

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

Publishing Schedule

L.A. Youth will begin arriving Wed. Jan. 21

## Key to using the January-February 2009 issue:

**ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER**

**KEY TEACHING POINTS**

<p><b>A mouthful of beats</b> p. 5 Ben is learning to beatbox and hopes to one day perform on stage.</p>	<p>What have you always wanted to do? What are ways that you could learn how to do it? Could you teach yourself?</p>
<p><b>Essay contest: What's your favorite sound?</b> pp. 6-7 Our winners write about gaining the ability to hear, the Pokémon theme song and applause.</p>	<p>What's your favorite sound? How does it make you feel when you hear it?</p>
<p><b>Finally friendship</b> pp. 8-9 Camilla used to be shy, but after making friends she feels more confident and outgoing.</p>	<p>How have your friendships formed? How has having friends helped you?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY: Leave us alone</b> pp. 10-11 A boy's family lived in fear of his abusive father.</p>	<p>How does domestic violence affect teens? How can law enforcement respond to help keep families safe?</p>
<p><b>My food paradise</b> pp. 14-15 Spending much of his childhood at the Fairfax Farmers Market taught Edison to love many different kinds of food.</p>	<p>What's one of your favorite places from your childhood? How has it influenced your life now?</p>
<p><b>I wish the violence would stop</b> pp. 16-17 Excerpts from a discussion among teens and a juvenile court judge about violence in their communities and schools.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>Gay couples should be allowed to marry</b> p. 19 At first it wasn't important to Stephany, but she came to see Proposition 8 as a civil rights issue.</p>	<p>What did Proposition 8 do? Do you think same-sex couples should be allowed to get married? Why or why not?</p>
<p><b>I'm glad she came here</b> pp. 20-21 Brett became more accepting of illegal immigration after learning how and why his housekeeper came to the United States.</p>	<p>What do you think the government's policy should be on immigration? Why? How have your experiences shaped your views?</p>
<p><b>Acting against AIDS</b> pp. 22-23 Putting on a play about AIDS made Jessica realize that teens are at risk and need to protect themselves.</p>	<p>How much do you know about HIV and AIDS? Do you think teens take the risks seriously? Why or why not?</p>
<p><b>Eating out, eating right</b> pp. 24-25 After Brandie learned she had high cholesterol, she had to make changes to her diet.</p>	<p>What do you eat every day? How could you make your diet healthier?</p>

# How can we stop the violence?

A lesson plan to go with “I wish the violence would stop” from the January–February 2009 issue of L.A. Youth, in which five teens describe the violence they’ve witnessed in their communities and suggest ways to make teens feel safer.

By Amanda Riddle, editor

**Grades:** 7-12

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

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

## Resources/Materials:

- copies of the L.A. Youth article “I wish the violence would stop” (one per student)
- pens and paper
- white board or blackboard

**Overview:** Students will examine the violence in their communities and how it affects them, and suggest solutions for making their communities safer.

## Introduction:

Unfortunately, violence is a part of everyday life for many teens in Los Angeles. While some recent news has been good—the numbers of murders and violent crimes are down—many young people still live with violence, whether it’s tagging crews or gangs marking their territory with graffiti, gang violence, racial fights or drug-related crime. When L.A. Youth asked its readers to tell us how violence affects them, we received hundreds of essays. When we asked our readers to fill out a survey on violence, we got more than 1,000 responses. Two-thirds of the teens who responded said they experience violence at least once a month. This showed that beyond the high-profile killings that make the headlines, many teens in Los Angeles face danger in their

neighborhoods and schools, a problem that impacts how they view their lives and their hopes for their future.

## Warm-up discussion:

Ask your students to describe the types of violence they’ve witnessed or experienced in their communities and write their answers on the board. They may say graffiti or tagging, fights at school, gangbanging or being jumped. How have they adjusted their behavior to stay safe? They may tell you they stay in a teacher’s classroom at lunch or don’t walk home after school or take a different route. Or they may admit they hang out with gang members because they are their friends or to keep them on their good side. Finally, ask them how all of the violence impacts them. They may tell you it makes them less hopeful about their future or angry or frustrated that the police or school administrators aren’t doing enough. They also may have been victims of violence.

## Activities:

Read the article “I wish the violence would stop,” which contains excerpts from a roundtable discussion on violence with five teens and a juvenile court judge, on pages 16-17.

## Discussion questions:

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

What types of violence have the teens experienced?

- racial fights at school
- gangs in their neighborhoods
- getting jumped on the way to school
- hanging out with gang members
- being threatened with a gun

How did they stay safe?

- Britawnya stayed after school in her teacher’s classroom and took a different route home when fights broke out at school.

- Juan waits at school to get a ride home at night.

How do they feel their schools or the police have responded to the violence?

- Solange said her school has tried to kick out gang members.
- Britawnya said the police aren’t doing enough.

What do they think would help reduce violence?

- more after-school programs
- teachers reaching out to and listening to students
- making education a priority
- more adults who care

## Assignment:

Have a brief discussion. Ask your students what they could relate to about the five teens’ experiences. Then ask them what they think could help reduce violence in their communities. Do they agree or disagree with the five teens’ suggestions? After the discussion, ask students to write a letter to a government official or school administrator about their personal experiences. They should describe the violence they have witnessed and explain how it has affected them. Then they should offer their suggestions for ways to reduce violence and help teens feel safer.

## Extension activity:

Have your students mail their letters, encouraging them to have their voices heard, like the teens who participated in the discussion. They may have decided to write to a local official such as the mayor, a city council member, a county supervisor or a state legislator. Or they could write to a school administrator such as a dean, principal or school superintendent.



## 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 essays and letters to the editor: Jolie Augustine, Wilson MS in Glendale; Chris Davis and Jennifer Davis, Clark Magnet HS in Glendale; Ann Hanson, Wilson HS in Hacienda Heights; Jacquie Hartt, East Valley HS in North Hollywood; Salli Hale, Gardena HS; Kerry Jackson, Birmingham HS in Van Nuys; Marc Ketchum, Workman HS in City of Industry; Emily Milon, West Covina HS; Cristy Putman, Hutchinson MS in La Mirada; Mike Zwart, Paramount HS; and San Gabriel HS.

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**Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, Feb. 7, 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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