

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

*Publishing Schedule*

**L.A. Youth will begin arriving Wed. Nov. 12**

## Key to using the November-December 2008 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p><b>Election reaction</b> p. 5 Teens share their thoughts about who won the presidential election and what they think it could mean for the country.</p>	<p>Did you follow the election? What do you think of the results?</p>
<p><b>Essay contest: How have you been affected by violence?</b> pp. 6-7 Our winners write about getting drawn into gang life, fearing the gangs in their neighborhood and an uncle who was shot.</p>	<p>How have you been affected by violence? What do you think would help make schools and communities safer?</p>
<p><b>Stuck between two worlds</b> pp. 8-9 After years of trying to pick one, Elliot has learned to embrace both his Korean and American sides.</p>	<p>How have you struggled figuring out who you are? What defines you?</p>
<p><b>My friend is a mom</b> pp. 10-12 Solange was shocked when she found out her classmate was pregnant but realized that she needed her support.</p>	<p>What do you think should be taught in sex education? What would help lower the teen pregnancy rate?</p>
<p><b>As good as new</b> pp. 14-15 Jasper discovered good deals on cool clothes at thrift stores.</p>	<p>Would you shop at a thrift store? How can teens find stylish clothes that are affordable?</p>
<p><b>Leaving my anger behind</b> pp. 16-17 A girl's behavior was out of control until an intense treatment center helped her become someone she likes.</p>	<p>How do you react when you get upset? What helps you calm down?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: How I chose the right school</b> pp. 20-21 Jennifer had her mind set on going to an East Coast college until she realized she could get a great education and be happy here in L.A.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>Applying for financial aid</b> p. 23 Sasha says starting early made the process easier for her and her parents.</p>	<p>How are you going to pay for college? What types of financial assistance would help you?</p>
<p><b>Making a difference close to home</b> pp. 24-25 Melissa realized that she doesn't need to go to Africa to fight poverty.</p>	<p>What types of volunteering are you interested in? How can teens improve their communities?</p>
<p><b>What was I thinking?</b> p. 26 Hormones were to blame for Lia's crush on a jerk.</p>	<p>Have you ever had a crush on someone? How did it affect you? What did you learn from the experience?</p>

# Thinking about which college is best for you

A lesson plan to go with “College: Choosing the right school” from the November-December 2008 issue of L.A. Youth. In “How I chose the right school,” Jennifer Carcamo says that despite having her heart set on going to an Ivy League school on the East Coast, once she actually started looking into colleges and figuring out what she wanted, she realized that she could get a good education and be happy by choosing a school that’s close to home.

By Laura Lee, associate editor

**Grades:** 7-12

**Subjects:** Language Arts, Life Skills

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

## Resources/Materials:

- copies of the L.A. Youth articles “How I chose the right school” and “Q&A: Getting ready for college.” (one per student)

- pens and paper
- white board or blackboard

**Overview:** Students will examine the different factors they should consider when deciding what college is best for them to help meet their goals after high school.

## Introduction:

All too often teens don’t starting thinking about life after high school until their senior year. Many may intend on going to college, but don’t seriously consider how to find a school that fits them best. Teens can be attracted to certain schools because of their well-known names, desirable locations and beautiful campuses, but what do they really know about the schools that isn’t part of the marketing campaign? Do they know what majors are offered, what academic requirements are needed for admission or how big the classes are? It’s best for teens to start thinking about college as early as they can and thinking about it practically. What do they want to get out of it? How will they do once they enroll?

## Warm-up discussion:

Ask your students to throw out the names of colleges they’ve heard of and make a list on the board. They may say USC, Cal State Northridge, Harvard. Once you have a list of several, ask them questions about the schools. What do they know about each school? How do they know about them? They may tell you that USC has a good football team, Harvard is really hard to get into or a relative went to Cal State Northridge. Ask if there are any reasons they would want to go to those schools and why. Depending on where they are in the college search process, their answers may reveal that they’re thinking practically about college or that they haven’t thought much about which colleges would fit them best.

## Activities:

Read Jennifer Carcamo’s article “How I chose the right school” about how she realized that UCLA was the best fit for her on pages 20-21.

## Discussion questions:

These questions could be assigned as a reading comprehension exercise or used in a discussion.

What made Columbia a dream school for Jennifer?

- It was far from home and she could be away from her bad relationship with her mother.
- It had beautiful architecture.
- Famous people like Alexander Hamilton and Barack Obama went there.

What made Jennifer open her college search to schools closer to home?

- Her friends talked about how good University of California schools were and how hard it was to get into them, which helped her see that UCs could provide a good education.
- Her college counselor asked her to make a list of schools and while doing research she realized other schools besides Columbia have a lot to offer.
- She had an extra application fee

waiver and thought she’d apply to UCLA to see if she could get in.

What made UCLA Jennifer’s new dream school?

- She wants to be a journalist and can learn more about journalism by working for the Daily Bruin newspaper.
- It’s close to home and she can visit her family often.
- She got a good financial aid package to make it easier to pay for college.

Next read “Q&A: Getting ready for college” on page 22 in which Jennifer interviewed her high school college counselor to help other teens in their college search.

What is some of Ms. Koven’s advice?

- Look for the school that fits you best by examining size, location, majors, cost, financial aid and academics.
- If you have questions and your counselor is busy, ask a teacher you trust. They’ve been to college and would have helpful advice for you.
- Start early. The application process can be hard work, but if you start early you can meet the deadlines.

## Assignment:

Have students write an essay prioritizing their criteria for college. They can consider things such as what they want to study, if they want to be close to home, if they want to experience living in a different part of the country, how much their family can afford to spend on college, if they want to go to a two-year college and then transfer to a university, etc. Their reasons, like Jennifer’s, can be a mix of personal and more practical.

## Extension activity:

Ask your students to make an appointment with their college counselors. They should meet to discuss if they’re meeting requirements for graduation and if they are on track to have the necessary requirements for the colleges they’re interested in.



## 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 cost of gas.

**THANKS TO TEACHERS** who contributed letters and essays to the editor: Jolie Augustine, Wilson MS in Glendale; Melannie Brennan, Nimitz MS; Chris Davis, Clark Magnet HS; East Valley HS in North Hollywood; Salli Hale, Gardena HS; Kerry Jackson, Birmingham HS in Van Nuys; Susan Turner-Jones, Crossroads School in Santa Monica; Kane Lister, Webster MS; Jennifer Lopez, Wilson MS in Glendale; Miguel Contreras Learning Complex; Elizabeth Montano, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy; Candace Moore, Washington Prep HS; Jennifer Niemi, Cochran MS; Sarah Phillips, Jefferson HS; Phil Rodriguez, Bell Gardens HS; Sherry HS in Torrance.

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**Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.-noon** at L.A. Youth 5967 W. Third Street Suite 301, L.A. 90036 (between Fairfax and La Brea)

Call Amanda, Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194.

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