

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

*Publishing Schedule*

**L.A. Youth will arrive Tues. November 14**

## Key to using the November 2006 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p><b>Reflections on mirrors</b> pp. 4-5 Essay contest winners say they now have a more positive view when they look in the mirror.</p>	<p>How can you improve your self-image? Are your looks or your values more important?</p>
<p><b>Who needs Harvard?</b> p. 7 Students at Whitney High say an Ivy League college has certain advantages, but Kat says students should consider lesser-known schools too.</p>	<p>What criteria are you considering in a college—location, size, cost, reputation? Which of those are most important?</p>
<p><b>From L.A. to the NBA</b> pp. 8-9 Seth interviewed NBA players who said growing up in L.A. helped their sports careers.</p>	<p>What distractions do you face as you try to reach your goals? How do you overcome them?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY A day in court</b> pp. 10-11 After observing a juvenile courtroom, Selina concluded that the juvenile justice system can rehabilitate if teens have support.</p>	<p>Do you think the juvenile justice system rehabilitates youth? Why or why not?</p>
<p><b>Scared and confused</b> pp. 12-13 Teens at a detention facility in the San Fernando Valley tell what it was like when they went to court.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>Images of immigration</b> pp. 14-15 Teen artists depict their views about the immigrant experience.</p>	<p>Why do people immigrate to America? What image would you create to symbolize your feelings toward immigration?</p>
<p><b>My mom is amazing</b> p. 17 From supporting her interests to just hanging out, Nattalie has a special bond with her mom.</p>	<p>What makes a good parent? What can teens do to strengthen their relationships with their parents?</p>
<p><b>What's for dinner?</b> pp. 18-19 It was a hectic evening when Chris taught his friends to cook.</p>	<p>Should teens know how to cook? What would you do to improve your cooking?</p>
<p><b>Working in a "path lab"</b> p. 22 A junior pathologist's assistant says that although he never thought he'd work in medicine, he loves his job.</p>	<p>What careers are you considering? How can you learn more about those jobs while still in high school?</p>
<p><b>Scared we won't make it</b> pp. 24-25 Six teens share their fears and hopes for when they leave the foster care system.</p>	<p>What are your plans for when you turn 18? Would you be prepared to be on your own?</p>
<p><b>Movies in my mailbox</b> p. 26 Shannon loves Netflix.</p>	<p>What's your favorite way to see a movie?</p>

# Defining fairness

## *a look at the Los Angeles juvenile justice system*

A lesson plan to go with articles about the juvenile justice system in Los Angeles County, published November 2006

By Libby Hartigan, Managing Editor

**Grades:** 6-12

**Subjects:** Language Arts, Social Studies, Life Skills

**Suggested Time Allowance:** 45 minutes-1 hour

**Overview of Lesson Plan:** In this lesson, students will examine concepts of justice in the juvenile justice system.

### Objectives:

Students will:

- Discuss how teens are affected by the juvenile justice system.
- Analyze how different people perceive the juvenile justice system differently.
- Write a persuasive essay.

### Resources/Materials:

- copies of November issue of L.A. Youth (one per student)
- pens/pencils
- paper
- classroom whiteboard or blackboard

### Activities/Procedures:

1. Warm-up: In journals or on separate pieces of paper, ask students to respond to the following prompts written on the board: "The time I felt I was treated fairly was ..." or "The time I felt I was treated unfairly was ..."

2. Through a class discussion, ask the class to define "fairness." Do different people in the class have different definitions?

3. Introduce concepts of the juvenile justice system. When teens break the law, they have to go to court. If they cannot afford a lawyer, they are assigned a public defender. The people of California are represented by the prosecution, also called the district attorney or "D.A." A judge decides what should happen to the youthful offenders.



As a class, read "Scary and confusing: teens who've been there tell what court is really like." Through a classroom discussion or individually on separate pieces of paper, ask the class to answer the following questions using specific examples from the text (possible answers are listed):

A. What kinds of things were confusing about the court experience?

--Adults called out numbers, case loads and names, referring to things that teens don't know about.

--It didn't look like teens expected it would, based on what they had seen on TV or in the movies.

--A judge used words the teen didn't understand.

B. What kinds of things were scary about the court experience?

--A teen felt like no one had respect for him.

--A teen saw parents take their kid into court, then come out crying without their child.

--A boy said he didn't know what would happen to him.

--In the holding tank, other kids asked a boy, "Where are you from?"

--The district attorney wanted to give the boy a harsh consequence.

--A boy's attorney told him that he might get sent to the California Youth Authority for several years.

--Everyone in court stared at the teen.

C. To these teens, what seemed unfair about the juvenile justice system?

--They couldn't speak for themselves.

--They were sentenced without the judge knowing them well.

--One boy said that it was unfair that he could have been sent to the Youth Authority without the judge hearing what he had to say.

D. To these teens, what seemed fair about the juvenile justice system?

--One teen wrote that it was fair for him to do the time since he committed the crime, and that he was treated without respect, just as he had treated the law with no respect.

--Another teen who was arrested six times wrote, "The court saw something in me, that I can change and be a better person." He said he had gotten therapy and wanted to get his diploma.

--He thought it was fair that he was placed on house arrest, since his friends had gotten six to nine months in a placement or camp.

--Another teen said that he was glad he was sent to camp instead of the California Youth Authority.

--He also said he thought that teens could get something out of placement if they stayed focused.

**4. Writing.** Ask students to write a persuasive essay about the juvenile justice system, arguing that it is or is not "just," using information contained in the statements by these four teens.

### Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will be evaluated on their participation in discussion and their individual written work.

### Extension Activity:

- Read through all the materials about the juvenile justice system on pages 10-13 of the November issue of L.A. Youth. Create a glossary of vocabulary that teens might need to know, including judge, district attorney, public defender, bailiff, placement, Juvenile Hall, California Youth Authority and other terms that teens might not know.



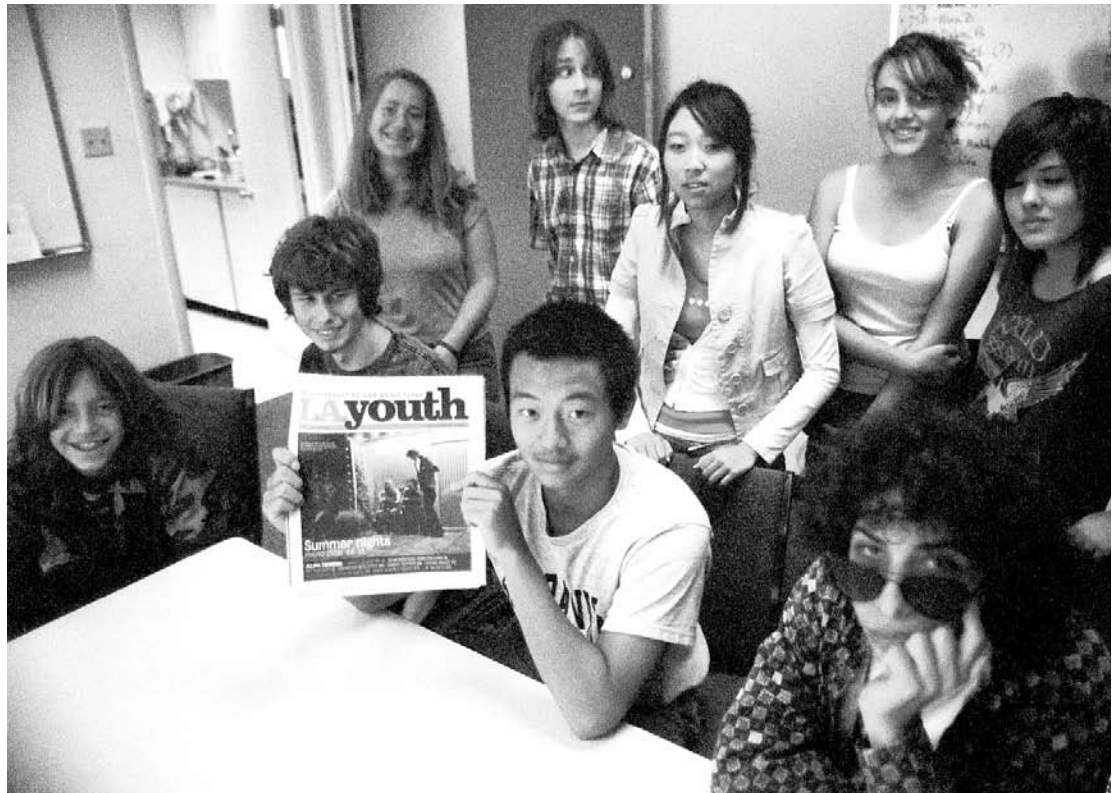
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Editor Mike Fricano speaks about journalism, current events, working as a reporter, how to be a better writer and how students can get involved in L.A. Youth.

Call Mike at (323) 938-9194 or e-mail [mfricano@layouth.com](mailto:mfricano@layouth.com).

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Mike Zwart, Paramount HS teacher



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