

“Where Can We Turn Right into Justice/The 2nd Amendment and Gun Violence”

Designed by Glen Young for Grade 12

My contentions are:

- Students are aware of and concerned by current events
- Students are aware of and concerned about their mental health and well-being
- Students need time to process the world both close by and more distant.
- Essential Questions can help students process their world and their world view.
- Important essential questions must be open-ended and broad, but engage students’ interests.
- Essential questions allow students to explore the development of their own questions about social justice and action.
- Teachers need to give students an opportunity to reflect on essential questions, including those about how and why to turn from attention to action.
- Students need to recognize the way they might influence different audiences as a model for action.
- Students need to analyze what is in the text, and ask questions about what is, purposely sometimes, not in the text.
- Reading multiple genres on a shared subject is important to recognizing the ideas shared and not shared and the notion that what is in the text is important, but so is what is not in the text.
- Discourse is a method of discovery.
- Teachers must create time for discourse.
- Universal truths are best conveyed locally; essential questions can be identified and acted upon at a personal level as well as a collective level.
- History is often narrowed in scope when studied in school.
- The history of the 2nd Amendment is often confusing and misunderstood.

Systematic Lesson Development

1. We begin with the Garry Wills op/ed and the Sanford Levinson response
Discussion: What is compelling in Wills’ writing/argument? How does Levinson choose to frame his response? Is either piece more convincing or less convincing?

2. Next we look at the 2nd Amendment and the 13th Amendment
Discussion: what about the 2nd Amendment is unclear or vague, or broad? What is clear and concise? What about the 13th Amendment is unclear or vague, or broad? What is clear and concise?

3. Half the class next looks at Gunviolencearchive.org
Please address these questions:

- a. What is new to you?
 - b. What is not new to you?
 - c. What are your take-aways from your exploration?
4. Half the class looks at statistics from Pew Research
 - Demographics
 - Gun Safety and Gun Owners
 - Guns and Gun Violence
 - Views on Gun Policy
 5. Read “Dear American Gun Owner.”

Students now have 20 minutes to compose

Invitations to write include:

- Compose a Ghazal or other poem, a letter to the editor, or a letter to someone who might be close to the situation, e.g. “Dear American Gun Owner.”
- Write an op/ed
- Write additional Amendments to the U.S. Constitution
- Write

We conclude with sharing in small groups and large group

Adaptations and Extensions

- Identify subjects/projects for student activism, building from Greta Thunberg’s practices
- Listen to song lyrics that utilize guns or gun culture such as Organized Konfusion’s ‘Stray Bullet’ or Biggie Smalls’ ‘Machine Gun Funk.’ Students can likely identify other songs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQPIIuSzug8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnprWvFHU78>
- Have students create a six word PSA about guns and gun violence.
- Incorporate headlines/storylines from the MSU mass shooting from February 2023, or the Oxford High School mass shooting, or others. Trigger warnings may be necessary here.

A Few Reminders to Consider

- Students will take a look at the <http://gunviolencearchive.org> graphs and stats in a separate class period.
- Students will likely read one book and then we jigsaw with each other; this is due to time constraints.
- Weaving together the two books (Dunbar-Ortiz and Anderson) is student-generated and involves both group presentations and jigsaws.
- Dealing with students who don’t have an open mind is going to be the toughest aspect of a lesson like this; we would continually come back to historical details

and I would ask students to do the same. I would ask for primary source documents and investigations of the source; we would also look at the transformation of the NRA as a possible invitation to changing cultural perspectives.

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