

# L.A. youth teacher's guide

*Publishing Schedule*

**L.A. Youth will arrive Friday Jan. 26**

## Key to using the January 2007 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p><b>The courage to be shy</b> pp. 4-5 Paul got help overcoming his anxiety around others, while learning to accept who he is.</p>	<p>What are some advantages to being very outgoing? What are some benefits of being more withdrawn?</p>
<p><b>How to improve schools</b> pp. 6-7 Essay contest winners recommend real-life assignments, more security, and better teachers and supplies.</p>	<p>What things are needed most to improve your school? With limited money available, which would you rank as the top priorities?</p>
<p><b>Enough violence</b> p. 8 Christina says that we have to stop running from the violence in our communities and try to make them safer.</p>	<p>How can neighborhoods be made safer? What steps can regular people (not police) take to improve safety in their communities?</p>
<p><b>Working for smiles</b> p. 9 An orthodontist's assistant says her job is rewarding and pays well, even without years of medical school.</p>	<p>What are you looking for in a career? High pay? Good hours? A friendly environment? Fulfilling work?</p>
<p><b>COVER STORY New you can use</b> pp. 10-11 A teacher inspired Se to become more informed by reading the newspaper, watching the news and finding news on the Web.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p><b>Get the news—here's how</b> p. 12 From N.Y. Times headlines e-mails to customizable Google pages, L.A. Youth staff writers share tips for how they keep up with the news.</p>	<p>What makes it difficult to stay informed? What suggestions do you have for how teens can stay aware of what's going on?</p>
<p><b>Custom kicks</b> pp. 14-15 Inspired by favorite bands, movies and sheer creativity, these teens turned their ordinary sneakers into personalized, attention-grabbing works of art.</p>	<p>What do your clothes say about you? How can you transform an ordinary article of clothing into something special?</p>
<p><b>Could I be Rose Queen?</b> pp. 18-19 Samantha, who always dreamed of being on the Rose Court, finally got her chance to try out.</p>	<p>Have you ever had the opportunity to try to achieve a dream? How did you deal with the success or failure to realize it?</p>
<p><b>Dragon boat racing</b> pp. 20-21 Mel likes this ancient Chinese sport because of the team camaraderie and it's unusual.</p>	<p>Are there any unusual sports that you like? What is the appeal of participating in a something that's not as well-known?</p>
<p><b>I don't need 'em</b> pp. 23-24 When Shimia finally met her relatives after years of wondering about them, it was a disappointment.</p>	<p>What defines a family? Is it blood or the people who care about you and have been there when you needed them?</p>
<p><b>CD reviews</b> p. 27 Tanya was disappointed in the new Evanescence CD.</p>	<p>What do you do when a band you like releases a CD that you don't like that much?</p>

# Identifying credible online sources

*Helping students develop online media literacy in the information age*

A lesson plan to go with articles about getting informed, published January 2007

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:** To develop students' ability to evaluate the credibility of online information sources and improve the accuracy and effectiveness of their research skills.

**Resources/Materials:**

- copies of January 2007 issue of L.A. Youth (one per student)
- pens/pencils
- paper
- classroom board

**Introduction:** Se's cover story, "News you can use," tells how he got interested in current events at school, and eventually started reading newspapers, magazines and online commentaries to get the news and decide how he felt about it. Se instinctively turned to mainstream news outlets such as The Los Angeles Times, Time magazine and Yahoo News! When we asked other L.A. Youth writers how they stayed informed, they mentioned other well-known news sources such as the New York Times and foreign news media like the BBC.

But when teens set out to do research online, they don't usually turn to latimes.com or bbc.com. They usually go to a search engine, type in their topic, and use whatever research pops up without discernment. It's not unusual for students to search for images online, use them in their papers and student publications, and site the source as "Google.com." This lesson is designed to give teens some guidelines for their online research.

**Activities/Procedures:**

1. **Warm-up:** Write the word "credibility" on the board and ask students to discuss what they think it means. What

kinds of information seem credible to them and why?

2. Read two articles about getting informed: "News you can use" by Se on pages 10-11, and "Get your news--here's how" by L.A. Youth writers on page 12

3. **Discussion questions:** What news sources do Se and the other writers describe? Ask students to call out the answers and write them on the board. Here is a list in case you need to do some prompting.

Se's sources: Los Angeles Times; Time magazine; Se's history teacher; CNN; Yahoo News Opinion commentaries

Other writers' sources:

New York Times; InStyle magazine; BBC World News; CNN; Los Angeles Times; Wonkette; National Public Radio (NPR); MSN; Happynews.com; KPFFK radio; NBC Nightly News; 60 Minutes; Channel 11 Fox News

**Discussion:** The following questions will give you and the class an opportunity to discuss the differences among newspapers, wire services, and sites which simply aggregate or provide links to news sources (such as Google or Yahoo News)

1. Alana describes creating a Google home page that she could make her own customized news page. Where does the news come from?

2. What is the difference between a Web site such as latimes.com and a political blog such as Wonkette.com? What are differences and similarities between, for examples, the Los Angeles Times White House correspondent and the editor of Wonkette.com?

3. Why would the BBC, the New York Times and the L.A. Times each publish different articles about the same news event? Why wouldn't they all just publish the same article?

Specific things that teens can look for to help them determine a site's credibility:

1. Where does the information come from? If you don't know who the author is, it's hard to decide if it's credible. And don't necessarily be impressed by titles. The fact that someone has the title "Dr." in front of his name doesn't mean he knows what he's talking about. Credible Web sites will tell you where the information came from. Reporters will tell you who they interviewed. Academics will offer links to reputable journals and research. If it's the author's opinion, that will be clearly stated. Often this information can be found in the "About us" or "Who we are" part of the site. If there is none, that could be a warning sign.

2. Is the site up-to-date? Particularly if it's a news site, there should be daily updates. The world changes fast.

3. Does the site get things right? Misspellings, facts that don't sound right, or misspelled company references (like "Greenpeas" instead of "Greenpeace") can be clues that something is wrong. The site might be a joke site or the work of amateurs.

4. **Assignment.** Ask students to investigate a Web site they often use and write about whether it's credible. Ask them to answer each of the questions above.

**Evaluation/Assessment:** Students will be evaluated on their participation in discussion and their individual written work.

**Extension Activity:** Susan Beck, the Collection Development Coordinator at the New Mexico State University Library, put together a great Web page called "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, or, Why it's a good idea to evaluate Web sources." It offers a way for Web visitors to evaluate the authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency and in-depth coverage of a Web site, with lots of example Web sites that students can use to investigate. <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html>



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

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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**Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, February 10, 11 a.m.-noon**  
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Mike Zwart, Paramount HS teacher



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