

Should I Make a Stand? Adolescent Conflict  
with Authority  
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Adolescence is a time of great change and with this change comes varying degrees of inner and outer awkwardness as teens' bodies begin making adjustments for adulthood, and as they wrestle with self-identity. Teenagers often feel as though they are constantly struggling to find where and how they belong in the world. Even before classifying them as students, I believe I must first make a genuine effort to get to know them as people, becoming acquainted with their personalities, therefore, opening up a space for dialogue and trust. I foresee this effort being negotiated in a ninth grade classroom among girls and boys of a regular, college preparatory level.

I believe half the battle of getting kids to truly enjoy learning is to offer them a space to showcase their individuality, thus, providing an outlet for them to feel appreciated and valued in the learning exchange. This outlet would come in the form of differentiated practice and projects. In other words, I think allowing the students the opportunity to choose the medium through which they present their ideas; for example, allowing them to showcase their technological skills as with using music or film would be highly beneficial to honing in on their creativity. Since students are already so savvy in this area, why not let them work within what they already know? Rather than feeling as though the teacher is the utmost authority on the material presented with little to no room for their own ideas to enter the discussion, students will see their ideas are important to the learning transaction.

The very premise of a transaction is an exchange between two or more people; it makes sense then that a transactional approach to teaching would benefit both parties equally when both feel their ideas are worthy of discussion. Just in my own experience with students, I have seen that when students have a say in what and how they learn they tend to want to do well since they have something of interest invested. Of course, I realize that this is not always possible in the high school curriculum; however, I do feel there is room for student input.

Since I have chosen to frame this unit through the lens of the adolescent's conflict with authority, pinning down a grade level or even an age range seems counterintuitive because this can apply to any level of adolescence. However, in the interest of this project, I have decided to apply this three week long unit to a ninth grade curriculum. Ninth grade is a transitory time, and, consequently, students often feel they are not given a voice in many aspects of their lives, school being one of the main ones. In fact, ninth graders still feel as though they are treated as children and as a reaction they rebel against authority. I feel that by presenting this theme to ninth graders, I will still have a shot at appealing to their senses and, hopefully, prevent them from feeling as though they need to react with rebellion. One of my goals with this unit is to help them see there are alternatives to simply refusing to do something. If they can see an adult is willing to listen to them without shooting them down for their youth, then, I hope they will apply these principles into other areas of their lives.

Although adults tend to feel the brunt of students' rebellion, I think it is a deeper issue. Sure, since we are the ones that are making them follow rules and do things they do not want to do, we see them as rebellious students or teens. Perhaps, they would not feel the need to rebel if they felt their voices were being heard in some way. This is why I have chosen to highlight several texts that show people in situations of forced acceptance and their fight for independence.

The first text I have chosen to include is Sherman Alexie's, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. Although this is technically a poem, a very long one at that, it is arranged as a book of short stories. Sherman Alexie is a Native American who felt the pressure to conform when colonialism tried to take over his tribe, the Sioux. He is heralded as the quintessential rebel in terms of his ability to expose how the "white man" actually treated the Native Americans. This text shows a Native American boy named Victor's journey away from his own tribe, and by extension - nonconformity. He even drops his Native American name in an effort to begin this purgation of his ancestry. In his mind, he feels that his tribe has chosen to conform to the "white man's" ways because it is easier than the alternative - finding their own way. It is this alternative that Victor chooses to face because, he feels, anything is better than being a puppet. The book follows Victor into adulthood where he faces many obstacles, including his constant antithesis, Thomas Builds the Fire, who acts as an anchor for the traditions of his Native American heritage, the very heritage he forsakes due to its choice of conformity.

This collection of short stories has some questionable language; therefore, I realize I will need to gain parental consent. However, I think many parents would not be opposed when they see how this work represents someone's fight against tradition and how it is relevant to our own lives. The relevancy factor comes to life because many of my students will be of varying ethnicities; some of them might even have felt many of the same feelings or dealt with some of the same issues Victor does in the book – loneliness and the struggle for self-identity. Focusing on literature about other ethnic backgrounds and exposing my students to these ethnicities will help them become more aware that life is not just about them. By offering students viewpoints from people other than the canonical authors about the same issues plaguing the human condition, I feel that students will become more well-rounded individuals and, possibly, develop a more sympathetic view towards the "Other." If there is any opposition, I will deal with them as they come, perhaps by offering that child an alternative assignment.

Before reading the novel, I would first introduce my students to its author, Mr. Alexie by showing them a *60 Minutes* segment of an interview. In this interview, he discusses his rejection of the title "Native American" because as he puts it, "that could be anyone born here"; he prefers the title "Indian" (*60 Minutes*). I think showing this segment will help put the book in perspective when thinking about how "Indians" have been treated for centuries by the "white man." After they have seen this interview, I plan for them to dive right

into the book. Since it is arranged in short sections, it will not be hard to cover a lot of material in a short period of time. As a pre-reading activity, we will do some work analyzing what a myth is and how stereotypes play a role in classifying people in society, especially those with different ethnicities.

Since the point of reading this book is to debunk myths of Western civilization - namely, American Indians, students will have to find and uncover a myth or stereotype from their own lives and rewrite it. This is an art project so they will have freedom to show creativity when writing and drawing these projects. I believe that allowing them the freedom of artistic expression will enhance the book's themes even more, and, consequently, will give them more of an understanding of how a myth works. They will first need to draft their myth on a piece of notebook paper and then they can transfer it to poster board. They will have the option of using colored pencils, markers, or anything else that they choose to enhance its artistry. On one side of the poster they will display what their myth looks like and on the flip side they will show what the truth actually is. I believe this project will help students see how detrimental stereotyping people can be to one's culture, thus, possibly helping to stop the cycle with them.

Media is such a big influence in our lives, especially in the lives of teenagers; therefore, I have decided to use a song that underscores the elements of conflict with authority. Although from the 1980's, the song "Ride into the Danger Zone" by Kenny Loggins from the movie *Top Gun* has become a cult classic. Even teenagers today have heard the lyrics and music of this song, even

if they are unable to recognize the title or even the artist. I chose this song in particular because the lyrics speak to exactly the ideas of conflict. The notion of facing “danger” is in and of itself a statement against mainstream views. As Loggins puts it, “You’ll never know what you can do / Until you get it up as high as you can go;” in other words, he says unless you test the waters and fight for what you want, then you will never know of what you are capable. I think students will respond well to this song because not only does it have a catchy tune but also because it emphasizes following your own instincts. However, one must realize that one must face the consequences of the decision he or she makes. Sometimes the results of one’s ambitions may work out the way one plans, but sometimes they do not. Unfortunately, this is the part many teenagers fail to grasp. I would first pass out the lyrics to the class and they will read along while we listen to the song aloud. While they are listening, I would ask them to jot down any thoughts they have about conflict with authority or make notes beside specific words that intrigue them. Once the song has stopped playing, I would then open the floor to discussion about the song and how it represents conflict with authority. For a follow-up activity, the students would work in small groups of no more than three; they would then analyze the song and determine how this song is representative of this theme. They would then present their findings to the class.

The final text I have chosen is *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. This novel is essentially about a group of farm animals who are not happy with their lives,

so they set out to design a revolution. However, they find the further away from structure they get, the worse their lives become. I believe this novel works well in this thematic unit on conflict with authority because it offers one view of what can happen if one chooses to fight the rules and regulations placed upon them. In the novel, the animals suffer because having no structure and rules is worse than too much structure. The animals finally realize in order to have a successful society, they do need to implement exactly what they were running away from – rules! No structure leads to chaos because people do not know what is expected of them or what to do when problems arise.

This multi-genre unit has quite a bit of potential in showing students how some people deal with authority – whether those actions result in success or failure is not the major concern, but the attitude of nonconformity prevails. My goal in teaching this unit is not to give my students even more ammunition to start conflict, but to help them understand why so many people have felt the need to rebel. Rebellion is not always a bad thing; in many cases, it is a fight for a better tomorrow. I think many times student feel as though they must fight the system because they do not have a say in the rules. This is why I particularly like *Animal Farm*; it serves as a good example of how people must learn to co-exist and to live peaceably through an agreed-upon system of rules. The operative word here is “agreed-upon!” I think if we show students we are willing to listen to what they have to say, they will be less likely to form a rebellion against the administration.

### Overarching Unit Goals

Goal 1: Reading Journal (during reading)

Since the very students that will be engaging with the theme of conflict with authority, and since many of them are experiencing much the same feelings and/or situations, I thought it appropriate to allow them the opportunity to offer their own perspectives and interpretations to the chosen texts for the unit. The whole idea of a reading journal is introspective by nature; in other words, it is meant to be a forum for engaging with the text by raising questions and realizing one's own feelings and beliefs toward a particular idea that permeates the literature. This journal will provide students with a medium through which they can make connections to the literature they are reading as well as serve as prompts for class discussions. For each entry, students will provide two columns, one where they will record a passage they find particularly significant, and the other for providing comments, asking questions or offering a possible interpretation. Students will be required to turn in three entries for each text studied using this double - sided format and will be checked after each text is completed. With that said, I will not be grading these journals for grammar or conventions, however, if there are general recurring errors I will address the class as a whole with a mini lesson on that particular convention.

### **Rubric/Assessment for Reading Journals:**

Journals will be collected after each work of literature for assessment and given participation points.

A grade of "A" will be awarded to journals that

- are turned in on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide genuine open-ended comments and/or questions not simply plot summary

A grade of "B" will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide some genuine open-ended comments and/or questions but includes some plot summary or closed-ended questions

A grade of "C" will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature

- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide more plot summary or closed-ended questions and hardly any genuine open-ended comments and/or questions

A grade of “D” will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in on time
- lack one or more entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provides mostly plot summary or closed-ended questions and hardly any genuine open-ended comments and/or questions

A grade of “F” will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in late
- are turned in on time, but do not follow any of the directions given for assignment

A grade of “Zero” will be awarded to journals that:

- are not turned in at all!!

## Goal 2: Debunking Myths Art Project (pre-reading)

As a pre-reading activity to introduce Sherman Alexie’s *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fisfight in Heaven*, students will create a poster project debunking a personal myth from their own lives. Students will have to uncover a myth from their own lives and rewrite it giving the truth. I believe this activity will help students understand just how detrimental these myths can be to a particular person or culture, and, incidentally, the power that truth holds and how important it is to stand up for it. Once their myths are chosen, students will begin to draft their layout of their posters. On one side will be the myth and the student’s interpretation of what that myth looks like; they may use symbols, charged words, pictures etc. to represent the myth. The other side of the poster will contain the truth, and again the student may choose to use symbols, charged words, pictures or any other expression he or she sees fit to represent that truth. Students will present their posters to the class after the assignment is complete. Each student will be subject to a teacher and peer assessment. Peer assessment will count as half the presentation grade; my assessment will comprise the other half.

**Assessment/Rubric for Myth Poster:**

A grade of "A" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are highly creative in design and representations of myth and/or truth shows an exceptional level of originality

A grade of "B" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are creative in design and no more than 1 representation of myth and/or truth are not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "C" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are minimally creative in design and there are 2-3 representations of myth and/or truth not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "D" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are not creative in design and there are 4 or more representations of myth and/or truth not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "F" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in late
- are turned in on time but fail to meet all minimum requirements

**Assessment / Rubric for Poster Presentation:**

Students will receive both peer and teacher assessments for presentation.

**An "A" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last between 3-5 minutes
- clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "B" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "C" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "D" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- not exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**An "F" Presentation will:**

- not be delivered smoothly, not holding the audience's attention.
- not exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

## Presentations: Peer Assessment

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Did:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The presenter deliver a smooth presentation that held your attention?		
The presentation exhibit original, creative thought?		
The presentation last at least 3 minutes?		
Did the presentation clearly provide evidence for debunking the myth?		
<b>Totals</b>		

**Other thoughts/feedback:**

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\* Rubric was borrowed from Stuart: Who am I? A Unit of Self-Discovery through Literature

**Goal 3: Written Rationale of Student's Song Choice (post-listening)**

As I have mentioned in my rationale, media has become more and more present in our lives. We are inundated with news, ads for products and services, celebrity gossip and much more and with teenagers being the most targeted audience, it is no wonder they have a hard time being independent when they are told what jeans to wear, what toys to have, or even what kinds of friends to have to be cool. While teenagers claim to want independence, in an effort to belong or "fit in" they often resort to the total opposite: blind obedience to what the media or popular culture deems as "cool." Teens and their parents often conflict when it comes to preferences; for example, a teenager might listen to rap

music because it is what everyone at school is listening to or beg his or her parents to buy him or her a pair of expensive jeans from a high-end clothing store because the label offers the possibility of popularity or coolness. Since music is a medium through which teenagers respond, I think it is appropriate to look at Kenny Loggin's "Ride into the Danger Zone" from the 1980's cult classic *Top Gun*. Loggin's reference to heading into the danger zone can be applied to teenagers and their constant struggle to be independent and set their own rules, which incidentally, causes many adults to see them as simply rebellious without considering their ideas for their own lives. Everyday teens are walking into potential landmines in school, at home, and in society and often feel they have no one to advocate for them. I believe playing this song for my students in this particular unit on conflict with authority will help give some validity to their everyday problems, and with music as the medium, they will be more willing to relate to it. I would first pass out the lyrics to the song to every student, and while they listen to the song I would ask them to jot down any thoughts about conflict with authority beside words or phrases in the song. Once the song has stopped playing, I would then open it up to a whole-class discussion in which I would invite anyone to share his or her thoughts on how this song is representative of conflict with authority. For the main assignment, I would have students break into small groups of no more than 3 students and analyze the song deeper on how it suggests the theme. They would share with their other group members their thoughts they jotted down while it played. I would then have each group present their findings to the whole class. As a follow-up activity, I will ask each student to bring in another song with the lyrics that relates to the theme for homework. Also, they will need to have a written rationale that is at least 1 paragraph in length, but may be longer if desired, offering reasoning for their choice. They will be warned that questionable language or lewd lyrics will not be accepted and could be grounds for a zero. If they have any questions if their songs might be potentially bad, they should consult with me beforehand. The assessment will be primarily on the student's choice and written rationale. I will give students participation points for the small group and large group discussion.

### **Assessment / Rubric for Written Rationale for Song**

A grade of "A" will be awarded to rationales that:

- are turned in on time
- offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is at least 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "B" will be awarded to rationales that:

- are turned in 1 day late
- offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is at least 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "C" will be awarded to rationales that:

- could be on time but no more 1 day late
- does not offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is less than 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "D" will be awarded to rationales that:

- more than 1 day late
- does not offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is less than ½ paragraph in length

A grade of "F" will be awarded to rationales that:

- not turned in or include questionable language or lewd lyrics

#### Goal 5: Personal Narrative

Since the unit is on conflict with authority, something almost, if not all, teenagers have dealt with in their short lives, I believe the best activity to end this unit with is with their own voice; that is, having them relate an actual conflict with an authority figure they have experienced. Also, I believe after reading the texts and completing the various assignments in this unit, students will be better able to create a narrative from their own lives that will help them understand their problems and experiences are shared by all kinds of people. My hope is that writing their narratives with the knowledge they have gained throughout this unit will help them to think more critically about the world around them, especially those that decide to rebel for a cause they are passionate about. I am not, however, suggesting that teenagers are experts in their own lives; we know that they do not know everything despite what they think. In every stage of our

lives there is something valuable and crucial for us to learn, and always fighting the system is not necessarily the best way to have a voice heard. What I am suggesting, then, is that one must know what causes or situations are worth risking conflict. After all, it is not only one person that is affected by a choice; one must be able to take into account the consequences of one's actions – whether they be good or bad and need to be able to accept them. This is often the hardest part. Perhaps the most important goal I have for this unit to be successful in my eyes, what I believe will make it a success for me as a teacher is for them to have an understanding for why people go against the grain, that it is important to stand up for what is right and, perhaps most importantly, realizing the consequences that could befall them for doing so. There is evidence of a lot of good coming from people standing up and rebelling against the system – Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., even women demanding the right to vote. However, it was with much sacrifice that we today can enjoy these rights. Just like I said, every decision has a consequence and also affects more than the person making that decision. Students will be required to produce a personal narrative about an experience in which they have had a conflict with someone of authority; it will be approximately 2-3 pages in length and must include the following components:

- identification of an immature behavior that was present prior to the experience
- the changing experience through which an acquisition of a higher level of maturity took place
- the mature behavior that was present after the experience
- a reflection on how this experience had such an impact and caused such a change
- an understanding of language conventions associated with narrative writing

\* adapted from Smagorinsky, Peter, *Teaching English through Principled Practice*, 2002.

### **Assessment / Rubric for Personal Narratives:**

A grade of “A” will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time
- are between 2-3 pages in length
- include all required components

A grade of “B” will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time

- are between 2-3 pages
- include most of the required components

A grade of “C” will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time
- are not at least 2 pages in length
- include some of the required elements

A grade of “D” will be awarded to narratives that:

- are 1 day late
- are not at least 2 pages in length
- include hardly any of the required components

A grade of “F” will be awarded to narratives that:

- are not turned in at all

## Lesson Plans

Note: Classes are 90 minutes in length.

### Week 1 - Day 1 (Monday)

5 minutes: **Attendance / Housekeeping / Intro to New Unit**

25 minutes: **Introductory Activity** – Pass out Scenarios on Conflict with Authority Handout and go over with whole class. (Appendix A). Have students read and respond to the following scenarios.

Conflict seems to be an inevitable part of life, especially between authority figures and their subjects. With power over others, some authority figures can let it go to their heads wreaking havoc on those whom they have a

level of control; however, there are the situations in which authority figures do right by their subjects sharing rather than depriving them for personal gains. For this unit, you will primarily be concerned with how adolescent conflict with authority – since this relates to you now! Consider the following scenarios of individuals' problems with authority. Does this person have a good reason for rebelling? If so, why is this justified? Do not simply say because they are misunderstood...but give specific reasons for your agreement or disagreement. On the other side, does the authority figure have just cause for his or her reaction to the rebellion? If so, what is/are these justifications for these reactions? Be as specific as possible.

A) A teacher prevents Marissa from coming into her room because she is breaking the school rule against wearing coats to class. After Marissa refuses to comply with her teacher's wishes to put her coat away, she refers the matter to an administrator. Marissa continues to argue with the Vice principal, and when told she can either put her coat in her locker or go to the office, she angrily storms out of the building. (*Adapted from libraryvideo.com*).

B) While a mother and her young daughters are playing in the park, a group of older kids arrive and begin to play roughly and listen to loud music. The mother, concerned that her children could be injured, asks the police for help. The young people proceed to disrespect and argue with the arriving officers. Finally, one of the teens is given a citation for his unruly behavior. (*Adapted from libraryvideo.com*)

C) Mark is a 17 year old senior in high school. He does not think nothing of getting drunk, even admitting it takes 13 or more shots to get there or partying till all hours of the night skipping curfew because he says although his mom gives him rules and tries to enforce the rules of the house, Mark claims he gets away with it because she will eventually just give in and let him by. He has even gone as far as to steal his mother's car despite his lack of a driver's license and shows no remorse for doing so when confronted by his mother, acting as though it is not a big deal! With his father living out of state on business, Mark admits that he bullies his mother simply "because I can..." (*Adapted from Dr Phil.com*)

D) Samantha, a 14 year old freshman, has begun to fight more and more with her mother about what she should do with her free time. In just the short year since her mother and father have divorced, which incidentally she blames her mother for, Samantha has been busted for possession of marijuana and cocaine as well as public drunkenness. Her mother has

come to her daughter's aid each time getting her out of these sticky situations; therefore, as a result Samantha has lost several privileges including hanging out with her friends on weekends. Her mother has a hard time trusting Samantha and wants her to straighten up her act. However, Samantha decides she is not going to listen to her mother or follow rules, so she sneaks out several nights a week to meet her friends, but one night her mother catches her red-handed and locks her window and tells her she can not leave the house except to go to school and back.

20 minutes: Small Group Discussion: Discuss Scenario responses

In groups of 3-4 students, discuss what you thought about each scenario. Did you all agree or disagree on any or none? Discuss justifications for agreement or disagreement. Why do you think there are differences or similarities in your answers? Jot down group's ideas about each scenario. After deliberating over these scenarios, groups will choose one scenario only and prepare a verbal statement justifying for or against the rebellion to present to class. Teacher circulates around room to keep students on task.

15 minutes: Large Group Discussion: Reconvene as a class to share group ideas.

Determine if there are any similarities or differences among the groups. If so, what are these and how might this shed light on the relevance factor of the unit to their everyday lives. If not, how and why do you believe this is not the case?

15 minutes: Give class overview of unit explaining unit goals and assessments as they will happen. Discuss briefly the texts chosen that highlight several different situations of conflict with authority as they have already seen with the introductory activity. Explain the activities and projects they will need to complete as part of the unit.

8 minutes: Introduction to Reading Journals: Explain that students will be keeping a reading log in conjunction with the texts they will read over the course of the unit. Explain format that they must follow when contributing an entry. (see Appendix B for handout). Each text read must have 3 entries. Have class get a composition book for keeping journal.

2 minutes: Rearrange desks to original position/Exeunt.

### Week 1 - Day 2 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping

15 minutes: Introduce Debunking Myth Poster Project. Pass out instructions for project and presentation (see Appendices C & D). Explain to students that the first text, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie, chronicles Victor who is at odds with his Native American ancestry. He has become disillusioned by what it means to be Indian because he believes his people sold out to the white man instead of stand up for their rights. Before they read this text, they will identify a myth from their own lives, using symbols, charged words, or other pictures that represent this myth as well as provide the truth with accompanying symbols, words, or pictures that it represents. Tell them they will have to present their posters to the class; they will have both peer and teacher assessments.

45 minutes: Students brainstorm myths and prepare layout for posters. They begin drafting the layout of their posters; butcher paper, colored pencils, markers, and other art supplies will be available for their use. If there is any other supplies they want, they can bring in from home the next day. Students should complete these today; however, if there are any students not complete, I may extend the time if they are working diligently.

5 minutes: Clean up materials and put desks back to original position.

15-18 minutes: Begin presentations; pass out peer assessment handouts (see Appendix E). Explain how to assess on peer assessment handout for everyone. If students need more time to complete posters, we will move this to next day.

2 minutes: Prepare for departure; turn in completed peer assessments.

**Homework:** Get a composition book for reading journal. We will begin with our first text tomorrow.

### Week 1 - Day 3 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

85 minutes: Finish presentations; turn in completed peer assessments.

### Week 1 - Day 4 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

10 minutes: Talk about the myth posters and ask students if they found anything interesting about the myths their classmates came up with, the actual truth, and if they were surprised that these were myths and not the truth. How did this project make you feel? Lead in to Alexie and why he wrote *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.

20 minutes: Play *60 Minutes* segment on Sherman Alexie providing background on the text. Open up for discussion about what they think about Alexie's beliefs.

5 minutes: Assign novels to class

15 minutes: I will read first chapter "Every Little Hurricane" aloud to class. We will discuss Victor and who he seems to be in the beginning and how he is influenced by his family and extended family on the reservation. Discuss hurricane metaphor that permeates this chapter and, by extension, the novel.

10 - 15 minutes: On overhead or board, write a journal entry about this first chapter as a class. I will model how this should be done in their journals using the format provided.

20 minutes: Have students continue to read starting with Chapter 2 until bell rings. Exeunt.

**Homework:** Finish reading through Chapter 4. Encourage students to continue to think about how Victor might be rebelling or conflicting with authority in his experiences. Remember you must have at least 3 journal entries for this whole book.

### Week 1 - Day 5 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

15 minutes: Open up discussion of Chapters 2-4. I will encourage students to share their initial reactions to the first part of the book and their ideas on how this text represents the theme conflict with authority. If necessary, I will be prepared to start discussion to get the ball rolling.

15 minutes: Think / Pair / Share: In pairs, discuss together what you thought was interesting or strange so far in the book. As a pair you should decide one or two items in particular that strikes you and be prepared to share with the class.

20 minutes: Large Group Discussion: Each pair will share their items; after each pair shares, I will ask the class to offer suggestions or answers to the pairs thoughts.

30 minutes: Assign Chapters 5-10, and have students read silently till bell rings.

2 -5 minutes: Remind students to continue writing in their reading journals and remind them that I will be collecting the journals after this text is completed.

**Homework:** Read through Chapter 8.

### **Week 2 - Day 1 (Monday)**

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

20 minutes: Small group discussion: Students get in groups of 3-4 students to discuss their reactions up to Chapter 10. Group members may share their journal entries and discuss how they agree or disagree with each other on the issues the book raises. Explain to them that they may spend time talking about this; however, they will have to share with the whole class. I will circulate the room making sure they stay on task.

20 minutes: Large group discussion: Each group shares what they feel about the novel thus far, explaining their ideas and thoughts to the entire class. I will encourage the class to respond to each other's thoughts openly and offer other suggestions.

10 minutes: Look more closely at "This is what it means to say Phoenix, Arizona." Introduce the film *Smoke Signals* and explain that it has been recreated from this chapter.

30 minutes: Watch film until end of class.

2 minutes: Prepare for departure.

### **Week 2 - Day 2 (Tuesday)**

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

60 minutes: Finish *Smoke Signals*

23 minutes: Have students get out a piece of paper and write their thoughts comparing the movie to the story. Are there any differences? Does it shed a different light on the characters? Students will turn in at end of class. I will grade these but not for grammar, only content.

2 minutes: Prepare for departure.

**Homework:** Read Chapters 11-15. Remember to be journaling.

### Week 2 - Day 3 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Pass back writing from yesterday

20 minutes: Small group discussion: students break into small groups of 3 and discuss reactions to the previous night's reading; they may share their journal entries to aid discussion. Let them know that they will have to share with the class after this time.

20 minutes: Large group discussion: bring class together and ask each group to share their thoughts with the class. Students may feel free to discuss or answer questions posed by others.

40 minutes: Continue reading *Lone Ranger and Tonto* from chapter 16 in class in the form of popcorn.

2 minutes: Prepare for departure.

**Homework:** Finish book. Finish journal entries for this text. Remind students I will be collecting journals on Friday.

### Week 2 - Day 4 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

20 minutes: Final small group discussion on the text. Students will break into groups of 3-4 each. They will prepare a small presentation on how this text represents conflict with authority. What characters are conflicted? Do they have just cause to be? Why or why not? How do Victor and Thomas - Builds - the - Fire differ and how are they similar, or are they? Who do you believe is staying truer to himself? Each group will present their findings to the class and the class will comment on each groups ideas.

15 minutes: Large group discussion: Each group shares their findings on the aforementioned questions and the class discusses.

5 minutes: Explain how media can showcase conflict with authority. Pass out lyrics to Kenny Loggins' "Ride into the Danger Zone." (see Appendix F) Explain the significance of this song in relation to conflict with authority.

4-5 minutes: Play song for class. Class will jot down any ideas or questions they have about how this relates to conflict with authority theme while song plays.

15 minutes: Discuss song and go over any questions or thoughts the class had to song.

20 minutes: Break into small groups of 3 to discuss deeper meaning and significance to theme of conflict with authority. They would then present their findings to whole class.

3 minutes: Assign homework to find another song that represents the theme with lyrics to present to class. Pass out rubric for song rationales. (see Appendix G) They are warned about lewd or offensive language and consequences.

2 minutes: Prepare for departure.

**Homework:** As a follow-up activity, you must bring in another song with the lyrics that deals with this theme. Also, you will need to write a 1 paragraph rationale as to why this song is representative of the theme of conflict with authority.

### Week 2 - Day 5 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Collect journals

75 minutes: Have students take out their songs and rationales; students will each take turns playing their songs for the class and explaining their choice. Before they will be able to play it for the class, they will have to have it approved by me first. If there are any songs that are questionable, the student will have another chance to find another song and redo the assignment but with a late penalty. Collect written rationales for grade.

5 minutes: Introduce final assessment for unit – personal narrative; pass out instructions for assignment (see Appendix H). Tell students this will be due next Friday.

5 minutes: Explain to class that next week we will begin our final major text, a novel *Animal Farm*. Prepare for departure. Exeunt.

### Week 3 - Day 1 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Return song rationales.

20 minutes: Introduce *Animal Farm*. Pass out "The Freedom of the Press," (see Appendix I) a preface of the novel published after his death. Explain to students that this novel is about a group of animals that decide to rebel against their current keepers and opt for no rules. What they realize is the total elimination of rules is worse than what they had before.

15 minutes: After students have finished reading this preface, have them break into small groups to discuss what they think about Orwell's ideas and how this novel might be an example of conflict with authority.

15 minutes: Reconvene as a whole class to go over groups' ideas and elaborate more on the ideas presented in the book and give more of an introduction to the novel. Assign novels to students.

5 minutes: Redirect class to get back into small groups they were in previously and explain they will be reading a scenario and as a group will need to determine a plan of action for the dilemma. Pass out instructions for scenario (see Appendix J).

25 minutes: Work in small groups to draft plan of action for dilemma; each group will need to turn in a written plan of action. Be prepared to present to whole class tomorrow.

5 minutes: Assign homework to read Chapters 1-2 of *Animal Farm*. Remind students they will need 3 journal entries before end of novel. Prepare for departure.

**Homework:** Read Chapters 1 and 2 of *Animal Farm*. Remember to be journaling!

### Week 3 - Day 2 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping

10 minutes: Get back into small groups from yesterday to finalize presentations.

45 minutes: Whole class presentations of scenarios. Take up written answers to scenarios.

28 minutes: Read Chapters 3-4 silently.

2 minutes: Assign homework; prepare for departure; exeunt.

**Homework:** Finish reading through Chapter 4 and remember to journal.

**Week 3 – Day 3 (Wednesday)**

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Remind students that their personal narratives are due on Friday. Answer any last minute questions.

20 minutes: Break into small groups of 3-4 students and discuss last night's reading. You may share your journal entries with each other.

20 minutes: Large class discussion: each group will share their thoughts on the novel so far and voice any questions or concerns to class; continue to discuss the animals' conflict with their authority figure. Are they any better off now that they are not bound by rules? Or, is there more chaos?

40 minutes: Read Chapter 5 popcorn-style as a class.

5 minutes: Assign homework; prepare for departure; exeunt.

**Homework:** Continue reading through Chapter 7. Remember to journal!

**Week 3 – Day 4 (Thursday)**

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Remind students their personal narratives are due tomorrow.

30 minutes: Students read "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" by Richard Wright silently.

20 minutes: Students complete questions for story. (see Appendix K). Students will turn in at end of class.

20 minutes: Reconvene as a whole group and discuss the story and go over questions. What is this story saying about race and boyhood? Why is this story an example of conflict with authority? Who is in conflict with an authority figure and is this person in the right?

12 minutes: Continue reading *Animal Farm* silently from Chapter 8 until time to leave.

3 minutes: Assign homework; prepare to depart; exeunt.

**Homework:** Finish *Animal Farm*. Finish personal narratives. Remember final journals are due tomorrow.

### Week 3 - Day 5 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance / Housekeeping / Collect personal narratives and reading journals.

45-55 minutes: Pass out questions for *Animal Farm*; students will complete these in small groups. Each group will turn in one set of answers. After this time, we will reconvene as a large group to discuss questions.

20-25 minutes: Reconvene as a large group to discuss the novel and the questions the students completed in their small groups. Tie up loose ends with the novel. Take up novels.

5 minutes: Prepare for departure / Exeunt.

### Appendix A

#### Introductory Activity

#### Conflict with Authority Scenarios

Conflict seems to be an inevitable part of life, especially between authority figures and their subjects. With power over others, some authority figures can let it go to their heads wreaking havoc on those whom they have a level of control; however, there are the situations in which authority figures do right by their subjects sharing rather than depriving them for personal gains. For this unit, you will primarily be concerned with how adolescent conflict with authority – since this relates to you now! Consider the following scenarios of individuals' problems with authority. Does this person have a good reason for rebelling? If so, why is this justified? Do not simply say because they are misunderstood...but give specific reasons for your agreement or disagreement. On the other side, does the authority figure have just cause for his or her reaction to the rebellion? If so, what is/are these justifications for these reactions? Be as specific as possible.

A) A teacher prevents Marissa from coming into her room because she is breaking the school rule against wearing coats to class. After Marissa refuses to comply with her teacher's wishes to put her coat away, she refers the matter to an administrator. Marissa continues to argue with the

Vice principal, and when told she can either put her coat in her locker or go to the office, she angrily storms out of the building. (*Adapted from libraryvideo.com*).

B) While a mother and her young daughters are playing in the park, a group of older kids arrive and begin to play roughly and listen to loud music. The mother, concerned that her children could be injured, asks the police for help. The young people proceed to disrespect and argue with the arriving officers. Finally, one of the teens is given a citation for his unruly behavior. (*Adapted from libraryvideo.com*)

C) Mark is a 17 year old senior in high school. He does not think nothing of getting drunk, even admitting it takes 13 or more shots to get there or partying till all hours of the night skipping curfew because he says although his mom gives him rules and tries to enforce the rules of the house, Mark claims he gets away with it because she will eventually just give in and let him by. He has even gone as far as to steal his mother's car despite his lack of a driver's license and shows no remorse for doing so when confronted by his mother, acting as though it is not a big deal! With his father living out of state on business, Mark admits that he bullies his mother simply "because I can..." (*Adapted from Dr Phil.com*)

D) Samantha, a 14 year old freshman, has begun to fight more and more with her mother about what she should do with her free time. In just the short year since her mother and father have divorced, which incidentally she blames her mother for, Samantha has been busted for possession of marijuana and cocaine as well as public drunkenness. Her mother has come to her daughter's aid each time getting her out of these sticky situations; therefore, as a result Samantha has lost several privileges including hanging out with her friends on weekends. Her mother has a hard time trusting Samantha and wants her to straighten up her act. However, Samantha decides she is not going to listen to her mother or follow rules, so she sneaks out several nights a week to meet her friends, but one night her mother catches her red-handed and locks her window and tells her she can not leave the house except to go to school and back.

## Appendix B

### Instructions for Reading Journals

Throughout this unit on conflict with authority, you will be keeping a reading journal to help you keep track of the events and characters in the various texts we will be reading. You will be required to have three entries per text we read. A reading journal has a more structured format with a more defined purpose than just a regular journal or diary. The purpose of this journal is twofold. Firstly, it should encourage you to pay specific attention to the language present in the literature as well as read reflectively, or to think about what you are reading in a more analytical and emotional way. For example, instead of just writing about what happened in the story or what transpires between the characters, this will help you pay more attention to the details and consider why those details matter. The rubric for this assignment is included at the end of this sheet.

To keep your reading journals, follow these specific criteria:

- Divide each page with a vertical line down the center of the page.
- On the left side of each page, write down significant passages from the literature you read
- On the right side, across from each passage, you may do any or all of the following:
  - ❖ Ask questions that might help you understand the passage better
  - ❖ Provide a personal response to the passage

- ❖ Offer an evaluation of the passage (i.e. does it seem to make sense?)
  - ❖ Ponder or think through possible interpretations of the passage (i.e. what is the author trying to say about it? Is he or she trying to make a statement about something?).
  - ❖ Include a minimum of 3 entries for each text we read
- Your journals are not going to be graded for grammar conventions; rather, I want you to pay more attention to getting your thoughts on paper without worrying about how it should be worded.
  - Keep in mind, though, that *I am required by law to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, family abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.*

### **Rubric/Assessment for Reading Journals:**

Journals will be collected after each work of literature for assessment and given participation points.

A grade of “A” will be awarded to journals that

- are turned in on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide genuine open-ended comments and/or questions not simply plot summary

A grade of “B” will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide some genuine open-ended comments and/or questions but includes some plot summary or closed-ended questions

A grade of “C” will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned on time
- include at least three entries for each work of literature

- follow the correct double-sided format
- provide more plot summary or closed-ended questions and hardly any genuine open-ended comments and/or questions

A grade of "D" will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in on time
- lack one or more entries for each work of literature
- follow the correct double-sided format
- provides mostly plot summary or closed-ended questions and hardly any genuine open-ended comments and/or questions

A grade of "F" will be awarded to journals that:

- are turned in late
- are turned in on time, but do not follow any of the directions given for assignment

A grade of "Zero" will be awarded to journals that:

- are not turned in at all!!

## Appendix C

### Instructions for Debunking Myth Poster Assignment

What is a myth? How do they affect our lives? No matter how we slice it, life is full of myths. A myth can be either positive, such as Native American myths about creation or negative, those which paint cultures or peoples in harmful lights. As a pre-reading activity to introduce our first text, Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fisfight in Heaven*, you will create a poster project debunking a personal myth from your own lives. You will have to uncover a myth from your own lives and rewrite it giving the truth. I believe this activity will help you understand just how detrimental these myths can be to a particular person or culture, and, incidentally, the power that truth holds and how important it is to stand up for it. Once you choose your myths, you will begin to draft your layout of your posters. On one side will be the myth and your interpretation of what that myth looks like; you may use symbols, charged words, pictures etc. to represent the myth. The other side of the poster will contain the truth, and again you may choose to use symbols, charged words, pictures or any other expression you see fit to represent that truth. You will present your posters to the class after the assignment is complete. Each of you will be subject to a teacher and peer assessment. Peer assessment will count as half the presentation grade; my assessment will comprise the other half.

#### **Assessment/Rubric for Myth Poster:**

A grade of "A" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)

- are highly creative in design and representations of myth and/or truth shows an exceptional level of originality

A grade of "B" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are creative in design and no more than 1 representation of myth and/or truth are not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "C" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in the correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are minimally creative in design and there are 2-3 representations of myth and/or truth not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "D" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in on time
- include both the myth and the truth with accompanying representations
- are in correct format (e.g. one side is myth and other side is truth)
- are not creative in design and there are 4 or more representations of myth and/or truth not logical in debunking myth

A grade of "F" will be awarded to posters that:

- are turned in late
- are turned in on time but fail to meet all minimum requirements

Appendix D  
Presentation Rubrics

**Assessment / Rubric for Poster Presentation:**

Students will receive both peer and teacher assessments for presentation.

**An "A" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last between 3-5 minutes
- clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "B" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "C" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**A "D" Presentation will:**

- be delivered smoothly, holding the audience's attention.
- not exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student's personal connection with the literature

**An "F" Presentation will:**

- not be delivered smoothly, not holding the audience’s attention.
- not exhibit a large amount of original, creative thought.
- last less than 3 minutes
- not clearly express the student’s personal connection with the literature

Appendix E

**Presentations: Peer Assessment**

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Did:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The presenter deliver a smooth presentation that held your attention?		
The presentation exhibit original, creative thought?		
The presentation last at least 3 minutes?		
Did the presentation clearly provide evidence for debunking the myth?		
<b>Totals</b>		

**Other thoughts/feedback:**

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\* Rubric was borrowed from Stuart: Who am I? A Unit of Self-Discovery through Literature

## Appendix F

“Ride into the Danger Zone” by Kenny Loggins from *Top Gun*

Revvin' up your engine  
Listen to her howlin' roar  
Metal under tension  
Beggin' you to touch and go

Highway to the Danger Zone  
Ride into the Danger Zone

Headin' into twilight  
Spreadin' out her wings tonight  
She got you jumpin' off the track  
And shovin' into overdrive

Highway to the Danger Zone  
I'll take you  
Right into the Danger Zone

You'll never say hello to you  
Until you get it on the red line overload  
You'll never know what you can do  
Until you get it up as high as you can go

Out along the edges  
Always where I burn to be  
The further on the edge  
The hotter the intensity

Highway to the Danger Zone

Gonna take you  
 Right into the Danger Zone  
 Highway to the Danger Zone

### Appendix G: Instructions for Song Rationales

Now that we have heard this song about riding into a danger zone, I want you to find another song that exhibits the theme of conflict with authority. You must have the lyrics with the song. Also, you must prepare a 1 paragraph rationale, longer if desired, offering reasoning for your choice. You are warned that any lewd or offensive lyrics will not be accepted and could be grounds for a zero. If you have a question as to if the song you are thinking of using is questionable, you should run it by me first before playing it. I will be grading your rationales on a rubric and it follows these instructions.

#### **Assessment / Rubric for Written Rationale for Song**

A grade of "A" will be awarded to rationales that:

- are turned in on time
- offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is at least 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "B" will be awarded to rationales that:

- are turned in 1 day late
- offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is at least 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "C" will be awarded to rationales that:

- could be on time but no more 1 day late
- does not offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is less than 1 paragraph in length

A grade of "D" will be awarded to rationales that:

- more than 1 day late

- does not offer a solid proposal with evidence from song for theme
- do not include any questionable language or lewd lyrics
- is less than ½ paragraph in length

A grade of “F “will be awarded to rationales that:

- not turned in or include questionable language or lewd lyrics

## Appendix H

### Instructions for Personal Narratives – Final Assessment

Since the unit is on conflict with authority, something almost, if not all of you have dealt with in your short lives, I believe the best activity to end this unit with is with your own voice; that is, having you relate an actual conflict with an authority figure you have experienced. Also, I believe after reading the texts and completing the various assignments in this unit, you are better able to create a narrative from your own lives that will help you understand your problems and experiences are shared by all kinds of people. In every stage of our lives there is something valuable and crucial for us to learn, and always fighting the system is not necessarily the best way to have a voice heard. What I am suggesting, then, is that one must know what causes or situations are worth risking conflict. After all, it is not only one person that is affected by a choice; one must be able to take into account the consequences of one’s actions – whether they be good or bad and need to be able to accept them. This is often the hardest part. There is evidence of a lot of good coming from people standing up and rebelling against the system – Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., even women demanding the right to vote. However, it was with much sacrifice that we today can enjoy these rights. Your narratives need to be about a personal experience in which you have experienced a conflict with someone in authority. It must be between 2-3 pages in length and must also include the following components:

- identification of an immature behavior that was present prior to the experience
- the changing experience through which an acquisition of a higher level of maturity took place
- the mature behavior that was present after the experience
- a reflection on how this experience had such an impact and caused such a change
- an understanding of language conventions associated with narrative writing

\* adapted from Smagorinsky, Peter, *Teaching English through Principled Practice*, 2002.

**Assessment / Rubric for Personal Narratives:**

A grade of "A" will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time
- are between 2-3 pages in length
- include all required components

A grade of "B" will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time
- are between 2-3 pages
- include most of the required components

A grade of "C" will be awarded to narratives that:

- are turned in on time
- are not at least 2 pages in length
- include some of the required elements

A grade of "D" will be awarded to narratives that:

- are 1 day late
- are not at least 2 pages in length
- include hardly any of the required components

A grade of "F" will be awarded to narratives that:

- are not turned in at all

Appendix I  
Orwell's Preface to *Animal Farm*

## THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

This book was first thought of, so far as the central idea goes, in 1937, but was not written down until about the end of 1943. By the time when it came to be written it was obvious that there would be great difficulty in getting it published (in spite of the present book shortage which ensures that anything describable as a book will 'sell'), and in the event it was refused by four publishers. Only one of these had any ideological motive. Two had been publishing anti-Russian books for years, and the other had no noticeable political colour. One publisher actually started by accepting the book, but after making the preliminary arrangements he decided to consult the Ministry of Information, who appear to have warned him, or at any rate strongly advised him, against publishing it. Here is an extract from his letter:

I mentioned the reaction I had had from an important official in the Ministry of Information with regard to *Animal Farm*. I must confess that this expression of opinion has given me seriously to think ... I can see now that it might be regarded as something which it was highly ill-advised to publish at the present time. If the fable were addressed generally to dictators and dictatorships at large then publication would be all right, but the fable does follow, as I see now, so completely the progress of the Russian Soviets and their two dictators, that it can apply only to Russia, to the exclusion of the other dictatorships. Another thing: it would be less offensive if the predominant caste in the fable were not pigs. [It is not quite clear whether this suggested modification is Mr ...'s own idea, or originated with the Ministry of Information; but it seems to have the official ring about it - *Orwell's Note*] I think the choice of pigs as the ruling caste will no doubt give offence to many people, and particularly to anyone who is a bit touchy, as undoubtedly the Russians are. This kind of thing is not a good symptom. Obviously it is not desirable that a government department should have any power of censorship (except security censorship, which no one objects to in war time) over books which are not officially sponsored. But the chief danger to freedom of thought and speech at this moment is not the direct interference of the MOI or any official body. If publishers and editors exert themselves to keep certain topics out of print, it is not because they are frightened of prosecution but because they are frightened of public opinion. In this country intellectual cowardice is the worst enemy a writer or journalist has to face, and that fact does not seem to me to have had the discussion it deserves.

Any fairminded person with journalistic experience will admit that during this war *official* censorship has not been particularly irksome. We have not been

subjected to the kind of totalitarian 'co-ordination' that it might have been reasonable to expect. The press has some justified grievances, but on the whole the Government has behaved well and has been surprisingly tolerant of minority opinions. The sinister fact about literary censorship in England is that it is largely voluntary. Unpopular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept dark, without the need for any official ban. Anyone who has lived long in a foreign country will know of instances of sensational items of news - things which on their own merits would get the big headlines - being kept right out of the British press, not because the Government intervened but because of a general tacit agreement that 'it wouldn't do' to mention that particular fact. So far as the daily newspapers go, this is easy to understand. The British press is extremely centralized, and most of it is owned by wealthy men who have every motive to be dishonest on certain important topics. But the same kind of veiled censorship also operates in books and periodicals, as well as in plays, films and radio. At any given moment there is an orthodoxy, a body of ideas which it is assumed that all right-thinking people will accept without question. It is not exactly forbidden to say this, that or the other, but it is 'not done' to say it, just as in mid-Victorian times it was 'not done' to mention trousers in the presence of a lady. Anyone who challenges the prevailing orthodoxy finds himself silenced with surprising effectiveness. A genuinely unfashionable opinion is almost never given a fair hearing, either in the popular press or in the highbrow periodicals.

At this moment what is demanded by the prevailing orthodoxy is an uncritical admiration of Soviet Russia. Every-one knows this, nearly everyone acts on it. Any serious criticism of the Soviet régime, any disclosure of facts which the Soviet government would prefer to keep hidden, is next door to unprintable. And this nation-wide conspiracy to flatter our ally takes place, curiously enough, against a background of genuine intellectual tolerance. For though you are not allowed to criticize the Soviet government, at least you are reasonably free to criticize our own. Hardly anyone will print an attack on Stalin, but it is quite safe to attack Churchill, at any rate in books and periodicals. And throughout five years of war, during two or three of which we were fighting for national survival, countless books, pamphlets and articles advocating a compromise peace have been published without interference. More, they have been published without exciting much disapproval. So long as the prestige of the USSR is not involved, the principle of free speech has been reasonably well upheld. There are other forbidden topics, and I shall mention some of them presently, but the prevailing attitude towards the USSR is much the most serious symptom. It is, as it were, spontaneous, and is not due to the action of any pressure group.

The servility with which the greater part of the English intelligentsia have swallowed and repeated Russian propaganda from 1941 onwards would be quite astounding if it were not that they have behaved similarly on several earlier occasions. On one controversial issue after another the Russian viewpoint has

been accepted without examination and then publicized with complete disregard to historical truth or intellectual decency. To name only one instance, the BBC celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Red Army without mentioning Trotsky. This was about as accurate as commemorating the battle of Trafalgar without mentioning Nelson, but it evoked no protest from the English intelligentsia. In the internal struggles in the various occupied countries, the British press has in almost all cases sided with the faction favoured by the Russians and libelled the opposing faction, sometimes suppressing material evidence in order to do so. A particularly glaring case was that of Colonel Mihailovich, the Yugoslav Chetnik leader. The Russians, who had their own Yugoslav protégé in Marshal Tito, accused Mihailovich of collaborating with the Germans. This accusation was promptly taken up by the British press: Mihailovich's supporters were given no chance of answering it, and facts contradicting it were simply kept out of print. In July of 1943 the Germans offered a reward of 100,000 gold crowns for the capture of Tito, and a similar reward for the capture of Mihailovich. The British press 'splashed' the reward for Tito, but only one paper mentioned (in small print) the reward for Mihailovich: and the charges of collaborating with the Germans continued. Very similar things happened during the Spanish civil war. Then, too, the factions on the Republican side which the Russians were determined to crush were recklessly libelled in the English leftwing press, and any statement in their defence even in letter form, was refused publication. At present, not only is serious criticism of the USSR considered reprehensible, but even the fact of the existence of such criticism is kept secret in some cases. For example, shortly before his death Trotsky had written a biography of Stalin. One may assume that it was not an altogether unbiased book, but obviously it was saleable. An American publisher had arranged to issue it and the book was in print - I believe the review copies had been sent out - when the USSR entered the war. The book was immediately withdrawn. Not a word about this has ever appeared in the British press, though clearly the existence of such a book, and its suppression, was a news item worth a few paragraphs.

It is important to distinguish between the kind of censorship that the English literary intelligentsia voluntarily impose upon themselves, and the censorship that can sometimes be enforced by pressure groups. Notoriously, certain topics cannot be discussed because of 'vested interests'. The best-known case is the patent medicine racket. Again, the Catholic Church has considerable influence in the press and can silence criticism of itself to some extent. A scandal involving a Catholic priest is almost never given publicity, whereas an Anglican priest who gets into trouble (e.g. the Rector of Stiffkey) is headline news. It is very rare for anything of an anti-Catholic tendency to appear on the stage or in a film. Any actor can tell you that a play or film which attacks or makes fun of the Catholic Church is liable to be boycotted in the press and will probably be a failure. But this kind of thing is harmless, or at least it is understandable. Any large

organization will look after its own interests as best it can, and overt propaganda is not a thing to object to. One would no more expect the *Daily Worker* to publicize unfavourable facts about the USSR than one would expect the *Catholic Herald* to denounce the Pope. But then every thinking person knows the *Daily Worker* and the *Catholic Herald* for what they are. What is disquieting is that where the USSR and its policies are concerned one cannot expect intelligent criticism or even, in many cases, plain honesty from Liberal writers and journalists who are under no direct pressure to falsify their opinions. Stalin is sacrosanct and certain aspects of his policy must not be seriously discussed. This rule has been almost universally observed since 1941, but it had operated, to a greater extent than is sometimes realized, for ten years earlier than that. Throughout that time, criticism of the Soviet régime *from the left* could only obtain a hearing with difficulty. There was a huge output of anti-Russian literature, but nearly all of it was from the Conservative angle and manifestly dishonest, out of date and actuated by sordid motives. On the other side there was an equally huge and almost equally dishonest stream of pro-Russian propaganda, and what amounted to a boycott on anyone who tried to discuss all-important questions in a grown-up manner. You could, indeed, publish anti-Russian books, but to do so was to make sure of being ignored or misrepresented by nearly the whole of the highbrow press. Both publicly and privately you were warned that it was 'not done'. What you said might possibly be true, but it was 'inopportune' and 'played into the hands of' this or that reactionary interest. This attitude was usually defended on the ground that the international situation, and the urgent need for an Anglo-Russian alliance, demanded it; but it was clear that this was a rationalization. The English intelligentsia, or a great part of it, had developed a nationalistic loyalty towards the USSR, and in their hearts they felt that to cast any doubt on the wisdom of Stalin was a kind of blasphemy. Events in Russia and events elsewhere were to be judged by different standards. The endless executions in the purges of 1936-8 were applauded by life-long opponents of capital punishment, and it was considered equally proper to publicize famines when they happened in India and to conceal them when they happened in the Ukraine. And if this was true before the war, the intellectual atmosphere is certainly no better now.

But now to come back to this book of mine. The reaction towards it of most English intellectuals will be quite simple: 'It oughtn't to have been published'. Naturally, those reviewers who understand the art of denigration will not attack it on political grounds but on literary ones. They will say that it is a dull, silly book and a disgraceful waste of paper. This may well be true, but it is obviously not the whole of the story. One does not say that a book 'ought not to have been published' merely because it is a bad book. After all, acres of rubbish are printed daily and no one bothers. The English intelligentsia, or most of them, will object to this book because it traduces their Leader and (as they see it) does harm to the cause of progress. If it did the opposite they would have nothing to say against it,

even if its literary faults were ten times as glaring as they are. The success of, for instance, the Left Book Club over a period of four or five years shows how willing they are to tolerate both scurrility and slipshod writing, provided that it tells them what they want to hear.

The issue involved here is quite a simple one: Is every opinion, however unpopular - however foolish, even - entitled to a hearing? Put it in that form and nearly any English intellectual will feel that he ought to say 'Yes'. But give it a concrete shape, and ask, 'How about an attack on Stalin? Is *that* entitled to a hearing?', and the answer more often than not will be 'No'. In that case the current orthodoxy happens to be challenged, and so the principle of free speech lapses. Now, when one demands liberty of speech and of the press, one is not demanding absolute liberty. There always must be, or at any rate there always will be, some degree of censorship, so long as organized societies endure. But freedom, as Rosa Luxembourg said, is 'freedom for the other fellow'. The same principle is contained in the famous words of Voltaire: 'I detest what you say; I will defend to the death your right to say it'. If the intellectual liberty which without a doubt has been one of the distinguishing marks of western civilization means anything at all, it means that everyone shall have the right to say and to print what he believes to be the truth, provided only that it does not harm the rest of the community in some quite unmistakable way. Both capitalist democracy and the western versions of Socialism have till recently taken that principle for granted. Our Government, as I have already pointed out, still makes some show of respecting it. The ordinary people in the street - partly, perhaps, because they are not sufficiently interested in ideas to be intolerant about them - still vaguely hold that 'I suppose everyone's got a right to their own opinion'. It is only, or at any rate it is chiefly, the literary and scientific intelligentsia, the very people who ought to be the guardians of liberty, who are beginning to despise it, in theory as well as in practice.

One of the peculiar phenomena of our time is the renegade Liberal. Over and above the familiar Marxist claim that 'bourgeois liberty' is an illusion, there is now a widespread tendency to argue that one can only defend democracy by totalitarian methods. If one loves democracy, the argument runs, one must crush its enemies by no matter what means. And who are its enemies? It always appears that they are not only those who attack it openly and consciously, but those who 'objectively' endanger it by spreading mistaken doctrines. In other words, defending democracy involves destroying all independence of thought. This argument was used, for instance, to justify the Russian purges. The most ardent Russophile hardly believed that all of the victims were guilty of all the things they were accused of. but by holding heretical opinions they 'objectively' harmed the régime, and therefore it was quite right not only to massacre them but to discredit them by false accusations. The same argument was used to justify the quite conscious lying that went on in the leftwing press about the

Trotskyists and other Republican minorities in the Spanish civil war. And it was used again as a reason for yelping against *habeas corpus* when Mosley was released in 1943.

These people don't see that if you encourage totalitarian methods, the time may come when they will be used against you instead of for you. Make a habit of imprisoning Fascists without trial, and perhaps the process won't stop at Fascists. Soon after the suppressed *Daily Worker* had been reinstated, I was lecturing to a workingmen's college in South London. The audience were working-class and lower-middle class intellectuals - the same sort of audience that one used to meet at Left Book Club branches. The lecture had touched on the freedom of the press, and at the end, to my astonishment, several questioners stood up and asked me: Did I not think that the lifting of the ban on the *Daily Worker* was a great mistake? When asked why, they said that it was a paper of doubtful loyalty and ought not to be tolerated in war time. I found myself defending the *Daily Worker*, which has gone out of its way to libel me more than once. But where had these people learned this essentially totalitarian outlook? Pretty certainly they had learned it from the Communists themselves! Tolerance and decency are deeply rooted in England, but they are not indestructible, and they have to be kept alive partly by conscious effort. The result of preaching totalitarian doctrines is to weaken the instinct by means of which free peoples know what is or is not dangerous. The case of Mosley illustrates this. In 1940 it was perfectly right to intern Mosley, whether or not he had committed any technical crime. We were fighting for our lives and could not allow a possible quisling to go free. To keep him shut up, without trial, in 1943 was an outrage. The general failure to see this was a bad symptom, though it is true that the agitation against Mosley's release was partly factitious and partly a rationalization of other discontents. But how much of the present slide towards Fascist ways of thought is traceable to the 'anti-Fascism' of the past ten years and the unscrupulousness it has entailed?

It is important to realize that the current Russomania is only a symptom of the general weakening of the western liberal tradition. Had the MOI chipped in and definitely vetoed the publication of this book, the bulk of the English intelligentsia would have seen nothing disquieting in this. Uncritical loyalty to the USSR happens to be the current orthodoxy, and where the supposed interests of the USSR are involved they are willing to tolerate not only censorship but the deliberate falsification of history. To name one instance. At the death of John Reed, the author of *Ten Days that Shook the World* - a first-hand account of the early days of the Russian Revolution - the copyright of the book passed into the hands of the British Communist Party, to whom I believe Reed had bequeathed it. Some years later the British Communists, having destroyed the original edition of the book as completely as they could, issued a garbled version from which they had eliminated mentions of Trotsky and also omitted the introduction written by Lenin. If a radical intelligentsia had still existed in

Britain, this act of forgery would have been exposed and denounced in every literary paper in the country. As it was there was little or no protest. To many English intellectuals it seemed quite a natural thing to, do. And this tolerance or [of?] plain dishonesty means much more than that admiration for Russia happens to be fashionable at this moment. Quite possibly that particular fashion will not last. For all I know, by the time this book is published my view of the Soviet régime may be the generally-accepted one. But what use would that be in itself? To exchange one orthodoxy for another is not necessarily an advance. The enemy is the gramophone mind, whether or not one agrees with the record that is being played at the moment.

I am well acquainted with all the arguments against freedom of thought and speech - the arguments which claim that it cannot exist, and the arguments which claim that it ought not to. I answer simply that they don't convince me and that our civilization over a period of four hundred years has been founded on the opposite notice. For quite a decade past I have believed that the existing Russian régime is a mainly evil thing, and I claim the right to say so, in spite of the fact that we are allies with the USSR in a war which I want to see won. If I had to choose a text to justify myself, I should choose the line from Milton:

By the known rules of ancient liberty.

The word ancient emphasizes the fact that intellectual freedom is a deep-rooted tradition without which our characteristic western culture could only doubtfully exist. From that tradition many of our intellectuals are visibly turning away. They have accepted the principle that a book should be published or suppressed, praised or damned, not on its merits but according to political expediency. And others who do not actually hold this view assent to it from sheer cowardice. An example of this is the failure of the numerous and vocal English pacifists to raise their voices against the prevalent worship of Russian militarism. According to those pacifists, all violence is evil and they have urged us at every stage of the war to give in or at least to make a compromise peace. But how many of them have ever suggested that war is also evil when it is waged by the Red Army? Apparently the Russians have a right to defend themselves, whereas for us to do [so] is a deadly sin. One can only explain this contradiction in one way: that is, by a cowardly desire to keep in with the bulk of the intelligentsia, whose patriotism is directed towards the USSR rather than towards Britain. I know that the English intelligentsia have plenty of reason for their timidity and dishonesty, indeed I know by heart the arguments by which they justify themselves. But at least let us have no more nonsense about defending liberty against Fascism. If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear. The common people still vaguely subscribe to that doctrine and act on it. In our country - it is not the same in all countries: it was not so in republican France, and it is not so in the USA today [*i.e.* 1945(!)] - it is the liberals who fear liberty and the intellectuals who want to do dirt on the intellect: it is to draw attention to that fact that I have written this preface.

\*borrowed from [webenglishteacher.com](http://webenglishteacher.com)\*

In small groups, read the following scenario and draft a plan of action in response to it. What would you do if this actually happened in your school? Would you go along with the principal's new rule changes or would you lead a protest against the new administration? In your proposal, write out exactly what you would do and explain the plan you would implement for getting your ideas done. Also, note that you must prepare for counterarguments against your ideas. How would you explain your ideas and show how they would be better? Keep these things in mind!

- Your school gets a new principal and she changes all the old rules, some in ways that seem unfair. Some students organize a protest and ask for a voice in setting rules. The principal rejects this without explanation. What will you do? What guidelines will you follow to determine how far your protest should go to gain equality?

1. What does manhood mean to Dave?
2. How does the narrator's tone contrast with Dave's attitude?
3. At what point in the story do you suspect its outcome? What are the clues?
4. What might the reader understand about manhood as a result of Dave's actions?