
Lesson Plan

The American Dream in the Real World: A Nonfiction Unit

Grades	11-12
Lesson Plan Type	4-Week Critical Literacy Unit
Estimated Time	20 50-minute sessions
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OVERVIEW

“Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.”

–Barry Switzer

This unit grew out of a class discussion that I had several years ago with my AP seniors about social responsibility. When asked what responsibility we had to others in our society, one girl said, “I can only be expected to keep my side of the street clean.” Despite my shock at this statement, I found that many students agreed with her, and comments about the laziness of the poor and the injustice of having to give money away to those who don’t deserve it came spewing out from all sides of the room. Although we attempted a small social responsibility project as a result of this conversation, I didn’t scratch the surface of challenging their ingrained ideologies about their own entitlement and their misconceptions about those of different classes. This critical literacy unit is an effort to expose students to a variety of perspectives related to the tenets of the American Dream. While most American Dream units focus on classic texts such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Death of a Salesman*, or *The Grapes of Wrath*, this unit analyzes the American Dream through nonfiction texts that have to do with issues of the injustice of minimum wage, poverty, homelessness, and inequitable funding in schools. Because students do not typically encounter much nonfiction in their high school experience, this unit serves to introduce them to the genre and teach them to analyze and apply persuasive techniques. My intention is not to brainwash these students into having a “liberal” or “conservative” perspective on society, but I want them to be exposed to texts that challenge their perceptions and force them to look at the world from a different angle. These texts were instrumental in challenging my own perceptions as a college student, so I hope that they will do the same for my students. I intentionally did not include detailed study questions with this unit because I want the discussions to arise primarily from my students’ questions, reflections, and reactions. These texts

will certainly provoke them. The social responsibility project at the end is intended to encourage students to step out of their comfort zones, apply what they learned, and improve the community that surrounds them.

FEATURED RESOURCES (Resources for Teacher Research Prior to Unit)

Children in America's Schools with Bill Moyers – Documentary released in 1998 based upon Jonathan Kozol's book *Savage Inequalities*

The National Coalition for the Homeless website – [<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>] Great resources for examining the issues related to homelessness as well as reading the stories of homeless people in America

The Life You Can Save website – [<http://www.thelifeyoucansave.com>] Peter Singer's social action website which includes interesting videos about how to solve world poverty and encourages people to take action.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Freire, P. (1993/2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Freire critiques the hegemonic belief of those who “have” that those who “have not” are responsible for their own failure due to laziness. He suggests that for the oppressors, “*having more* is an inalienable right, a right they acquired through their own ‘effort,’ with their ‘courage to take risks.’” (p. 59). In contrast, they believe that “if others do not have more, it is because they are incompetent and lazy, and worst of all is their unjustifiable ingratitude toward the ‘generous gestures’ of the dominant class” (p. 59). Many students that I have encountered in suburban schools seem to share this perspective of these “others” that they have never met. By blaming the poor for their own condition, students don’t have to grapple with their own social responsibility for this failure. They can maintain an indifferent attitude thinking (as one of my previous students suggested) that their only responsibility is to keep “(their) side of the street clean.” Barbara Ehrenreich’s book *Nicked and Dimed* and Jonathan Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities* are specifically intended to challenge these often deep-seated beliefs and complicate students’ perceptions of those that “have not.”

Charity is not the solution to poverty. While this may seem revolutionary to students who believe that working at soup kitchens and taking gifts to homeless shelters at Christmas is the ultimate form of human kindness, Freire challenges this notion saying, “True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity... True generosity lies in striving so that these hands – whether of individuals or of entire peoples – need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world” (p. 45). In thinking of their own social responsibility to other humans, students must be pushed to see beyond the “band-aid” of charity toward large-scale solutions that address the origin of the poverty issue: dehumanization of the poor.

As he shifts his focus from the world at large to education specifically, Freire points out

that students often become “listening objects” in the classroom who are filled with “deposits” of knowledge by expert teachers who act as “Subjects” (pp. 71-72). The irony of this shift is that many suburban students who have inherited the position of the “oppressors” are in this case repositioned as the “oppressed” who are passive recipients of others’ ideologies, beliefs, and thoughts. Freire presents the consequences of students who are subject to the “banking concept of education:” “The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world” (p. 73). The counterargument to the “banking” metaphor of education is the notion that students must be liberated through “praxis” which he defines as “the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79). This new form of education should be based upon encouraging “acts of cognition” and students acting as “critical co-investigators” rather than “docile listeners” (pp. 80-81). As Freire advocates, this unit encourages students to examine the world around them through a variety of lenses and then determine whether or not they have a responsibility to change anything. They will be encouraged to ask “Why” things are the way they are and then empowered to come up with their own solutions. During seminars, the teacher will serve as a facilitator rather than a lecturer, and students will be guided toward leading each discussion with little teacher input.

Shor, I. (1996). Sharing power, democratizing authority, and mediating resistance. In *Negotiating authority in a critical pedagogy* (pp. 29-60). Chicago: The University Press.

Because Shor is focused on “sharing power” with one’s students in the classroom, he begins by asserting that the teacher can set the stage for this power sharing by “(inviting) students to take the most active role while the teacher restrains his or her verbal profile” (p. 30). The purpose of the initial Socratic Seminar about students’ perceptions of the American Dream is to do just that. Although I will give them the initial instructions, their own drawings and commentary will dominate the majority of class time.

My primary focus in this unit is to encourage students to think critically about the world around them as well as their own perceptions about themselves and others. Shor speaks of a “context-based...student-centered” classroom in which he defines critical thinking as “a literate social performance enabled in an experientially and linguistically meaningful context, enacted in the language students possess, inside a purposeful, negotiated process which encourages them to question the cultural assumptions of society and to imagine alternatives to the status quo” (p. 40). Because the students will be grappling with the ideology of the American Dream and how it impacts their own lives as well as the lives of others, the context is both real and relevant to their lives. Through the sociological nonfiction pieces they will read, I hope that they will be challenged to rethink their assumptions about society, and specifically about those invisible, impoverished people in society who seem to have ‘failed’ to achieve the American Dream.

An additional part of his “power-sharing” pedagogy is Shor’s belief in the need for the teacher to learn from the students as well as students learning from the teacher. He reports taking notes on what his students say in class which has the dual purpose of “focus(ing) (his) concentration on what is happening in the dialogue” and “send(ing) a

signal to the students of (his) attentiveness and interest” (p. 48). During each of the Socratic seminars throughout the unit, I will be taking notes on what my students contribute, and I will encourage them to take notes on what their peers say as well. In this way, we will create a collaborative community in which the learning happens collectively rather than along a narrow path between one teacher and one student.

Behrman, E.H. (2006). Teaching about language, power, and text: A review of classroom practices that support critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49(6), 490-498.

In his review of the prevalent strategies for critical literacy, Behrman discusses the need for students to read texts to supplement traditional classroom texts. These texts include “other works of fiction, nonfiction, film, or popular culture” (p. 492). He bases this strategy on the assumption that “traditional or canonical texts are somehow deficient in helping students focus on social issues, and that supplementary texts may allow students to confront social issues glossed over or avoided in traditional texts” (p. 492). While I believe that traditional texts can be very useful in helping students address and challenge social issues, this particular unit focuses wholly on these types of supplementary texts. Because units on “The American Dream” traditionally revolve around works of fiction such as *The Great Gatsby*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, or *Death of a Salesman*, this unit intends to use nonfiction (*Nickel and Dimed* and *Savage Inequalities*), film (*The Pursuit of Happyness*), and popular culture (advertisements, songs, political cartoons, etc.) to explore the issue from several different angles. While students may find it easy to distance themselves from texts written about bygone eras, it will be more difficult for them to remain indifferent when they encounter modern texts that deal with issues relevant to their everyday lives.

Behrman also points out the propensity of critical literacy teachers to encourage students to read a text from a resistant perspective. Using this strategy, students can “‘peel’ different layers of meaning from a text and... explore how the same reader might approach a text from different identities based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexuality, and religion” (p. 493). In this unit, students will be instructed to view the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* from a variety of perspectives different from their own based primarily on gender, race, and class. I hope to encourage “critical viewing” so that students do not merely accept the message of the movie without interpreting how the movie might be viewed by marginalized individuals. In the fishbowl discussion that follows this viewing, students will take this a step further by taking on the persona of that particular marginalized individual in the discussion.

A third characteristic of critical literacy that Behrman discusses is the use of social action projects to “move students’ real-life concerns beyond classroom walls” (p. 495). He argues that these projects are necessary because “critical literacy instruction should not be limited to the promotion of personalized or internalized reconceptualizations of language, power, and text” (p. 495). At the conclusion of this unit, students will present “Social Responsibility Research Projects” that are intended to create tangible solutions to the problems of poverty and inequality in our community. After the projects have been presented, the class will vote on which project they would like to tackle based upon the power of the idea and the feasibility of whole-class involvement. Thus the lessons of the unit will continue throughout the remainder of the school year and hopefully beyond into students’ lives.

Standards

NCTE/IRA, Critical Literacy, Globalization, 21st Century, ALEX Standards

NCTE

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Critical Literacy

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts

- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments

Globalization (adapted from NCTE’s “Globalization and English Education”)

- Central to the concerns of globalization in English education are differing interpretations, contesting ideologies, and struggles between frames for meaning.
- **Literature** is broadening in terms of authors, audiences, genres, and modes of representations. Readers have an expanded set of possible identities, discourses, subjectivities, communities, and modes of interpretation.
- **Mass media** has increasingly become a global means to convey dominant ideologies and discourses that demand critical analyses. In recognizing the identities and values being promoted through rhetorical techniques, audiences use critical strategies to achieve greater agency and consciousness in their future consumption and production.
- To prepare students who can be active and effective world citizens able to make thoughtful decisions and solve global problems, we must first help them to be critical, meta-aware thinkers and communicators.

21st Century

- 1.1.1 Follow an inquiry- based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real- world connection for using this process in own life.
- 1.1.4 Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.
- 1.1.5 Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- 1.1.9 Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.
- 1.2.1 Display initiative and engagement by posing questions and investigating the answers beyond the collection of superficial facts.
- 1.3.2 Seek divergent perspectives during information gathering and assessment.
- 1.3.4 Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.
- 2.1.1 Continue an inquiry- based research process by applying critical- thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.
- 2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real- world situations, and further investigations.
- 2.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.
- 2.1.5 Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.
- 3.1.1 Conclude an inquiry- based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning. 3.1.2 Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.
- 3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively. 3.1.4 Use

technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.

4.2.3 Maintain openness to new ideas by considering divergent opinions, changing opinions or conclusions when evidence supports the change, and seeking information about new ideas encountered through academic or personal experiences.

ALEX

11th grade standards:

3.) Read with comprehension a variety of informational and functional reading materials, including recognizing organizational patterns, evaluating strengths and weaknesses of argument, and identifying directions implied or embedded in a passage.

4.) Analyze twentieth and twenty-first century American literary selections for plot structure, cultural significance, and use of propaganda.

12.) Use the research process to manage, document, organize, and present information to support a thesis on a literary topic.

13.) Compare the use of oral presentation skills of self and others.

14.) Identify propaganda in nonprint media.

12th grade additional standards:

11.) Critique visual communication for effectiveness.

Resources & Preparation

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

• <i>Nicked and Dimed</i> by Barbara Ehrenreich
• <i>Savage Inequalities</i> by Jonathan Kozol
• “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” by Peter Singer
• “On the Mindless Menace of Violence” by Robert F. Kennedy
• DVD copy of <i>The Pursuit of Happyness</i>
• DVD player, television, and necessary cables
• Access to computer lab/Internet capabilities

PRINTOUTS

• Sample American Dream images/advertisements
• Sample American Dream song lyrics
• Excerpts from film reviews for <i>The Pursuit of Happyness</i>
• PowerPoint presentation slides (handout)
• Nonfiction Critical Analysis sheet
• Student Budget Sheet
• Social Responsibility Project Handout
• Social Responsibility Project Evaluation Sheet

WEBSITES

Political Cartoon: “The Real American Dream” http://editorialcartoonists.com/cartoon/display.cfm/50440/
<i>New York Times</i> article about the American Dream: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/07/business/economy/07generation.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=american%20dream&st=cse
MasterCard “American Dream” Commercial: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71KAO_bmc2o
Robert F. Kennedy’s speech: “On the Mindless Menace of Violence” (http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/lifevision/onthemindlessmenaceofviolence/)
<i>Nickeled and Dimed</i> YouTube clip: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDgFiW2xtf0
Study questions for <i>Nickeled and Dimed</i> : http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/NickelandDimed_tg.pdf
Cosby Show clip about living in the “real world:” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rh74tNeaZg
Living Wage Calculator: http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/
National Coalition for the Homeless Speaker’s Bureau Website: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/faces/speakers.html
“The Singer Solution to World Poverty” essay: (http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/19990905mag-poverty-singer.html)
<i>Children in America’s Schools</i> video clips: (1) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kFwE89hR-4 (2) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zl19CbBzFw

PREPARATION

1.	The teacher should review the process and goals of the Socratic seminar since this is one of the primary tools used throughout the unit to promote student discussion and critical thinking.
2.	The teacher should read and critique each of the texts ahead of time. (<i>Nickeled and Dimed</i> , <i>Savage Inequalities</i> , “The Singer Solution to World Poverty,” etc.)
3.	The teacher should collect his or her own modern representations of the American Dream to contribute to the learning stations.
4.	The teacher should visit each of the websites to insure that they are working properly prior to using them in class.
5.	The teacher should contact Michael Stoops mstoops@nationalhomeless.org at the National Coalition for the Homeless if he or she is interested in having members of the Speakers’ Bureau visit the class.

Instructional Plan

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will

• Learn to analyze nonfiction focusing on the structure of an argument
• Analyze persuasive techniques noting both “fair” and “unfair” strategies
• Critique and analyze various forms of media from their everyday lives
• Work collaboratively to generate a topic of inquiry for a social action project
• Critically view a film with different audience perspectives in mind
• Write both a film review and an editorial as a result of their analysis

SESSION 1: Exploring Initial Perceptions of the American Dream

Note: If it is possible, arrange the desks in a large circle for the Socratic Seminar.

1.	Give each student a blank sheet of white, unlined paper, and ask students to draw a picture or representation of “The American Dream.” Encourage them to make their drawings as detailed as possible, and then ask them to write a paragraph on the back of the sheet explaining how the drawing depicts their understanding of The American Dream.
2.	Begin the Socratic Seminar by asking each student to share and explain his or her drawing to the class. While students are sharing, the rest of the class should jot notes about the common characteristics among the drawings as well as aspects of the drawings that stand out as being different or unique.
3.	After all students have shared, ask students to discuss the similarities and differences among the drawings. (As with all Socratic Seminars, encourage students to talk to one another rather than the teacher, and ask them to take notes on what others have to say during the discussion.) Although the seminar discussion should be fluid enough to move in many directions, the primary questions that can guide students are as follows: (1) Who or what created this picture of the American Dream in our minds? For what purpose? (2) What are the basic tenets/beliefs of the American Dream (as you would explain them to someone from another country)? (3) Is it available to everyone? Why or why not? (4) Can you think of people you know (relatives, celebrities, etc.) that have achieved the American Dream? What did that look like in their lives? (5) What is your personal reaction to the American Dream?
4.	Write a seminar reflection in which you consider whether the American Dream is a good thing because it is motivating and hopeful or a bad thing because it is false and impossible. You may also write about any other topic that came up during the seminar or anything that you wish you had said during the seminar that you didn’t get a chance to say.

Hw (due at the beginning of Session 2): Find at least three examples of the various ways that the media portrays the American Dream and bring them to class. Use three different forms of media

(i.e. paper advertisements in magazines, YouTube clips of commercials, political cartoons, newspaper articles, blogs, wikis, song lyrics, etc.)

SESSION 2: Examining the Media Portrayal of the American Dream

Note: The teacher should have at least five examples of the ways that the American Dream is portrayed in these different types of media so that there is a “foundation” at each learning station. [Samples are provided in the attached resources and websites.]

1.	Set up a learning station for each of the various types of media represented: paper ads, commercial clips, political cartoons, newspaper articles, internet blogs/wikis, song lyrics, etc. The stations for printed material could be a bulletin board or table, and the stations for the commercial clips and internet resources should have at least one computer available for student use.
2.	When students come into class, they should place their examples (after the teacher has briefly scanned them to insure their appropriateness for class) at the appropriate learning station. Students with YouTube examples should write the web address on a notecard to be placed next to the computer station(s).
3.	Divide the students into groups of 3-4, and ask them to circulate through each of the learning stations with their notebooks. [Note: These will be their “American Dream” groups, and they will remain in them for the duration of the unit in order to develop deeper relationships and levels of trust.] The following questions should guide their examination of the “artifacts”: (1) What images are prevalent among these depictions? (2) Who is the intended audience? How do you know? (3) What message is conveyed? Are there also hidden messages that are less obvious? (4) What types of individuals are portrayed in each piece (i.e. gender, race, class, etc.)? What does this suggest about the American Dream? (5) Who is NOT represented in these depictions? What might be a reason for these omissions?

Hw (due at the beginning of Session 4): Interview one person your age (not in this class) and another person your parent’s or grandparent’s age. It could be a parent or grandparent, but it does not have to be. Ask them each the following questions: (1) How would you define the American Dream? (2) Do you believe achieving this dream is possible? (3) If so, how does one go about achieving it? If not, why? (4) What has influenced your belief or lack thereof?

SESSION 3: Examining the Media Portrayal of the American Dream

1.	Allow groups to continue circulating through the learning stations if they did not finish during the previous session.
2.	Once each group finishes, ask them to reconvene to discuss their findings. They should compare their impressions and responses and begin to draw conclusions about how the media portrays the American Dream and why. They do not have to reach a consensus, but if they

	find contradictions, they should attempt to explain why those contradictions are significant.
3.	After the groups have had time to analyze their findings, each group should nominate a spokesperson who will serve as an “ambassador” for the jigsaw activity. During this activity, one group member from each group will circulate to another group, and they will share what they found and glean information from the ‘host’ group as well. Groups should take notes on any new or contradictory ideas that are introduced during this jigsaw.
4.	Once the students have returned to their original groups, they will participate in a whole-class discussion in which they present their collective findings and justifications. Students will record these conclusions on butcher paper and post it in the room.

Hw: Complete interview assignment from Session 2; Begin reading *Nickeled and Dimed*, and keep a reading journal of your reactions to what you read.

SESSION 4: The American Dream in Film: *The Pursuit of Happiness*

1.	Students should return to their learning station groups and compare their interview notes. The following questions can guide their discussion: (1) What common words and phrases characterized your interviewees’ perceptions of the American Dream? (2) Were there significant differences in the perceptions based upon age? Explain possible reasons for any differences. (3) How did their ideas compare with the media representations we have studied over the past few days?
2.	Groups then report back to the whole class while one student records the common words and phrases gleaned from the interviews on a second large piece of butcher paper. As a class, the students will examine the list of words and phrases, discussing how they compare to those portrayed by the media and how they differ according to the age of the interviewee. [If students do not identify these, make sure to discuss two of the primary attitudes associated with the American Dream: (1) “Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough. Those who fail in this country are just lazy”, and (2) “Due to public education in our country, every child has an opportunity to succeed if he or she is willing to put forth effort.”]
3.	With this background work on the ideology surrounding the American Dream in place (their own perceptions, that of people they know, and media influences), we will turn to a film depiction of the American Dream: <i>The Pursuit of Happiness</i> .
4.	As students watch the movie, they are responsible for taking notes on issues, comments, or ideals conveyed about the American Dream. Despite the movie’s “happy ending,” I also encourage them to watch the movie with other perspectives in mind. For instance, how would a woman view this movie differently than a man? A black teenager versus a white teenager or a Latino teenager? A person living comfortably versus an impoverished person? What message does the movie send? Who is the target audience? Does the movie suggest that anyone can do what the protagonist is able to do?

5.	Begin watching <i>The Pursuit of Happyness</i> (20 min)
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Hw: Continue reading *Nickeled and Dimed* (w/ reading journal)

SESSION 5

1.	Continue watching <i>The Pursuit of Happyness</i> . (50 min)
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Hw: Continue reading *Nickeled and Dimed* (w/ reading journal)

SESSION 6

1.	Finish <i>The Pursuit of Happyness</i> . (50 min)
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Hw: Continue reading *Nickeled and Dimed* (w/ reading journal)

SESSION 7

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| 1. | Ask students to return to their American Dream groups and compare their notes about the film. They should specifically focus on how different types of people might perceive the movie, and how the message might impact those people differently. |
| 2. | Once the groups have had a chance to collaborate, each group will send one member as a representative of the group to a “fishbowl” discussion in which 4-5 students sit in a small inner circle surrounded by an outer circle of their peers. Each person in the fishbowl must represent a perspective other than their own (i.e. female or male, black, white, or Hispanic, poor or wealthy, etc.) During the discussion, each person must take on that persona as they critique the film. While they watch, the rest of the class should analyze the conversation and prepare questions or comments for the fishbowl participants. A “hot seat” is available within the fishbowl so that another student can jump into the conversation to ask a question or make a comment. |
| 3. | I will hand out brief excerpts of contradictory reviews of the film and ask students to provide their opinions about the different perspectives (see attached). We will conclude the class with a whole-class discussion about how the movie portrays the American Dream and whether or not students agree with the portrayal. |

Hw: Write your own (1-2 page) review of the film based upon your perception of how successful it was in accomplishing what it set out to accomplish. Make sure to provide specific examples to support your opinions. [Continue reading *Nickeled and Dimed* w/ reading journal]

SESSION 8: Introduction to Nonfiction (Focus on Persuasion)

1.	Begin by asking students to write in their journals on the following topic: Make two columns in your journal, one labeled “fiction” and the other labeled “nonfiction.” Take a few minutes and list as many examples of each that you have read either in school or for pleasure. Which type of writing do you prefer? Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? (Assume that students have read more fiction than nonfiction, and plan to discuss why this may be the case.)
2.	Introduce nonfiction as a genre, focusing specifically on persuasion using the PowerPoint attached. These slides are intended as an overview, but they will guide your students’ evaluations of the nonfiction pieces they will read for the remainder of the unit. (Give students printed copies of the PowerPoint presentation for future reference.) Discuss the power of persuasion focusing on central questions such as What is the claim? and How does the writer convince you to take his or her side?
3.	Hand out three copies of the Nonfiction Critical Analysis sheet (see attached) to each student and a copy of Robert F. Kennedy’s speech “On the Mindless Menace of Violence” (http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/lifevision/onthemindlessmenaceofviolence/) which was given the morning after Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death. Read the first part together, modeling for students how to identify the different components of an effective argument, then ask the students to work in pairs to finish the speech and finish filling out the Critical Analysis sheet together. Discuss and compare their findings prior to the end of class.

Hw: Finish *Nicked and Dimed*; Using the second copy of the Nonfiction Critical Analysis sheet, analyze Ehrenreich’s *Nicked and Dimed* using your text and the reader response notes.

SESSION 9: Tenet #1: “Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough. Those who fail in this country are just lazy” [*Nicked and Dimed*]

1.	Begin class by watching the “musical” version of <i>Nicked and Dimed</i> on a YouTube clip by The American Ruling Class. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDgFiW2xtf0 (10 min). This provides a summary of the book’s premise and allows the students to hear Barbara Ehrenreich discuss her project.
2.	Prior to the first discussion of the book, ask students to take out their reader response journals. They should skim their entries for ideas, questions, frustrations, surprises, etc. and highlight any salient points.
3.	Begin a Socratic Seminar by asking each student to share one or two comments or questions from their reader response journals. Take notes on these ideas to insure that they are addressed at some point during the seminar.
4.	The seminar should be primarily student-led, but make sure that they touch on the following topics: (1) How does this book challenge our assumptions about jobs in America? (2) What surprised you about Ehrenreich’s experiences? (3) Who or what does she blame for these

	problems? (4) What solutions does she suggest to solve these problems? (5) Do you agree/disagree with her assessment? Why?
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Hw: Begin reading *Savage Inequalities* w/ reader response journal; keep the third copy of the Critical Analysis sheet on hand as you read to make note of persuasive techniques

SESSION 10

1.	Continue seminar discussion of <i>Nickeled and Dimed</i> using student questions. For more detailed questions, use the Macmillan Study Guide on the book: http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/NickelandDimed_tg.pdf
2.	Ultimately, ask students if they believe that Ehrenreich’s experiment was valid and whether or not her experience represents that of millions of Americans struggling to get by in our country.
3.	Once students have had a chance to examine and discuss the claims of the text, we will shift our focus to a stylistic analysis of her rhetorical strategies and the structure of her argument using Jim Burke’s “Argument Organizer” from his <i>Tools & Texts for 50 Essential Lessons</i> [format includes the following categories: Claim, Reasons, Three Forms/Types of Evidence, Acknowledge, and Respond].
4.	In their American Dream groups, students will examine their Critical Analysis sheets focusing on the “Fair” persuasive techniques she uses (firsthand experiences, quotes/opinions of experts, facts/statistics, comparisons/contrasts, emotional appeals, logical appeals) and her “Unfair” persuasive techniques (appeal to ignorance, giving only one side, bandwagon appeal, loaded words, generalizations, red herring, stating opinions as facts, and the straw man). [Each of these is explained in the PowerPoint presentation given previously.] Students should collaborate to find examples of these various techniques and prepare to share them with the class.
5.	Groups will reconvene to breakdown the structure of her argument using Burke’s categories above (and his template), and then we will do this as a class on a large piece of butcher paper. Our discussion will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of her argument and whether or not the strategies she uses are successful in convincing her reader.

Hw: Continue reading *Savage Inequalities* w/ reader response journal

SESSION 11

1.	To give students a chance to test Ehrenreich’s argument for themselves, tell them that they are now independent young adults who must find a job and a place to live. Show the famous clip from the <i>Cosby Show</i> where Cliff talks to Theo about the money he will need to be a “regular” person. (Theo is arguing that he doesn’t need to go to college because he just wants to be a “regular person” with a “regular job.”) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rh74tNeaZg
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2.	Ask students to return to their American Dream groups, and hand each group a copy of the local classifieds. Instruct them to choose a job that requires no education or particular trade skill and find out how much they would make. Then tell them to search the want ads for an apartment and a car. Once they have chosen these, hand out the budget sheet (see attached) and model the process of budgeting using the sample budget. Each group member should have their own budget sheet to take home to their parents at the end of class. Students can go to the “Living Wage Calculator” at http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/ to determine typical wages and expenses in their particular county and state.
3.	Encourage students to take the sheets home to their parents to check their “estimates” against the actual expenses they might incur for car payments or groceries. Tell them to adjust their budget sheets accordingly.

Hw: Share your budget with your parents/guardian and adjust it according to their advice; Continue reading *Savage Inequalities* w/ reading journal.

SESSION 12

1.	Begin class by asking students to write a journal response concerning what they discovered in creating their personal budgets with a minimum wage salary. How much money did you have left over? Did you have to adjust the amount you spent on food, shopping, or entertainment? Would your lifestyle change significantly if you had to follow this budget? Based on this activity, do you agree with Ehrenreich’s assessment of the inability of minimum wage workers to remain afloat in our society? (Whole-class discussion)
2.	Poverty in America: In American Dream groups, students should discuss the following questions: Why do you think some people accept welfare from the government rather than working? What do you think causes homelessness in America? Is it our responsibility to do anything about it?
3.	Two options: (a) The National Coalition for the Homeless has a Speaker’s Bureau that will bring a panel of homeless people to your classroom to share their stories and answer questions. If this is a possibility for you, you can contact Michael Stoops at mstoops@nationalhomeless.org for more information. If these speakers can visit your classroom, students should prepare questions ahead of time. (b) If bringing the panel of guest speakers to your classroom is not a possibility, then take your students to the computer lab, and ask them to work in pairs to visit the Speaker’s Bureau website http://www.nationalhomeless.org/faces/speakers.html This site allows students to read the stories of these individuals. Ask each pair to choose an individual, read their story, and choose one member of the pair to take on the persona of that individual. Each individual will share his or her “story” of being homeless with the rest of the class. (Send around a sign-up sheet with the individuals’ names in order to make sure that no two groups choose the same person.)

4.	Once each person has shared his or her story, ask students to write down anything that surprised them, changed their opinions, or confirmed their opinions about those who are homeless. Then ask them if there is a solution to this problem in our country. (Discuss). Hand out “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” for their homework assignment.
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Hw: Read “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” (<http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/19990905mag-poverty-singer.html>) and ask students to use the Nonfiction Critical Analysis sheet to examine his argument.

SESSION 13

1.	Begin Socratic Seminar by asking students to write a one-paragraph response to Singer’s argument. Ask students to share their responses, and then open up the class discussion concerning whether or not his approach is valid. What are the strengths and weaknesses of his argument? Analyze the style of his argument. How does he provoke the reader’s reaction? What rhetorical tools does he use to make his point? Do you think he’s being facetious or serious? (Allow student responses and reactions to direct the remainder of the seminar. This article typically produces heated discussions among students.)
2.	Introduce “Social Responsibility” Project (see attached)
3.	Allow students to meet in their American Dream groups to begin planning

Hw: Finish *Savage Inequalities* and write final reader-response journal entry.

SESSION 14: Tenet #2 “Due to public education in our country, every child has an opportunity to succeed if he or she is willing to put forth effort.”

1.	Begin class by watching clips from the documentary based on <i>Savage Inequalities</i> called “Children in America’s Schools” [Clip 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kFwE89hR-4 Clip 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zl19CbBzFw]
2.	Ask students to journal about how the images portrayed in these clips impact their perspective of the inequality of resources in schools. Then ask them to comment generally about their reactions to Kozol’s text. Discuss these responses as a whole class.
3.	Students should return to their American Dream groups, and they will be assigned one of the six chapters of the text to examine more closely. Using their reading response journals as well as the Critical Analysis sheet, they should focus on the following: (1) the purpose of the chapter, (2) the persuasive strategies used, (3) powerful words/phrases/sentences/paragraphs, (4) effectiveness of the chapter as a whole, (5) questions about the chapter

Hw: Work on social responsibility project.

SESSION 15

1.	Begin class by asking students to write a journal response to the following tenet: “Due to public education in our country, every child has an opportunity to succeed if he or she puts forth the effort.” (Discuss as a class.)
2.	Each American Dream group will use the work that they did on the previous day to lead a discussion of their chapter from <i>Savage Inequalities</i> . They should focus on the persuasive strategies we have discussed as well as choosing the most potent aspects of the chapter to read and analyze. Along with sharing their insights, they should involve the rest of the group by asking questions and seeking their opinions.
3.	I will primarily take notes during this student-led discussion, and we will have a wrap-up discussion at the end based upon the groups’ responses to each of the chapters. Ultimately, I will seek to find out whether or not the book changed their opinions or preconceived notions about the relationship between schooling and social mobility in our country.

Hw: Work on social responsibility project.

SESSION 16-17: Social Responsibility Project Workdays

1.	Group Project Workdays
2.	On these workdays, students may sign up to go the computer lab, work on the presentation itself, analyze interview notes or recording etc. Upon completion of the project, students will write a one-page summary of their work as well as how responsibility was divided and how much each student contributed to the group.

Hw: Finish social responsibility project.

SESSION 18-20: Social Responsibility Project Presentations

1.	Social Responsibility Project Presentations
2.	During presentations, students should evaluate each group according to the criteria listed on the “Social Responsibility Presentation Evaluation Rubric” (explanation of social issue, persuasive strategies, social action plan, and presentation). Each student will then give the group a score from 1-10 to indicate how convincing and well-conceived the project is overall.
3.	Once all groups have presented, I will analyze the students’ evaluations to determine which group’s project will be the one that we undertake as a class for the remainder of the school year.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 4. | At this point, students will also turn in their editorials to be submitted to the local newspaper. |
|----|--|

EXTENSIONS

Once students have completed their social responsibility projects, the class will vote on which one they would like to take on as a class project for the remainder of the year. Using what they have learned throughout this unit, students will be more aware of the needs of people in their communities, and they can become advocates for those who can't speak for themselves. I will also submit their editorials to the local newspaper to make the adults in the community aware of the students' ability to analyze social issues and contribute to improving them.

This nonfiction unit could also lead toward a fiction unit on the American Dream that uses classic texts such as *The Grapes of Wrath* or *The Great Gatsby*. It would be an interesting pairing to encourage students to consider how the historical period and social context impacts the perspective of the American Dream. They will begin the unit with a critical eye, and the comparison opportunities would be numerous.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

Students will be assessed throughout the unit primarily for their participation in Socratic Seminars (or written reflections for quiet students), their reader response journals for the books, their film review and editorial, and their social responsibility presentation. I will use the same criteria provided in the Nonfiction Critical Analysis handout and the student evaluation rubric. As much as possible, I want the grades for this unit to be ancillary to what the students learn.

REFERENCES

- Burke, J. (2006). *50 Essential Lessons: Tools and Techniques for Teaching English Language Arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
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- Hayden, J. (Writer/Director). (1996). *Children in America's school with Bill Moyers*. [Television documentary]. United States: South Carolina ETV
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Singer, P. (1999, September 5). The Singer solution to world poverty. *New York Times*. Retrieved July 28, 2010, from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

**American Dream Images:
A search of Google images for pictures and ads related to the American
Dream results in the following:**



American Dream Song Lyrics

**Johnny America
By Five for Fighting**

**Show me a better bike than the one I got
If it makes any difference you can keep the lot
There's plenty of space in the parking lot**

**A head full of hopes
A pocket full of dreams
Handle bars coming apart at the seams**

**There goes Johnny America
Riding Hard up Mission Hill
Some think he'll make it to the top today
Some say he never will
Though he's just a child at heart
He's old enough to fall
Nobody in 100 years
Can touch him faults and all...**

**What you going to say about my little man
Take another shot, do the best you can
They're selling out souls in the grandstand**

**His Cap peeled back
Got Blood on his knees
Fighting back tears
Tearing through the breeze**

**There goes Johnny America
Riding Hard up Mission Hill
Some think he'll make it to the top today
Some say he never will
Though he's just a child at heart
He's old enough to fall
Nobody in 100 years
Can touch him faults and all...**

He's come too far to fall

**There goes Johnny America
Riding Hard up Mission Hill
Some think he'll make it to the top today
Some say he never will...**

**GO!
Go Johnny!
Go Johnny!**

**There goes Johnny America
Riding Hard up Mission Hill
Some think he'll make it to the top today
I say he will.**

America
By Neil Diamond

Far
We've been travelling far
Without a home
But not without a star

Free
Only want to be free
We huddle close
Hang on to a dream

On the boats and on the planes
They're coming to America
Never looking back again
They're coming to America

Home, don't it seem so far away
Oh, we're travelling light today
In the eye of the storm
In the eye of the storm

Home, to a new and a shiny place
Make our bed, and we'll say our grace
Freedom's light burning warm
Freedom's light burning warm

Everywhere around the world
They're coming to America
Every time that flag's unfurled
They're coming to America

Got a dream to take them there
They're coming to America
Got a dream they've come to share
They're coming to America

They're coming to America
They're coming to America
They're coming to America
They're coming to America
Today, today, today, today, today

My country 'tis of thee
(Today)
Sweet land of liberty
(today)
Of thee I sing
(today)
Of thee I sing
(today)
(today)
(today)
(today)
(today)

Film Reviews of *The Pursuit of Happyness*:

1. "I left the movie thinking that a whole lot of folks in Gardner's situation can't do what he did. They can't break the cycle of poverty. They never get off the street. But this is the story of one man who made it, and Smith does him justice." – Robert Denerstein, *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, Dec. 15, 2006
2. "For anybody who ever has been at the bottom, or feared they were headed there, it's a reminder that there's no guarantee of luck or happiness in the Declaration of Independence -- just the right to pursue it." – Roger Moore, *Orlando Sentinel*, Dec. 15, 2006
3. "There are worse ways to spend the holidays, and, at the least, it will likely make you appreciate your own circumstances." – Kevin Crust, *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 15, 2006
4. "Winter's coming in hard, but this season's leading cause of the sniffles is going to be *The Pursuit of Happyness*, a viral blast of the American Dream. It's *Rocky* with a briefcase." – Kyle Smith, *New York Post*, Dec. 14, 2006
5. "The American Dream as white, rich and all male." –Prairie Miller, *WBAI Web Radio*, March 21, 2007
6. "We may wonder if happiness can be bought this way, and whether the film being sold to us isn't a slightly suspect package, but Smith, sublime and moving, sells it regardless." – Tim Robey, *The Daily Telegraph*, January 17, 2007
7. "Deserves kudos for avoiding saccharine sentiment, but its relentless emphasis on money as the cure for all ills is depressing. They might as well have called it *The Pursuit of Richyness*." – Paul Arendt, *BBC*, January 14, 2007
8. NYTimes Full Review:
<http://movies.nytimes.com/2006/12/15/movies/15happ.html?scp=3&sq=%22pursuit%20of%20happyness%22&st=cse>

Sample Budget: Minimum wage = \$7.25 per hour x 40 hours/wk x 4wks = \$1,160 per mo.
 Tax bracket = 15% = (.15) x \$1160 = \$174 per mo.

Category:	Monthly Budget:
INCOME: (wage x hours – taxes)	\$1160 - \$174 = \$986
EXPENSES:	
<i>Bills</i>	
Rent	\$400
Utilities (electric, cell phone bill, etc.)	\$80
Groceries	\$100
<i>Car</i>	
Car payment	\$200
Car insurance	\$80
Gasoline/maintenance	\$100
<i>Shopping</i>	
Clothes	\$75
Other	\$0
<i>Fun</i>	
Entertainment	\$50
Other	\$0
Subtotal (expenses):	\$1085
NET INCOME: (income- expenses)	(-\$99)

Your budget: Wage = _____ x 40 hrs/week x 4 wks = _____ per mo.
 Tax bracket = 15% = (.15) x _____ = _____ per mo.

Category:	Monthly Budget:
INCOME: (wage x hours – taxes)	
EXPENSES:	
<i>Bills</i>	
Rent	
Utilities	
Groceries	
<i>Car</i>	
Car payment	
Car insurance	
Gasoline/maintenance	
<i>Shopping</i>	
Clothes	
Other	
<i>Fun</i>	
Entertainment	
Other	
Subtotal (expenses):	
NET INCOME: (income- expenses)	

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT

In your American Dream groups, you will synthesize all that you have learned about the reality of the American Dream in our society. Your task is to examine these ideas in the context of our community and create a plan for a social action project that will in some way improve the lives of people in our community. Although we may not be able to make the “American Dream” a reality for everyone in our community, we can do *something* to make that dream a little more attainable.

KITCHENETTE BUILDING

by Gwendolyn Brooks

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,
Grayed in, and gray. “Dream” makes a giddy sound, not strong
Like “rent,” “feeding a wife,” “satisfying a man.”

But could a dream send up through onion fumes
Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes
And yesterday’s garbage ripening in the hall,
Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms

Even if we were willing to let it in,
Had time to warm it, keep it clean,
Anticipate a message, let it begin?

We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!
Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,
We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.



1. **IDENTIFY YOUR TOPIC:** In your groups, **identify the particular social issue** that you would like to research and address for your project. Consider the topics we have covered: perspectives on the American Dream, the insufficiency of minimum wage, issues of poverty, homelessness, inadequate school funding, unequal school resources, distribution of wealth, etc. You may also choose a separate but related topic as long as you get approval from me.
2. **RESEARCH:** Once you have identified your topic, you should **research that particular topic in the context of our community**. This research may take a variety of forms, but it should include the following at minimum:
 - a. **one formal interview** with a member of the community (consider community leaders, homeless people, a single mom, a janitor at our school, someone working multiple jobs, the grocery bagger at the local supermarket) to find out about their daily lives and their perspectives on the American Dream

- b. research on **statistics** in the community related to your particular topic (consider class stratification percentages, number of homeless people, school funding statistics, etc.)
 - c. at least **two local media publications/broadcasts** related to your issue (newspaper/magazine articles, news stories on television, radio commentary, etc)
3. **SOCIAL ACTION PLAN:** Using this research, you and your group must develop a **plan of action** to address this particular issue in your community. Keep in mind that a thorough plan must consider details such as fundraising (How much money will this require? How will you raise that money?), marketing (Who is your target audience? How will you get them involved?), and organizing (Who will be in charge? How will you divide responsibility?).
4. **DETERMINE FORMAT:** Next you must consider what **format** would be best to present your social action plan to the rest of the class (and possibly the community at large). Will you grab their attention through PowerPoint with its ability to make charts/graphs? Would a photo collage with recorded narration and music be more effective using Microsoft Photostory? Could you convey the information successfully through a Facebook page, blog, or wiki? You can be creative with your choice of format, but make sure that you consider which one best matches the goals of your project.
5. **PRESENTATION:** During our presentation days, you will **present your problem, the supporting research, and your social action plan to the rest of the class**. Make sure to divide responsibilities among your group members and practice several times before you give the actual presentation. After everyone has presented, the class will vote on whose presentation was the most persuasive, and we will take on that project as a class for the remainder of the school year.
6. **EDITORIAL:** The independent component of this project is a **persuasive editorial** that you will each write to the local newspaper in an effort to share what you have learned with a wider audience. You must follow the criteria for creating a strong argument that we have been using throughout this unit to critique other pieces. You will turn these editorials in to me, and after a few revisions, we will send them to the local paper in hopes that some will be chosen for publication.

Social Responsibility Evaluation Sheet

Group Members: _____

Social Action Plan: _____ Rating (1-10): _____

Explanation of Social Issue (clear? valid?)	
Persuasive Strategies (appeals, statistics, examples)	
Social Action Plan (relevant, realistic, well-conceived)	
Presentation (clear, fluid, persuasive, prepared, professional)	

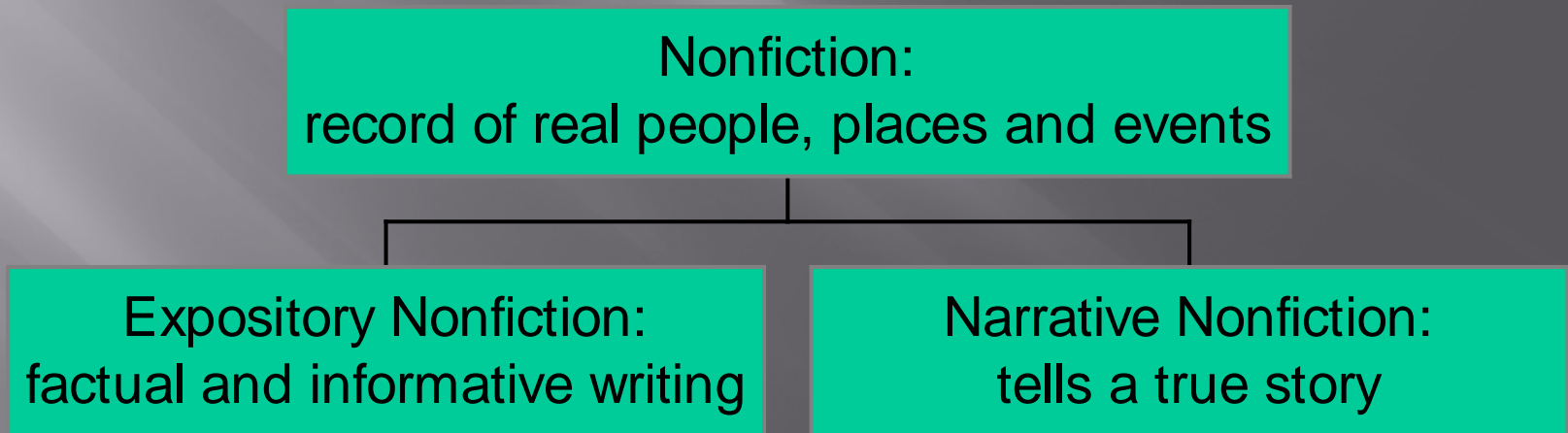
Group Members: _____

Social Action Plan: _____ Rating (1-10): _____

Explanation of Social Issue (clear? valid?)	
Persuasive Strategies (appeals, statistics, examples)	
Social Action Plan (relevant, realistic, well-conceived)	
Presentation (clear, fluid, persuasive, prepared, professional)	

Introduction to Nonfiction: Welcome to the Real World

Types of Nonfiction



When reading nonfiction...

...you must read
CRITICALLY

- ▣ make judgments about what seems accurate, biased, or incorrect
- ▣ discover author's purpose

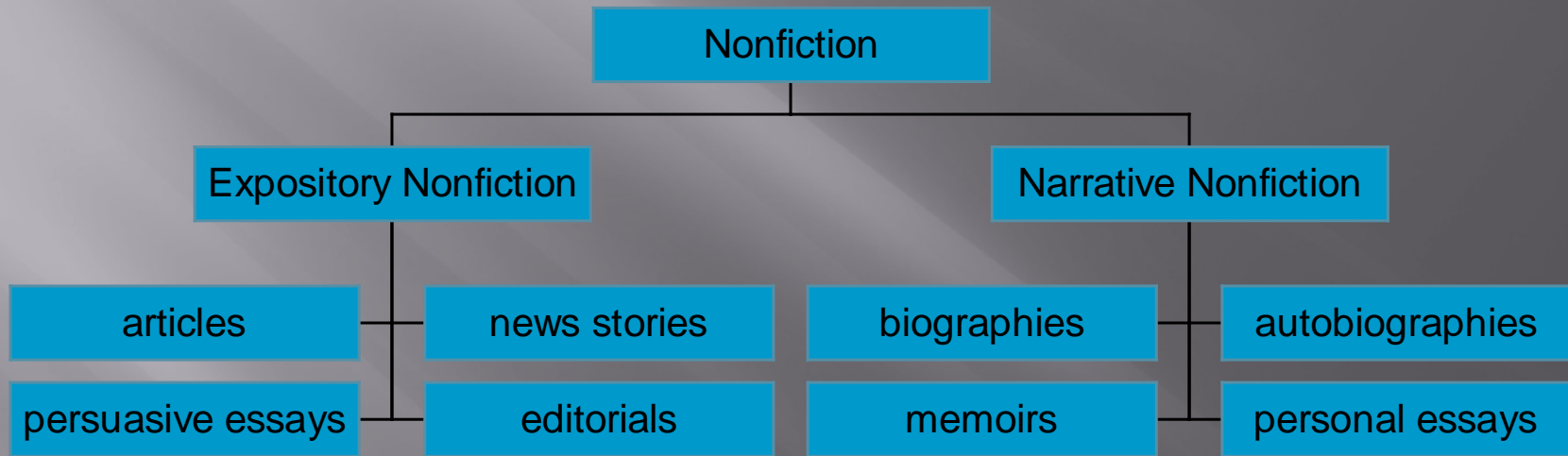


Author's Purpose

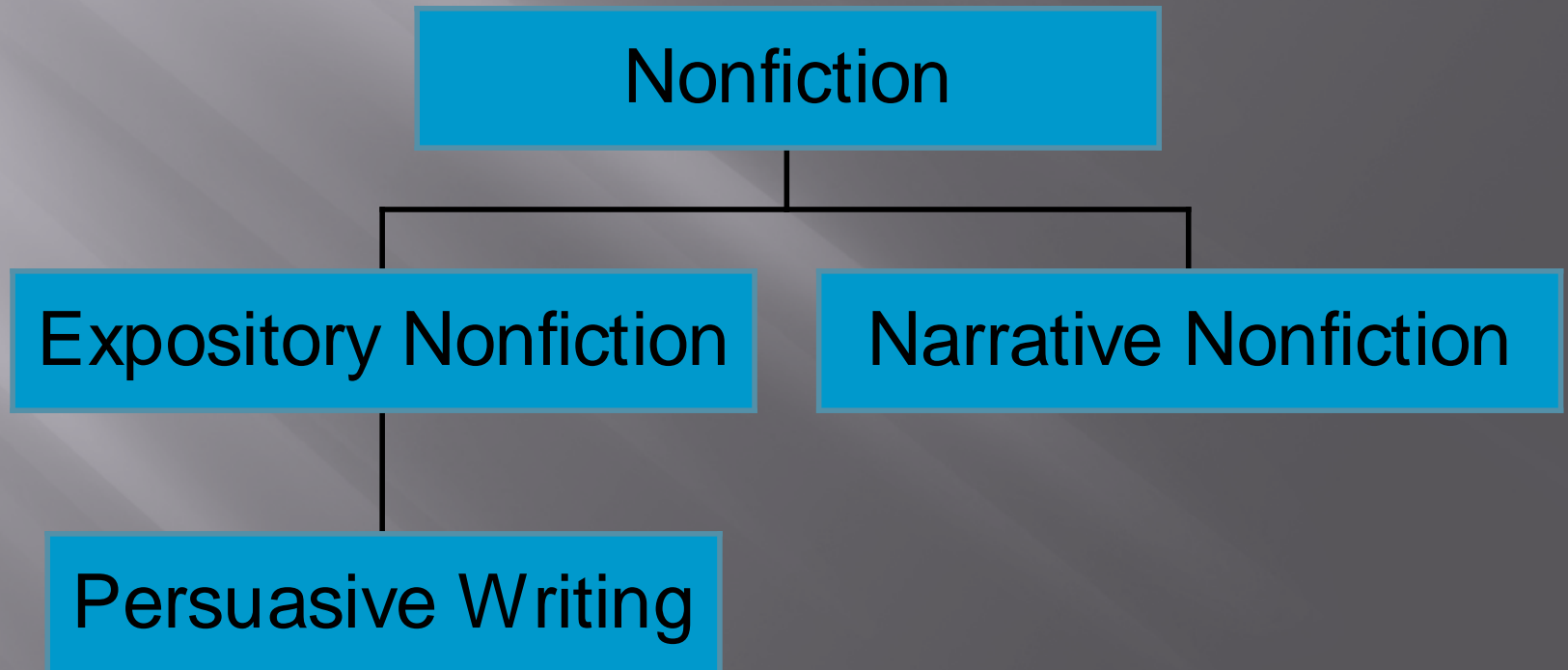
- ▣ His or her reason for writing
- ▣ Determine his or her goal...
 - Explain/inform
 - Entertain
 - Persuade
 - Enlighten



Types of Nonfiction



Persuasive Writing



Persuasive Techniques

Three parts of an effective argument:

1. Assertion
2. Support
3. Opposing Viewpoint



Assertion

- ▣ Def: statement of belief that the writer or speaker explains and supports
- ▣ Ex) “The pet food crisis is forcing Americans to face a stomach-wrenching fact: The human food supply is little or no better protected than food for our dogs and cats.”

Support

- ▣ Def: facts, figures, statistics and examples the author gives that prove the assertion is correct
- ▣ Ex)
 - ▣ The average American eats about 260 pounds of imported foods a year.
 - ▣ The nation with one of the worst food export safety records in the world – China – now sends more than \$2 billion of food to the United States every year.

Opposing Viewpoint

- ▣ Def: the “other side” of the argument (anticipate objections to what you have stated and answer them)
- ▣ Ex) “American suppliers have their own contamination issues. But they pale in comparison to problems in China...”

Evaluating the Argument

- ▣ What is your opinion of the author or speaker's assertion?
- ▣ Has the argument changed your opinion?
- ▣ Is the support strong and convincing?

“Fair” Persuasive Techniques

Firsthand experiences or examples	Comparisons and Contrasts
Quotes/opinions from experts	Emotional appeal
Presenting facts or statistics	Logical appeal

“Unfair” Persuasive Techniques (Propaganda)

<p>Appeal to ignorance (if no one has proven it – must not be true)</p>	<p>Giving Only One Side (present one side of argument)</p>	<p>Bandwagon Appeal (if everyone believes it, it must be right)</p>	<p>Loaded Words (emotionally-charged words)</p>
<p>Generalizations (general statement about all members of a group)</p>	<p>Red Herring (changing the subject)</p>	<p>Stating opinions as facts</p>	<p>Straw Man (exaggerating other side in order to reject as ridiculous)</p>

Watch out for.... BIAS

- ▣ Bias: mental leaning, inclination, prejudice, or bent



- ▣ Almost all pieces of nonfiction have some form of bias; however, the important thing is being able to detect it and keep it in mind while reading. (This goes back to the author's purpose.)

After reading, consider the following elements:

- ▣ Style, tone, and use of language (What effect is the author trying to attain?)
- ▣ Personal, social, historical, or cultural influences, contexts, or biases (What other factors affect *what* they are saying? Where are they coming from?)