

Notes From the Field & The 1619 Project

Interdisciplinary Unit
English Daily Slides
Week 2

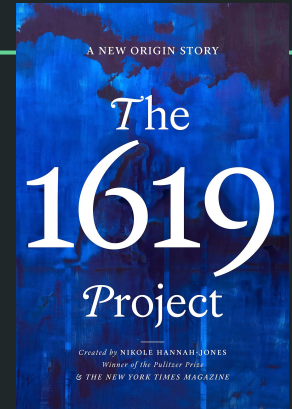


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Lesson 5

Objective

You will discuss the questions raised by Baldwin in 'Walk on a Leaf' from *Notes From the Field* in a Socratic Seminar.

Agenda

Word of the Day: Disenfranchise

Introduction to Socratic Seminar Definition, Roles, and Norms

Review Socratic Seminar Rubric

Watch Clip of Anna Deavere Smith Performing 'Walk On A Leaf'

Socratic Seminar

Introduction to Prompt for Journal #3 and Begin Writing Response

Word of the Day

Definition
deprive (someone) of the right to vote.

disenfranchise

Example sentence
Our policy choices as a society and our decisions about where to allocate resources—pouring them into prisons rather than into mental health or education—have turned our schools into a road to incarceration for too many of our youth. Because this is not only an American issue, we have an opportunity to invite new ideas, new ways of thinking about the disenfranchised.

Notes

- Also, to deprive (someone) of a right or privilege.



What is a Socratic Seminar?

- A classroom discussion based on the implications and themes of a text
 - Looking at a text critically and making meaning together
- The teacher provides you with a series of questions but does not otherwise interfere
- Student-led, student-centered



Watch this brief video about the Socratic Method.

- How does Socrates view learning?
- What is a line of inquiry? How does it involve various people?
- How can we apply his thoughts in class discussion?

What is YOUR role in a Socratic Seminar?



- *Active Listening*
 - Do not just hear, listen to what your peers are sharing.
 - Side chatter or conversation not on-topic will result in you losing points for the seminar.
- *Reference the Text*
 - Backup your thoughts and direct your peers to the text.
- *Active Participation*
 - You do not need to raise your hand, but you must not cut others off.
 - Monitor your airtime. Are you commanding or making space? If you have spoken a lot, encourage others and step back.
 - Speak professionally.
- *Respect*
 - Even if you disagree, explain why and follow up in a response when it is your turn.
 - Phones or computer screens are prohibited. We are present in the seminar.

Socratic Seminar Norms

1. **Reference the text:** Your opinions are important, but they should be thoughts about the text.
2. **Listen to what others say:** Build upon what your classmates say and don't interrupt. A discussion cannot take place unless you are listening actively and carefully to what others say.
3. **Speak clearly:** For others to respond to your opinions, everyone must be able to hear and understand what you say.
4. **Give others your respect:** Always remember our one classroom rule. A discussion is a cooperative exchange of ideas and not an argument or a debate: if you disagree, do so politely. You may become excited and wish to share your ideas, but don't talk privately to your neighbor. Share your ideas with the whole class instead.
5. **Guidelines:**
 - a. You do not need to raise your hand to speak. However, do need to wait until whoever is speaking is finished before you speak.
 - b. Monitor your airtime. In our discussions, everyone should get a chance to speak. If you've spoken multiple times, hold back, and encourage others to speak.
 - c. Speak in formal, academic language. We are practicing for college and for professional, academic conversations.

Formative 2: Socratic Seminar

This is a required formative.
Participate at least three times
with **substantive** contributions.

[Slide]

JAMES BALDWIN

FROM "A RAP ON RACE"—A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MARGARET
MEAD

1971

"Walk on a Leaf"



Socratic Seminar Rubric

0-2	Does not participate in seminar. Has device out/open.
3-4	Speaks at least one time, making reference to the text. Shows signs of active listening.
5-6	Speaks at least two times, making purposeful references to the text. Shows signs of active listening. Encourages others to participate.
7-8	Speaks at least three times, making insightful references to the text. Shows signs of active listening. Encourages others to participate by presenting alternate lines of inquiry/questioning.



(To the musician.) If I may interrupt you for a moment. Luckily, I'm not fifteen, but if I were, how in the world would I find any respect for human life, or any sense of history? And history is a concept that exists in almost nobody's mind. *(To the musician.)* Go on, go on.

How do people
develop a sense of
respect for human
life and for history?

Source: NFF, 115

According to the West, I have no history. I've had to wrest my identity out of the jaws of the West. What I'm trying to say is that if I were young, I would find myself with no models. And that's a very crucial situation. Because what we've done, the world we created. If I were fifteen, I would feel hopeless, too. So you see what we gotta try to, what we gotta try to face...

What does it mean to
have a history? Why
is this important?

Source: NFF, 115

According to the West, I have no history. I've had to wrest my identity out of the jaws of the West. What I'm trying to say is that if I were young, I would find myself with no models. And that's a very crucial situation. Because what we've done, the world we created. If I were fifteen, I would feel hopeless, too. So you see what we gotta try to, what we gotta try to face...

Do you have a
history? If so, why?
If not, why not?

Source: NFF, 115

I read a little book called *The Way It Spozed to Be*. And it was poetry and things written by little black children, Mexican, Puerto Rican children. Land of the free, home of the brave. And the teacher had made a compilation of the poems these kids wrote. And he respected them. And he dealt with them as if they were—as a fact, all children are. As a fact, all human beings are...some kind of a miracle! And so something wonderful happened.

What happens when we
treat people who are
often poorly treated with
respect? Why?

Source: NFF, 116

I read a little book called *The Way It Spozed to Be*. And it was poetry and things written by little black children, Mexican, Puerto Rican children. Land of the free, home of the brave. And the teacher had made a compilation of the poems these kids wrote. And he respected them. And he dealt with them as if they were—as a fact, all children are. As a fact, all human beings are...some kind of a miracle! And so something wonderful happened.

Why does respect or
dignity change people?
How does it change
them?

Source: NFF, 116

So what I'm trying to get at, I hope, is that there is a tremendous national global moral waste. And the question is: How can it be arrested?

What is the
“tremendous
national global moral
waste?”

Source: NFF, 117

So what I'm trying to get at, I hope, is that there is a tremendous national global moral waste. And the question is: How can it be arrested?

Why is this waste
happening?
Is it still happening?

Source: NFF, 116

So what I'm trying to get at, I hope, is that there is a tremendous national global moral waste. And the question is: How can it be arrested?

How do we stop it?

Source: NFF, 116

So what I'm trying to get at, I hope, is that there is a tremendous national global moral waste. And the question is: How can it be arrested?

Can restorative
narratives “arrest” the
“tremendous national
global moral waste?”

Source: NFF, 116

That's an enormous question. Look. You and I, we've become whatever we become. The curtain will come down eventually. But what should we do about the children? We are responsible, in so far as we're responsible for anything at all, we are responsible for the future of this world.

Answer Baldwin's question. What should we do about the children?

Source: NFF, 117

Journal #3

Do Baldwin's questions still apply? He did ask them 50 years ago, after all. If you do not feel these questions still apply, then explain how you believe society has changed since 1971.

Are you part of what society is 'wasting' by not respecting you or valuing you enough?

Do you have a history?

What is your personal and social history?

How does that history impact your sense of value in the world? How can you change the way you tell your story?

What should we do about the children?

Homework

Read:

- Read the following monologues from *Notes From the Field*: ‘The Baddest,’ ‘Broken,’ and ‘The Geese’
- Read ‘August 1619: poem’ by Clint Smith from *The 1619 Project*

Write:

- Complete Journal Entry #3

Lesson 6

Objective

You will write a PEAL paragraph on imagery based on a close reading of your choosing.

Agenda

Free Write

Discussion of Responses to Journal Entry #3

Introduction to the Different Types of Imagery

Imagery Example Identification Exercise

Close Read Excerpts of 'August 1619: poem' by Clint Smith and 'The Geese' and 'The Baddest' for Imagery

Discussion of Common PEAL Mistakes

Write Practice PEAL Paragraph

Review Practice PEAL Paragraph

Focus Activity: Freewrite

A **free write** is a sustained writing period where the writer **does not censor themselves**. Anywhere your mind goes is fine! Start by reading the prompt, and then just WRITE!

You cannot deal with children if you don't have a sense of kindness and respect. And if you don't like them. And if you *don't* have a system that supports them and likes them and stays with 'em. I get mad at you so I throw you outta school? What is—what is *that*? NO. I get mad at you so we need to come *closer*. You did something wrong: so you need to come closer you don't need to go further. You know, if I have something to offer, then you need to be *close*, you don't need to be further.

Open invitation to share any final reflections from last class.

Do Baldwin's questions still apply? He did ask them 50 years ago, after all. If you do not feel these questions still apply, then explain how you believe society has changed since 1971.

- Are you part of what society is “wasting” by not respecting you or valuing you enough?
- Do you have a history?
- What is your personal and social history?
- How does that history impact your sense of value in the world? How can you change the way you tell your story?
- What should we do about the children?

Imagery Notes (Imagery is our vocab word instead of WOD)

Figurative language that invites the reader to immerse themselves in a sensory experience with the speaker.

- I. Organic imagery: internal experience or feeling
 - A. “my heart dropped into my stomach”
- II. Kinesthetic imagery: movement
 - A. “The birds flapped their wings in excitement, the promise of food so close. They sprung out of the tree, one by one, soaring through the branches and swooping down low to the pile of berries beneath the tree.”
- III. Visual imagery: sight
 - A. “The deep blue hues of twilight were reflected in the still water.”
- IV. Tactile imagery: touch
 - A. “Sarah placed her bare hand on the cold snow. It was wet at first, then the frigid cold set in like a thousand needles, all pricking her palm at once.”
- V. Gustatory imagery: taste
 - A. “The rich, sweet, sugary taste of chocolate ran over his taste buds as he chewed and swallowed the whole cupcake in less than ten seconds.”
- VI. Auditory imagery: sound
 - A. “The rooster crowed at early dawn; the clang of pots and pans signaled that breakfast was almost ready.”
- VII. Olfactory imagery: smell
 - A. “The sweet scent of maple wafted through the room, causing Stephanie to stop what she was doing and sniff the air.”

Steps:

1. Identify the imagery.
2. Which type of imagery is it and **why**?
3. Which **specific words** make this imagery?
4. How does the imagery **work** to make meaning? What do you know or learn from it?
5. **Why** is it there? Does it **characterize**? Does it push the conflict?

Which type of imagery is which? Identify the examples.

Example	Type of Imagery
“The deep blue hues of twilight were reflected in the still water.”	
“The rich, sweet, sugary taste of chocolate ran over his taste buds as he chewed and swallowed the whole cupcake in less than ten seconds.”	
“Sarah placed her bare hand on the cold snow. It was wet at first, then the frigid cold set in like a thousand needles, all pricking her palm at once.”	
“My heart dropped into my stomach”	
“The birds flapped their wings in excitement, the promise of food so close. They sprung out of the tree, one by one, soaring through the branches and swooping down low to the pile of berries beneath the tree.”	

Which type of imagery is which? Identify the examples.

Example	Type of Imagery
The rooster crowed at early dawn; the clang of pots and pans signaled that breakfast was almost ready.”	
“The sweet scent of maple wafted through the room, causing Stephanie to stop what she was doing and sniff the air.”	

Examine this passage from Clint Smith's poem

1. Identify the imagery.
2. Which type of imagery is it and **why**?
3. Which **specific words** make this imagery?
4. How does the imagery **work** to make meaning? What do you know or learn from it?
5. **Why** is it there? Does it **characterize**? Does it push the conflict?

Over the course of 350 years,
36,000 slave ships crossed the Atlantic
Ocean. I walk over to the globe & move

my finger back & forth between
the fragile continents. I try to keep
count how many times I drag

my hand across the bristled
hemispheres, but grow weary of chasing
a history that swallowed me.

For every hundred people who were
captured & enslaved, forty died before they
ever reached the New World.

I pull my index finger from Angola
to Brazil & feel the bodies jumping from
the ship.

I drag my thumb from Ghana
to Jamaica & feel the weight of dysentery
make an anvil of my touch.

I slide my ring finger from Senegal
to South Carolina & feel the ocean
separate a million families.

The soft hum of history spins
on its tilted axis. A cavalcade of ghost ships
wash their hands of all they carried.

Examine this passage from ‘The Baddest’

1. Identify the imagery.
2. Which type of imagery is it and why?
3. Which **specific words** make this imagery?
4. How does the imagery **work** to make meaning? What do you know or learn from it?
5. **Why** is it there? Does it **characterize**? Does it push the conflict?

Everyone's *bad* in there, it...don't really matter what you do, to a person that's there for twenty-five to life. I did everything I could to stay on **top of the food chain.** I did day for day in prison because of my fighting. Mean' I come out my cell and I **make the whole yard lay down?** **Put down the whole yard.** Lay it down! You git in a fight and then everyone has to lay down while you're fighting cuz eh gunners gonna shoot. I didn't care if they shot in the yard. I ain't give a shit. I'm doing it and I'm gonna make it happen and I'm gonna do what it *does*. That world, that world in prison is just as strong as the world out here, **'cept for you're in a cage.** Sure, people get hurt; people get stabbed. You can do anything you want, you know what I mean?

Examine this passage from ‘The Geese’

1. Identify the imagery.
2. Which type of imagery is it and **why**?
3. Which **specific words** make this imagery?
4. How does the imagery **work** to make meaning?
What do you know or learn from it?
5. **Why** is it there?
Does it **characterize**?
Does it push the conflict?

But it’s—I think it’s the way...you raise your kids. What they see around the family. I never heard too much about drugs at that time, but it was more about baggy pants and you start being in gangs? That’s what I was worried. (*Listens to a question.*)

I don’t see *nothing* in the pants; what I see is *butts* all the time. You can see the *underwear*! I don’t have the *slightest* idea why the kids do it. And I—I don’t think I would let my kids do it. I wouldn’t let them. No! I woulda ripped every single pants. Knowing myself I would have done it!

Examine this passage from ‘The Geese’

1. Identify the imagery.
2. Which type of imagery is it and **why**?
3. Which **specific words** make this imagery?
4. How does the imagery **work** to make meaning?
What do you know or learn from it?
5. **Why** is it there?
Does it **characterize**?
Does it push the conflict?

I used to even—we were having some goose? Goose? I think it’s what you call goose, they’re worse than dogs? The kids used to, you know, they used to get up at nighttime? Take the cars out?

The goose? The goose? The geese? The geese? The goose or the geese? Geese, yes.

The *dog*—they knew the dogs, they didn’t bark or anything, but the *geese*? Oh *no!* That’s when I find out they were taking the car, too. And you could hear—the geese, they don’t stop. When they see a stranger, they go, “*Voo, voo-voo, voo.*” And one time I woke up. I say, “Wow, what is that noise?” And heard the garage door. And I came downstairs, and...I call the police on my own kid. And his friend was begging me and, “Mrs. De Santiago. Please don’t—don’t—don’t—don’t call my parents. Don’t call the police.” I say, “I have to do it.”

Which is the best example for a paragraph about imagery? Why?

“The biggest expense in Medicaid in this county—in this state [of California], is for psychotropic drugs for foster children! All they do is jack these kids up on medicine. We’re using drugs to control children.” (*Notes From the Field*, 81)

“If...if you have children who are suffering to the extent that they act out in schools and do things they should not do... that could include hitting another child, hitting a teacher, having some kind of fit—and then they get expelled from school, then they get mad at somebody or they attack a school resource officer, then they get handcuffed, then they go to jail or probation or juvenile hall, and then it just goes from there and it—it just keeps going!” (*Notes From the Field*, 80)

“I was in a fistfight and somebody clobbered me. And they were saying, “Say ‘I give up,’ or say ‘Uncle.’ ” And this other person walked by and said, “You may as well kill her, ’cause she’ll never say it.” And it’s true!” (*Notes From the Field*, 80)

Common PEAL mistakes

- Arguing by assertion instead of analyzing the implications of a quotation
- Long quotations
- Your Point needs to be in OELi format
- Analysis:
 - WHY did you pick the evidence?
 - HOW is it show a literary device?
 - How does it link to your thesis?
 - Pull the evidence apart: use a word or phrase from the quotation in the analysis and then explain what it is doing.
 - Use specific language; don't say "this shows," that's not clear enough

Formative 3: Peer-reviewed PEAL paragraph

Directions: Choose to write about one of the monologues you have read. Select a strong example of imagery. Why is it powerful, and what is its purpose?

- Write a PEAL paragraph with an OELi point. You may use the sentence starters included.
- You may start with the OELi point/thesis, or you may start with the evidence. It's entirely up to you.
- You may use the graphic organizer or the linear outline, or you may choose to just start writing in the blue box.
- **Your grade here is going to be based on whether you COMPLETED the paragraph, RECEIVED peer feedback, and REFLECTED on the basis of that peer feedback.**

Peer Feedback (partner writes here)	Your Reflection
What are two things that the writer of the paragraph above did well?	How can you make this strength happen more often in your writing?
What are two things that the writer of the paragraph needs to work on? Write about something that was unclear or a part that is missing.	What can you do to improve in this area?

Homework

Read:

- Read 'The Shakara Story' from *Notes From the Field*
- Make sure you are caught up on all the readings you have been assigned thus far.

Write:

- Complete Formative 3

Lesson 7

Objective

You will close read for perspective and narrator so that you can explain the difference between the two as well as why an author would choose specific perspectives or narrative lenses.

Agenda



Word of the Day: Perspective



Notes on Perspective and Point of View



Discussion of Reactions to 'The Shakara Story'



Close Read Excerpts of 'The Shakara Story' for Perspective



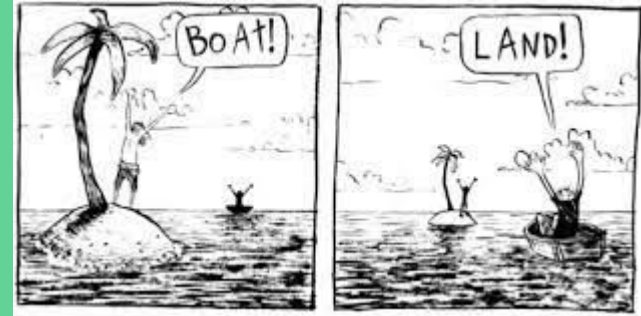
Debrief



Writing Prompt

Word of the Day

Definition: is the values, experiences, views, opinions, and aspects of identity that inform how a person sees the world and interprets their experiences.



perspective

Example sentence

Notes

- Literary term
- Different from POV

Perspective and Point of View

Point of View is the relationship between the narrator and the story.

- 1st person: the narrator is telling their story, with the “I” voice.
- 3rd person: the narrator is outside of the story, telling a story they are not a part of.
- The monologues are in ____ person, while the poems are in ____ person.

Perspective is the values, experiences, views, opinions, and aspects of identity that inform how a person sees the world and interprets their experiences. It’s their lens on the world, as established by their experience of it. All the characters and writers in this unit are speaking from different perspectives.

Open 'The Shakara Story'

Discussion: what did you think of ‘The Shakara Story?’

1. Was any part of this story particularly challenging or familiar for you?
2. Which parts of the text jumped out at you? Please share, if you feel comfortable.
3. Does this text function as a restorative narrative?
 - a. Acknowledgement of harm
 - b. Empowerment through truth and/or validation
 - c. “These aren’t positive, happy-go-lucky fluff pieces. They explore the tough emotional terrain of disruptions... But they’re “positive” in the sense that they focus on themes such as growth and renewal” (Tenore).
 - d. Opportunity for growth, new understandings, or way to move forward with a new shared past
4. Are there any other takeaways you want to share?

When reading difficult texts, what should I do?

- Pay attention to your body
 - (signs of stress are heart rate going up, sweating, shaking or jittering, feeling cold in your extremities and hot, flushed cheeks or chest, unexplained crying)
 - stop and think about what you are feeling (Are you remembering something sad, scary or an angry memory? Are you not sure (that's also okay)?
- Acceptance: Stress is a form of suffering. Many religions have their own versions of this, but Buddhists explain it best in my opinion:
 - “welcome suffering as a mother welcomes a sad child.” Your suffering is a part of you that is feeling sad or afraid - it is good to accept that part without judgement, nurture it and let it feel safe.
- Listen to your suffering: You may need another person to help you figure those feelings out. I am definitely here for you as well as your classmates.
- Continue until both you and your suffering are okay to do so.
- TAKE TIME if you are not able to continue. Use the time to nurture and understand your suffering so you can return to learning.

We are going to read together, quietly, then talk.
Who are these people? What are their perspectives?

1. What do we **know** about Amanda Ripley's perspective? Can you describe her lens?
2. What do we **know** about Niya Kenny's perspective? Can you describe her lens?
3. How has Niya's personal experience made her who she is?
4. Can you make any inferences about Shakara's perspective?
5. Can you make any connections to "All Because Of Your Mouth," which you read in Government?
6. Why does perspective matter?

Reading For Perspective

We can't close read all of these sections as a class. We will need to select some, and you will have the chance to read some others with your partner.

Please take a few minutes to read over which sections are cut into the following slides, and select two that you want to do as a class. We will choose 2-3 of the most popular to close read together, and then you will read the remaining as you can with your partner.

Examine Different Perspectives: Amanda Ripley

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

Niya Kenny. Who was the oldest girl in the class. She was sitting there in this Algebra 1 class that she'd failed as a freshman and needed to pass to graduate. And she was doing well in that class actually! So she's [an] eighteen-year-old African American girl, and she—she had a good rapport with the teacher, she had an A average, and she's working on a—each of them working on their laptops. Uh, on...*math* problems.

And [Niya] sees the teacher whisper something. She sees the whip—the teacher, Mr. Long, who's a veteran math teacher, white man, whisper something to one of the other kids in the class. A girl. Who doesn't—she doesn't—Niya doesn't know her name, but she doesn't talk much, she's new to the class, this girl. Shakara. As it turns out. And then Niya sees Mr. Long go back to his desk and pick up the phone and call for someone to escort someone outta the classroom.

Examine Different Perspectives: Niya Kenny

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

He's—he's like, wrestling, trying to get her arms behind her back at this time. On the floor. And they were wrestling for, like, a minute, too. It took Deputy Bradley to come in and get her in handcuffs.

That's what I was thinking, too! This man is, like, three hundred pounds, body builder, and you couldn't get her...I don't know. She was like, kinda—her arms were may—in some kind of way. Maybe he thought, you know, “I would break her arm if I just go like this.” (*She gestures.*) So maybe he wasn't trying to do that. But I—I don't—I really don't know what was going through his head, her head, or anything. I know he couldn't get her in those handcuffs. That's all.

I was like, “*Is nobody gonna help her?*” I'm like: “*Somebody record this! Put it on Snapchat!*” And then I'm askin' Mr. Webb and Mr. Long, I'm just like: “*Look,*” like, what I— “*Nobody's gonna help her?*” I turn to Mr. Long, I'm just like: “*You did this! You didn't even have to call the administrator!*” I was just...(*Breathes out, long and heavy.*)

Examine Different Perspectives: Amanda Ripley

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

Shakara's kind of leaning down, she's still handcuffed. She's got her braids falling in her face. And he flips the braids out of Shakara's face? And he says to her, according to Niya, "Did you take your meds today?" And this is the *one* thing Shakara says. She finally says something. She says: "Yes. Did *you*?"

Which I thought was great! That was great, that was a great teenage response right there. And uh...just perfect.

And then he leaves again. And then Shakara's apparently released into the care of a guardian. She's in foster care. I don't know which guardian.

And then Niya Kenny is eighteen, so she's considered an adult. So she's sittin' there waiting. Still handcuffed. And she hears over Fields's walkie-talkie that the uh the transport is here. And she starts crying. 'Cause she knows that's for her and he's not joking. Like she keeps thinking, "*Maybe* he's gonna release me. Maybe it's just to scare me." And she goes outside, and there's a paddy wagon—police paddy wagon, right? They drive Niya to the detention center. It was an adult jail.

Examine Different Perspectives: Niya Kenny

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

NIYA KENNY: The whole time I was thinking about, “I’m embarrassing my mom. My mom’s gonna be mad. She’s gonna kill me.” Like, “Mom, Mom, Mom.” That’s the only person I’m thinking about. I was like, “Oh God, I’m gonna get outta this jail and she’s gonna beat me right in the yard.”

But everybody in the jail was like normal people to me. Everybody was nice, y’know. When they saw the video on the TV news, they was like, “Whaaa...” Everybody. Everybody was like, “Whaaaaa...He threw that little girl like that? And you was in there? Oh, *girl* you goin’ *home*, you goin’ *home*.”

And then when I saw [the video] on the news, when I saw the video, I was like, “I know she saw it!” The first thing that—that, uh, went through my mind was like, “My mom saw it! I know she did! I’m not in trouble anymore! I’m not in trouble!” So I call my mom, and she was like, “Niya, you don’t even know. The news is out here. They wanna interview you. *Good Morning America* is coming to the house tonight—”

Examine Different Perspectives: Niya Kenny

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

I don't know. I don't know what it is. It's just somethin' inside of me, that I don't know, makes me snap, when I see people bein' mistreated, I guess. I'm talking about elementary school, I *never* held my tongue. One time in third grade, one of my friends was bein' bad in class in third grade. And my teacher was, um...was (*whispering*) a *white* lady. You know, and I knew about racism, because my dad had always taught his kids, like, since we were in kindergarten, like, always raised us to know about racism, like, "Know your history." So one time she grabbed this boy—like, picked him up by his *cheek* out of the chair. And I just lost it. I lost it! Lost it in the classroom. I was like, "You are not his mom! You can't touch him like that! That is—that's not your job! Your job is to teach us! You do not pick a student up by his cheek out of the chair!" Like, yeah. I was really mad. And um...she wrote me up for bein' disrespectful and um belligerent. And so that was my first after-school detention. Yeah. So that's why—that's why I feel like I was born, y'know, with this. Because what third grader do you know would've stood up for, you know, her friend after the teacher pinch his cheek?

Examine Different Perspectives: Niya Kenny

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

And initially, I was like, “Is this girl, like, ungrateful?” Like, “I literally sat in jail for a day for standing up for you.” But...at the same time, you know, I was also—not at the same time, ‘cause that was like me initially thinking. But after that, thinking more on it, I just figured it was because—I don’t know, like, maybe she wanted to be alone? Maybe...I knew that she didn’t wanna always talk about, you know, the incident, and so when I did reach out to her, it was never talking about that. It was like, “How are you doing? Do you need anything?” You know, like, “If”—always telling her—“if you need anything, I’m here.” But she’s never reached out to me for anything. (*She listens to a question.*) She’s actually in a home right now. Like, one of those group homes. I don’t know how she ended up there.

Examine Different Perspectives: Niya Kenny

1. Identify phrases that reveal the character's **perspective**.
2. What is the speaker's perspective? (their lens, seen from their values, experiences, views).
3. Why do you think Smith is putting these perspectives together?

I knew when they told my mom, when the school called her, they were gonna say, “Niya got in something that didn’t involve her.” And that’s exactly what they did. So I knew her mind-set was gonna be, “Oh, Niya. Why didn’t you be quiet?”

You know, because that’s the response I got in third grade. You know, and “Mind your business, it didn’t have nothin’ to do with you.” And I’m, “But she picked this boy up by his cheek!” You know?

And then, *they’re* telling me, “Mind your business, this didn’t have nothing to do with you.” “But he just threw a whole girl across the classroom!” How can you mind your business? Like, that’s somethin’ you need to *make* your business.

How does this text function as a restorative narrative?

The features of a restorative narrative are:

- Acknowledgement of harm
- Empowerment through truth and/or validation
- “These aren’t positive, happy-go-lucky fluff pieces. They explore the tough emotional terrain of disruptions... But they’re “positive” in the sense that they focus on themes such as growth and renewal” (Tenore).

Do you feel that this text is **restorative**? Does it create a **shared past, meaning, or understanding**?

Write Your Truth

Prompt: Writing from a first and/or second person point of view, write a brief explanation of your perspective on the world. What is it that you believe? What issues does society face? How do you traverse through this society and life?

Aim to write 1-3 paragraphs. The practice is for you, but I will encourage you to share with one another.



Lesson 8

Objective

You will close read blues songs for characterization, diction, perspective, and point of view.

Agenda

Turn and Talk: Reflections on ‘The Birth of American Music’

Watch ‘Is Blues the Mother of All Modern Music?’ Clip

Review History of Minstrelsy and the Blues

Small Group Close Readings of Blues Songs

Whole Group Debrief

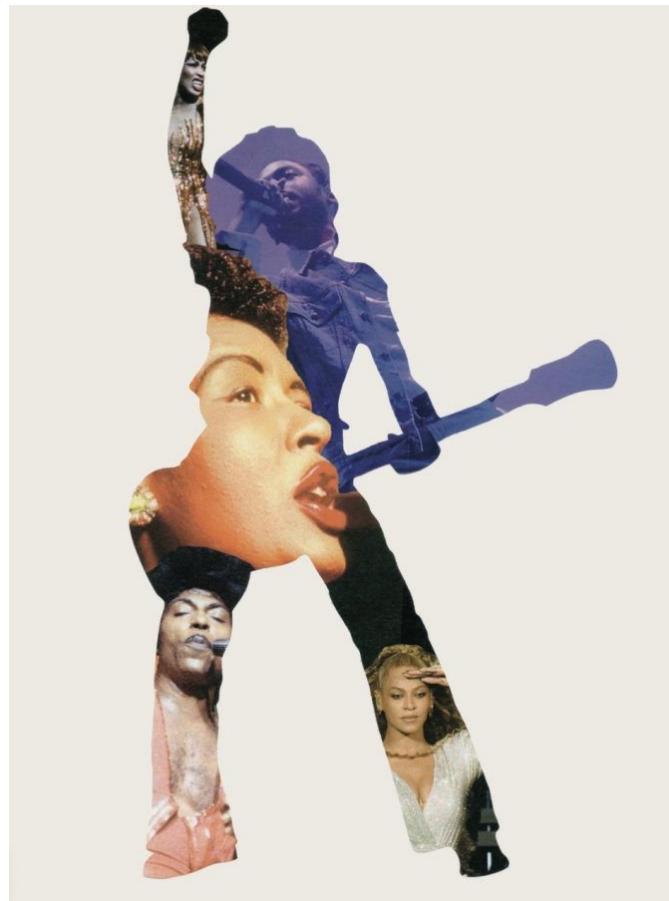
“Our first most original art form arose from our original sin”
(Morris)

Turn and talk:

What did you learn about the history and origins of American music from this reading or from the podcast?

Were you aware of this history?

What is your response?





It begins with a man named T.D. Rice...

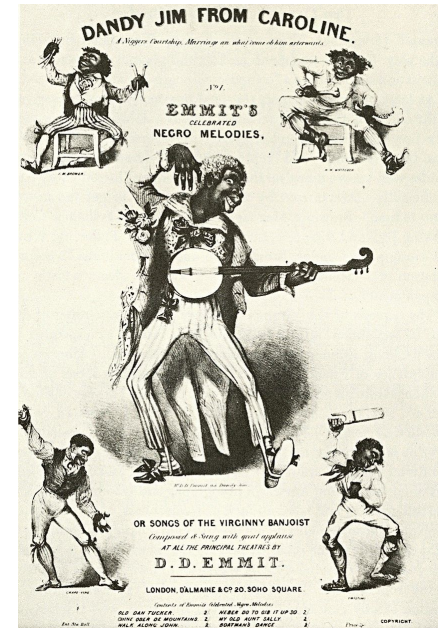


*Weel about and turn
about jus so/ Ebery
time I weel about, I
jump Jim Crow*



The Minstrel Show

- Traveling performance that went from city to city
- Featured “minstrels” -- performers in blackface who sang, danced, played music, and performed in skits
- Instrumentation included banjo, fiddle, bone castanets, tambourine -- the foundation of American popular music
- Minstrel shows were THE form of entertainment in America from 1830s-1870s



Important Note

Performances were ALL conjecture, as most white performers in blackface had never meaningfully met or interacted with black people.

Birth of the Blues in the 1920s

- Following the end of slavery, a new audience emerged with a desire for real black performers
- Tradition of traveling tent show spectacles upheld, performing in predominantly black, Southern, working-class spaces
- A new tradition -- the blues.
- Music that addressed the true social and emotional lives of black performers and audiences
 - Humorous, aggressive, ironic, and straight-forward all at once
- Tackled tough topics -- depression, sexuality, domestic violence, migration, work, racial injustice



Meet “Mother of the Blues” and “Empress of the Blues”

Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey



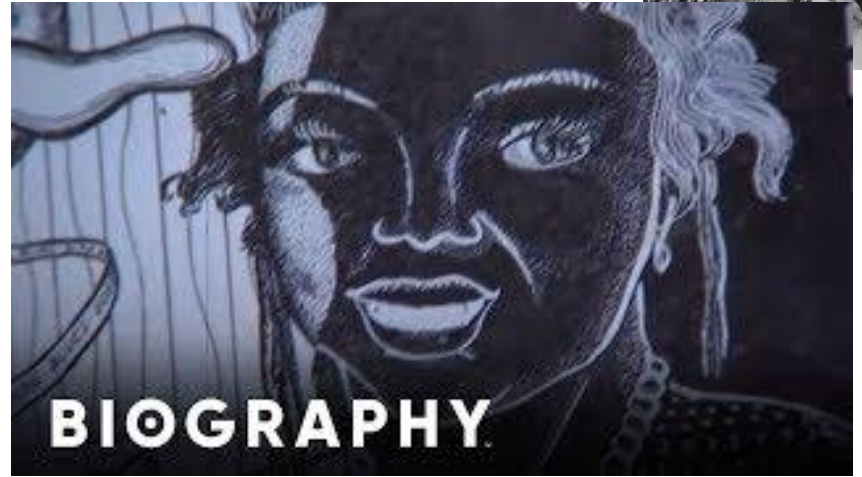
Bessie Smith



Both artists embodied characters and portrayed narratives in their songs rooted in their identities as Black women

Who is Ma Rainey? (1886–1939)

- Ma Rainey ,born Gertrude Pridgett, is a blues singer from Georgia.
- She is known as the “Mother of Blues”.
- Her music and influence was popular in 1920’s America.
- Her music explored her life as an “independent, openly bisexual African-American woman.”
(Women’s History)



Who is Bessie Smith? (1894- 1937)

- Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee Bessie Smith was a famous blues singer of 1920's and 1930's .
- She was known as the “Empress of Blues”
- She often worked with Ma Rainey during this time period in music.
- She was one of the best selling blues singers of that time.



Small Group Close Read

- Work with a group assigned to you
- Choose one of the songs on the following slides, listen to it together, and read along with the lyrics.

Then, close read together and **take notes:**

1. What is the **narrative** being told in the song? Is it **restorative**?
2. What is the narrator's **point of view**?
3. What is the narrator's **perspective**?
4. How can you describe the **character**? **Direct or indirect** characterization? What are their **traits**?
5. What words/phrases are interesting/stand out to you? Analyze this **diction**.



“Black Eye Blues” by Ma Rainey

Down in Hogan’s Alley lived Miss Nancy Ann
Always fussin’, squabbling with her man
Then I heard Miss Nancy say
“Why do you treat your gal that way?”

I went down the alley, other night
Nancy and her man had just had a fight
He hit Miss Nancy ‘cross the head
When she rose to her feet, she said

“You low down alligator, just watch me
Sooner or later gonna catch you with your britches down
You ‘buse me and you cheat me, you dog around and beat me
Still I’m gonna hang around

“Take all my money, blacken both of my eyes
Give it to another woman, come how and tell me lies
You low down alligator, just watch me
Sooner or later gonna catch you with your britches down
I mean, gonna catch you with your britches down.”



- What is the **narrative** being told in the song? Is it **restorative**?
- What is the narrator’s **point of view**?
- What is the narrator’s **perspective**?
- How can you describe the **character**? **Direct or indirect** characterization? What are their **traits**?
- What words/phrases are interesting/stand out to you? Analyze this **diction**.

“Black Eye Blues” by Ma Rainey Group Notes

Put the names of your group members below and add your response to this slide.

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

“Trust No Man” by Ma Rainey

I want all you women to listen to me
Don't trust your man no further'n your eyes can see
I trusted mine with my best friend
But that was the bad part in the end

Trust no man, trust no man, no further than your eyes can see
I said, trust no man, no further than your eyes can see
He'll tell you that he loves you and swear it is true
The very next minute he'll turn his back on you
Ah, trust no man, no further than your eyes can see

Just feed your daddy with a long-handled spoon
Be sure to love him, morning, night, and noon
Sometimes your heart will ache and almost bust
That's why there's no daddy good enough to trust

Trust no man



- What is the **narrative** being told in the song? Is it **restorative**?
- What is the narrator's **point of view**?
- What is the narrator's **perspective**?
- How can you describe the **character**? **Direct or indirect** characterization? What are their **traits**?
- What words/phrases are interesting/stand out to you? Analyze this **diction**.

“Trust No Man” by Ma Rainey

Put the names of your group members below and add your response to this slide.

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

“In the House Blues” by Bessie Smith

Settin' in the house with everything on my mind
Settin' in the house with everything on my mind
Lookin' at the clock and can't even tell the time

Walkin' to my window, and lookin' out of my door
Walkin' to my window, and lookin' out of my door
Wishin' that my man would come home once more

Can't eat, can't sleep, so weak I can't walk my floor
Can't eat, can't sleep, so weak I can't walk my floor
Feel like hollerin' murder, let the police squad get me once more

They woke me up before day with trouble on my mind
They woke me up before day with trouble on my mind
Wringin' my hands and screamin', walkin' the floor hollerin' and cryin'

Catch 'em, don't let them blues in here
Catch 'em, don't let them blues in here
They shakes me in bed, can't set down in my chair

Oh, the blues has got me on the go
Oh, they've got me on the go
They runs around my house, in and out of my front door.



- What is the **narrative** being told in the song? Is it **restorative**?
- What is the narrator's **point of view**?
- What is the narrator's **perspective**?
- How can you describe the **character**? **Direct or indirect** characterization? What are their **traits**?
- What words/phrases are interesting/stand out to you? Analyze this **diction**.

“In the House Blues” by Bessie Smith Group Notes

Put the names of your group members below and add your response to this slide.

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

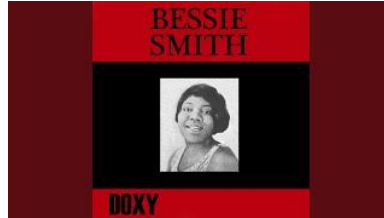
“Please Help Me Get Him Off My Mind” by Bessie Smith

I've cried and worried, all night I've laid and groaned
I've cried and worried, all night I've laid and groaned
I used to weight two hundred, now I'm down to skin and bones

It's all about a man who always kicked and dogged me
'round
It's all about a man who always kicked and dogged me
'round
And when I try to kill him that's when my love for him
comes down

I've come to see you, gypsy, beggin' on my bended
knees
I've come to see you, gypsy, beggin' on my bended
knees
That man put something on me, oh, take it off of me,
please

It starts at my forehead and goes clean down to my toes
It starts at my forehead and goes clean down to my toes
Oh, how I'm sufferin', gypsy, fix him for me one more
time
Just make him love me, but please, ma'am, take him off
my mind



- What is the **narrative** being told in the song? Is it **restorative**?
- What is the narrator's **point of view**?
- What is the narrator's **perspective**?
- How can you describe the **character**? **Direct or indirect** characterization? What are their **traits**?
- What words/phrases are interesting/stand out to you? Analyze this **diction**.

“Please Help Me Get Him Off My Mind” by Bessie Smith

Put the names of your group members below and add your response to this slide.

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

Group Members:
Close Read Notes:

The Women of the Blues

- What song did your group choose? What was it about? What was your reaction to it?
- Was the narrative restorative? Why or why not?
- What is the POV and perspective of the song?
- Who is the character? How are they characterized?
- What words/phrases did you analyze?



Homework

Read:

- Read James Baldwin's Interview with Jordan Elgrably

Write:

- No new writing