

# Creating False Identities: Breaking Down the Myths of Childhood

Conceptual Unit for 11th grade American Literature

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## Rationale for Unit on Breaking down the Myths of Childhood

Setting: 11<sup>th</sup> grade American Literature course at an urban charter school with a social justice emphasis; 55 minute classes

This conceptual unit is designed to challenge students' perception of the world by breaking down media-formulated myths and encouraging students to communicate their understanding of false identities through the written and spoken word. The unit will present students with challenging texts that are meant to increase the effectiveness of each student's reading and writing ability, for, as Linda Christensen (2006) states, "People who lack reading and writing skills have difficulty expressing who they are" (p. VI). Students will understand that having a voice, and thereby having the power to identify and eliminate false identities, is inherently intertwined with English Language Arts skills.

### Personal Development of Students

- Students should have the opportunity to look at their childhood and the outside forces that influence their thoughts and behaviors, as *critically* as they feel comfortable. The influences of these negative forces are immeasurable; students should be able to *actively analyze* media and choose what they want to accept and what they want to disregard (Kinloch, 2012, p. 69).

- The people who are in power make the labels, make the stereotypes and reinforce them with every image we encounter throughout our day. It is our responsibility as educators to allow students to tell their own story, pick their own influences and have voices about their future. (Christensen, 2000, p.10).

- In order to have *informed citizens* our classrooms must be preparing students to be active members of society. They should be informed about who dictates what is shown, heard and experienced (Busching, 2002, p. 5).

### Social Development of Students

-The National Council of Teachers of English includes in their 1996 Standards that "Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles" (The Standards 2012)

-However, this understanding is hindered by the reality in which urban students live, a reality in which "most of the early information we receive about "others"-people racially, religiously, or socioeconomically different from ourselves- does not come as a result of firsthand experience. The secondhand information we receive has often been distorted, shaped by cultural stereotypes, and left incomplete..." according to Beverly Tatum (Christensen 2006, p. 40)

-In order to meet the challenge presented by the NCTE and the global world in which our students live, teachers can use literature as a window into other peoples and places, allowing

students vicarious experience as well as an opportunity to see themselves reflected, increase self-awareness, and enrich interactions with others (Alsup and Bush 2003, p.1).

### Literacy Development of Students

-Wide reading will allow students to break down second-hand impressions, and will help students acquire grammatical and language skills, “tools for facilitating communication in various situations” (Alsup and Bush, 2003, pp. 81-3)

-This unit will be built around the novel *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz which chronicles the life of Oscar Wao, an outcast teenager, and his Dominican family. The text will be challenging for students to read and analyze based on the mature content and the complicated cultural foundations of the characters. Students will be challenged to track themes of racism, poverty, classism, community pressures, familial/cultural pressures, and how these different challenges force Oscar into accepting, and then denying, a false identity.

- To be sure, some individuals may claim that the content in *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* will be too mature and/or graphic for an eleventh grade audience. However, the casual language of the novel and the realistic circumstance of Oscar Wao will allow students to connect with literature in a monumental way that will contribute to their ability to write and speak in a professional manner about mature subject matter.

- Some may contend that *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is not sufficiently “American” to fulfill the requirements of this class because it centers around an immigrant Dominican family. Yet, the face of American literature, and American identity, is changing with the ever-evolving American demographic. In fact, “children who come from non-English speaking homes constitute the fastest growing population of school-age children in the United States” (Alsup and Bush 2003, p. 110), thereby making this novel representative of both America today and our students.

### References

Alsup, J. & Bush, J. (2003). “But will it work with real students?”: Scenarios for teaching secondary English language arts. Urbana: IL: National Council of Teachers of English

Busching, B & Slesinger, B. (2002). “It’s our world too”: socially responsive learners in middle school language arts. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English

Christensen, L. (2000). “Reading, writing, and rising up: Teaching about social justice and the power of the written word.” Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Kinloch, V. (2012). “Crossing boundaries: Teaching and learning with urban youth.” New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.

The Standards [Review of the book *Standards for the English Language Arts*] (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/standards/ncte-ira>

## Goals:

1. Journal- Students will keep track of a weekly journal in which they will observe and write about newspaper articles, magazine articles and advertisements, music videos, television shows, commercials, billboards etc. Specifically, students will examine what identities are being appealed to, what identities are being left out, what identities are being ostracized and ridiculed, and what identity stereotypes are being created through the power of the media.

- Measure- checklist rubric

2. Students will write a letter to Disney (or a cartoon company) arguing how that specific company incorrectly represents different identities in American society (women, individuals with obesity, Arabs, African Americans, etc.).

- Measure- analytic rubric

3. Name Poem- Students will discuss identity and how names have power in creating identity. After reading Sandra Cisneros's name poem, students will create their own name poems that give them the opportunity to shatter any false identities and create their own identities through the power of their names.

- Measure- Holistic Rubric

4. Multi-Lens/Multi-Media Project- The class will brainstorm different lenses that the novel could be examined through (examples: feminist lens, "nerd" lens, lens of power, lens of teen with obesity, immigrant lens, "cool kid" lens, etc.) Students will form groups and choose a lens randomly by drawing from a hat. Then groups will choose one of the following projects to complete by analyzing the novel from their assigned lens.

Options:

- a. Skit (live or video)
- b. Identity Exclusion in the Media- students will compile ads (commercials, print ads, billboards) that do not appeal to the identify lens that they chose. Students choose the style of presentation (PowerPoint, video compilation, collage, etc.)
- c. Rewriting the Story- students will choose one character from the novel and rewrite his/her story. Students can choose to rewrite the characters' ending or other events throughout the characters' life. Students can choose to place the character in a different setting, etc.
- d. "A Day in the Life of"
  - i. video/skit
  - ii. written paper (read to class or summarize, do oral presentation based on paper)

- Measure- Peer/Personal/Teacher Review

## Forms for Goal Assessment

### Weekly Journal Checklist

- Quantity: 8-10 entries
- Breadth: Examine at least 3 different media genres and 3 different identities
- Content: Address central questions of the unit (Which identities are included and which are marginalized? Does it reinforce or breakdown existing stereotypes?)
- Level of Thought: Bring your own thought and experience to analyze what you are reading, seeing, hearing.
- Exploration: Work through half-formed thoughts or contradictions you find in the text or in your own thinking
- Details: Include examples, details, and quotes when necessary
- Readability: Entries are neat and clearly label date and what text is being discussed

Other comments:

A = 7 checks  
check

B = 5-6 checks

C = 3-4 checks

D = 2 checks

F= 0-1

Argumentative Letter Rubric- Analytic Rubric

	1	2	3	4	
Position Statement	Statement of position cannot be determined.	Position is stated but is not maintained consistently throughout the letter.	Position is stated and is consistently maintained throughout the letter. Reference to the issue(s) at hand are missing.	Position is clearly stated and consistently maintained. Clear reference to the issue(s) are stated.	_____ _____ _____
Supporting Information	Evidence is unrelated to argument.	Argument is supported by limited evidence.	Evidence clearly supports the position but there is not enough evidence.	Evidence clearly supports the position; there is sufficient evidence.	_____ _____ _____
Organization	There is total lack of structure.	Some attempt to structure the argument has been made, but the structure is poorly developed.	Structure is developed reasonably well but lacks clarity.	Structure work is clearly developed.	_____ _____ _____
Tone of Letter	Tone is inappropriate to purpose.	Tone does not contribute to persuasiveness .	Tone enhances persuasiveness but there are inconsistencies .	Tone is consistent and enhances persuasiveness .	_____ _____ _____
Sentence Structure and Mechanics	Work pays little attention to proper sentence structure.	Work contains structural weaknesses and grammatical errors.	Sentence structure is generally correct. Some awkward sentences do appear.	Sentence structure is consistently correct.	_____ _____ _____

Capitalization and Punctuation	There are four or more errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are two or three errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There is one error in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are no errors in punctuation or capitalization.	_____ _____ _____
				Total:	

## Holistic Rubric for Name Poem

Poems that meet to following criteria will receive an A

1. The poem is clearly in poetic form with stanzas rather than sentences
2. The poem uses clear, varied, and concise language
3. The poem brings meaning to the name beyond the surface (family history, origin of nicknames, associations with people calling you, how much you like or dislike your name and why, etc)
4. The poem shows how the name shapes your identity
5. The content and language are easy to follow
6. The poem has been edited and corrected for conventions of spelling and grammar, and only deviate where it adds to the meaning of the poem

Poems that meet to following criteria will receive a B

1. The poem is clearly in poetic form with stanzas rather than sentences
2. The poem uses clear and concise language, but lacks variety
3. The poem brings meaning to the name but stays mostly on the surface (gives example of people saying the name but not explaining the significance, tells how much you like or dislike your name but not why, etc.)
4. The poem shows how the name is related to your identity
5. The content and language are easy to follow with only a few confusing parts
6. The poem has been edited and corrected except for a few errors in conventions of spelling and grammar, and deviations rarely add to the meaning of the poem

Poems that meet to following criteria will receive a C

1. The poem is clearly in poetic form but parts may read and appear more like prose.
2. The poem uses language that is often unclear and or unnecessary
3. The poem brings little new meaning to the name and mostly repeats the name without significance
4. The poem hints at how the name may relate to identity but the connection is unclear.
5. The content and language are difficult to follow but can often be understood upon rereading
6. The poem has been edited but still has several mistakes in conventions of spelling and grammar, for which the deviation does not add to the poem's meaning

Poems that meet to following criteria will receive a D

1. The poem is not decidedly in poetic or prose form
2. The poem uses unclear and unvaried language
3. The poem brings no new meaning to the name, but at least mentions it
4. The poem shows little connection between the name and identity



5. The content and language are disjointed and disorganized
6. The poem show little sign of having been edited and corrected and shows several mistakes in conventions of spelling and grammar, which do not add to the meaning of the poem

Poems that meet to following criteria will receive an F

1. The poem has no distinguishable form
2. The poem lacks coherent language
3. The poem does not mention the name
4. The poem makes no reference to identity
5. The content and language have no connection and cannot be understood without student explanation
6. The poem shows no sign of having been edited and corrected and has frequent mistakes in conventions of spelling and grammar that do not add to the meaning of the poem

Partner Peer Review for Final Project

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's name \_\_\_\_\_

Did:	Yes	No
Your partner do equal amounts of work with you?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Your partner act reliable, organized and easy to communicate with?	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Your partner share the responsibilities of this project willingly?	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Total		

Other thoughts/feedback

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What grade would you give your partner? \_\_\_\_\_

Final Project Rubric

Category	3	2	1
Originality/Creativity	Project shows imagination and depth of thought.	Project shows some imagination and/or some depth of thought.	Project does not show imagination or depth of thought.
Relevance	Project shows understanding of texts and contemplation of theme. Evidence of growth and knowledge gained throughout the unit	Project shows some understanding of texts and/or some lack of contemplation of theme. Occasionally wanders off topic. Evidence of growth and knowledge gained throughout the unit is sketchy	Project does not show understanding of texts or any contemplation of theme. Mostly off topic. No evidence of growth and knowledge is apparent.
Oral Presentation	Was prepared for the oral presentation, spoke clearly, and attempted to engage class members in project. Paid attention to other people.	Was somewhat prepared for the oral presentation, did not speak clearly and/or did not attempt to engage class members in project. Paid attention to other projects.	Was not prepared for the oral presentation did not speak clearly, and did not attempt to engage class members in project. Did not pay attention to other projects.
Quality/Effort	Obviously put fourth great effort in designing and completing this project and preparing for the presentation. Full use of resources available is evident.	Put fourth minimum effort in designing and completing this project and preparing for the presentation. May or may not have taken advantage of all available resources.	Did not put fourth minimum required effort into the project. Did not take advantage of available resources.

Peer & Self Evaluation	All peer and self-evaluations were completed and you receive high marks from your peers and you give yourself high marks.	All peer and self-evaluations were completed and you received average marks from yourself and from your peers	All peer and self-evaluations were not completed and you received low marks from yourself and/or your peers.
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## Unit Design for Instruction-5 weeks

### Day 1: Introductory Activity

#### Lesson Objectives

- Students will analyze an individual based on a single image- the purpose of the warm-up is to have students explore stereotypes.
- Students will be able to identify their own flaws when stereotyping while writing about the image of Trayvon Martin.
- Students will have a better understanding of Trayvon Martin's case based on the video. They will be encouraged to research more of the case at home.
- Students will be aware of how framing in the media can lead to altered perceptions of the truth.
- Students will be able to artistically demonstrate and intellectually discuss their interpretation of the Trayvon Martin case using graffiti.
- Students will humanize Trayvon Martin as a 17 year old boy by writing both an "I am" and an "I will be" poem from his perspective.

#### Resources

- Projector and laptop
  - Image of Trayvon Martin
  - Image of Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart
  - Rodney King Beating
    - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW1ZDIXiuS4>
  - Trayvon Martin fact sheet
  - Graffiti assignment directions
- Print
  - Trayvon Martin fact sheet
  - "I am" and "I will be" poem for students to complete in their at-home composition notebook. Students have been and will be working in this journal all year.
- Butcher block paper or large poster boards
- Colored markers
- Laminating machine to laminate posters for the classroom or hallway.

#### Research

- I will have to familiarize myself with Trayvon Martin's fatal shooting. I should be well aware the social implications of the way that he was stereotyped. In order to successfully engage with the students about this case it is important that I remain updated on any news revealed since the initial incident.
- I should also have an example of the graffiti project and the "I am" and "I will be poems" ready so that students have clear expectations for the level that they should be interpreting and writing at.
- Relate Trayvon Martin to Rodney King beating that led to the Los Angeles Riots.
- I should be familiar with what happened in the country as a result of the Rodney King beating. I should be aware of how this case unfolded and what the can be implied about

our society based on the fact that the four police officers who were convicted of beating him were found not-guilty.

### **Performance Standards**

- ELACC11-12RI7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- ELACC11-12SL5: 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.
- ELACC11-12W3
  - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
  - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
  - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

### **Outcomes**

- Students will be aware of who Trayvon Martin is and be able to connect his case with Rodney King and the wider reaching implications of discrimination in society.
- Students will be able to connect these two cases with their own behavior and stereotyping that they may be involved in.
- Students will create artwork in the form of graffiti to depict their understanding and reaction to Trayvon Martin and Rodney King.
- Students will start to write and “I am” and an “I will be” poem from the viewpoint of Trayvon Martin or Rodney King to create a human connection with these individuals.
- Students will view the digital story and have an understanding of the provocative questions that will run through the entire unit.

### **Differentiation**

- Students will have the opportunity to respond individually and in groups during this class period.
- Students will also have the opportunity to interact as a group and share with the entire class.
- Showing images and videos will help visual learners connect their writing to a real story.
- The graffiti project will allow students with artistic skills to flourish; those who do not have great artistic skills will be able to work with stronger artists.
- Bringing the graffiti project into the classroom allows students to think abstractly, artistically and it allows them to express themselves in a unique way.
- Journaling will allow students who are usually quiet to write down their thoughts about what is being discussed in class; even though they may not be comfortable orally participating they still have a voice about the issues that we examine in class.

### **Technology**

- Students will be looking at images, YouTube videos, a Power Point presentation and a Digital Story in this class so that they can more fully humanize what it means to stereotype; it will also further humanize Trayvon Martin and Rodney King.

### Teaching Procedures

- **Opening Engagement- 15 minutes**
  - A picture of Trayvon Martin will be projected on the screen with a prompt that asks the following questions.
    - What does society think of this boy?
    - How does he spend his time?
    - Who are his friends?
    - What are aspirations?
    - How does he sound when he talks?
  - Some of the students may recognize that this boy is Trayvon Martin: some may not. Discuss their answers and then reveal the identity of the boy.
  - Show the image of Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart.
- **Demonstration-30 minutes**
  - Videos
    - Students will watch the video outlining the case of Trayvon Martin (5 minutes)
    - Students will watch the video of the Rodney King beating (2 minutes).
    - We will also talk about what the students' prior knowledge is regarding these two cases. The instructor should fill in any gaps in information.
    - We will discuss how the two cases are connected and talk about how the videos make them feel.
  - Digital Story (5 minutes).
- **Closing Engagement- 10 minutes**
  - Students will view the Digital Story (5 minutes)
  - Students will continue writing in their composition notebooks that they use at home for this unit. For the first week they will complete the "I am" and "I will be" poem from the perspective of either King or Martin.

### Assessment

- Students will have a better understanding of stereotypes that they make by responding to the image of Trayvon Martin without background knowledge of him.
- Student will have a better understanding, using the Rodney King case, of the racial profiling that happens, even at the level of the law.
- Students will use artwork to depict their reactions to both the Rodney Kind and Trayvon Martin cases.

### Homework

- Journal entry number one is going to be structured to help the student jump-start journaling for this unit.

- They will have the outline for the “I am” and “I will be” poems to complete in their journals.
- Journal checks happen at the end of each school week.

Image of Trayvon Martin





## Trayvon Martin Fact Sheet

From [Think Progress](#):

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On February 26, 2012, a 17-year-old African-American named Trayvon Martin was shot and killed in Sanford, Florida. The shooter was George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old white man. Zimmerman admits killing Martin, but claims he was acting in self-defense. Three weeks after Martin's death, no arrests have been made and Zimmerman remains free.

Here is what everyone should know about the case:

**1.** Zimmerman called the police to report Martin's "suspicious" behavior, which he described as "just walking around looking about."

Zimmerman was in his car when he saw Martin walking on the street. He called the police and said: "There's a real suspicious guy. This guy looks like he's up to no good, on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around looking about... These a\*\*holes always get away" [[Orlando Sentinel](#)]

**2.** Zimmerman pursued Martin against the explicit instructions of the police dispatcher:

Dispatcher: "Are you following him?" Zimmerman: "Yeah" Dispatcher: "OK, we don't need you to do that." [[Orlando Sentinel](#)]

**3.** Prior to the release of the 911 tapes, Zimmerman's father released a statement claiming "[a]t no time did George follow or confront Mr. Martin." [[Sun Sentinel](#)]

**4.** Zimmerman was carrying a 9 millimeter handgun. Martin was carrying a bag of Skittles and a can of iced tea. [[ABC News](#)]

**5.** Martin weighed 140 pounds. Zimmerman weighs 250 pounds. [[Orlando Sentinel](#); [WDBO](#)]

**6.** Martin's English teacher described him as "as an A and B student who majored in cheerfulness." [[Orlando Sentinel](#)]

**7.** Martin had no criminal record. [[New York Times](#)]

**8.** Zimmerman "was charged in July 2005 with resisting arrest with violence and battery on an officer. The charges appear to have been dropped." [[Huffington Post](#)]

**9.** Zimmerman called the police 46 times since Jan. 1, 2011. [[Miami Herald](#)]

**10.** According to neighbors, Zimmerman was "fixated on crime and focused on young, black

males.” [*Miami Herald*]

**11.** Zimmerman “had been the subject of complaints by neighbors in his gated community for aggressive tactics” [*Huffington Post*]

**12.** A police officer “corrected” a key witness. “The officer told the witness, a long-time teacher, it was Zimmerman who cried for help, said the witness. ABC News has spoken to the teacher and she confirmed that the officer corrected her when she said she heard the teenager shout for help.” [*ABC News*]

**13.** Three witnesses say they heard a boy cry for help before a shot was fired. “Three witnesses contacted by The Miami Herald say they saw or heard the moments before and after the Miami Gardens teenager’s killing. All three said they heard the last howl for help from a despondent boy.” [*Miami Herald*]

**14.** The officer in charge of the crime scene also received criticism in 2010 when he initially failed to arrest a lieutenant’s son who was videotaped attacking a homeless black man. [*New York Times*]

**15.** The police did not test Zimmerman for drugs or alcohol. A law enforcement expert told ABC that Zimmerman sounds intoxicated on the 911 tapes. Drug and alcohol testing is “standard procedure in most homicide investigations.” [*ABC News*]

The Martin case had been turned over to the Seminole County State Attorney’s Office. Martin’s family has asked for the FBI to investigate.

Image of Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart



**BE MINDFUL ABOUT STEREOTYPES!**  
ONLY ONE OF THEM IS A CONVICTED FELON.

## Day 2: Introduction to Stereotypes in U.S. Culture

**Objectives:** Students will look at advertisements and dissect the racial and social implications of each image. They will write a short (introductory) letter to the companies arguing why their ads are unsuccessful. Students will realize the stereotypes that exploited groups of people and that those stereotypes still exist in advertising.

### **Procedures:**

15 minutes: Teacher will introduce the Daily iWrite: Do you feel that different advertising companies generally appeal to specific groups of people based on their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.? Give an example to justify your claim. Name a company that you think represents all races, body types, and genders equally. What types of advertisements are the most meaningful or persuasive to you?

10 minutes: Students will share their iWrites in a Think, Pair, Share format with their table partner.

25 minutes: Mini-lecture—the teacher will introduce concepts about stereotypes in U.S. culture and the ways in which those stereotypes are exaggerated by the media and through entertainment. In this lecture, teacher will define and discuss the differences between stereotypes, bias, racism, and prejudice. At the end of the lecture, the teacher will expose students to a series advertising images.

30 minutes: Using one of the images on the students' tables, they will work in a group to answer the following questions. Students should elect one person to write because they will be turning this assignment in at the end of class.

1. What is being sold in this image?
2. How is this company selling their product?
3. Is this advertisement exploiting someone? (exploit: to take advantage of someone unethically)
4. Write down specific reasons why this ad is unsuccessful.
5. If you were to write a letter to these companies, what would you say to them to convince them that they way they are trying to sell their product is unsuccessful? Write one paragraph as a group.
6. Come up with a more successful way of selling this product. (If you have the cigarettes ad, come up with a more realistic consequence for smoking)

10 minutes: Exit ticket—students will answer the following prompt: “Given all that you’ve learned about stereotypes in advertisement, do you believe that there are any companies that display completely unbiased advertisements? Which one of the advertisement images on your table do you find the most meaningful and why?”

Homework: Tonight you should find a newspaper, magazine, or internet advertisement. Glue the advertisement into your journal and discuss the stereotypes, racism, bias, etc. that is employed by the advertisement. This is an ongoing assignment which you should complete at least three nights during the week.

### Day 3: Stereotypes in Children's Entertainment

**Objectives:** Students will identify myths about minorities that are taught through cartoons. Students will look objectively and critically at cartoon clips to see the stereotypes that are expressed.

**Procedures:**

10 Minutes: Students will get in groups and share out their commentary from the homework from the night before. Students will verbally answer and discuss the following questions: "In what ways are our perceptions, as adults, are shaped and defined by the advertisements that we are exposed to?"

10 minutes: Students will receive a "Charting Stereotypes" worksheet, and the teacher will explain to the students that today they will be looking at cartoon clips and analyzing them based on the criteria listed. They are going to be looking at different types of stereotypes clips so that they can see that, even as children, they were brainwashed to think a certain way about certain people.

20 Minutes: Students will watch the YouTube video that will expose students to clips that display pervasive stereotypes in various cartoons. Students should fill out their worksheet as they watch; however, the teacher will give students ten minutes to complete the sheet after the video.

15 minutes: Once worksheets are completed, teacher should facilitate a whole-group discussion to synthesize students' observations and understandings. The teacher should ask the following questions:

- Have you noticed these stereotypes before?
- What are some specific things that you have noted on your worksheet?
- Do you find the stereotypes offensive, or do you think it is funny?
  - Teacher should point out: I do not want you to think that you are racist or wrong for thinking these characters are funny. They are written to be funny: to make children laugh. What I want you to be aware of is that people take offense to this because they are *only* represented in the movies and media as ONE thing. There is no diversity in the roles that they are allowed."

### Day 4: How to Break a Stereotype

**Objectives:** Students will establish an understanding of how stereotypes can be dissected with logic and broken with power. Students will also learn the requirements for their argumentative research paper, and will ask any clarifying questions for the assignment. Finally, students will evaluate a sample piece of student writing so that students know what is expected of them.

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present Daily iWrite: "What is the most effective way to eliminate stereotypes? Do you think it will ever be possible to rid the world of all stereotypes and bias?"

10 minutes: Students will discuss their iWrites using a Think, Pair, Share format.

15 minutes: Teacher will introduce the argumentative essay assignment; the teacher will mention that one way to break stereotypes is to address the source that is exaggerating or promoting that stereotype. In this way, students will be writing letters to companies that incorporate stereotypes into their cartoons, and students will be arguing how and why the stereotypes employed by that company are harmful to society. Students will also be exposed to

the rubric that will be used to evaluate their work. During this time, students may ask any questions they have concerning this essay.

15 minutes: Teacher will pass out copies of an exemplary argumentative letter written by a student (copies should be made of a student essay from earlier this semester or else from past years; therefore, there is no handout attached for this example). Students will be equipped with highlighters and pens, and will work with a table partner to highlight and comment on the essays' warrant, data, and claim combinations. They will discuss what makes the essay so powerful, and will comment on how they will use the same techniques in their papers. Specifically, students will look at the essay's organization and discuss how they should organize their own essays to be effective and meaningful.

5 minutes: The teacher will explain the students' homework as follows: "Each student should bring to class tomorrow three claims, three pieces of data, and three warrants that they will be using in their paper. Each student should be prepared to begin drafting at the beginning of class." Students should copy down their homework assignment.

### **Day 5: Writer's Workshop**

**Objectives:** Students will complete the first draft of their essay in class. Students will ask the teacher questions concerning their essays, and students will pair up a new partner and will edit each other's essays. Partners will make sure that the essay that they are editing has a clear organizational structure, and integrates three strong points (claim, data, and warrants) into the essay.

#### **Procedures:**

5 minutes: Teacher will randomly assign students to pairs. The pairs will move to tables in order to sit with each other. The teacher will explain that today is a writer's workshop and that the entire class period will be devoted to breaking down stereotypes through writing. Students will have the first 30 minutes to draft their essay, and 15 minutes to peer edit. The teacher will keep an internet timer on the board so that students can divvy up their time. During this time, the teacher will explain, the teacher will visit each pair to give them feedback and guidance in their writing.

25 minutes: Students will use their homework from the night before to draft their argumentative letter.

20 minutes: Students will switch papers with their partner with red ink; the partners will begin editing the papers. Editors should be looking for the following elements:

- 3 organized paragraphs that each contain a claim, data, and a warrant
- Punctuation and capitalization
- Grammar

5 minutes: The teacher will remind students that their final draft is due Monday. They should bring in two printed, stapled copies of their letter. In addition, students should remember to bring in their copies of *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* to be reading in class on Monday.

### **Day 6: Introduction to Dominican History**

**Objectives:** Students will build background knowledge concerning the Dominican Republic and the treacherous reign of Trujillo. Students will also learn about Junot Diaz and will begin reading *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

**Procedures:**

15 minutes: Students will get into small groups and read their letters out loud. Afterwards, the teacher will collect all writing and hold for grading.

10 minutes: In the same groups, students will discuss whether they have ever noticed any type of stereotypes, racism, and prejudice in novels that they have read. Then, the teacher will explain that their next novel will deal with the creation and destruction of identity in a Dominican teenager. Students will create a KWL chart in their composition book. Students will fill out what they know about the Dominican Republic and what they want to learn.

20 minutes: Teacher will give a mini-lesson that details Dominican history and immigration, Dominican relationships with the U.S., and the reign of Trujillo. Teacher will employ maps, images, and videos to engage students. At the end of the mini-lesson, students will ask any questions and will fill in what they have learned in their KWL chart.

10 minutes: Students will use the rest of class to begin reading *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

Homework: Read through page 50.

**Day 7: Identity as Color and Culture**

**Objectives:** Students will build an understanding of Dominican Stereotypes, and will analyze those stereotypes using *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Students will look at Dominican expectations for masculinity, and will be able to assess how Oscar does or does not abide by these gender norms.

**Procedures:**

15 minutes: Teacher will present daily iWrite: "Diaz draws particular attention to the situation of black Dominicans, black by skin color, descended from Africa, but living in a culture that vilifies the physical traits of Africans, from kinky hair to dark skin. How did Oscar and Lola deal with their blackness? What about their mother, Hypatia Belicia Cabral?" Students will complete iWrite.

10 minutes: Students will share their iWrite with a table partner.

5 minutes: The teacher will explain an activity titled "Who is Oscar Wao?" Students will each receive a sheet of paper that has the outline of a figure on it. On the inside of the figure, students will draw picture/ symbols, and write words and phrases that represent who Oscar truly is based on his description in the book. They will depict his interests, his feelings, and his personality. On the outside of the figure, students will draw picture/ symbols, and write words and phrases that represents how society perceives Oscar, and how society develops false or bias expectations for Oscar based on Dominican stereotypes of masculinity.

20 minutes: Students will create their "Who is Oscar Wao" diagram.

10 minutes: Students will volunteer to stand up and share their work with the whole group.

Homework: Read pages 50-95

**Day 8: A Feminist Critique**

**Objectives:** Students will develop an understanding of female gender roles in Dominican society, and will analyze those gender roles using the strong female leads in *Oscar Wao* (Beli, La Inca, and Lola). Students will analyze how and why gender norms and stereotypes are different for males and females, and how these expectations effect the characters in the novel.

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will introduce iWrite: Diaz plays with stereotypes of Dominican male virility, with Oscar asking roommate Yunior one night, for example, "I have heard from a reliable source that no Dominican male has ever died a virgin. You who have experience in these matters--do you think this is true?" What do you think Diaz' motive is in emphasizing such stereotypes?

10 minutes: Students will share iWrite with a new partner.

15 minutes: The teacher will give a mini-lesson discussing male and female stereotypes in Dominican culture. The teacher will show students a variety of Dominican ads and caricatures to illuminate these stereotypes. The teacher will also include ads from various other cultures that display stereotypes, and will use these ads to compare with the Dominican ads.

15 minutes: Students will be exposed to a series of questions that pertain to a female critique of *Oscar Wao*. For example:

- 1) How are women portrayed in *Oscar Wao*? What language is used to describe them?
- 2) What role do women have in Dominican society? Do the women in *Oscar Wao* fit these norms and follow these stereotypes?
- 3) How does Dominican society judge men and women differently?

After viewing the questions (one at a time), students will take part in paseo protocol so that they have the opportunity to share their responses with others, and so that they are exposed to the thoughts and ideas of several classmates.

5 minutes: Students should copy down the following homework:

- 1) Read pages 95-136
- 2) Create a timeline that depicts the big events and the migration of the characters in the novel.
  - a. There will be a timeline drawn on the board for to sketch quickly. Students can use this model to create their own timeline.

**Day 9: Stereotypes and False Identities**

**Objectives:** Students will create timelines that chart the chronological and geographical movements of the characters in *Oscar Wao* in order to organize and analyze the plot. Students will be able to further analyze gender roles and various stereotypes in Dominican society and *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

**Procedures:**

15 minutes: Students will work with a partner and combine their timelines on a large sheet of chart paper. They should decide what the major events in the story are. In this way, students will be able to track the chronological and geographical shifts in the novel that can often complicate the story.

10 minutes: One pair will share their timeline out with the entire class. Then, if a different group has something else to add, they will share their timeline out with the entire class. This



will continue until each pair has a comprehensive timeline that they can keep adding to throughout their reading.

25 minutes: Students will get into small groups. Each student will have clay and various other items (such as Legos, crayons, etc.), and will use these items to symbolically answer questions on the board.

- 1) How does the geographical space in the novel affect the identity of the characters?
- 2) How does returning to the place that you were born make you feel and act?
- 3) If you were Oscar, what would be your Dominican identity? What would be your American identity?

The students will have two minutes to create their masterpiece, and then will share with their group. The teacher will walk around and call on students to share out with the entire group.

5 minutes: Students will write down the following homework assignment:

- 1) Read pages 136-167

### **Day 10: Culminating Project**

**Objectives:** Students will learn about their final project, will be exposed to the rubric with which they will be evaluated, and will ask questions to clarify the requirements of the assignment.

**Procedures:**

15 minutes: Teacher will introduce iWrite: "Do any characters work towards breaking the stereotypes by which they are trapped? If so, who and how?"

10 minutes: Students will share response with a new table partner.

15 minutes: Teacher will present procedures and requirements for the students' final project. Teacher will distribute a directions sheet as well as a rubric that will be used to evaluate the project.

15 minutes: Students will be put into groups and each group will choose a lens through which to complete their project. At this time, group may formulate and ask questions about the project.

### WEEK 3:

### **Day 11- How we picture ourselves**

**Objectives:** Students will consider the differences between how they view themselves and how society views them as a way to relate to Oscar de Leon in general, and to think about concepts of identity in general.

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present the daily iWrite: write two lists, one for how you think of yourself and a second for how you think others would describe you

20 minutes: Teacher will read these two quotations from the weekend reading:

“I’ll change your life” -Yunior (175)

“ If we were orcs, wouldn’t we, at a racial level, imagine ourselves to look like elves? - Oscar(178)

Explain that together, these quotations capture the contrast between how a person sees him/herself and how others may see that person. Oscar suggests that he sees himself as belonging to what he considers a more desirable race, whereas Yunior sees the flaws and room for improvement in Oscar. He thinks that he can solve Oscar’s problems according to his values of fitness and personal appearance. Tell students to keep these quotes and perspectives in mind as they work on the following assignment :

use the supplies in class-markers, glue, paper, scissors, etc. to make a mask (blank cardboard template provided). Divide the mask between how you see yourself and how others see you; you may want to do a front and back, left and right, or even what’s on the outside and what’s inside in the brain.

20 minutes: Have a few students share their masks; as part of sharing, prompt students to discuss the contrasts between their self-conception and society’s conception, why they think that disparity exists, whether or not their mask confirms Oscar or Yunior’s assertions, etc.. Encourage the class to also prompt one another with such questions. Depending on student participation, the teacher may guide this into a discussion of whether or not we can change ourselves according to someone else’s evaluation and values.

5 minutes: Exit ticket. Have students answer the following question: “In what ways was a mask appropriate or not appropriate as a prompt for discussing this section of *Oscar Wao*, and the difference between self- and social conceptions in particular?”

Students should continue reading *Oscar Wao* to have pages 188-201 read by Thursday

### **Day 12-The tragedy of losing names**

**Objectives:** Students will read Sandra Cisneros’s “My Name” Poem to understand the relationship between name and identity. They will relate the themes of this poem to the novel *Oscar Wao* and further to their own lives in preparation for composing their own name poems.

#### **Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present the daily iWrite: What makes something “tragic”? You may include specific examples, personal or historical, or think more generally, but focus on *why* it is tragic (i.e. don’t just write “I lost my house,” but write “I lost my house, and with it I lost my sense of security and many of the memories associated with that house”). Allow any students who want to share.

10 minutes: Read the following from the text :

After Melvin starts calling Oscar, Oscar Wao, Yunior writes “And the tragedy? After a couple of weeks dude started *answering* to it”

Discuss with class: According to the descriptions you wrote about tragedy, why is this occasion the one Yunior identifies as tragic? If it does not fit your definition, can you think of other ways in which Oscar taking a socially-imposed name is tragic?

10 minutes: Distribute and read aloud Sandra Cisneros's "My Name" from *The House on Mango Street*. Ask students if they see any themes in the poem similar to those in Oscar Wao. Examples: treatment of women, cultural norms, interconnection with past generations. Write whatever students come up with on the board

15 minutes: Explain upcoming "Name poem" assignment. Have students in pairs talk and take notes about their name as they relate to the themes in the previous activity. They may, of course, write about different themes, but these themes should give them some guidance in brainstorming, especially since these themes have models in the Cisneros poem and the ideas from *Oscar Wao*. Clarify that class will be reading these poems with one another.

10 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will answer the following "Thinking about today's discussion of Oscar's mental tragedy, consider whether or not Oscar's mentality is tragic in the following statement " If we were orcs, wouldn't we, at a racial level, imagine ourselves to look like elves?" (178). How or how not is it tragic?"

-Tell students to bring science textbook to class tomorrow.

Students should continue reading *Oscar Wao* to have pages 188-201 read by Thursday

### **Day 13: Science Cross-curricular day**

**Objectives:** Students will review metaphor and simile in recent readings as well as in the possibilities for their own writing. They will practice generating their own metaphors and similes, particularly through the application of knowledge from science class about the properties of different scientific elements.

#### **Procedures:**

10 minutes: Have students search in science textbook for topics they have recently studied (you, as the teacher, would already have found out what they are studying by talking with grade-level science teachers), and list the properties of certain items or elements. This may change according to science course taught at school, but imagine they are studying chemistry. In this case, for example, they may find that argon is a noble gas, it is abundant, and as a noble gas it is relatively inactive.

10 minutes: Present powerpoint mini-lesson on figurative language. Read from the text how Yunior describes Lola's reaction as "Cold as Saturn" (181). Identify this as simile, then give definitions of simile and metaphor. Explain that both he and Sandra Cisneros use several metaphors and similes in their writing, and give more examples. Ask students why they may use

these metaphors and similes. Possible answers: to make it interesting; to give another way to understand ; to show the personalities/interests/cultural backgrounds of the characters.

15 minutes: Students will practice generating figurative language through the following activity:

Take out a blank sheet of paper and write one science term at the top and an adjective describing it. Fold over the top of the paper so that only the adjective/property is visible. Pass clockwise. Look at the adjective at the top of your new sheet and write one noun that may suit that adjective. Now fold the paper so that the first noun and adjective are covered but not your new noun, and pass clockwise. Look at the noun on your new sheet and write an adjective beneath that describes the noun. Now fold the paper so that the noun is covered but your adjective is visible. Continue passing in this fashion.

Once the papers have gone all the way around, have a few students share. They should find that for every noun, there is another noun that shares a similar characteristic: for example, both an ice-cube and a stare may be cold. They can use these lists to generate metaphors and similes, i.e. "her stare was as cold as an ice cube," or conversely "the ice cube was as cold as her stare."

10 minutes: Have students in pairs use these lists of associated nouns and adjectives to generate some figurative sentences:

- Mary was as unchanging as argon
- Her insult brought my mood down like gravity

10 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will generate 3 metaphors or similes related to their own name that they may use in their poems

Students should continue reading *Oscar Wao* to have pages 188-201 read by Thursday

### Day 14- Emulating writers

**Objectives:** Students will practice interpreting and discussing specific phrases from *Oscar Wao*. They will also identify effective writing techniques from both the novel and their peer's poems that may help them improve their own name poems.

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Have students look through the last excerpt they have read, pgs. 188-201, and find a quote they like. They should copy down the quote and write down why they chose it.

20 minutes: Have students get in groups of 4 and share their quotes and explanations using the protocol "Save the Last Word for Me," giving each student 1 minute to reflect on the quote (from Beers "When Kids Can't Read")

25 minutes: Explain that this was an exercise not only in examining a specific line of text from multiple perspectives, but also in identifying writers techniques that you yourself like. Now

students will extend this practice of identifying techniques to emulate to their poems. One student will read their poem aloud and then in a circle the three other students will name one aspect they think was done well and which they might like to emulate in their own poems. Continue with the next student until all students have shared. Each student should write down one of these techniques they want to emulate in lieu of an exit ticket.

Homework: write final draft of poems

### **Day 15-Poem Read-Aloud**

**Objectives:** Students will establish respectful procedures for sharing poetry, and then share their own Name poems. Their peers will meanwhile listen to the poems to reflect upon their own assumptions and stereotypes.

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher presents daily iWrite : write down how you would expect an audience to behave at a poetry reading. Students will share these expectations with the class to set the tone and norms for the upcoming read-aloud. The teacher will write these norms on the board

40 minutes: Arrange desks in a circle, and have each student share their poem. While students listen, they are to listen for anything in a poem that disproves an expectation or assumption they had about that person. They will then write the poet a small personal note thanking them for opening the letter-writer's eyes.

If extra time, students can begin reading for next week

5 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will answer the following: "Having reflected so much on your name this week, how do you think name is connected with identity in *Oscar Wao*?"

Students should be reading the following excerpts for next week:

211-216, 224-246, 251-258, 270-283. Reading through page 246 will be due by Tuesday, but since it is only 27 pages over three days, they would do well to get ahead for subsequent reading tasks)

### WEEK 4

### **Day 16-Sketch to Stretch**

**Objectives:** Students will identify where novel content is unclear, as well as hone their research skills as they answer questions to bring clarity to the text. This exercise in questioning a text and research skills will also provide them with useful background knowledge for this week's reading of *Oscar Wao*

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present the daily iWrite: What about the novel so far has been unclear for you or left you with questions?

-Students should not write this in their composition books, but on a separate slip of paper to turn in

15 minutes: Students in groups of 4 will do a “Sketch to Stretch” on a large sheet of butcher paper. One student will draw for one minute on the prompt “draw a symbol for what we have read in the novel so far” without anyone speaking. Then each member in the group will have a minute to add to the drawing without any communication. Continue for 8 minutes so that each student can draw twice. After the drawing, each person will then have a minute to explain what they were drawing and what they thought the others were drawing. They should then prepare an explanation for the class.

10 minutes: Groups will present to the class what they have drawn and any meaning that emerged. Students and the teacher should take note of any parallel themes or any oppositions among the groups .

15 minutes: Class discussion about ambiguity and interpretation. How is *Oscar Wao* like these drawings, thinking about the work as a composite of multiple viewpoints, and the uncertainty of several events?

5 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will answer the following: “ Considering our broader unit theme of breaking down false identities, how can ambiguous images either reinforce or break down simplified stereotypes or assumptions?”

Students should complete excerpts 211-216 and 224-246 by tomorrow

### **Day 17- Power of the written word**

**Objectives:** Students will consider why Junot Diaz breaks conventions of Standard English, and how such deviations contribute to meaning. They will extend this discussion of language to broader themes of representations of reality in *Oscar Wao*

#### **Procedures:**

5 minutes: Teacher will presents the daily iWrite: In your opinion, was Abelard arrested for a passing joke or for writing a book against Trujillo?

-Do a quick survey of class; record responses, but leave time for discussion during class discussion later

20 minutes: Junot Diaz often breaks conventions of Standard English. Have students consider the reasons for these deviations by considering and writing answers to the following questions:

1. Although most of the novel is in English, Diaz includes several Spanish terms. Look at the following phrase on pages 230 and 231: “Tarde venientibus ossa”
  - a. What do you think it means?
  - b. How did you figure out this meaning?
  - c. What is the effect of leaving it in its original language?

2. In describing a possible reason for Abelard’s arrest, the author writes:

...when Dr. Abelard Luis Cabral opened the trunk of the Packard, he said, Nope, no bodies here, *Trujillo must have cleared them out for me.*

End quote.

- a. Does it seem more or less representative of reality to have no actual quotation marks?
- b. What is the effect of having the sentence about Trujillo in italics? Perhaps does it make it seem more or less realistic, more or less emphatic and offensive, etc.?

10 minutes: Use think, pair, share to go over class responses

10 minutes: Class discussion about the lost book of Abelard. This will be a chance for students to return to their iWrite entries and consider their initial responses in light of class discussion. Did students like the ambiguity Diaz creates by presenting the two possibilities? Considering what they’ve learned about the media’s creation of stereotypes, does this approach by Diaz offer an unbiased alternative? Might people be turned away from confronting this ambiguity that does not fit neatly into black and white answers?

10 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will answer the following: “How is Diaz’s deviation from cut and dry rules of Standard English related to the themes of stereotypes and perceptions of reality?”

Students should finish reading excerpts 251-258 and 270-283 for tomorrow

### **Day 18- Clarifying Ambiguity**

**Objectives:** Students will learn to analyze symbols in a text, specifically the role of the mongoose in *Oscar Wao*. Then, they will practice self-sufficiency in using the text to answer their own peer’s questions, meanwhile considering which questions are meant to have answers and which should be left ambiguous.

#### **Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present the daily iWrite: Go through the following pages and take notes on what happens when the mongoose appears: pgs 149, 191, 225

15 minutes: Discuss as a class why the mongoose appears, what it is, and how it contributes to the themes of the text—stereotypes, superstition, personal strength and determination, heritage, etc.. Three students who participate well can add mongoose templates to class plot line.

20 min: Students will get in groups of three, and every student will be given a question from the other day's iWrite to discuss something that was unclear. Each group should discuss the three questions they have been given, and write a written reply to the author of the question (although names will remain anonymous)

10 minutes: Exit ticket- Students will respond to the following: "We spent yesterday and the first half of class discussing undefined objects, yet finished class today trying to answer questions from peers. Did you feel satisfied with the answers you provided? What is the value or purpose of trying to answer these types of questions, or why is there no value or purpose?"

### **Day 19- Group Work Day**

**Objectives:** Students will finalize plans for final multi-media project

**Procedures:**

10 minutes :Teacher will present the daily iWrite: How do you predict Oscar's visit to the Dominican Republic will end...or will it?

45 minutes: Give students time to work on multi-media project. They should submit a written proposal with the names of group members by the end of class

### **Day 20-Group work day**

**Objectives:** Students will continue working on multi-media project, working out any concerns raised by the teacher and laying out a plan for the weekend

**Procedures:**

10 minutes: Teacher will present daily iWrite: why have you chosen the particular lens through which to discuss *Oscar Wao* in your multi-media project

40 minutes: Give students time again to work on multi-media project. Use this time as teacher to discuss any concerns with groups based on their written proposals from yesterday.

5 minutes: Exit ticket –Student will respond to the following: "write down where your group is on the project and what you intend to complete over the weekend"

Students should read excerpts 296-301 and 315-331 for next week



## **Day 21- iWrite and Project Work**

### **Objectives:**

Students will compete an iWrite and to discuss their experience with the novel. Students will spend the rest of the working on their projects.

### **Procedures**

15 minutes: Students will work on iWrite question: If you could ask the author question, what would you ask?

Discuss the answers and tell students that their journal for this week is to e-mail Junot Diaz at [junot@mit.edu](mailto:junot@mit.edu)

### **Exit Ticket:**

The last 10 minutes of class will be organizing what they want to accomplish for the next day and they will pack up their work.

**Homework:** Anything that they do not think they will have time to complete in class should be completed at home.

## **Day 22 - iWrite and Project Work**

### **Objectives:**

Students will compete an iWrite and to discuss their experience with the novel. Students will spend the rest of the working on their projects.

### **Procedures:**

15 minutes: Students will work on iWrite question: Why do you think this book has been banned from being taught? Do you think banning books should be legal?

We will discuss the responses that they have for these questions.

**Exit Ticket:** The last 10 minutes of class will be organizing what they want to accomplish for the next day and they will pack up their work.

**Homework:** Anything that they do not think they will have time to complete in class should be completed at home.

## **Day 23- iWrite and Project Work**

### **Objectives:**

Students will compete an iWrite and to discuss their experience with the novel. Students will spend the rest of the working on their projects.

### **Procedures:**

15 minutes: Students will work on iWrite question: If you could rewrite the end of this book, how would you do it? Do you think that you, as a reader, have the right to rewrite the ending of a book?

Discuss their answers for the iWrite questions  
Move into working on the project in class.

**Exit Ticket:** The last 10 minutes of class will be organizing what they want to accomplish for the next day and they will pack up their work.

Homework: Anything that they do not think they will have time to complete in class should be completed at home.

### **Day 24 & 25- Group Presentations**

**Objectives:**

Students will share their final project with each other. Students will get to see how each group interpreted the text differently.

**Procedures:**

Students will come in and gather their things together to present. We will present from bell to bell all day.

**Exit Ticket:** 10-15 minutes to evaluate the unit.

**Homework:** none

## Appendix

### Day 1 Handouts

#### I Am Poem- Trayvon Martin

By \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_

I see \_\_\_\_\_

I want \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I pretend \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

I touch \_\_\_\_\_

I worry \_\_\_\_\_

I cry \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I understand \_\_\_\_\_

I say \_\_\_\_\_

I dream \_\_\_\_\_

I try \_\_\_\_\_

I hope \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I Will Be- Trayvon Martin

By \_\_\_\_\_

I will be \_\_\_\_\_

I will wonder \_\_\_\_\_

I will hear \_\_\_\_\_

I will see \_\_\_\_\_

I will want \_\_\_\_\_

I will be \_\_\_\_\_

I will pretend \_\_\_\_\_

I will feel \_\_\_\_\_

I will touch \_\_\_\_\_

I will worry \_\_\_\_\_

I will cry \_\_\_\_\_

I will be \_\_\_\_\_

I will understand \_\_\_\_\_

I will say \_\_\_\_\_

I will dream \_\_\_\_\_

I will try \_\_\_\_\_

I will hope \_\_\_\_\_

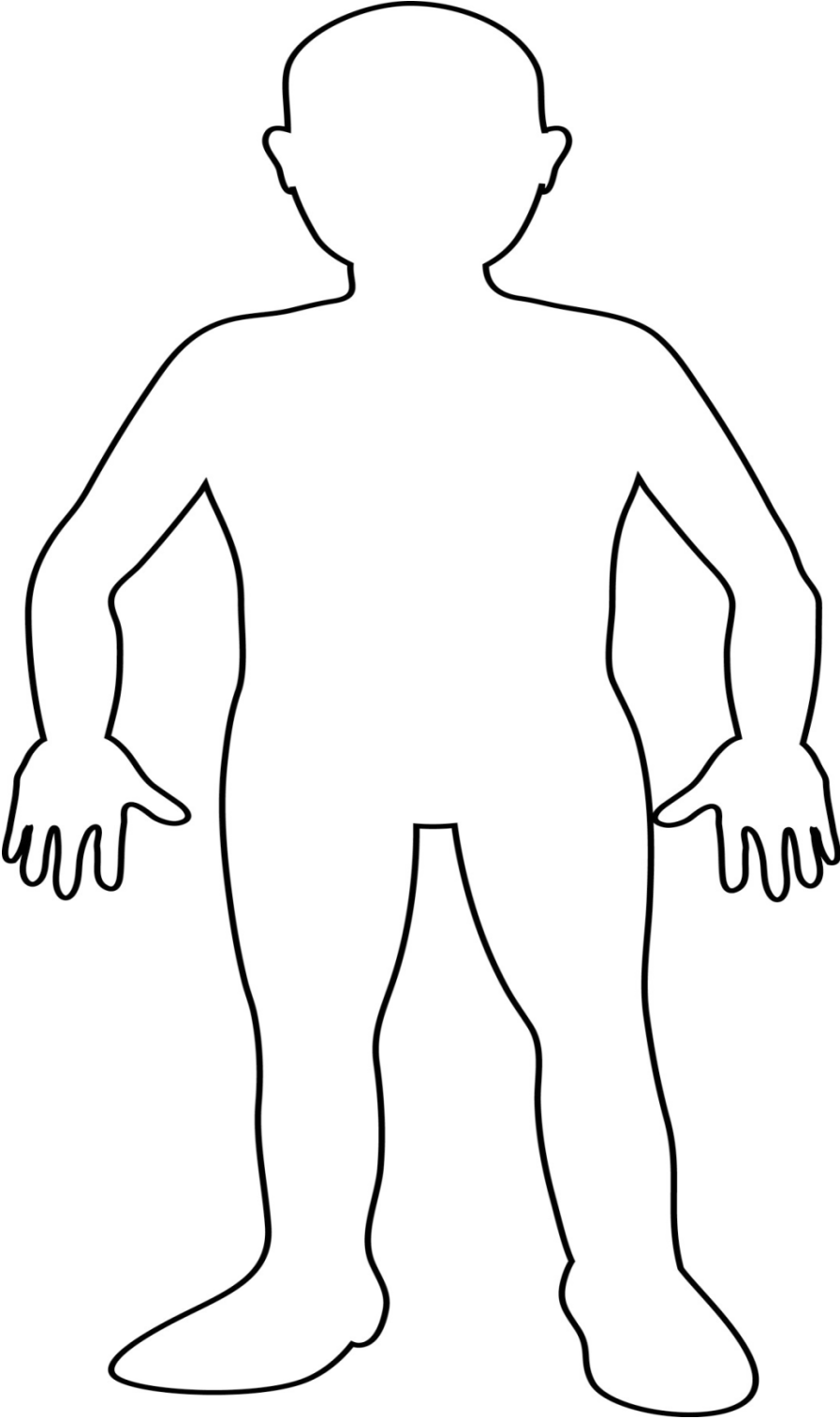
I will be \_\_\_\_\_

Day 3 Handout

**Charting Stereotypes Activity (adapted from Linda Christensen)**

	Character's Name	Character's Name	Character's Name
Women			
Men			
People of Color			
Poor People			

Day 7 Handout



## Day 10 Handout

### Multi-Lens/Multi-Media Project

You and your group will use the **literary lens** that you have been assigned, to analyze *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. In order to show mastery in your analysis, your group will choose **one** of the following projects to complete together:

- e. Skit (live or video) that expresses the presence of your lens in a particular scene, theme, setting, etc.
- f. Identity Exclusion in the Media- your group will compile ads (commercials, print ads, billboards) that do not appeal to the identify lens that you have chosen. You should explain how and why these ads are exclusive. You may choose the medium of presentation (PowerPoint, video compilation, collage, digital story, etc.)
- g. Rewriting the Story- You will choose one character from the novel and rewrite his/her story. You can choose to rewrite the characters' ending or other events throughout the characters' life. At the end of your story, please add an appendix that explains why you chose to rewrite that particular portion of the story. Why was it meaningful, and important for you to change the character's life trajectory?
- h. "A Day in the Life of"- In this project, your group will map out a day in the life of a particular character from the novel. The group should detail the daily activities of the character, should express the emotions felt by the characters, and should depict how the character is viewed through the group's chosen lens. In order to complete this assignment, you should create a:
  - iii. Pre-Recorded Video
  - iv. Live Skit
  - v. Written Paper or Play (read to the class or do an oral presentation based on the paper)

## Day 12 Handout

### “My Name” by Sandra Cisneros from *The House on Mango Street*

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 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.



## Day 17 Handout

Junot Diaz often breaks from standard English. While you all should still use standard English for any formal writing assignments, authors of fiction may not use standard English if their break from English adds to the meaning of the story. Answer the following questions on your own paper as a way to consider possible reasons for Diaz to use break conventions:

1. Although most of the novel is in English, Diaz includes several Spanish terms. Look at the following phrase on pages 230 and 231: "Tarde venientibus ossa"

- a. What do you think it means?
- b. How did you figure out this meaning?
- c. What is the effect of leaving it in its original language?

2. In describing a possible reason for Abelard's arrest, the author writes:

...when Dr. Abelard Luis Cabral opened the trunk of the Packard, he said, Nope, no bodies here, *Trujillo must have cleared them out for me.*

End quote.

- c. Does it seem more or less representative of reality to have no actual quotation marks?
- d. What is the effect of having the sentence about Trujillo in italics? Perhaps does it make it seem more or less realistic, more or less emphatic and offensive, etc.?