



Looking with Fresh Eyes

Language Arts Student Worksheet

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: RL.9-10.7, W.9-10.3d, L.9-10.5 National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Re7.1.5, MA: Cr3.1.1-III

In the film *Louder than a Bomb*, many students use their poetry to describe their life experiences in a way that gives them a different or additional meaning. Poetry can come from anywhere. It might stem from things you have done, thought, felt, or seen. It might be inspired by people you know, it might come from dreams, or it could come simply from your imagination or things you think about.

Below is an image of a woman sitting on a windowsill.

- Write down everything you see in the image. Describe what these things look like.
- After you have made this list, look at the image again. This time write down things that you didn't notice the first time. What do you see now that you missed at first?
- Write some ideas about what the woman might be doing or thinking.
- Turn your ideas into a free-form poem. Include the descriptions and ideas you like best, and craft them to tell this woman's story through your words.
- If you'd like, share your poem with your class, viewing companion, or your family.



Harlem Window by photographer Matt Weber, 1988 Documentaries and Filming "Real Life"



Media Literacy/Language Arts Student Worksheet

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: W.9-10.2b, W.9-10.3c, W.11-12.2b-d, W.11-12.4, L.9-10.3 National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Cr2.1.I, MA:Pr4.1.I, MA:Re7.1.I

Documentary films are meant to be “true stories” that present events as they happen. However, non-fiction documentary films are as constructed as fiction films. In other words, directors and editors of documentary films watch hundreds of hours of footage to find the most interesting events, funniest or most emotional moments, and most beautiful images. They then edit these shots together to create drama, tension, or comedy, and they usually use a traditional narrative that has a beginning (exposition), conflicts (rising action), a climax, and a resolution.

Thinking about Reality versus Documentary: Creating your Documentary Treatment

Imagine someone is creating a documentary about your class or school. What might be the story of your film? Even though creating a documentary is often an unpredictable experience, documentary filmmakers will tell you that having a plan is important. Use the chart on the next page to help you create a **treatment** for a documentary film about your school or class. A treatment is a short (less than one page) explanation of what your film’s story, characters, and major events will be.

What Is My Documentary’s Narrative?	
Perhaps think of something that already has a definite beginning and ending point. Would it be one class period? A class assignment, like writing a paper or doing a science experiment? An entire school year? The arrival of a new student and his or her experiences at your school?	
Who Are the Characters in my Documentary?	
Who would be the real life “characters” in your film? Is there a class clown? Anyone who studies a lot? A group of popular kids? Athletes? Bullies? What kind of a character would your teacher or principal be?	
What Are the B-roll images for my Documentary? <i>B-roll is additional footage that is not an essential part of the action.</i>	
B-roll is used to create atmosphere or add interest to scenes. Footage of the things on your classroom walls, the clock, students being silent and listening, and the school building itself are examples of B-roll. Would you try to create a certain atmosphere for your school or classroom? E.g. is it a controlled space? A chaotic space? A fun space? A bland space? What would you include so audiences can understand that space?	



Watching Reality Television

Media Literacy Student Worksheet

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: SL.9-10.1a, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.2, SL.11-12.4 National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Re7.1.II-III, MA:Re8.1.I-III, MARe9.1.I-II

Use the ideas gathered in the **Documentaries and Filming “Real Life”** activity above to critically view a Reality Television show. Reality Television is similar to documentary, since it also is meant to capture “real life.” However, it is often easier to see how footage is manipulated on reality television than in documentary films.

Watch an episode or two of a reality television show and answer the following questions. You may write answers on a separate sheet of paper or discuss your responses with a viewing companion/family member.

- 1) Who are the main characters? How would you describe them? Do you think they are being “real”? Does anyone act like they are playing a part?

- 2) What happens in the show? Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end? What is the conflict, and how is it resolved? Does the conflict seem natural or contrived?

- 3) How would you describe the look of the show? Think about the differences between some reality shows that you’re familiar with. For example, *Ghost Hunters* looks much different than *The Biggest Loser*, which looks different than *The Great British Baking Show*. How does the show you watched use the way it looks to reinforce its stories, drama, or themes?

- 4) Think about what other factors affect the drama of the show. Many contestants on shows like *Project Runway* get fewer than five hours of sleep per night for days in a row, are made to engage in unusual challenges, and have to share living spaces with several strangers. How might these factors affect how often they cry, fight, or have physical accidents?

After reflecting on these questions, write a short review of the show including your analysis of how the people or footage has been manipulated to make it more entertaining, more dramatic, or funnier than “real life.”



Expressing and Analyzing Emotion

Language Arts/Social and Emotional Wellbeing Student Activities

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: W.9-10.2d; Wisconsin Model Academic Standards: School Counseling—D.1, F.1

Many students in *Louder than a Bomb* use their poetry to express their feelings about complicated or hard experiences they've encountered in their lives. Consider, for example: We are all experiencing the same difficult situation right now, but our individual experience of the Covid-19 pandemic is unique to each of us. We all know that it helps to talk about difficulties, but how often do we give ourselves the time and space to write through things that make us angry, frustrated, sad or scared? In this activity, try giving yourself just that time and space.

- 1) When you are upset about something, make a chart with three different columns: exactly what happened, what you actually did, and how you felt. Look at these columns and separate the facts from the emotions. These kinds of charts can help us think logically about situations while still legitimizing our feelings.
- 2) Free-write about a challenging emotional situation or time in your life. Write as much as you can or want to without editing yourself at all, and don't worry about spelling or grammar. Underline your favorite ideas or most powerful lines. Turn these ideas and lines into a poem, and craft your poem to think about the way it sounds in your head when there are pauses and certain lines are spoken differently to express emotion (quick reads might reflect anger and whispered lines might express concern, for example). Hang onto this poem, and when you are alone, read the poem aloud using your voice to express your emotion. No one needs to hear you: sometimes it just feels good to emote!

Instead of handing these exercises in to your teacher, write a short journal entry about how you felt engaging in these activities - or after you did them. How did your emotions change? Did you feel better afterward? Relieved? More aware, logical, or analytical about the situation? Are either of these exercises something you might do on your own to make you feel better? If not, why not?