write. While watching, students should note how the authors express their motivations for writing. Finally, students will consider the question "Why Writing?" Why do they (students) write? Would they/do they write outside of school? What would need to happen for them to write more frequently? What genres or mediums would they prefer to create?</p> <p>Process</p> <p>Objective: Understand how to engage in the writing process to produce an original writing piece in any genre of your choice that is intended for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>Learning Experience: For this lesson, use this video of author Ngozi Ukazu discussing her writing process (start video at 29:41 and end at 32:00). Students will</p> |
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learn about Ukazu's process for writing her graphic novel, where she discusses her process for creating images and writing text, as well as the craft decisions she made for her graphic novel based on what she was trying to convey to readers. After watching the video, facilitate a discussion with students (in partners, small groups, or as a whole class) to share what they've learned about Ukazu's process. Then, have students choose one additional process video they'd like to watch (independently, in pairs, or in small groups) in order to learn more about the different processes writers take when they're working on a piece of writing. While students are viewing the videos, they should note what aspects of the writer's process are interesting, surprising, and/or which processes resonate most with them. Students should then create an original graphic organizer that shows their own writing process. This organizer can be an outline, a web, a flowchart, a series of sketches, a storyboard, or any other visual tool that helps them conceptualize their writing process. Students may benefit from seeing an example graphic organizer, such as one modeled by the teacher. Students can also discuss their process in partners, small groups, or as a whole class.

Part 3-Engaging in the Writing Process

Planning

Objective: Select a genre for the writing project using inspiration from the "A Nation of Writers" exhibit at the American Writers Museum.

Learning Experience: After exploring [American Voices](#) online exhibit, students will write about and discuss the writers and genres they explored and which genres in particular they are interested in writing for their own project. Students should spend time browsing different kinds of texts (online and print), including poetry, picture books, song lyrics, graphic novels, short stories, and essays. Students may also reference any/all of the texts they've engaged with throughout the curriculum. As students explore these texts, their notes should include responses to one or more of the following questions: What do you know about this genre? Why are you considering this genre? How will this genre best communicate your ideas to your target audience? What do you still need to learn about this genre? Using Padlet or paper, students will spend time taking notes and writing about the genres they're considering. Once students have recorded their ideas, they can meet in small groups to share their ideas with classmates for feedback.

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| | <p>Feedback may include: what makes this genre a good choice, what challenges might be anticipated with this genre, what authors should be explored who write in this genre? Students can also generate their own questions they'd like to explore as they think about and plan their writing project. At the end of this lesson, students will select the genre for their writing project. This can be submitted via Google Form, exit ticket, or another form best determined by the teacher.</p> |
| Other Notes (Supplies needed, independent vs. whole class engagement) | <p>Overview of the activities: The activities included in this resource kit are an abridged version of a writing unit. This unit is designed for a middle school English Language Arts course. While the unit focuses on writing processes and skills, each lesson provides opportunities for students to engage in reading, speaking, and listening as well.</p> <p>Because the unit incorporates the dynamic resources from the American Writers Museum, students will be immersed in rich and engaging content that will stimulate reflection, creativity, collaboration, and most importantly, authentic writing. If you would like to engage with the writing unit in its entirety, please place a request here.</p> |