

Name:

Period:

STUDENT SAMPLE HANDOUT DAY 4 (long version)

Beyond Crisis Mode: Humanizing Youth Migration to the United States

**DAY 4
Unit Assessment**

Warm-Up: In what ways does this poem by Warsan Shire represent the experiences of the unaccompanied youth migrants we have learned about?

["Home" by Warsan Shire](#)

Note: Warsan Shire is a London-based poet-activist of Somali ancestry.

Response

She represents the experiences of unaccompanied youth migrants because it represents the sheer survival and brutality of it. She shows that their home, that the anti-immigrant laws demand they go back to, is a zone of violence, fire, death, and war. They do not go because they want to, they go because they must, because if they don't they die. They do not eat newspapers, beg, nor become refugees because it is a choice, but because it is the only way to survive. This is what youth migrants go through when they cross countries, borders, and gang lines - it seems dangerous and yet it is less so than what they are fleeing.

MEDIA LITERACY ASSESSMENT

Read the following article published by the AP. Pay attention to word choice regarding the arrival of unaccompanied children and their potential impact on the country. Whose voices are heard? Whose aren't?

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-bills-immigration-fc90f485136eb48d6a293b2d0bb8c1d9>

Fram, Alan. "House Passes Immigration Bills for Farm Workers, 'Dreamers'." *AP NEWS*, Associated Press, 19 Mar. 2021, apnews.com/article/joe-biden-bills-immigration-

fc90f485136eb48d6a293b2d0bb8c1d.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House has voted to unlatch a gateway to citizenship for young “Dreamers,” migrant farm workers and immigrants who have fled war or natural disasters, giving Democrats wins in the year’s first votes on an issue that faces an uphill climb in the Senate.[...]

Neither House measure would directly affect those trying to enter from Mexico. Republicans criticized [the bills] anyway for lacking border security provisions and used the debate to lambaste Biden, who’s ridden a wave of popularity since taking office and winning a massive COVID-19 relief package.

“It is a Biden border crisis, and it is spinning out of control,” said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

While the number of migrants caught trying to cross the border from Mexico has been rising since last April, the 100,441 encountered last month was the highest figure since March 2019. [Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas](#) has said the number is tracking toward a 20-year high.

In another measure of the problem, around 14,000 children and teens are in Customs and Border Protection custody or Health and Human Services Department shelters while officials find relatives or sponsors to take them, Biden administration officials told reporters.

Democrats were making that problem worse, Republicans said, with bills they said entice more immigrants to sneak into the U.S. and provide amnesty to immigrants who break laws to get here.

“We don’t know who these people are. We don’t know what their intentions are,” Rep. Jody Hice, R-Ga., said of immigrant farm workers who might seek legal status. He added, “It’s frightening, it’s irresponsible, it’s endangering American lives.”

During earlier debate on the “Dreamers” bill, Democrats said Republicans were going too far.

“Sometimes I stand in this chamber, and I feel like I’m in the Twilight Zone, listening to a number of my Republican colleagues espouse white supremacist ideology to denigrate our ‘Dreamers,’” said Rep. Mondaire Jones, D-N.Y.

...The House approved “Dreamer” and farm worker bills in 2019 by similar partisan margins, and both died in what was a Republican-run Senate. Trump, who as president constricted legal and illegal immigration, would have signed neither.

Biden has suspended work on Trump’s wall along the Mexican border, ended his separation of young children from migrant families and allowed apprehended minors to stay in the U.S. as officials decide if they can legally remain. He has also turned away most single adults and families.

Questions	Responses
<p>What are some of the words that are used to describe youth migrants in this article?</p>	<p>First of all, the author interviews and quotes mostly Republicans that use dehumanizing language. Without offering a counter argument nor using humanizing words, they project Republican opinions. It makes the article one that sees migrants as mere numbers and data. It is a method to cause fear, not empathy. We are meant to see the people coming as an invasion, and use the same language to talk about the Covid-19 pandemic. For example using the words, "spinning out of control" or "number tracking toward a 20-yearhigh." The author also says, "In another measure of the problem," referring to the amount of migrants fleeing from home countries. The problem is not the people coming <i>into</i> the country, it is why they are fleeing, and how it is affecting them and the people living there. This article, however trying to remain unbiased, is complacently denoting the migrants as the problem, contradicting the beginning of their article. The beginning tells us that Dreamers "fled war or natural disasters." It is not their fault, nor will it ever be - in fact the U.S has been a major cause of disruption. However, we do not see or read any of this in the article, making it one that denotes migrants, and dehumanizes them.</p>
<p>Whose voices are heard in this article?</p>	<p>The Republicans' voices are heard in this article and it matters because instead of being able to empathize and humanize the immigrants, we read an article that depicts people that point fingers, fear-monger, and blame. This is not the unbiased opinion that they claim it to be, it is complacency and neutrality. Neutrality is not in the middle, it always chooses the sides of the oppressors.</p>

	<p>This has been a trend for much of the media. For example when Trump was president, they would put his lies in the title without adding nuance, reality, and truth. They gave him a platform to spout lies, and now they give Republicans a platform to dehumanize migrants - saying that they are criminals and a threat to 'Americans.'</p>
<p>Whose voices aren't heard?</p>	<p>The migrants' voices are not heard! It is vital to hear their opinions and stories, not the words of politicians. The whole point of this unit was to hear the counter narrative and be able to empathize and sympathize. Instead, the mainstream media objectifies. Language is important, it can build bridges and empower. That is what poems and writing can do - it unites people. But when the right voices are not heard and the language incites hate and fear rather than the opposite, it is detrimental.</p>
<p>If you could speak to members of Congress about the issue of youth immigration, what would you say?</p>	<p>I would approach the House minority leader Kevin McCarthy and say: I'm going to start off with an easy question. If you trip someone and they fall, will you help them get up, brush off their shoulders, and put a bandaid on their scraped knee? Yes? I think almost every morally good person would help them, especially since it was their fault, accidental or not. Now to add on to this question: You have said that, and I quote, "We don't know who [migrants] people are. We don't know what their intentions are. It's frightening, it's irresponsible, it's endangering American lives." Do you ever stop to think why kids my age flee war, violence, and starvation? It's because of us - the U.S. We have been the main perpetrator and cause of disruption in Central America. With our imperialistic values we have helped violent</p>

	<p>local allies in war, taken fertile land for our businesses, as well as deported gangs caused by the U.S wealth inequality into migrants’ home countries. Migrants are not the problem, we are. So, now I will ask you again: We have inflicted pain and suffering towards Central/South Americans causing them to flee and seek asylum. We pushed them down, and now they are at our border, asking for a hand to help them up. Will you help them get up, brush off their shoulders, and give them the opportunity to live a safe and better life in the United States; or will you send them back to the violence stricken country that they escaped?</p>
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Now read the article by Jaime Joyce and answer the questions.

<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/faces-honduras>

Questions	Responses
<p>What are some of the words that are used to describe young people in Honduras and their views on migration? What do the article’s photos reveal about them?</p>	<p>The article emphasizes much about the humanity of the children in Honduras and shares things about them that make them seem very much like kids anywhere, especially the United States. It talks about Stacyl Mendoza who listens to Queen and watches the U.S. Women’s Soccer team. It talks about Luis Bonilla who studies computers and robotics. Many of these young people know people who have migrated or have tried to migrate themselves. They often feel like they and their families have little choice due to poverty, lack of access to education, and the need to reunite with their families.</p>
<p>Whose voices are heard in this article?</p>	<p>The voices of young people living in Honduras, some of whom have tried to emigrate to the United States, but returned home when they faced difficulties along the way.</p>

<p>Whose voices aren't heard?</p>	<p>The main voices not heard are from Honduran officials, American politicians, Hondurans who have successfully migrated to the United States.</p>
<p>How might reading an article like this one provide a counternarrative or a different perspective to mainstream media portrayals of youth migrants as shown in the AP article above?</p>	<p>This article portrays potential migrants to the as very much like people in the United States. Rather than being portrayed as criminals, invaders, natural disasters or diseases, these people are individuals with the same dreams as most young people anywhere. Furthermore, this article suggests that if circumstances were different in Honduras, they wouldn't want to leave the country at all.</p>
<p>Reflect: After all of the activities we have done so far, what have you learned about the role of the media in dehumanizing and/or humanizing unaccompanied youth migrants?</p>	
<p>Response: Prior to this unit, I hadn't really thought very critically about how the words used in media portrayals of different groups and situations can play such an important role in shaping public opinion. I also never really thought about how white migration to the United States from Europe and to other parts of the country is viewed in heroic terms, as evidence of white settlers' resilience and determination, whereas immigration and migration by BIPOC groups are often regarded in dehumanizing language. I also feel like the overemphasis on media coverage on the border itself has led to a lack of understanding of why young people are leaving their countries and the role that the United States has often played in creating negative conditions in their homelands. Learning about the challenges that these migrants face on their journey's was also eye-opening. Rather than being criminals and rapists themselves, young migrants must face such people all along the route to the U.S.-Mexico border. Furthermore, once arriving at the border, they often face days, weeks, sometimes months of harsh conditions as they wait for an asylum hearing. I feel like leaders often use dehumanization of these people to support oppressive immigration policies or, at the very least, inaction in dealing with the structural issues that are contributing to the rise of youth migration and migration in general. I feel like if Americans could put themselves in the shoes of the migrants, they might be willing to support a reform of the immigration system and great aid to struggling countries in Central America and elsewhere. Right now, U.S. policy toward countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Cuba, and Venezuela make matters worse instead of better.</p>	