

## Poetic Justice: Using Journalism and Poetry to Illuminate Injustice

Unit plan by Anne Lape

<b>Session One</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name and define basic journalism terms</li> <li>• Define what makes a news story underreported</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary for this lesson/unit</b>	<p><b>by-line:</b> a line giving the name of the writer or creator of a news story</p> <p><b>dateline:</b> a line at the beginning of a news article giving the date and place of origin of the news dispatch</p> <p><b>headline:</b> the title of a newspaper article</p> <p><b>journalist:</b> a person who reports and creates news stories through writing, video, photography, audio, or any other medium</p> <p><b>news outlet:</b> a publication or broadcast program that provides news and feature stories to the public through various distribution channels</p> <p><b>media:</b> the type of distribution channel used for a news publication. Media include print newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and social media.</p>
<b>Warm-up</b>	<p>As a class, brainstorm what news stories/events you are familiar with. After you list these stories, see if you can put them into broad categories that your class develops.</p> <p>Next, discuss how you learn about these stories. What <b>news outlets</b> are you familiar with? (e.g. <i>CNN</i>, <i>The New York Times</i>, <i>NPR</i>) What <b>news media</b> are you familiar with? (e.g. TV, print newspapers, radio, social media)</p> <p>What stories <i>aren't</i> you seeing in the news? True, important stories that don't get a lot of attention in the headlines are called <b>underreported stories</b>. Watch <a href="#">this video</a> to get a better idea of what underreported stories are, and why they might go underreported.</p>
<b>In-class activity</b>	<p>Explore "<a href="#">Disappearing Daughters</a>" by journalists Corinne Chin and Erika Schultz and poet Claudia Castro Luna, published in <i>The Seattle Times</i>.</p> <p>Scroll through the multimedia journalism project, reading the news article, reading and hearing the poems, looking at the images, and watching the videos. Take note of what stands out to you, what catches your attention. What words and phrases make you stop and think or put a vivid picture in your head? What images make you pause and keep</p>

	<p>looking at them for a long time? After this class is over, what will you remember about this project? Be prepared to share some of these things with the class. Use this <a href="#">Underreported Stories Worksheet</a> to keep track.</p> <p>After reading “Disappearing Daughters,” answer the following comprehension questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define <i>femicide</i></li> <li>● What is the city of Juarez known for?</li> <li>● How much/what kind of attention is being paid to these deaths?</li> <li>● Who is at the forefront of calling attention to this issue?</li> </ul> <p>Then, discuss the following questions as a class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What do you think makes “Disappearing Daughters” an underreported story?</li> <li>● How did interacting with a news story through poetry and photography affect your perception of the information and the story overall?</li> <li>● What words/images/combination of the two will stay with you after this class is over?</li> </ul>
<b>Supplementary resources</b>	<p><a href="#">“The Backstory: About the ‘Disappearing Daughters’ project”</a> by Corinne Chin and Erika Schultz for <i>The Seattle Times</i></p> <p><a href="#">“Washington State Poet Laureate Claudia Castro Luna Writes a Book for Ciudad Juárez’s Murdered and Missing ‘Marías’”</a> by Tyrone Beason for <i>The Seattle Times</i></p> <p><a href="#">Map of Mexico</a></p>

<b>Session Two</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain what makes a story underreported</li> <li>● Identify the news outlet, byline, dateline, and why the stories are underreported</li> <li>● Explain how the use of poetry can help tell a news story</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-up</b>	<p>Review news vocabulary and what thoughts are lingering from exploring “Disappearing Daughters.” Review the concept of underreported stories.</p> <p>Opening discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are ways that you’ve handled the bad/negative things in your life?</li> <li>● Which of those things have been positive/helpful?</li> <li>● How have they helped?</li> </ul>
<b>Introducing the lesson (background and context)</b>	<p>Today, we are going to learn about a group of people facing a great deal of hardship, the Rohingya people in Myanmar, and one of the ways in which some Rohingya people are handling the negative things in their lives.</p> <p>1. To get some background, read <a href="#">“Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis”</a> from the <i>BBC</i>. You can also explore some basic country information about Myanmar/Burma <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>2. After exploring these resources, answer the following comprehension questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the dominant religious group in Myanmar?</li> <li>● Which religious group is being singled out for discrimination, according to the reading?</li> <li>● What are some of the specific ways that that discrimination is taking place?</li> </ul>
<b>In-class activity</b>	<p>1. Now that you have some background information on Myanmar and the Rohingya people, read <a href="#">“A Spoken Word Poet in Myanmar Speaks Out Against Hate and Injustice”</a> by Shaina Shealy for <i>PRI’s The World</i>. (*<b>Teacher’s note:</b> The news story provides a link to the radio story from <i>PRI’s The World</i>. You may wish to play the story for students as well as having them read it.)</p> <p>As you read, use this <a href="#">Underreported Stories Worksheet</a> to gather your thoughts and as a basis for discussion.</p>

2. Watch [“It Starts with You”](#) by Aung Kaung Myat and Than Toe Aung (the video is also embedded in the article).

(\***Teacher’s note:** While students watch the poem performance video,, and have them list, aloud or on paper, words and phrases that stand out to them that help them understand the enormity of the problem at hand.

You may need to explain that Spoken Word/Performance Poetry often does not rhyme, but is written for the impact it will have when it is spoken. It relies on patterns, form and repetition. You can find many other examples of the form on YouTube.)

3. After you finish reading the article, completing the worksheet, and watching the poem, discuss the following questions as a class:

- What injustice is Than Toe Aung using his poetry to speak out about?
- How does the situation in Myanmar compare with the situation in Juarez that you read about in “Disappearing Daughters”? How is it different?
- How do the situations in Myanmar and Juarez compare to events in the U.S.? How are they different?
- How can poetry be used to bring awareness and change? Think about both today’s reading and “Disappearing Daughters” as you consider.

<b>Sessions 3 and 4</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recall and summarize details from the articles they read in the previous classes</li> <li>● Write poems that address an injustice, modeled on the poems they have explored in “Disappearing Daughters” and “A Spoken Word Poet in Myanmar Speaks Out Against Hate and Injustice”</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-up</b>	<p>Review the poems in “Disappearing Daughters” and “A Spoken Word Poet in Myanmar Speaks Out Against Hate and Injustice.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which poem(s) were your favorites, and why?</li> <li>● What words and phrases made you understand the injustices the poems addressed better?</li> <li>● What words and phrases did you find interesting, memorable, or emotionally powerful?</li> <li>● How does the format of poetry change the way the story affects you? What impact does the poetic form have?</li> </ul>
<b>Performance task(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have students choose an issue of injustice that is close to their hearts. Encourage students to choose an issue that is underreported. (If students would like help thinking about what issue they would like to focus on, they can explore the <a href="#">Pulitzer Center “Issues” page</a> to get some ideas.)</li> <li>2. Have students brainstorm ideas around their chosen topic. What are some of the roots of this injustice? Who does it affect? How does it affect people’s daily lives? What steps could be taken to improve the issue?</li> <li>3. After students have made their lists, ask them these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What message do you want to convey through your poem?</li> <li>● How can you use a poem to convey your message and the impact of the problem you are presenting?</li> <li>● What are some words that are essential to your issue? What are the most powerful words you can find to get your point across?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Provide time for students to write, peer review, and edit their poems. <a href="#">A poem template is provided here</a>, inspired by “It Starts with You” by Aung Kaung Myat and Than Toe Aung. However, you and your students may have ideas of your own for a poetry form.</li> </ol> <p>If you would like to share more examples of poems written about justice issues by other students, they could explore the winners and finalists of the Pulitzer Center’s Fighting Words Poetry Contest from <a href="#">2020</a>, <a href="#">2019</a>, and <a href="#">2018</a>.</p>

	<p>5. Time permitting, students can perform their poems for the class and celebrate one another / give feedback. Here is a format for giving feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What injustice do you think the poet wanted to address with this poem? (Let the poet respond)</li><li>• What do you think the message of this poem was? (Let the poet respond.)</li><li>• What words/phrases did you like in this poem, and why?</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	Use <a href="#">this rubric</a> to assess poems. If you have students perform the poems, you could add points for performance.