

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

*Publishing Schedule*

**L.A. Youth will arrive the week of Jan. 24, 2011**

## Key to using the January-February 2011 issue:

**ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER**

**KEY TEACHING POINTS**

<p><b>Rough waters</b> p. 5 Amy's one season of water polo was harder than she expected, but she's glad she tried.</p>	<p>Have you struggled to learn something new? Even if you didn't do as well as you expected, what did you get from the experience?</p>
<p><b>Playing a new role</b> pp. 6-7 Francesco loved being in his first musical.</p>	<p>What things do you want to try before you finish high school? Why is it important to get involved in activities at school?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: Height doesn't matter</b> p. 9 Audrey doesn't care that she's taller than her boyfriend, so she wishes people would stop staring.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: Lessons in dating</b> pp. 10-11 Kevin shares the advice he gives his friends.</p>	<p>What do you think is important to look for in someone you're dating? Who would you ask for dating advice?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: I fell for a bad boy</b> pp. 12-13 While dating a guy, a girl did things she's not proud of, like ditching and using drugs.</p>	<p>Have you ever done something to make someone like you? Why do some people change for other people?</p>
<p><b>On the boardwalk</b> pp. 14-15 With its artists, street performers and cheap stuff to buy, Stacey always has fun at Venice Beach.</p>	<p>Where do you go to have fun with your friends? What makes it a good place for teens to hang out?</p>
<p><b>Making money online</b> pp. 16-17 Lubina earned cash to hang out with her friends by selling her clothes on eBay.</p>	<p>What do you do to make money? What makes it hard for teens to get jobs?</p>
<p><b>Allergic to my food</b> p. 19 Eating was frustrating until Feather got treatment.</p>	<p>Do you have a health condition that keeps you from doing things? How have you adapted?</p>
<p><b>Loud and clear</b> p. 21 Being part of speech and debate taught Brian not to be afraid of public speaking.</p>	<p>Why do you think some people are afraid of public speaking? What do you fear? How have you tried to overcome it?</p>
<p><b>We're not ready to be on our own</b> pp. 22-23 Teens in foster care say they need support from the system as they become adults.</p>	<p>Do you think you would be ready to live on your own at age 18? What kinds of things do you think you'd still need help with?</p>

# Learning to be true to yourself

A lesson plan to go with “Height doesn’t matter” from the January–February 2011 issue of L.A. Youth. In this article, Audrey writes about being happy with her boyfriend despite people judging them because she’s taller than him.

By Amanda Riddle, co-managing editor  
Grades: 7-12

Subjects: language arts, life skills, health

Suggested Time Allowance: 45 minutes-1 hour

## Resources/Materials:

- copies of the L.A. Youth article “Height doesn’t matter” (one per student)
- pens and paper
- white board or blackboard

## Overview:

Students will develop strategies to stay true to themselves when others disapprove.

## Warm-up:

Write “Don’t judge me” on the board and ask your students if they’ve ever felt judged by others. Maybe they were pursuing their passion for acting but were told they weren’t good enough, or their friends didn’t like their taste in clothes or music or guys, or people thought they were stuck up because they cared about their grades. Write down the judgmental phrases they’ve heard, like “you can’t act,” “why are you wearing that?” or “you’ll never succeed.”

## Discussion:

It can be hard to stay true to yourself when you feel others disapprove of what you’re doing or the decisions you’ve made. Ask your students how they felt when people judged them. Did they second-guess themselves? Or were they able to ignore others? If they did change, how do they feel about that now?



- She would hold her head down and avoid making eye contact.
- She hated that she felt like they had a spotlight on them.

What helped Audrey be able to ignore what others thought?

- Abee said their height difference didn’t matter to him, and he thought she was pretty.
- She and Abee had a lot in common and liked talking to each other.
- She and Abee were able to laugh about their height difference.
- At prom she reminded herself that Abee was proud to have her as his date.
- She thinks Abee is a talented musician, smart and sweet and likes him just the way he is.

## Activities:

Have your students read Audrey’s story “Height doesn’t matter” on page 9. After reading the story, as a discussion measuring their reading comprehension, ask students to answer the following questions:

How did others judge Audrey and Abee?

- A guy pointed at them and laughed when he saw Abee holding an umbrella for Audrey.
- People stare, point and make comments like “she’s too tall for him.”
- Audrey’s friend called Abee “tiny” and asked how they kiss.
- Other friends told her they thought she could do better.
- Audrey’s mom asked Audrey to squat so she and Abee would be the same height in their pictures before prom.
- She saw people staring at them at prom because she was wearing 3-inch heels.

How did Audrey used to react when people judged her?

- It used to bother her.

## Discussion:

After reading the story, ask your students how Audrey was able to stay true to what was important to her and ignore what others thought. If they had been in her position would they have been able to do what she did?

## Assignment:

Have students write an essay about a time they felt judged. Have them write about whether they succumbed to the pressure or if they were able to stand up for themselves. What helped them stay strong? If they did change for others, how do they feel about that decision now? What did they learn from the experience? Using Audrey’s experience as a guide, have them write about how they can stay true to themselves in the future.

## Extension activity:

It’s easy to judge others when we haven’t been in their shoes. Have your students pledge to go a week without expressing judgmental thoughts about others, then write about the experience. Was it easy or hard? How did it make them feel?



## Would you like a speaker from L.A. Youth?

Editors Laura Lee and Mike Fricano speak about journalism, current events, working as a reporter, how to be a better writer and how students can get involved in L.A. Youth.

Call (323) 938-9194 or e-mail Laura at [lle@layout.com](mailto:lle@layout.com) or Mike at [mfricano@layout.com](mailto:mfricano@layout.com). PLEASE NOTE: You'll be asked to **pay \$5** to help offset the cost of gas.

**THANKS TO TEACHERS** who contributed essays and letters to the editor: Jolie Augustine, Wilson MS in Glendale; Christine Barboza, Paramount HS; Tiffany Campbell, Madison MS in North Hollywood; Chris Davis, Clark Magnet HS in La Crescenta; Keith Drucker, Centennial College Prep Academy in Huntington Park; Daisy Gonzalez, Paramount HS; Suzanna Gordon, Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies; Kerry Jackson, Birmingham Community Charter HS in Van Nuys; Jennifer Kim, San Gabriel HS; Heather Lighthston, East Valley HS in North Hollywood; W. Rodriguez, Bell Gardens HS and Macali Soto, Markham MS.

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**Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, Feb. 5, 11 a.m.-noon at**  
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Call Amanda, Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194.

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