

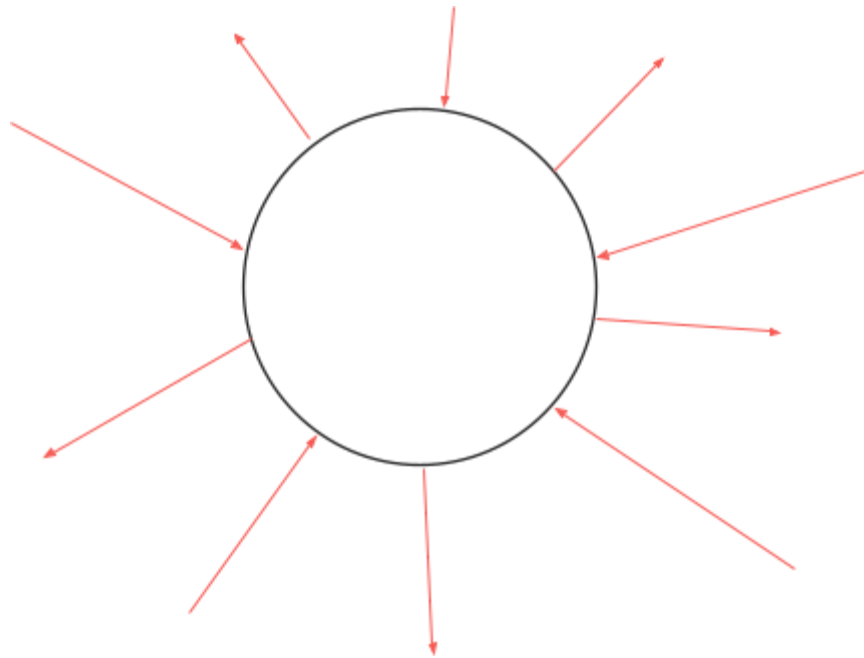
## Identity in the Time of COVID-19

Unit plan by Nikysha D. Gilliam

### Days 1-2: Identity

#### Warm-up: What is identity? What comprises it?

1. Students make a brace map of the parts of their identities
2. Students create an identity web
  - Students place their names in the center of the circle
  - Arrows coming from the circle reflect how they describe themselves
  - Arrows coming toward the circle include how others describe them as well as other factors that make up their identity. (See below)



3. Group Jamboard activity
  - Students define identity based on what people put on their individual brace map or bubble map.
  - [Click here](#) to see examples of Jamboards created by students at Susan Miller Dorsey Senior High School in fall 2020.

#### Activities: Evaluate how identity is formed

1. In a discussion post, students analyze the cartoon “Street Calculus” Cartoon (reproduced in Appendix A, p. 11 of this document) and write about how our perceptions of ourselves and others inform our identities.

2. Read three texts (reproduced in Appendix B, p. 12-16 of this document): “Names & Identity” by Jennifer Wang, “Little Boxes,” and “Two Names Two Worlds.”

Students select one article and use padlet, or another collaborative platform, to summarize the article. Students should also reflect on what they learn from the article about how identity is defined.

3. Jigsaw the pieces: After writing their summaries, students should review the summaries by students who read the other two articles.

4. Watch the following video: [“Intersectionality 101”](#) by Teaching Tolerance

5. Guided reflection after reviewing the texts and video above:

- How do you feel about what you saw and heard?
- What connections can you make?
- What questions do you have?

### Homework

1. Students read [“My Name”](#) by Sandra Cisneros, [“Eleven”](#) by Sandra Cisneros, and [“Names Nombres”](#) by Julia Alvarez. These texts are also reproduced in Appendix C, p. 17-21 of this document.

2. Students note their reflections on the following: *How do these stories connect to our learning about identity?*

## Days 3-4: Community

### Warm-up

1. Students share one thought that is sticking with them from the Padlet based on the three texts, “Names & Identity” by Jennifer Wang, “Little Boxes”, and “Two Names Two Worlds.”
2. Students review the [“What Is Community? Anticipation Guide”](#) from Facing History and Ourselves.
3. Community Jamboard:
  - Students share words, ideas, or pictures that they associate with community
  - Based on shared words, ideas, and images, students discuss what questions they have about what makes a community.

### Activities

1. Students utilize [“Exploring Community in Three Ways”](#) from Facing History and Ourselves to evaluate a definition of “community” by Suzanne Goldsmith. [Click here for an example of this graphic organizer completed by a student at Susan Miller Dorsey Senior High School in fall 2020.](#)
2. In small groups, students create a working definition of community that utilizes their analysis from the past three activities.
3. Using their working definition of “community” as a guide, students complete the activity [“ABC’s of Community”](#) from Facing History and Ourselves

### Exit ticket

Fill in the ideas about what community is and what community is not, using the following sentence frames:

- Community is...
- Community isn't...

Include a picture for each sentence.

**Days 5-6: COVID-19**

**Warm-up: Who am I? Who are we?**

Students reply to the prompts “Who am I?” and “Who are we?” and share their responses in Google Sheets, or another platform.

**Read and Reflect: “Alone in a Pandemic” by Naomi Marcus for Mission Local**

1. Students read the article [“Alone in a Pandemic”](#) by Naomi Marcus. While they read, they answer the following **comprehension questions**:

- How would you describe Jose Montes? What evidence do you have, based on the text?
- Where is he from? Where are his children and grandchildren?
- Why doesn’t he visit them?
- How has Montes’s life changed since the pandemic?

2. After reading, students answer the following **discussion questions**:

- What are Pan Lido and Pan Rico Salvadoreno and why are they so important to Jose Montes?
- He says that he was used to living alone, but was alone? Lonely? What’s the difference?
- What place in your community is as important to you?
- Why do you think that the yearning for El Salvador is so strong for Jose during this time?
- How has your life changed since the pandemic?
- How might the lives of other people in your community be changed by the pandemic?

3. Students record their first impressions (initial thoughts about Jose Montes, his life, his situation; connections you can make; questions you have)

**Activities: Looking at various parts of the world**

1. Review the following photo essays (*three groups, with one essay explored by each group. Virtual example of article sharing at right.*) Be prepared to present the following:

- What do you notice?
- What’s happening?
- Why do you think that?
- What connections can you make?
- What is the purpose and effect of the photo essay?

2. How does the journalist communicate someone’s identity? Which medium is most appealing to you, and why?

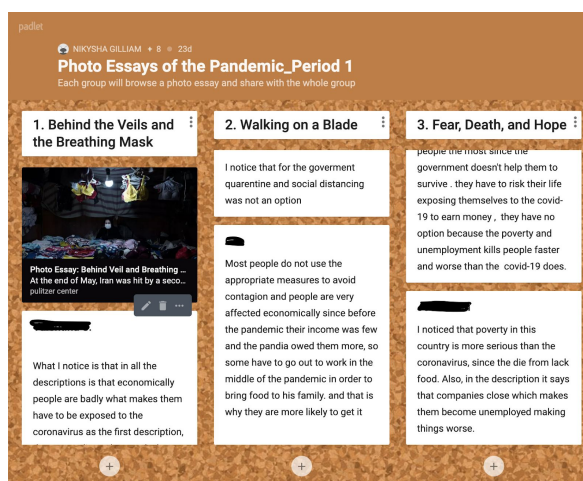


Photo essay resources:

- [“Behind Veil and Breathing Mask”](#)
- [“Walking on a Blade”](#)
- [“Death / Fear / Hope”](#)

**Homework: Note to a neighbor**

Students write a short note to a neighbor to show that they are remembered during this time of isolation. **For examples of notes written by students at Susan Miller Dorsey Senior High School in fall 2020, [click here](#).**

## Days 7-8: Our Identity in the Time of COVID-19

### Warm-up: I'm used to... but I miss...

Students respond to the following sentence starters out loud, or in writing:

- I'm used to...
- But I miss...

### Discussion

Review key takeaways from the articles, and the photo essays reviewed on the previous day, through a class discussion that explores the following questions:

- How are the individuals in these places impacted?
- What do you learn from the reporting about the person's identity?
- How does the journalist communicate someone's identity? Which medium is most appealing to you, and why?

### Research and Reporting

Review at least one of the articles below and reflect on the following question: Can our identities change because of a pandemic? Why or why not?

Articles:

- ["Portraits of a Pandemic"](#)
- ["How lockdown may have changed your personality"](#)
- ["Our changing identities under COVID-19"](#)
- ["Creating new social divides: How coronavirus is reshaping how we see ourselves and the world around us"](#)

### Homework

1. Write a letter to yourself at the start of the year 2020, knowing what you know now about yourself, family, and friends. **For an example of a letter written by a student at Susan Miller Dorsey Senior High School in fall 2020, [click here](#).**

2. In preparation for the special guest, complete the [Close Reading Chart](#).

## Day 9: Our Identity in the Time of COVID-19 cont'd

### Warm-up

Share your letter from you to you (today's homework) with the class.

### Virtual Visit from an Expert on Identity Formation, Trauma, and/or Mental Health

Explore research about how identity is formed by connecting with a guest. For support identifying a journalist guest speaker, email the Pulitzer Center ([education@pulitzercenter.org](mailto:education@pulitzercenter.org)), or invite a professor.

1. During the virtual visit, students record their learning about psychology, personality, and identity development using a [Note-taking Guide](#).

2. Q & A session: Students ask questions based on research and reporting they've read.

**Supplemental resources:** Resources that can be used to explore scientific research about identity development:

- ["Self concept, self identity, and social identity"](#) from Khan Academy
- ["Is your identity given or created?"](#) | Marcus Lyon | TEDxExeter

### Exit Ticket

What message(s) would you share with the people from the articles that you've read? Pick a person from a specific article with whom to share a message.

**Day 10: Remembering (Our Identity in the Time of) COVID-19****Warm-up**

Is COVID-19 something that we should remember? Why or why not?

Students reflect on the question above in small groups, and then as a class. Encourage students to reflect on their own experiences, and the experiences of the individuals profiled in the articles they read.

**Activities**

1. Read "[Everyone has a story: How will the world remember pandemic](#)" from the *Associated Press*.
2. Discuss the article, and use details from the article to revisit the warm-up question.
3. Chart the ways of remembering using Padlet.
4. Respond to the question: How are you remembering this time?

**Homework: "My COVID Summer"**

Students use one of the three topic sentences to write a personal narrative about their summer. Teachers may set the length requirement.



**Days 11-12: Remembering (Our Identity in the Time of) COVID-19 cont'd**

Note: This lesson introduces the performance task

**Warm-up**

Gallery Walk of “My COVID Summer” assignments from students.

- Names should be redacted, and vignettes shared via Zoom ([example here](#))
- Students have a [reflection/reaction sheet](#) to record responses to the writing (content only)

Vignettes could be revised and published later as a class collection.

**Discussion**

From the articles we have reviewed so far, which mediums most engaged you? Why?

**Introducing the Performance Task**

Students embark on a performance task that communicates their understanding of identity and how it is impacted by the pandemic. Example projects include:

- Video confessional
- Photo story
- Interview family member that you live with or who live in another country (Facetime or audio)

Requirements:

1. The resource includes students’ reflection on what identity is, and how the pandemic has impacted students’ identity or the identity of someone in their community.
2. A Message to the community that uses the following structure:
  - I am...
  - You are...
  - We are...

**Rubric for Evaluation is located in Appendix D (p. 22 of this document).**

**Days 13-14:Remembering (Our Identity in the Time of) COVID-19 cont'd****Students work on and finalize their performance tasks**

Students finalize a performance task that communicates their understanding of identity and how it is impacted by the pandemic. Examples include:

- Video confessional
- Photo story
- Interview with a family member that you live with or who live in another country (FaceTime or audio)

Requirements:

1. The resource includes students' reflection on what identity is, and how the pandemic has impacted their identity or the identity of someone in their community.
2. A Message to the community that uses the following structure:
  - I am...
  - You are...
  - We are...

**Rubric for Evaluation is located in Appendix D (p. 22).**

**Days 13-14:Remembering (Our Identity in the Time of) COVID-19 cont'd****Students present their performance tasks to the class!**

## Appendix A “Street Calculus”



DOONESBURY © G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL UCLICK. All rights reserved. Retrieved from: <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/image/street-calculus>

## Appendix B

### Three Texts

#### “NAMES & IDENTITY” BY JENNIFER WANG

Something about myself? How do I summarize, in thirty seconds, everything which adds up and equals a neat little bundle called Me? How do I present myself in a user-friendly format, complete with “Help” buttons and batteries? Who am I, and why do I matter to any of you?

First of all, I am a girl who wandered the aisles of Toys “R” Us for two hours, hunting in vain for a doll with a yellowish skin tone. I am a girl who sat on the cold bathroom floor at seven in the morning, cutting out the eyes of Caucasian models in magazines, trying to fit them on my face. I am the girl who loved [newscaster] Connie Chung because she was Asian, and I’m also the girl who hated Connie Chung because she wasn’t Asian enough. . . .

During that time I also first heard the term “chink,” and I wondered why people were calling me “a narrow opening, usually in a wall.” People expected me to love studying and to enjoy sitting in my room memorizing facts for days and days.

While I was growing up, I did not understand what it meant to be “Chinese” or “American.” Do these terms link only to citizenship? Do they suggest that people fit the profile of either “typical Chinese” or “typical Americans”? And who or what determines when a person starts feeling American, and stops feeling Chinese?

I eventually shunned the Asian crowds. And I hated Chinatown with a vengeance. I hated the noise, the crush of bodies, the yells of mothers to fathers to children to uncles to aunts to cousins. I hated the limp vegetables hanging out of soggy cardboard boxes. I hated the smell of fish being chopped, of meat hanging in a window. I hated not understanding their language in depth—the language of my ancestors, which was also supposed to be mine to mold and master.

I am still not a citizen of the United States of America, this great nation, which is hailed as the destination for generations of people, the promised land for millions. I flee at the mere hint of teenybopper music. I stare blankly at my friends when they mention the 1980s or share stories of their parents as hippies. And I hate baseball.

The question lingers: Am I Chinese? Am I American? Or am I some unholy mixture of both, doomed to stay torn between the two? I don’t know if I’ll ever find the answers. Meanwhile, it’s my turn to introduce myself . . .

I stand up and say, “My name is Jennifer Wang,” and then I sit back down. There are no other words that define me as well as those do. No others show me being stretched between two very different cultures and places—the “Jennifer” clashing with the “Wang,” the “Wang” fighting with the “Jennifer.”

Jennifer Wang, “Orientation Day,” in *YELL-Oh Girls! Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity, and Growing Up Asian American*, ed. Vickie Nam (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 199–200. Reproduced by permission from HarperCollins Publishers. Retrieved from:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-1/names-and-identity?reading=original>

## “LITTLE BOXES” BY ANTHONY WRIGHT

Little Boxes. “How would you describe yourself? (please check one)” Some aren’t as cordial. “Ethnic Group”: These little boxes and circles bring up an issue for me that threatens my identity. Who am I? Unlike many others, I cannot answer that question easily when it comes to ethnicity. My mother is Hispanic (for those who consider South American as Hispanic) with an Asian father and my father is white with English and Irish roots. What does that make me? My identity already gets lost when my mother becomes a “Latino” instead of an “Ecuadorean.” The cultures of Puerto Rico and Argentina are distinct, even though they are both “Hispanic.” The same applies to White, Asian, Native American or Black, all vague terms trying to classify cultures that have sometimes greater disparities inside the classification than with other cultures. Yet I can’t even be classified by these excessively broad terms.

My classification problem doesn’t stop with my ethnicity. My father is a blue-collar worker, yet the technical work he does is much more than manual labor. My family, through our sweat, brains and savings, have managed to live comfortably. We no longer can really be classified as poor or lower class, but we really aren’t middle class. Also, in my childhood my parents became disillusioned with the Catholic religion and stopped going to church. They gave me the option of going or not, but I was lazy and opted to stay in bed late Sunday mornings. Right now I don’t even know if I am agnostic, atheist or something else, like transcendentalist. I just don’t fit into categories nicely.

My biggest conflict of identity comes from another source: education. In the seventh grade, I was placed in a prep school from P.S. 61. The only similarity between the two institutions is that they are both in the Bronx, yet one is a block away from Charlotte Street, a nationally known symbol of urban decay, while the other is in one of the wealthiest sections of New York City. Prep for Prep, a program for disadvantaged students that starts in the fifth grade, worked with me for fourteen months, bringing me up to the private-school level academically and preparing me socially, but still, the transition was rough. Even in my senior year, I felt like I really did not fit in with the prep school culture. Yet I am totally separated from my neighborhood. My home happens to be situated there, and I might go to the corner bodega for milk and bananas, or walk to the subway station, but that is the extent of my contact with my neighborhood. I regret this, but when more than half the teenagers are high-school dropouts, and drugs are becoming a major industry there, there is no place for me. Prep for Prep was where I would “hang out” if not at my high school, and it took the place of my neighborhood and has been a valuable cushion. At high school, I was separate from the mainstream majority, but still an inextricable part of it, so I worked there and put my effort into making it a better place.

For a while, I desperately wanted to fit into a category in order to be accepted. Everywhere I went I felt out of place. When I go into the neighborhood restaurant to ask for *arroz y pollo*, my awkward Spanish and gringo accent makes the lady at the counter go in the back for someone who knows English, even though I think I know enough Spanish to survive a conversation. When I was little, and had short straight black hair, I appeared to be one of the few Asians in my school, and was tagged with the stereotype. I went to Ecuador to visit relatives, and they could not agree about whether I was Latin or gringo. When the little boxes appeared on the Achievements, I marked Hispanic even though I had doubts on the subject. At first sight, I can pass as white, and my last name will assure that I will not be persecuted as someone who is dark and has “Rodriguez” as his last name. I chose Hispanic because I most identified with it, because of my Puerto Rican neighborhood that I grew up in, and my mother, who has a big influence on me. However, many

people would not consider me a Latino. And by putting just “Hispanic,” “White,” or “Asian,” I felt as if I was neglecting a very essential side of me, and lying in the process. I now put “Other” in those little boxes, and when possible indicate exactly what I am.

I realize now the problem is not with me but with the identification system. The words *Black*, *White*, *Hispanic*, *Asian*, and *Native American*, describe more than one would expect. They describe genealogy, appearance and culture, all very distinct things, which most people associate as one; but there exists many exceptions, like the person who grows up in the Black inner city and adopts that culture, but is white by birth; or the Puerto Rican immigrant with blue eyes and blond hair. Religion can also obscure definitions, as is the case in Israel recently with the label “Jewish,” which can be a race, culture or religion, and the definition of being Jewish by birth. The classifications especially get confused when appearance affects the culture, as with non-White cultures due to discrimination. Defining what is “culture;” and the specifics also confuses the issue. For example, it can be argued that almost every American, regardless of race (genealogy), is at least to some degree of the white culture, the “norm” in this country. With more culturally and racially mixed people like myself entering society, these classifications have to be addressed and defined.

My mixture helps me look to issues and ideas from more than one viewpoint, and I like that. Racial, economic, social and religious topics can be looked upon with a special type of objectivity that I feel is unique. I am not objective. I am subjective with more than one bias, so I can see both sides of an argument between a black militant and white conservative, a tenant and a landlord or a Protestant and a Catholic. I will usually side with the underdog, but it is necessary to understand opposing viewpoints in order to take a position. This diversity of self that I have, I enjoy, despite the confusion caused by a society so complex that sweeping generalizations are made. I cannot and don’t deserve to be generalized or classified, just like anybody else. My background and position have affected me, but I dislike trying to be treated from that information. I am Anthony E. Wright, and the rest of the information about me should come from what I write, what I say and how I act. Nothing else.

Anthony Wright, “Little Boxes,” *Points of View* (Amherst College) 1990. Retrieved from: <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-human-behavior/little-boxes>

## "TWO NAMES TWO WORLDS" BY JONATHAN RODRÍGUEZ

Hi I'm Jon.....No—Jonathan  
Wait—Jonathan Rodríguez  
Hold on—Jonathan Rodríguez  
My Name, Two names, two worlds  
The duality of my identity like two sides of the same coin  
With two worlds, there should be plenty of room  
But where do I fit?  
Where can I sit?  
Is this seat taken? Or is that seat taken?  
There never is quite enough room is there?  
Two names, Two worlds  
Where do I come from?  
Born in the Washington Heights of New York City  
But raised in good ol' Connecticut  
The smell of freshly mowed grass, autumn leaves  
Sancocho, Rice and Beans  
The sound from Billy Joel's Piano Keys  
And the rhythm from Juan Luis Guerra  
I'm from the struggle for broken dreams  
Of false promises  
Of houses with white picket fences  
And 2.5 kids  
The mountains and campos de la Republica Dominicana  
And the mango trees  
I'm not the typical kid from suburbia  
Nor am I a smooth Latin cat  
My head's in the clouds, my nose in a comic book  
I get lost in the stories and art  
I'm kinda awkward—so talkin' to the ladies is hard  
I listen to Fernando Villalona and Aventura every chance I get,  
But don't make me dance Merengue, Bachata  
Or Salsa—I don't know the steps  
I've learned throughout these past years  
I am a mix of cultures, a mix of races  
"Una Raza encendida,  
Negra, Blanca y Taina"  
You can find me in the parts of a song, en una cancion  
You can feel my African Roots en la Tambora  
My Taino screams en la guira  
And the melodies of the lyrics are a reminder of my beautiful Spanish heritage  
I am African, Taino and Spanish  
A Fanboy, an athlete, a nerd, a student, an introvert  
I'm proud to say: Yo soy Dominicano  
I'm proud to say, I am me  
I am beginning to appreciate that I am  
Una bella mezcla

I am beginning to see that this world is also a beautiful mix  
Of people, ideas and stories.  
Is this seat taken?  
Or is that seat taken?  
Join me and take a seat,  
Here we'll write our own stories

Jonathan Rodríguez, untitled poem. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/two-names-two-worlds>



## Appendix C

“MY NAME” VIGNETTE FROM *THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET* BY SANDRA CISNEROS

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse--which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female--but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as my sister's name Magdalena--which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

## "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, you're not...Not mine." I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says. "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine. In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says

loud and in front of everybody, “Now, Rachel, that’s enough,” because she sees I’ve shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it’s hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don’t care.

“Rachel,” Mrs. Price says. She says it like she’s getting mad. “You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense.”

“But it’s not –“

“Now!” Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn’t eleven because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren’t even mine.

That’s when everything I’ve been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I’m crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I’m not. I’m eleven and it’s my birthday today and I’m crying like I’m three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can’t stop the little animal noises from coming out of me until there aren’t any more tears left in my eyes, and it’s just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers. I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything’s okay.

Today I’m eleven. There’s a cake Mama’s making for tonight and when Papa comes home from work we’ll eat it. There’ll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it’s too late.

I’m eleven today. I’m eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven. Because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny—tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

## Names *Nombres*

By Julia Alvarez

When we arrived in New York City, our names changed almost immediately. At Immigration, the officer asked my father, *Mister Elbures*, if he had anything to declare. My father shook his head no, and we were waved through. I was too afraid we wouldn't be let in if I corrected the man's pronunciation, but I said our name to myself, opening my mouth wide for the organ blast of the *a*, trilling my tongue for the drumroll of the *r*, *All-vah-rrr-es!* How could anyone get *Elbures* out of that orchestra of sound?

At the hotel my mother was *Missus Alburest*, and I was *little girl*, as in "Hey, little girl, stop riding the elevator up and down. It's not a toy."

When we moved into our new apartment building, the super called my father *Mister Alberase*, and the neighbors who became mother's friends pronounced her name *Jew-lee-ah* instead of *Hoo-lee-ah*. I, as her namesake, was known as *Hoo-lee-ah* at home. But at school I was *Judy* or *Judith*, and once an English teacher mistook me for *Juliet*.

It took a while to get used to my new names. I wondered if I shouldn't correct my teachers and new friends. But my mother argued that it didn't matter. "You know what your friend Shakespeare said, 'A rose by any other name would be as sweet.'" My family had gotten into the habit of calling any literary figure "my friend" because I had begun to write poems and stories in English class.

By the time I was in high school, I was a popular kid, and it showed in my name. Friends called me *Jules* or *Hey Jude*, and once a group of troublemaking friends my mother forbade me to hang out with called me *Alcatraz*. I was *Hoo-lee-tah* only to Mami and Papi and uncles and aunts who came over to eat *sancocho*<sup>1</sup> on Sunday afternoons – old world folk whom I would just as soon go back to where they came from and leave me to pursue whatever mischief I wanted to in America. JUDY ALCATRAZ: the name on the wanted poster would read. Who would ever trace her to me?

My older sister had the hardest time getting an American name for herself because *Mauricia* did not translate into English. Ironically,

although she had the most foreign-sounding name, she and I were the Americans in the family. We had been born in New York City when our parents had first tried immigration and then gone back "home," too homesick to stay. My mother often told the story of how she had almost changed my sister's name in the hospital.

After the delivery, Mami and some other new mothers were cooing over their new baby sons and daughters and exchanging names and weights and delivery stories. My mother was embarrassed among the Sallys and Janes and Georges and Johns to reveal the rich, noisy name of *Mauricia*, so when her turn came to brag, she gave her baby's name as *Maureen*.

"Why'd ya give her an Irish name with so many pretty Spanish names to choose from?" one of the women asked her.

My mother blushed and admitted her baby's real name to the group. Her mother-in-law had recently died, she apologized, and her husband had insisted that the first daughter be named after his mother, *Mauran*. My mother thought it the ugliest name she had ever heard, and she talked my father into what she believed was an improvement, a combination of *Mauran* and her own mother's name, *Felicia*.

"Her name is Mao-ree-shee-ah," my mother said to the group. "Why that's a beautiful name," the new mothers cried. "*Moor-ee-sha*, *Moor-ee-sha*," they cooed into the pink blanket. *Moor-ee-sha* it was when we returned to the states eleven years later. Sometimes, American tongues found even that mispronunciation tough to say and called her *Maria* or *Marsha* or *Maudy* from her nickname *Maury*. I pitied her. What an awful name to have to transport across borders!

My little sister, Ana, had the easiest time of all. She was plain *Anne*—that is, only her name was plain, for she turned out to be the pale, blond "American beauty" in the family. The only Hispanic-seeming thing about her was the affectionate nicknames her boyfriends sometimes gave her, *Anita*, or as one goofy guy used to sing to her to the tune of the banana advertisement, *Anita Banana*.

Later, during her college years in the late 60's, there was a push to pronounce Third World names correctly. I remember calling her long distance at her group house and a roommate answering.

"Can I speak to Ana?" I asked, pronouncing her name the American way.

"Ana?" The man's voice hesitated. "Oh! You must mean *An-nah!*"

<sup>1</sup>*sancocho* traditional Caribbean stew of meat and vegetables

Our first few years in the States, though, ethnicity was not yet “in.” Those were the blond, blue-eyed, bobby-sock years of junior high and high school before the 60’s ushered in peasant blouses, hoop earrings, *sarapes*.<sup>2</sup> My initial desire to be known by my correct Dominican name faded. I just wanted to be Judy and merge with the Sallys and Janes in my class. But inevitably, my accent and coloring gave me away. “So where are you from, Judy?”

“New York,” I told my classmates. After all, I had been born blocks away at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

“I mean, *originally*.”

“From the Caribbean,” I answered vaguely, for if I specified, no one was quite sure what continent our island was located on.

“Really? I’ve been to Bermuda. We went last April for spring vacation. I got the worst sunburn! So, are you from Portoriko?”

“No,” I shook my head. “From the Dominican Republic.”

“Where’s that?”

“South of Bermuda.”

They were just being curious, I knew, but I burned with shame whenever they singled me out as a “foreigner,” a rare, exotic friend.

“Say your name in Spanish, oh, please say it!” I had made mouths drop one day by rattling off my full name, which, according to Dominican custom, included my middle names, Mother’s and Father’s surnames for four generations back.

“Julia Altigracia Maria Teresa Alvarez Tavaréz Perello Espiaillat Julia Perez Rochet Gonzalez.” I pronounced it slowly, a name a chaotic with sounds as a Middle Eastern bazaar or market day in a South American village.

I suffered most whenever my extended family attended school occasions. For my graduation, they all came, the whole noisy foreign-looking lot of fat aunts in their dark mourning dresses and hair nets, uncles with full, droopy mustaches and baby-blue or salmon-colored suits and white pointy shoes and fedora hats, the many little cousins who snuck in without tickets. They sat in the first row in order to better understand the American’s fast-spoken English. But how could they listen when they were constantly speaking among themselves in florid-sounding<sup>3</sup> phrases, rococo<sup>4</sup> consonants, rich, rhyming vowels?

<sup>2</sup> *sarapes* A long, blanket-like shawl

<sup>3</sup> *florid-sounding* flowery; very ornate

<sup>4</sup> *rococo* elaborate, flamboyant

Their loud voices carried.

Introducing them to my friends was a further trial to me. These relatives had such complicated names and there were so many of them, and their relationships to myself were so convoluted.<sup>5</sup> There was my Tia Josefina, who was not really an aunt but a much older cousin. And her daughter, Aida Margarita, who was adopted, *una hija de crianza*.<sup>6</sup> My uncle of affection, Tio Jose, brought my *madrina*.<sup>7</sup> Tia Amelia and her *comadre*.<sup>8</sup> Tia Pilar. My friends rarely had more than their nuclear family to introduce, youthful, glamorous-looking couples (“Mom and Dad”) who skied and played tennis and took their kids for spring vacations to Bermuda.

After the commencement ceremony, my family waited outside in the parking lot while my friends and I signed yearbooks with nicknames which recalled our high school good times: “Beans” and “Pepperoni” and “Alcatraz.” We hugged and cried and promised to keep in touch.

Sometimes if our goodbyes went on too long, I heard my father’s voice calling out across the parking lot. “*Hoo-lee-tah! Vamanos!*”<sup>9</sup>

Back home, my tios and tias and primas, Mami and Papi, and *mis hermanas*<sup>10</sup> had a party for me with *sancocho* and a store-bought *puddin*.<sup>11</sup> inscribed with *Happy Graduation, Julie*. There were so many gifts—that was a plus to a large family! I got several wallets and a suitcase with my initials and a graduation charm from my godmother and money from my uncles. The biggest gift was a portable typewriter from my parents for writing my stories and poems.

Someday, my family predicted, my name would be well-known throughout the United States. I laughed to myself, wondering which one I would go by.

<sup>5</sup> *convoluted* difficult to understand; complicated

<sup>6</sup> *una hija de crianza* a child raised as if one’s own

<sup>7</sup> *madrina* godmother

<sup>8</sup> *comadre* close friend

<sup>9</sup> *Vamanos* Let’s go!

<sup>10</sup> *mis hermanas* my sisters

<sup>11</sup> *puddin* pudding

## Appendix D

**Rubric for Final Performance Task**

	10	8	6
Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.	<b>Consistently</b> analyzes various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), and determines which details are emphasized in each account.	<b>Sometimes</b> analyzes various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), and <b>inconsistently</b> determines which details are emphasized in each account.	<b>Seldom</b> analyzes various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), and <b>rarely</b> determines which details are emphasized in each account.
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	Writes narratives to <b>vividly develop</b> real or imagined experiences or events <b>consistently</b> using <b>highly effective</b> techniques, <b>well-chosen</b> details, and <b>well-structured</b> event sequences.	Writes narratives that <b>may develop</b> real or imagined experiences or events using <b>some</b> effective techniques, <b>limited</b> details, and event sequences that <b>may not be well-structured</b> .	Writes narratives that <b>may not develop</b> real or imagined experiences or events using <b>few</b> <b>effective</b> techniques, <b>few</b> details, and event sequences that <b>may not be well-structured</b> .
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	<b>Consistently adapts</b> <b>speech</b> to a <b>variety of contexts</b> and tasks, <b>demonstrating</b> <b>command</b> of various vernaculars of English when indicated or appropriate.	<b>Inconsistently adapts</b> <b>speech</b> to a variety of contexts and tasks, <b>demonstrating limited</b> <b>command</b> of various vernaculars of English when indicated or appropriate.	<b>Does not adapt</b> <b>speech</b> to a variety of contexts and tasks, <b>demonstrating little to no command</b> of various vernaculars of English when indicated or appropriate.
Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.	Makes <b>consistent, strategic use</b> of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.	Makes <b>inconsistent use</b> of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.	Makes <b>minimal use</b> of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

**Total: /40**