

Can I TOUCH Your Hair?

Teacher's Guide

WITH ALIGNMENTS TO THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Created by Berry and Company Educational Experiences 2017.



SYNOPSIS

How can Irene and Charles work together on their fifth grade poetry project? They don't know each other . . . and they're not sure they want to.

Irene Latham, who is white, and Charles Waters, who is black, use this fictional setup to delve into different experiences of race in a relatable way, exploring such topics as hair, hobbies, and family dinners. Accompanied by artwork from acclaimed illustrators Sean Qualls and Selina Alko (of *The Case for Loving: The Fight for Interracial Marriage*), this remarkable collaboration invites readers of all ages to join the dialogue by putting their own words to their experiences.

ALIGNMENT TO THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM AND CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

The activities outlined in this guide are designed to enrich your students' educational experience by addressing many Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Common Core anchor standards as well as National Core Curriculum Content Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.



COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading and analyzing the poems of *Can I Touch Your Hair?*

READING LITERATURE

Key Ideas and Details:

GRADE 5	GRADE 8
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact.)</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p>

Craft and Structure:

GRADE 5	GRADE 8
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p>



Questions to think about before you read:

- How do you feel about poetry?
- What is your experience dealing with race and identity?
- How will your perspective aid in the understanding of these poems with your students?
- How can you help your students discover the connections between themselves and others who are different from them?
- How can you foster the love of language and storytelling within your students?
- How will your students use these stories to write their own poetry?

A Pre-Reading To-Do List for Teachers:

- Read all the poems in the book and familiarize yourself with themes.
- Also, be sure to familiarize your class with the ideas and devices in poetry so they can delve deeply into each poem featured in these lessons.
- This is merely a guide to foster discussion and analysis in your ELA and/or humanities classroom. Feel free to choose the activities in which you feel most comfortable.
- Be sure to use poems and subject matter appropriate for your class.
- Find articles and videos that could engage your students even further and could add to their understanding(s) of the themes/topics in this book.



THEMES EXPLORED IN THIS BOOK:

THEMES	POEMS TO FIND THESE THEMES	PAGE(S)
COMING OF AGE	<i>SHOES</i>	<i>PG. 7</i>
CHANGE VERSUS TRADITION	<i>THE POEM PROJECT/WRITING PARTNER</i>	<i>PG. 5</i>
EMPOWERMENT	<i>AUTHOR VISIT</i>	<i>PG. 33</i>
FACING REALITY	<i>BEACH DAY</i>	<i>PG. 12</i>
GROWING UP	<i>SUNDAY SERVICE</i>	<i>PG. 11</i>
INJUSTICE	<i>OFFICER BRASSARD/NEWS</i>	<i>PGS. 24 & 25</i>
OVERCOMING FEAR AND MISCONCEPTIONS	<i>THE POEM PROJECT/WRITING PARTNER</i> <i>THE ATHLETE</i>	<i>PGS. 4 & 5</i>
SELF-AWARENESS	<i>STRANDS/HAIR</i>	<i>PGS. 8 & 9</i>
UNDERSTANDING	<i>QUIET TIME/BLOOMING FLOWER</i>	<i>PGS. 34 & 35</i>



A THREE DAY SAMPLE LESSON UNIT FOR TEACHERS

LESSON 1: CAN I TOUCH YOUR HAIR? UNDERSTANDING SELF AWARENESS

COMMON CORE STANDARD ALIGNED TO THIS LESSON:

GRADE 2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1
Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

GRADE 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1
Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

GRADE 8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to recognize how their feelings and thoughts can influence their behavior;
- identify and analyze the theme of self-awareness in the poems, "Hair" and "Strands"
- Write a list poem and/or response to those ideas.

MATERIALS:

- "Is it Self-Awareness?" Guide (on chart paper)
- Index Cards for "Curious Connections"
- THINK-LINK-CONNECT Graphic Organizer
- Writing Notebooks and/or Looseleaf Paper
- Writing Utensils
- Chart paper or Digital White Board

LESSON DETAILS

HOOK: 5 MINUTES

With your students (in pairs), go through the series of "Curious Connections" index cards. Each card will have a word or object on it. In pairs, give students a set of index cards. Partner A will read the word or show the object and Partner B will share their feelings and thoughts about that word/object. Then, they'll switch until they run out of cards. After they are done, as a class, discuss their thoughts, connections, and questions.

THINK ALOUD/MINI LESSON: 12 MINUTES

Say, Curious Connections helped us to share our thoughts and feelings about our favorite things and what we just practiced in that activity is called, Self-Awareness. Self-Awareness a skill that helps you tune in or listen closely, to your feelings, thoughts and actions. It's how you feel about yourself and how



others view you at home, school, and your community. This is important because the more you know about yourself, the better you are about meeting people that are different from you and you can be more compassionate and considerate of them. They could be different in many ways like race, religion, and gender. Charles and Irene, the two main characters in the poetry book, "Can I Touch Your Hair?" are different in many ways and use their self-awareness as they learn about each other. So, let's take a look at our Self-Awareness Chart to help us identify the skills that make us and Charles and Irene much more thoughtful and aware of our feelings. (Refer to the "Is it Self-Awareness?" chart on chart paper or the digital whiteboard.)

- What skills would you need to study for a test?
- What if you failed the test?
- Would you do anything different?
- What skills would you need to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich?
- What kind of skills do you need to make new friends?
- What skills do you need to learn a new language?

Today, we are going to read two poems that will help us listen closely to our thoughts and feelings about behavior in new settings and/or new situations. The poems we are going to read are called, "Strands" and "Hair" Each poem speaks in the voice of one character. "Strands" speaks in the voice of Charles and "Hair" speaks in the voice of Irene. Read "Strands" and go through your thoughts, connections, and questions--modeling your self-awareness skills on the THINK-LINK-QUESTION Graphic Organizer; reminding students they will do this on their own.

**GROUP WORK:
5 MINUTES**

After you demonstrated how to think about your thinking, using the THINK-LINK-QUESTION chart, have students complete their own graphic organizer in pairs reading the next poem, "hair". Choose two partnerships to share their charts aloud.

**LINK TO INDEPENDENT
WORK:
5 MINUTES**

Say, "Now, you're going to take your self-awareness skills and make a list poem about your own hair. Think about how you feel about your hair, who has hair that's similar to yours, and create a list of words of those feelings." Have students choose between making 10, 11, or 12 lines for their list poem. A list poem is exactly what it sounds like. It's a list! Once they're done, have them write another list poem of their choice.

**INDEPENDENT WORK:
15 MINUTES**

Students work independently to create their list poems. Be sure to let the students work on their own for the first five minutes and encourage them to think creatively. After five minutes, monitor those who may need more encouragement and check in with students with their writing.

**SHARE & DEBRIEF:
10 MINUTES**

Have three to four students share their list poems. Then, once they're finished sharing, review the definition of self-awareness and the chart introduced earlier in the class.

EXTENSIONS:

Have students interview their partner asking three questions about the words/adjectives they chose in their list poem. Then, have them switch.



**FOR ELL & EMERGING
READERS:**

Focus on responding to poems orally, if they have trouble writing them. After they decide what they want to say, record their responses on a recorder and have them listen back to it to edit their list poem.

HOMEWORK:

Have students bring in a photo of themselves at a younger age, between the ages of four and ten. They will use in class tomorrow for the next lesson, "Coming of Age"



A THREE DAY SAMPLE LESSON UNIT FOR TEACHERS

LESSON 2: SUNDAY SERVICE

UNDERSTANDING GROWING UP AND ITS CHALLENGES

COMMON CORE STANDARD ALIGNED TO THIS LESSON:

GRADE 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

GRADE 8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to recognize how growing up and coming of age can teach them important lessons about life ;
- Identify and analyze the theme of growing up in the poems, "Church" and "Sunday Service"
- Write a diary entry in response to those ideas.

MATERIALS:

- <http://abc.tv/2zEPwQ7>
- THINK-LINK-CONNECT Graphic Organizer
- Writing Notebooks and/or Looseleaf Paper
- Writing Utensils
- Chart paper or Digital White Board

LESSON DETAILS

HOOK: 15 MINUTES

Have students take out their pictures of when they were young and examine them. If they didn't bring one in, have them create a strong mental picture of themselves. In their journal, have them answer the questions below:

- What were you doing in this picture at the time it was taken?
- What were you afraid of?
- Who were your best friends?
- What made you happy?
- What made you sad?
- What were your most favorite foods? Activities? Tv shows?



After they've written a short paragraph, answering the questions, give them these sentence starters to fill out, just below their picture response paragraph:

"I believe life is fair/unfair because..."
"Racism is..."

Chart a few of their responses, depending on time.

**THINK ALOUD/MINI
LESSON:
20 MINUTES**

Say, "This Activity helped us to share our experiences and find common ground with our fellow classmates. Yesterday, we learned about Self-Awareness. Let's review the definition of Self-Awareness. Yes, Self-Awareness a skill that helps you tune in or listen closely, to your feelings, thoughts and actions. And today's poems are going to help focus and listen closely on growing up and coming of age in our society and personal community. Charles and Irene are in the seventh grade and they are experiencing many different emotions because they are still trying to reflect upon themselves and their place in the world as young people--just like you! And oftentimes, characters in books, just like in real life, don't recognize they're growing up and maturing and it's a bit scary to them. They journey from innocence to experience right in front of us, the readers, while they are still trying to figure it all out.

Have them watch a short clip of the Blackish episode, "Churched" and respond with a THINK-LINK-QUESTION graphic organizer.

Now, we are going to read two poems that will help us listen closely to our thoughts and feelings about growing up and what the characters are going through as they come of age.

The poems we are going to read are called, "Church" and "Sunday Service" Each poem speaks in the voice on one character. "Sunday service" speaks in the voice of Charles and "Church" speaks in the voice of Irene.

Read "Church" and go through your thoughts, connections, and questions--thinking aloud and modeling lines indicating that Irene is growing up and realizing things she might not have realized had she not met Charles. Have students then read the poem, "Sunday Service" to themselves.

**GROUP WORK:
3 MINUTES**

TURN AND TALK: Turn to a person that's next to you and discuss your thoughts, connections, and questions about the poem, "Sunday Service"

**LINK TO INDEPENDENT
WORK:
2 MINUTES**

Say, "Now, you're going to take your understanding of growing up and you're going to write a diary entry as one of the two characters in the book. Think about how they feel based on the words in the poems and write an entry as if you were them at church. Students can write a paragraph or 10 line poem in response to the poems.

**INDEPENDENT WORK:
15 MINUTES**

Students work independently to create their diary entries.. Be sure to let the students work on their own for the first five minutes and encourage



them to think creatively. After five minutes, monitor those who may need more encouragement and check in with students with their writing.

**SHARE & DEBRIEF:
5 MINUTES**

Have three students with winter birthdays share their entries. Then, once they're finished sharing, review the concept of coming of age.

EXTENSIONS:

Have students role play as Irene and Charles at the same church. What might that look like? What might they say?

**FOR ELL & EMERGING
READERS:**

Focus on responding to the visual aids to spark conversation and writing. Have them dictate to a partner about how they are feeling and chart or draw their responses.



A THREE DAY SAMPLE LESSON UNIT FOR TEACHERS

LESSON 3: NEWS

UNDERSTANDING INJUSTICE

COMMON CORE STANDARD ALIGNED TO THIS LESSON:

GRADE 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

GRADE 8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to recognize how growing up and coming of age can teach them important lessons about life ; identify and analyze the theme of growing up in the poems, "Church" and "Sunday Service" and write an acrostic poem and/or response to those ideas.

MATERIALS:

INJUSTICE Survey displayed on chart paper hung up around the room (See appendix)
Mini sticky notes
THINK-LINK-CONNECT Graphic Organizer
Writing Notebooks and/or Looseleaf Paper
Writing Utensils
Chart paper or Digital White Board

LESSON DETAILS

HOOK: 12 MINUTES

Place your survey charts (one question per piece of chart paper or google slide) around the room. Make sure every student has a enough sticky notes for every question displayed. Have students walk around classroom, reading each survey question displayed. They will respond to the question with the letter corresponding to the answer on their post-it.

Ex. If their response to the survey question is option C, they will write C on their sticky note and post on the survey question chart.

Give them 5 minutes to complete the task. Then, tally up the responses in a big chart so everyone can see how they relate to one another in the class. Then, ask these questions:

- *How do you think these questions relate to what we've been reading? Why?*
- *What other ideas could we use, that relate to what we are reading? Why?*



- Do you have questions about any of the things you saw? What are they?

**THINK ALOUD/MINI
LESSON:
20 MINUTES**

Say, "This activity helped us to share our experiences and find common ground with our fellow classmates by exploring the theme of injustice. For the past two days, we've been discussing self-awareness and growing up. Today, we are going to be discussing the idea of injustice in today's poems from, "Can I Touch Your Hair?" In the poems, Charles and Irene write about police brutality and injustice. One poem mentions a name, Trayvon Martin and a city of Ferguson, Missouri. Before we read and analyze the two poems, let's get a solid understanding on who Trayvon was and what happened in Ferguson, Missouri.

<http://cnn.it/2zHDnYF>
(TRAYVON MARTIN)

<https://usat.ly/2yY2rgX>
FERGUSON, MISSOURI)

The poems we are going to read are called, "Officer Brassard" and "News" Each poem speaks in the voice on one character. "Officer Brassard" speaks in the voice of Charles and "News" speaks in the voice of Irene.

Read "Officer Brassard" and go through your thoughts, connections, and questions--thinking aloud and modeling lines indicating injustice and unfairness. Have students then read the poem, "News" to themselves.

**GROUP WORK:
3 MINUTES**

With a partner, have students share out their thoughts, connections and questions to the poem, "News"

**LINK TO INDEPENDENT
WORK:
2 MINUTES**

Say, "Now, you're going to take your understanding of injustice and write a poem or response about what justice means to you. Make sure to use your five senses when responding to this prompt. What does justice look like, feel like, sound like, smell like, and taste like. Use details to really describe what justice is. Also, be sure to start every line of your poem with, "Justice is..." Think about how you feel based on the words in the poems.

Students can write a paragraph or 10 line poem in response to the poems.

**INDEPENDENT WORK:
15 MINUTES**

Students work independently to create their justice poems. Be sure to let the students work on their own for the first five minutes and encourage them to think creatively. After five minutes, monitor those who may need more encouragement and check in with students with their writing.

**SHARE & DEBRIEF:
10 MINUTES**

Have students wearing the color blue will share their entries. Then, once they're finished sharing, review the concept of injustice.

EXTENSIONS:

Have students look at more video of Trayvon Martin as a human in the world and describe how might've been feeling walking home from the store



that night.



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APPENDIX AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



Name:

Date:

Title of poem:

THINK-LINK-CONNECT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

THINK ("I THINK...")

What are you thinking?

LINK ("I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE...")

Can you relate to this?

QUESTION ("I WONDER...")

What questions do you have?



IS IT SELF-AWARENESS?

A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-AWARE LEARNERS....

- ***Recognize their strengths and weaknesses.***
- ***Make well thought out decisions.***
- ***Can handle stressful situations and know when they are getting stressed or nervous.***
- ***Are self-motivated and do things successfully on their own.***
- ***Ask questions when they don't understand***
- ***Always monitor how they feel in different situations.***
- ***Are mindful of others' feelings too***

ARE YOU SELF-AWARE?



CURIOUS CONNECTIONS

Cut the squares and shuffle them. Make enough cards for every group of two.



YOU WOKE UP LATE



YOU PASSED A TEST



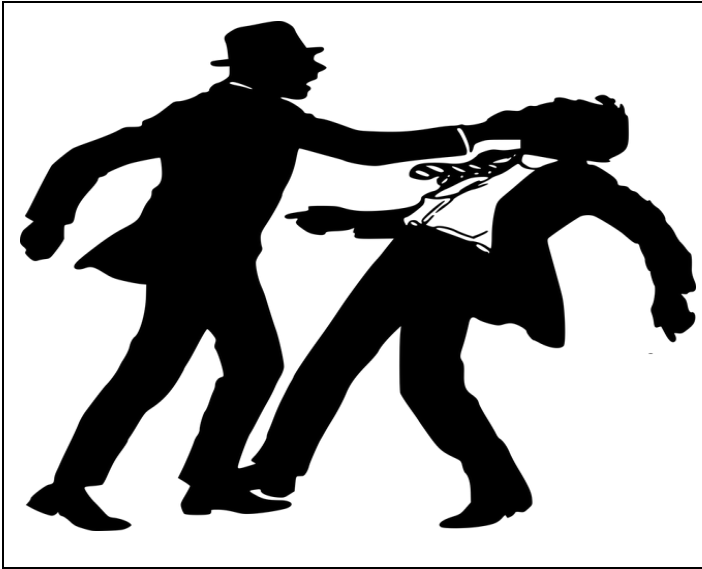
YOU HURT YOURSELF



YOU'RE THE NEW STUDENT



**YOU FAVORITE SONG COMES
ON!**



**YOU GOT IN A
FIGHT/ARGUMENT**



YOU FELL ASLEEP IN CLASS



YOU WALKED DOWN A SCARY STREET

Name:

Date:

Title of poem:

THINK-LINK-CONNECT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

THINK ("I THINK...")

What are you thinking?



<p>LINK (“I’VE SEEN THIS BEFORE...”)</p> <p><i>Can you relate to this?</i></p>	
<p>QUESTION (“I WONDER...”)</p> <p><i>What questions do you have?</i></p>	

INJUSTICE SURVEY

1. I BELIEVE EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY.

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

2. IF SOMEONE IS DIFFERENT, WE SHOULD TREAT THEM DIFFERENTLY.

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

3. IN OUR SOCIETY, EVERYONE IS TREATED THE SAME

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

4. IF YOU’RE FROM A DIFFERENT COUNTRY, YOU DON’T BELONG HERE

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually



- Always

5. BOYS AND GIRLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE WHO THEY WANT TO BE

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

6. GIRLS CAN'T DO WHAT BOYS CAN DO

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

7. IF YOU SPEAK A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE THAN ME, YOU'RE COOL.

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

8. SOMETIMES WATCHING THE NEWS, SCARES ME

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

9. MY FAMILY LOVES ME

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

10. I'VE BEEN BULLIED

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

**** FEEL FREE TO ADD MORE BASED ON YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR STUDENTS**