

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

Publishing Schedule

L.A. Youth will begin arriving Wed. Sept. 10

## Key to using the September 2008 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p><b>Slowed down by costly gas</b> p. 5 From staying close to home to taking the bus, L.A. Youth writers describe how they survived this summer's gas prices.</p>	<p>How have high gas prices affected you? How can teens have fun without going far from home?</p>
<p><b>I'm a loner but not lonely</b> pp. 6-7 Ernesto says it was worth the struggle to make friends, even though he still likes spending time alone.</p>	<p>What are the benefits of spending time by yourself? What do you enjoy about being with friends?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: My life on meth</b> pp. 10-11 A girl was angry, out of control and only cared about getting high until overdosing pushed her to get clean.</p>	<p>Why do you think teens do drugs? How do drugs affect teens' lives?</p>
<p><b>Adventures in suburbia</b> pp. 14-15 His small town may seem boring, but Kevin and his friends found ways to have fun in Hacienda Heights.</p>	<p>What do you do for fun in your neighborhood? What's something new that you could try doing? Have you ever made up a game?</p>
<p><b>Take action: register to vote</b> p. 16 Mindy says registering to vote is easy, fast and free.</p>	<p>Do you think voting is important? Should high school students have the right to vote?</p>
<p><b>An inside view of voting</b> p. 17 Casey says it was cool volunteering as a poll worker on an election day.</p>	<p>How can you get involved in the presidential election? Would you like to be a poll worker?</p>
<p><b>His lessons live on</b> p. 18-19 Before he died, Daisy's favorite teacher challenged her to think for herself and encouraged her to pursue her dreams.</p>	<p>What lessons have you learned from your teachers? What qualities make a teacher inspirational to you?</p>
<p><b>Shattering stereotypes</b> pp. 20-21 Lia says that recognizing our prejudices will help us eliminate them.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>My sugar-free life is still pretty sweet</b> p. 22 Wendy used to hate having diabetes because of the diet restrictions, but she's grown to accept her disease.</p>	<p>What limitations do you have? How have you learned to accept them?</p>
<p><b>Awed by nature</b> p. 26 Visiting the Grand Canyon gave Jabbar a different perspective than his South L.A. neighborhood.</p>	<p>Have you taken a trip outside Los Angeles? What did you appreciate about the new surroundings? What did you miss about home?</p>

# A closer look at stereotypes

A lesson plan to go with “Shattering stereotypes” from the September 2008 issue of L.A. Youth. In this article Lia Dun admits that she stereotypes people and says that until we all admit we make assumptions about each other based on race or ethnicity, we won’t end discrimination.

By Mike Fricano, editor

**Grades:** 7-12

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

**Suggested Time Allowance:** 45 minutes-1 hour, although this lesson plan can be extended for two days if the discussions warrant.

**Overview:** In this lesson, students will examine their own assumptions about other people and groups, and discuss and write about where generalizations and stereotypes come from and how to stop them.

**Resources/Materials:**

- copies of “Shattering stereotypes”
- pens/paper
- white board/chalkboard

**Introduction:**

While extreme forms of racism are not very common today and most people are tolerant of others, stereotypes about ethnicity and race are still very common. Lia writes in her article that people who think and say prejudiced things usually don’t intend them to hurt other people’s feelings. Nevertheless, she argues, people should try to stop using stereotypes, because they can prevent people from getting to know one another as individuals.

**Activities:**

1. Set ground rules: Before class, write a set of ground rules on the board. These rules will govern the lesson’s discussion:

- Use “I” statements—speak from personal experience rather than in broad, “you” or “they” generalizations.
- Students can disagree with ideas, but not attack the person sharing the idea.

Explain that this class session will deal with some personal and complicated issues about race and ethnicity and some potentially offensive ideas. Despite that, you want there to be both open discussion

and a feeling of safety in the classroom. Have the ground rules read aloud and discuss each one. Do students understand them? Do they agree with them? Do they have any to add? Emphasize that the point is NOT to come up with a list of slurs.

2. Warm-up: Write the terms “high school football player,” “police officer,” “politician” and “student body/ASB president” in a row across the board. Ask students to suggest brief characteristics that describe each category. For example, for “student body/ASB president” they might say things like “dedicated to the school” but also “brown-noser.” Briefly discuss where these ideas came from. The media? Friends? Parents? Personal experience?

3. Ask students to discuss the positive and negative generalizations about racial and ethnic groups that they have made or heard in school and among their friends as well as what they’ve seen in the media and pop culture. Write their answers on the board. Examples: “Latinos don’t care as much about school,” “blacks are good athletes,” “whites are wealthy,” “Asians are all quiet and hard workers.” Discuss why these generalizations exist. Is there any truth to them? Do they know people who don’t fit these stereotypes? For example, a Latino student who gets the best grades in class. Or an Asian student who is the class clown. Ask the students to share how they feel and respond when they’ve observed or had thoughts like these.

4. Read “Shattering stereotypes” on page 20, introducing it as one teen’s story about dealing with the issues they have just discussed. Then talk about the article, addressing these questions:

- a. When did Lia use generalizations?
  - She and a friend listed reasons for hating white people, including that they are snobby, favored by teachers and rich.
  - She assumed that all Asians at her school who were well-dressed and carried expensive cell phones were Korean.
  - When a friend talked about going to a \$5,000 summer program, her first thought was “Of course you can afford that. You’re white.”

b. What are generalizations people made about Lia based on her ethnicity?

- A friend asked her what her first language was, assuming it was Chinese, because Lia is Chinese-American.

- Another friend thought about taping her eyes in an attempt to look more Asian, as part of dressing up for a school cultural festival.

c. Lia writes that if people took the time, they could learn interesting things about each other’s cultures. What are some things Lia has learned about her friends’ cultures or wants others to learn about her culture?

- In 1882 Chinese people were banned from entering the United States.
- Before 1972, most Chinese-Americans were born in the United States.
- Her classmate told her about one of her favorite Korean singers.

5. Conclude the class with a discussion asking them about things they would like others to know about their own cultures. Have them share things that they’ve learned about another person or culture that surprised them.

**Assignment:**

Write a personal essay of your reflections on racial or ethnic stereotypes. When have you been a victim of stereotyping or generalizing and how did you feel when it happened? How did you respond? Or when have you used stereotypes? Why do you think you used them? How do you feel about having used them after reading the story and talking about this topic?

Eliminating stereotypes and generalizations begins with everyone recognizing that they use them from time to time and trying to make changes individually. In their essays, students could say how they can help eliminate stereotypes.

**Extension activity:**

Have your students think of ways to talk about and eliminate stereotyping beyond this assignment. Students could meet with the school administration to plan an assembly on this issue or start an awareness campaign.



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

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