



An Original EduGuide for

# OUT IN FRONT

QUEER YOUTH CHANGING THE WORLD

IT GETS  
BETTER  
PROJECT

# OUT IN FRONT:

QUEER YOUTH CHANGING THE WORLD

*The Out in Front series was  
made possible thanks to support from*



## Today’s youth face an unprecedented—and seemingly insurmountable—set of social problems that they must overcome.

Many young people have taken matters into their own hands and inspired others to do so along the way. Some of the most prominent figures in the sphere of activism, like “Little Miss Flint” Mari Copeny, climate change activist Greta Thunberg, and the students from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, are all examples of young people using their power to create positive changes in their communities.

The following EduGuide accompanies the original It Gets Better Project video series *Out in Front: Queer Youth Changing the World*, which highlights the activism of Andrea Gonzalez, Jude Kacey, Stephon Bradberry, Victor Hernandez, and Cynthia Garcia. Although they are all part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) community, their activism spans to issues that are usually considered to be outside the realm of LGBTQ+ issues.

**For Andrea (page 2)**, she saw that the voices of those most impacted by gun violence were being drowned out, so she created an organization to bring their voices to the forefront of the conversation.

**For Jude (page 9)**, her own identity as a trans girl led her to testify for a law in her state that would allow transgender individuals to change the gender designation on their birth certificate to match their gender identity without a court order.

**For Stephon (page 15)**, their experience as one of the few Black staff members in Congress inspired them to be unapologetically themselves while advocating for racial justice for the Black community.

**For Victor (page 22)**, his own identity as an undocumented, queer individual influenced his work to connect other undocumented, queer folks with vital mental healthcare resources.

**For Cynthia (page 29)**, being rejected from the Latinx community for being queer and from the LGBTQ+ community for being undocumented inspired her to get involved in deportation defense to protect others like herself.

Their work demonstrates how different aspects of our identities intersect and motivate us to create change. While their LGBTQ+ identities are a vital part of *who* they are, their work reminds us that their LGBTQ+ identities are not *all* that they are.

*Out in Front* is not intended to tell students *what* to think about the issues highlighted by Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia. Instead, it is intended to be used as a catalyst for open, constructive, and respectful dialogue between students so that they can learn to consider different perspectives from their own and unite over a common goal—creating a better society for all.

Whether the problems surrounding gun control, trans rights, racial justice, and immigration, and deportation are real or not is not up for debate, but the solutions to these problems are. There are multiple ways to solve these problems, and students will inevitably disagree in their approaches. Students might become a little *passionate*—read: heated—as they discuss these issues, which is entirely understandable. Disagreements may arise, but that’s okay! Be prepared to reinforce classroom standards of respect and kindness throughout the lessons.

Discussion is more important—and harder to have—than ever in today’s political climate. Without it, we cannot solve the problems in the world around us. We hope this series and its accompanying EduGuide help you spark conversations about these important issues in your classroom. Above all, our goal is to inspire, motivate, and bring hope to students by shining a light on Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia’s stories and their incredible activism.

Facilitation of all of our EduGuides benefits from the use of correct LGBTQ+ terminology and inclusive language. Specific words and labels to express gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation are incredibly meaningful within LGBTQ+ curriculum. Here is an It Gets Better Project resource to help: [itgetsbetter.org/glossary](https://itgetsbetter.org/glossary).

—Andrea Castro,  
Curriculum Developer

# Andrea Gonzales

GUN REFORM (P. 2–8)



WATCH ON  
 YouTube



## INTRODUCTION

The first episode of *Out in Front* shines the spotlight on Andrea Gonzales, a student from Staten Island, NY who became an activist for gun-reform after experiencing the threat of gun violence on her own campus. Although the threat against her school turned out to be a hoax, the fear that Andrea and her classmates felt was real. After the incident, they organized a schoolwide walkout to protest gun violence on school campuses, but Andrea noticed something strange during the walkout...

The media around the protest focused on only one white male student's perspective even though he didn't plan the walkout. The actual organizers of the event were women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people of color (POC).

As a queer woman of color who is also a first-generation American, the media's focus on this one student didn't sit right with Andrea. Now Andrea and her organization, Youth Over Guns, focus on bringing marginalized voices to the forefront of the conversation surrounding gun-reform.

## OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will listen to Andrea's story about how she became involved in gun-reform advocacy and learn about her organization, Youth Over Guns, before delving deeper to address the following objectives:

- Students will compare and contrast the effects of gun violence on marginalized communities (women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of color/POC) and non-marginalized communities.
- Students will hypothesize why certain groups (women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and POC) are often ignored by the media when discussing gun violence.
- Students will research and gather evidence, organize a coherent argument, and conduct a structured debate over gun-reform policies.
- Students will take into consideration how different policies affect marginalized groups—positively and negatively—when constructing their arguments.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with Common Core Standards, check out the "Common Core Alignment" section at the end of this lesson.

## A NOTE ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE

Neither Andrea's Out in Front episode nor any of the suggested videos depict gun violence or any needlessly graphic content, but the people in these videos do discuss topics that might be upsetting to some students. Understandably, talking about gun violence or school shootings elicits a great deal of fear for students. It's fair to give students a warning before diving into the lesson. You can start out the lesson by saying something like:

*"Today we're going to watch a video about a young activist named Andrea who advocates for gun-reform so that people can be safe everywhere they go, especially at school. After that, we're going to watch some videos about what students think should be done to solve the issue. Many of the people in the videos have experienced gun violence in their own lives, and they talk about their experiences during the videos. There isn't any graphic imagery in the videos, but it can still be scary to listen to students just talk about gun violence or school shootings, because you can empathize with their fear since you're students, too. I am here [times when you are available] if you want to talk about how you're feeling about anything we talk about in this class. Andrea's story is about having courage even in the face of fear, and I hope you all will be able to absorb a little bit of her courage by hearing her story."*

If your school has a school psychologist, counselor, therapist, or other mental health worker available, you can also remind students of those resources before beginning.

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, watch Andrea's video, [She Is Changing The Face Of Gun Violence Prevention | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:10).



WATCH ON  YouTube

As a **bonus**, you can watch any combination of the following videos or all of them to add extra information to the discussion that will come next:

- [11-Year-Old Naomi Wadler's Speech At The March For Our Lives](#) (NBC, 3:44)
- [Students Talk Gun Violence on Capitol Hill](#) (Associated Press, 1:58)
- [TEDx Talk: Gun Violence in Schools and in Urban Communities \(Brandon Dasent\)](#) (TEDx Talks, 6:02)  
*[NOTE: Brief depiction of police brutality from 3:50-4:25, including visible bleeding; speaker briefly uses curse words.]*
- [Parkland Shooting Survivors on Activism: "We're What Every American Should Be"](#) (CBS This Morning, 8:01)

After watching the video(s), head over to the website for Andrea's organization, Youth Over Guns ([www.youthovergunsny.org](http://www.youthovergunsny.org)), and walk through the website as a class.

Now that students have heard Andrea's story, visited her organization's website, and watched any bonus content, you can either give students a day to reflect on what they have learned or jump right into the class discussion.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

With everything that they have learned from Andrea's Out in Front episode, any of the suggested bonus videos, the information from the Youth Over Guns website, and their preexisting knowledge, begin a class discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

1. **What emotions did you feel as you watched Andrea's video?**
2. **How does Andrea's identity as a woman of color, a first-generation American, and a queer woman inspire her activism in the field of gun violence?**
3. **What do you think Andrea means when she says, "Asking for our survival is inherently political. Asking to exist safely is inherently political."?**
4. **Andrea's organization, Youth Over Guns, advocates for "channeling anger into activism." Anger is usually considered a negative emotion.**
  - How does Youth Over Guns reframe our ideas about anger?
  - What role does anger play in activism?
  - By advocating for channeling anger into activism, do you think that the organization risks losing some supporters? Explain your reasoning.
5. **When Andrea and other students of color organized a massive walkout to raise awareness about gun violence, the media focused on one white male student's perspective in all of their coverage.**
  - Why do you think that is?
  - Why do you think Andrea is concerned about this?
  - Can you think of another example of the media only focusing on certain groups when there is a problem?
  - Do you think women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and/or POC are talked about enough when discussing gun violence? Explain your reasoning.

## ACTIVITY

After absorbing Andrea's story, her organization's message, and their classmates' responses during the discussion, students will take a deeper look at possible solutions for gun violence and gun-control. Solutions for ending gun violence range from banning assault weapons to arming teachers with guns. Every solution has its pros and cons, and every solution has zealous support and equally zealous opposition.

Students will conduct a structured debate over gun-reform policies. There are many benefits to debating within the classroom, including:

- Improved critical thinking skills;
- Stronger listening and public speaking skills;
- Practicing research and writing;
- Practicing teamwork and collaboration; and
- Developing strong, balanced arguments.

The activity will begin by assigning the class a proposition concerning gun-reform policies:

**Proposition:** Andrea's organization, Youth Over Guns, lists solutions for solving the problem of gun violence. Two solutions for which the organization advocates are requiring universal background checks for all gun purchases and establishing Extreme Risk Protection Orders ("Red Flag Laws"). Would adopting these two policies effectively decrease gun violence?

**FOR:** States should require universal background checks and establish "Red Flag" laws to decrease gun violence.

**AGAINST:** States should not require universal background checks or establish "Red Flag" laws to decrease gun violence.

After giving students the debate topic, allow students as much time as you see fit to research their position, construct an argument, and practice their speeches before conducting the actual debate. This would typically require at least a few days.



At the end of this lesson, we have included a rubric that you can use to evaluate your students' work. Here are the steps to conduct a debate in the classroom.

## BEFORE

- If possible, break students into groups of six (6). Within these groups, break students into groups of three (3).
- Assign each group a position—FOR or AGAINST. This means within each group of six, three students should be FOR and three students should be AGAINST. Students can decide for themselves, flip a coin, or draw from a hat to choose their positions.
 

**Note:** Some students may end up on a side that they do not actually believe in. You can remind students that it is still important to learn about other perspectives even if they do not agree with them.
- Let students choose their role in the debate. Each team should have an opening speaker, rebuttal speaker, and concluding speaker
- Be clear about sources of information. Inform students that they should support their claims using evidence, not personal experience or opinions. Possible sources include:
  1. Peer-reviewed journal articles
  2. Books
  3. Newspaper articles
  4. Interviews with an expert on the topic
  5. Statistics from a credible source
- Encourage students to incorporate perspectives from a wide variety of groups, including women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and POC.

## DURING

- Write the proposition on the board.
- Monitor time limits and debate structure. You can either time the speakers yourself or assign a student moderator to each group.
- Remind the class about respectful debate conduct:
  1. Stick to facts, not just your personal opinion
  2. Respect the other side
  3. Speak, don't raise your voice
  4. Don't interrupt another speaker
- The debate will follow this structure:
  1. FOR team's opening speaker defines the topic, clearly states their side's position, and makes their team's first argument in support of the proposition. (5 minutes)
  2. AGAINST team's rebuttal speaker makes a counterargument by attacking specific parts of their opponent's opening argument. (3 minutes)
  3. AGAINST team's opening speaker clearly states their side's position and makes their team's first argument against the proposition. (5 minutes)
  4. FOR team's rebuttal speaker makes a counterargument by attacking specific parts of their opponent's opening argument. (3 minutes)
  5. Teams question each other. (5 minutes per team)
  6. AGAINST team's concluding speaker makes a final rebuttal against their opponent and summarizes their own team's argument. They do not introduce any new information. (3 minutes)
  7. FOR team's concluding speaker makes a final rebuttal against their opponent and summarizes their own team's argument. They do not introduce any new information. (3 minutes)

## AFTER

- Open up the debate to the audience
  1. Students can share their own opinions, ask questions, or offer new evidence
- Have students vote on which team made the most convincing argument
- Ask students if any of them changed their mind after listening to the debate and what information caused that change.

## CONCLUSION

If you would like to extend the activity, ask students to write a brief reflection piece responding to any or all of the following questions:

- What has listening to Andrea's story taught you? Did her story make you change your view about gun-reform in any way?
- Gun-control and gun violence are very hot-button issues, and those who support or oppose gun-reform are usually very passionate about their positions.
  1. How did you feel tackling this subject in a debate format?
  2. If you argued on behalf of the side that you agreed with, how do you think you would have felt arguing for the other side?
  3. If you argued for the side that you did not agree with, what was the experience like for you? Did it change your perspective in any way?
  4. Why might we feel so opposed to arguing for a side that we

do not support?

5. Why is it important to listen to the other side's position? How does listening to other perspectives help us?
- How can we make sure that women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and POC are not ignored when we talk about gun violence?
  - What do you think will happen in the future in regards to gun-reform? What do you *hope* will happen?

## LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

*"Today you listened to Andrea's story about how she and her classmates took a stand against gun violence. I'm sure that all of you have seen the damage caused by gun violence, whether you've seen it on the news or in your personal lives. Watching students like yourselves dealing with the aftermath of gun violence and school shootings can easily make you feel helpless. I hope you were inspired by Andrea's courage. It takes a lot of courage to tackle a daunting subject like the one you did today, and I commend you all for it. There's no perfect solution to end gun violence, but progress starts by recognizing that there is a problem and coming together to discuss and debate solutions. I'm proud of this class for listening to one another, considering new perspectives, and working toward a common goal. When you talk about gun-reform in the future, keep Andrea's message in your thoughts and remember to uplift the voices of those from marginalized communities, because, as we have learned, they are often the people impacted most by gun violence."*

Remind students of times when you are available to talk, or guide them to appropriate mental health resources based on their needs. Please thank your students for their willingness to learn, hard work, and participation—we at the It Gets Better Project are certainly thankful for them!

## RESOURCES & LINKS

Here are the links for the videos and resources mentioned throughout this lesson, plus a few other helpful links for your consideration. If any of the links do not work, simply type the exact title into your search engine:

### VIDEOS

[She Is Changing The Face Of Gun Violence Prevention | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:10)

[Students Talk Gun Violence on Capitol Hill](#) (Associated Press, 1:58)

[Parkland Shooting Survivors on Activism: "We're What Every American Should Be"](#) (CBS This Morning, 8:01)

[TEDx Talk: Gun Violence in Schools and in Urban Communities \(Brandon Dasent\)](#) (TEDx Talks, 6:02)

[11-Year-Old Naomi Wadler's Speech At The March For Our Lives](#) (NBC, 3:44)

[Students Speak Out On Gun Violence Prevention](#) (PBS, 3:28)

### WEBSITES

[Youth Over Guns](#) website

[Twitter @YouthOverGuns](#)

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Common Core Standards PDF](#)

[It Gets Better Glossary](#)



## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to digest information from diverse sources and media, conduct research, construct a coherent argument to defend a position, and participate in a debate, making it a great lesson to teach the following standards in particular:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A-D:

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
  - b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
  - c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
  - d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

## OUT IN FRONT DEBATE GRADING RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Debate Topic/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

	3	2	1
Viewpoint	Viewpoints are clear and well-organized	Viewpoints are somewhat clear and organized	Viewpoints are unclear and disorganized
Use of Facts and Examples	All arguments are supported with facts and examples	Some arguments are supported with facts and examples	Arguments lack factual support and examples
Relevance of Supporting Arguments	All supporting arguments are relevant	Most, but not all, supporting arguments are relevant	Supporting arguments are irrelevant
Strength of Arguments	All arguments are strong and convincing	Most, but not all, arguments are strong and convincing	Arguments are not convincing
Speaking Skills	Students display strong speaking skills	Students display sufficient speaking skills	Speaking skills need improvement
Debate Conduct	Students display respectful debate conduct at all times	Students display respectful debate conduct most, but not all, of the time	Students display disrespectful debate conduct
Preparation	Students are well prepared	Students need more preparation	Students are not prepared to defend position

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /21

# Jude Kacey

## TRANS RIGHTS (P. 9-14)



WATCH ON  
 YouTube



## INTRODUCTION

The second episode of *Out in Front* features Jude Casey, a transgender teen from Denver, CO whose incredible activism resulted in a law being passed—in *her* name!

At a young age, Jude knew that she didn't identify with the gender assigned to her at birth and began embracing her identity as a girl with the help of her family. For trans people, changing their name and gender designation on their birth certificate is a matter of personal choice. It's not a step for everyone during their transition, but it was an important step to Jude. With her family's support, 9-year-old Jude began testifying at the Colorado state capitol in support of House Bill 19-1039—the Birth Certificate Modernization Act—which would make it easier for trans people to change the name and gender designation on their birth certificate if they would like to do so.

[NOTE: To find out more information about the differences between sex, gender identity, and gender expression, visit our LGBTQ+ Glossary at [itgetsbetter.org/glossary](https://itgetsbetter.org/glossary)].

Many of the adults in Jude's life embraced her mission, including mentor Brianna Titone, Colorado's first transgender elected official. Not everyone supported Jude's activism, though. She persisted even when critics tried to invalidate her gender identity, and her work paid off. "Jude's Law" passed in 2019 after years of Jude testifying before her state legislators, making a hugely positive impact on the transgender community.

## OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will listen to Jude's story about how she testified in front of her state legislators to change her state's birth certificate law before delving deeper to address the following objectives:

- Students will hypothesize why it is important for trans people to have the option to match their name and gender designation on their birth certificate to their gender identity if they would like to do so as part of their transition.
- Students will compare and contrast birth certificate laws across states, noting how certain policies make daily life easier or harder for trans people.
- Students will consider the impact of having LGBTQ+ representation in government.
- Students will conduct research on the impact of birth certificate laws on the trans community and construct a coherent essay based on their findings.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core Standards, check out the "Common Core Alignment" section at the end of this lesson.

## A NOTE ABOUT NAMES

After the passage of Jude's Law, Jude got a considerable amount of media attention. While being interviewed and reported on by various new outlets, Jude refrained from disclosing her last name due to privacy concerns. In *Out in Front*, we credit Jude as "Jude Kacey" out of respect for her privacy. We mention this as an opportunity for you to open a dialogue with your students about why Jude, as a transgender individual, would choose to take precautions like this in order to protect herself. Explore this topic in order to gain insight into the life experiences of trans people in relation to safety, privacy, and identity.

**BEFORE YOU START:** Talking about gender identity in the classroom typically elicits plenty of questions—and strong opinions. You might encounter students who believe that being transgender is fake, wrong, or immoral. It's important to conduct these discussions with care because there may be students in the group who are navigating their own gender identity or coming to the conclusion that they are transgender.

The discussion surrounding Jude's story should be grounded in Jude's truth, that for all intents and purposes, she is a girl. Whether Jude's gender identity is correct or not is not up for debate. Period. In no way should this lesson serve as an opportunity to invalidate someone's gender identity. The point of listening to Jude's story is to understand the very real challenges that trans people face in their lives.

So what should you do if a student says that being transgender is wrong? "[How to Talk About Transgender Identity in Your Classroom](#)," an article published by Scholastic in collaboration with The Trevor Project, recommends:

*"You can immediately intervene to explain that someone's identity can't be right or wrong, and that you prefer open-minded and kind discussion in your classroom. In terms of suspected or overt bullying, you can work within your administration's bullying policy and remind both parties that you are available for separate and private discussion."*

Take a moment to let students know when you are available to talk outside of class in case they need to discuss any feelings that arise from the material presented in class. If your school has a school psychologist, counselor, therapist, or other mental health worker available, you can also remind students of those resources before beginning. Additionally, you may want to invite your school's psychologist or counselor to observe your class for the day if you feel that it is necessary. We also encourage educators to identify local mental health resources, such as hotlines or chat rooms, in case students ask for such resources.

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, watch Jude's episode, [Meet the Trans Teen Behind 'Jude's Law' | Out in Front: Queer Youth Changing the World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:00).



WATCH ON  YouTube

**NOTE:** YouTube is a public platform, meaning anyone can post a comment underneath a video. Sometimes the comment section is a great way to spark a discussion, but in this case we recommend that you avoid it. Don't scroll down! Unfortunately, many of the comments underneath the recommended videos are not conducive to an open, respectful conversation about trans rights, and they don't deserve your class's attention.

As a **bonus**, you can watch any combination of the following videos or all of them to add extra information to the discussion that will come next:

- [Transition Timeline | What Are Stages of Gender Transition?](#) (DR Z PHD, 6:27) [**Note:** Jude's story represents one gender transition experience, including the stage of legal transition—the decision to change legal documents— but it is worth showing students that not all trans people transition in the same way. This video explains how the decision to transition, including making changes to legal documents, is a unique one and is different for everyone.]
- [12-Year-Old Transgender Coloradan Talks About Importance of New ID Registration](#) (9News, 1:46)
- [Hear From a Transgender Teen About How Bill Banning Changes to Birth Certificate Would Affect Them](#) (KTVB, 6:19) [Note: Brief mention of suicide at 2:09]
- [Transgender People Sue Ohio for Right to Change Birth Certificates](#) (WCPO-9, 1:54)

After watching the video(s), you can head over to the website for the organization that supported Jude as she testified before her state legislators, One Colorado (<https://one-colorado.org/>), and take a look at One Colorado's mission and accomplishments as a class.

Now that students have heard Jude's story, watched any bonus videos, and/or visited One Colorado's website, you can either give students a day to reflect on what they have learned or jump straight into the class discussion.

With everything that they have learned from Jude's *Out in Front* episode, any of the suggested bonus videos, the information from One Colorado's website, and their preexisting knowledge, begin a class discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

**1. What emotions did you feel as you watched Jude's video?**

**2. When Jude randomly mentioned that she felt more like a girl than a boy to her mom and sister, they immediately began researching what that means. By the next day, they were already helping Jude match her clothing to her gender identity.**

- What do you think her family's support meant to Jude?
- Do you think her experience is common for most trans people?
- How has their support impacted her advocacy work?

**3. Jude's Law makes it easier for trans people to change their name and gender designation on their birth certificate so that it matches their gender identity, if they would like to do so.**

- What are some instances where you need to present your birth certificate?\*
- How might not having a birth certificate that matches your gender identity make it harder to navigate these instances?
- Aside from the practical implications, what might having the correct name and gender designation mean to trans people who want to change their birth certificate? Consider the personal impact of having their birth certificate match their gender identity.

*\*If students have trouble coming up with answers, here are some instances where a birth certificate is needed:*

- Obtaining a driver's license
- Getting married
- Signing up for sports (Many youth sports require birth certificates as proof of age so that children are placed in the correct age division)
- Getting a passport
- Getting a new copy of your Social Security card
- Opening a bank account
- Gaining employment
- To vote (If you do not have any other form of identification)

**4. Not all the adults in Jude's life applauded her for her advocacy. One time after testifying, a state legislator referred to Jude as a "little boy" right in front of her.**

- What did that experience teach Jude?
- How would you have reacted in that situation, if someone chose to intentionally refer to you in a way that didn't match your gender identity?

**5. Jude found a lot of strength from having a mentor like Brianna Titone, Colorado's first transgender elected official. Even though Jude viewed Representative Titone as an inspiration, Representative Titone admitted that she considered Jude an inspiration.**

- What did it mean to Jude to have Representative Titone as an ally?
- How did Jude and Representative Titone inspire one another?



## ACTIVITY & CONCLUSION

After absorbing Jude’s story and their classmates’ responses during the discussion, students will take a closer look at birth certificate laws around the United States and the ways in which these laws affect the trans community.

Students will conduct research and write a 5-paragraph essay to respond to the following prompt:

**Prompt:** Birth certificate laws are different from state to state. Depending on the state’s laws, it can be easy, difficult, or impossible for someone who would like to change their name and gender designation to do so. Please answer the following questions:

- What are your state’s birth certificate laws?
  - How do they compare to those of other states?
- How do your state’s birth certificate laws make life easier or harder for transgender individuals?
- Why is it important that their name and gender designation match their gender identity for some trans people? Consider the practical and personal reasons behind this.

*If you would like to extend the activity, ask students to write a brief reflection piece responding to any or all of the following questions:*

- What has listening to Jude’s story taught you?
- Jude’s relationship with Representative Titone, a transgender elected official, made a positive impact on her life and advocacy.
  - If you were in Jude’s position, how important would it be to find an ally, mentor, or role model in your community?
  - Who has inspired you in your life?
- While testifying at the Colorado state capitol, Jude encountered some people who were dismissive and rude about her work, even her state representatives.
  - What motivated Jude to persist in her advocacy even though many adults opposed her?
  - What qualities do you think your state representatives should have?
- Can you think of any other unique legal challenges transgender individuals face besides birth certificate laws? Please explain.

## LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

**“Today you listened to Jude’s story about how she testified in front of her state legislators to benefit the trans community. For some trans people, changing their name and gender designation on their birth certificate to match their gender identity is an important part of their transition. For those who want to amend their documents, having their gender identity recognized and validated on a legal level can make a significantly positive impact on their mental health and safety. What I hope you take away from this lesson is the importance of identity. I’m not only talking about embracing your own identity, but I’m talking about the importance of validating and respecting other people’s identities. The ability to be seen by the world how you see yourself is incredibly important on both a legal and personal level. Moving forward, I hope that you embrace your own identity and support others as they embrace their own.”**

Remind students of times when you are available to talk, or guide them to appropriate mental health resources based on their needs. Please thank your students for their willingness to learn, hard work, and participation—we at the It Gets Better Project are certainly thankful for them.

## RESOURCES & LINKS

Here are the links for the videos and resources mentioned throughout this lesson, plus a few other helpful links for your consideration. If any of the links do not work, simply type the exact title into your search engine:

### VIDEOS (YOUTUBE)

[Meet the Trans Teen Behind ‘Jude’s Law’ | Out in Front: Queer Youth Changing the World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:00)

[12-Year-Old Transgender Coloradan Talks About Importance of New ID Registration](#) (9News, 1:46)

[Hear From a Transgender Teen About How Bill Banning Changes to Birth Certificate Would Affect Them](#) (KTVB, 6:19) [Note: Brief mention of suicide at 2:09]

### WEBSITES

[One Colorado | LGBTQ Advocacy Organization](#) website

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[“How to Talk About Transgender Identity in Your Classroom”](#) (Scholastic, in collaboration with The Trevor Project)

[Common Core Standards PDF Glossary | It Gets Better Project](#)  
[Get Help | It Gets Better Project](#)

## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to conduct research by using a variety of sources, organize their findings, make comparisons, and write a paper based on a prompt, making this lesson excellent for teaching the following standards in particular:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.A-F

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## BIRTH CERTIFICATE LAWS ESSAY RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Debate Topic/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

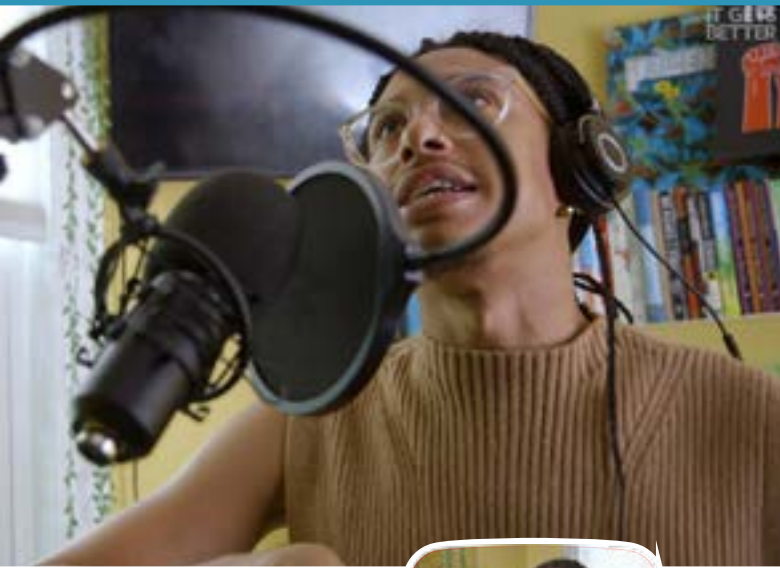
	4	3	2	1
Thesis Statement	Thesis statement is clear and includes specific details or reasons to support the author's claim	Thesis statement is clear and outlines reasons to support the author's claim	Thesis statement lacks some clarity and/or focus	Thesis statement is weak or unfocused
Focus	Writing is strongly focused on addressing the essential question and meets all task demands	Writing is focused on addressing the essential question and meets all task demands	Writing is somewhat focused on addressing the essential question and meets some of the task demands	Writing is not sufficiently focused on addressing the essential question and fails to meet most of the task demands
Use of Evidence	Controlling idea is supported by well-chosen, accurate, and relevant evidence	Controlling idea is supported by accurate and relevant evidence	Controlling idea is supported by inconsistently accurate or relevant evidence	Inaccurate or irrelevant evidence fails to support the controlling idea
Organization	Writing is poorly organized in a structure that does not meet the task demands	Writing is organized but does not clearly meet the task demands	Writing is organized in a structure that meets the task demands	Writing is well-organized with a purposeful structure that clearly meets the task demands
Word Choice	Writing does not attempt to use academic language or uses it incorrectly or in a way that fails to create an appropriate tone and purpose for the task demands	Writing attempts to incorporate academic language but sometimes fails to create an appropriate tone and purpose for the task demands	Writing incorporates academic language that creates an appropriate tone and purpose for the task demand	Writing skillfully incorporates academic language that creates an appropriate tone and purpose for the task demands
Conventions	Writing has consistent errors and fails to use language that is appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task	Writing has some errors; attempts to use language that is appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task	Writing has few errors and uses appropriate language for the audience and purpose of the task	Writing has few to no errors and uses language appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /24



# Stephon Bradberry

RACIAL JUSTICE (P. 15–20)



WATCH ON  
 YouTube



## INTRODUCTION

The third episode of Out in Front highlights Stephon Bradberry's experience as a queer, Black individual working in the United States Congress and the factors that propelled them to quit their job in order to pursue racial justice.

Although Stephon was initially excited to score what seemed to be a dream job working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. at just 22 years old, they quickly realized that not everyone on staff shared their passion for uplifting the Black community. As one of very few professional Black staffers in Congress, Stephon noticed that although the Black staffers looked out for one another, many of the non-Black staffers did not show the same level of care for their Black colleagues—or Black issues at all.

After witnessing their coworkers' apathy for the Black community, Stephon took a risk and quit their job. Now Stephon hosts "We, Too, Are America," a podcast for the organization of the same name that uplifts Black voices in an effort to pursue liberation for all Black people.

## OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will listen to Stephon's story about their experiences as a queer, Black individual in Congress and learn about their organization, *We, Too, Are America*, before delving deeper to address the following objectives:

- Students will consider the ways in which workplace racial dynamics impact marginalized individuals/groups.
- Students will recognize the importance of representation in government and draw connections between the racial makeup of our representative bodies and what policies/laws are passed
- Students will practice their listening and speaking skills by recording a structured podcast with their classmates, during which they will share their thoughts on American racial dynamics and respond to their classmates' perspectives.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core Standards, check out the "Common Core Alignment" section at the end of this lesson.

### A NOTE ABOUT PRONOUNS

For many people, the question of which pronouns to use doesn't come up too often. However, for many transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) individuals, pronouns are a crucial part of their mental health and safety. Pronouns like he, him, his, she, her, and hers reflect the male–female gender binary, and although they are what we are typically most familiar with, they don't always accurately reflect the identities of TGNC individuals. As a result, many TGNC folks who don't feel represented in the male–female gender binary or simply don't have a strong affinity for either gender might use gender-neutral pronouns like they, them, and their to accurately reflect their gender identity.

Stephon is comfortable with both he/him/his and they/them/their pronouns, but throughout this lesson, we will only use they/them/their when referring to Stephon. In doing so, we hope to create an opportunity for you to open a dialogue with your students about individuals who use they/them/their pronouns, as students might be unfamiliar with the usage of these pronouns when referring to a single person. For more information about pronouns, check out [What Are Pronouns? \(Minus18, 5:17\)](#) on YouTube.

**BEFORE YOU START:** Students may exhibit very different reactions while talking about race and/or racism in America. For students who have never been targeted because of the color of their skin, such discussions may bring out feelings of guilt and shame, which may cause students to become defensive and push back against the topic. For students who have felt the sting of racial injustice, such conversations may be acutely upsetting on an entirely different, personal level. It's fair to warn students that they might be uncomfortable during the coming lesson. You can start out the class by saying something like,

*"To start off this lesson, we're going to watch a video about a young activist named Stephon who advocates for racial justice, particularly for other Black individuals like themself. After we watch their video and take a look at their organization's website, you all are going to work in groups to record a podcast, during which you'll respond to questions about Stephon's story and race/racism in America. Talking about race is hard. Whether you have experienced racism firsthand or not, talking about it often brings up feelings of anger, sadness, guilt, and confusion. What's important is that we don't let the fear of being uncomfortable stop us from having a conversation. Talking about race/racism requires that we get comfortable with feeling uncomfortable, because we cannot learn and grow without being pushed outside of our comfort zone. Talking about race/racism also requires us to show empathy and compassion for other people's experiences so that we can have a conversation, not a debate. I'm here if you want to talk about how you're feeling about anything we talk about in this class. Stephon's story is about uplifting different voices in the discussion surrounding racial injustice, and I hope you will all be able to uplift each other's voices and have an open, respectful, and educational conversation."*

If your school has a school psychologist, counselor, therapist, or other mental health worker available, you can also remind students of those resources before beginning.

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, watch Stephon's episode, [They Quit Capitol Hill To Fight For Black Liberation | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:58).



WATCH ON  YouTube

As a **bonus**, you can watch any combination of the following videos or all of them to add extra information to the discussion that will come next:

- Video: [What Is the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government? | History](#) (History, 4:27)
- Article: [Chart: How Diverse is U.S. Congress? | Statista](#)
- Video: [BESE Explains: Representation in Politics](#) (BESE, 2:52)
- Video: [Being Comfortable Being Uncomfortable: Conversation About Race | Shane Knight | TEDxMoreauCatholicHS](#) (TEDx Talks, 8:38)

After viewing the bonus content, check out the website for Stephon's organization, We, Too, Are America (<https://www.wetooareamerica.org/>), and walk through the website as a class.

Now that students have heard Stephon's story, viewed any bonus content, and visited Stephon's organization's website, you can either give students a day to reflect on what they have learned or jump straight into the class activity.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What emotions did you feel as you watched Stephon’s video?**
2. **How did Stephon’s identity as a queer, Black individual impact their experience as a Congress staffer?**

- Do you think Stephon’s experience is unique to working in Congress, or do you think many queer and/or Black people would relate to their story? Please explain.
- How would you feel in Stephon’s situation?

1. **What emotions did you feel as you watched Stephon’s video?**
2. **How did Stephon’s identity as a queer, Black individual impact their experience as a Congress staffer?**

- Do you think Stephon’s experience is unique to working in Congress, or do you think many queer and/or Black people would relate to their story? Please explain.
- How would you feel in Stephon’s situation?

3. **At one point, Stephon said, “Congress is the American duality. Black folks—marginalized people working in the government, working in Congress—is that everyday duality.” What do they mean by this?**

4. **One of the goals of Stephon’s podcast, “We, Too, Are America,”**

**is to uplift Black voices from all walks of life, including queer, transgender, and disabled Black voices, in order to achieve racial justice for all Black people.**

- How do the experiences of queer, transgender, or disabled Black people differ from the experiences of other Black people?
- Do you think queer, transgender, and/or disabled people are talked about enough when discussing racial justice? Explain your reasoning.

5. **While working on Capitol Hill, Stephon was one of only four Black professional staffers in Congress. Although many people of color (POC), women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community are working hard in our government, their numbers do not reflect the diversity of America.**

- How might this impact the kinds of laws and policies that are put into place?
- How does this affect our ability as a society to achieve racial justice?
- What might seeing legislators from marginalized groups (POC, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community) mean on a personal level to someone from those groups?

## ACTIVITY

After leaving their job on Capitol Hill, Stephon began working with the organization We, Too, Are America and recording a podcast by the same name. Stephon’s podcast focuses on telling the stories of as many types of Black people as possible, including those of queer, transgender, and disabled Black individuals. In response to the injustices that the Black community faces, Stephon’s podcast aims to answer the question, “How do we live through this together?”

In this lesson, students will record a podcast responding to specific questions about Stephon’s story and about how to promote anti-racism, achieve racial justice, and uplift the Black community. To help students understand the meaning of anti-racism and the importance of uplifting the Black community, check out *What Is Anti-Racism?* ([www.verywellmind.org](http://www.verywellmind.org)) and *Letters for Black Lives | Mom, Dad, Uncle, Auntie, Grandfather, Grandmother, Family* ([www.lettersforblacklives.com](http://www.lettersforblacklives.com)).

Divide students into groups of five (5). Once students are divided into groups, give them a list of discussion questions (provided below) which they will use to structure their podcast. They should address the discussion questions listed below, but they are free to discuss any related topics as the conversation naturally unfolds. Their finished podcast should be about 45 minutes to an hour in length.

These articles provide different ways for students to record their podcasts:

- [A Studio At Your Fingertips: 5 Apps Teachers Are Using To Make Student Podcasts](#) (NPR)
- [How to Record a Podcast](#)

Allow students flexibility when deciding how to best record their podcast. Some factors that should be taken into consideration are the technology that students have available, their ability to meet in person as a group or to work together remotely, and how much editing they are willing to do or are capable of doing.

After giving students the instructions to record their podcast, allow students as much time as you see fit to plan, record, and/or edit their podcast. This would typically require at least a few days.

***This activity can also be shortened to fit your class’s time constraints. If you would like to teach a modified version of this lesson, you can hold a class discussion using the discussion questions that we have provided below instead of using the discussion questions as part of the larger activity.***

## CONCLUSION

If you would like to extend the activity, ask each group to give another group their podcast (whether this be through sharing a link, file, or video), and ask students to write a brief reflection piece. They should address the following questions about the other group's podcast:

- What was your most meaningful takeaway from this group's conversation?
- What learning, new understanding, or common ground was found between the students in this podcast?
- If you had listened to this group's podcast before recording your own, how might it have changed your discussion?
- Were there any differences between how this group answered the discussion questions and how your group answered? Please explain.
- Identify a moment where you disagreed with the speaker. What might you have added to the conversation at that moment?
- Is there a next step you would like to take after listening to this group's podcast? Please explain.

## LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

"Today you listened to Stephon's story about how they left their dream job to pursue racial justice when they felt like the other staffers in Congress were not showing concern for the Black community. Our society still has a long way to go to reach racial justice. I'm sure that all of you have seen the negative impact of racism in our country. A major part of Stephon's story and their work is the value of authenticity, bringing your entire self to the table wherever you go. When Stephon first started working in Congress, they worried that they were being "too much"—too loud, too loving, too outspoken—before realizing the importance of being yourself, wholly, authentically, and unapologetically. That's also what makes Stephon's podcast so moving—Stephon's guests make their voices heard, loud and clear. What I hope you take away from Stephon's story is the value of being true to yourself—your whole self—especially when you want to change the world that you live in."

Remind students of times when you are available to talk, or guide them to appropriate mental health resources based on their needs. Please

## RESOURCES & LINKS

Here are the links for the videos and resources mentioned throughout this lesson, plus a few other helpful links for your consideration. If any of the links do not work, simply type the exact title into your search engine:

### VIDEOS

[They Quit Capitol Hill To Fight For Black Liberation | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:58).

[What Are Pronouns?](#) (Minus18, 5:17)

[BESE Explains: Representation in Politics](#) (BESE, 2:52)

[Being Comfortable Being Uncomfortable: Conversation About Race | Shane Knight | TEDxMoreauCatholicHS](#) (TEDx Talks, 8:38)

[What Is the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government?](#) | History (History, 4:27)

### WEBSITES

[What Is Anti-Racism?](#)

[Letters for Black Lives | Mom, Dad, Uncle, Auntie, Grandfather, Grandmother, Family](#)

[Chart: How Diverse is U.S. Congress? | Statista](#)

[We, Too, Are America](#)

[A Studio At Your Fingertips: 5 Apps Teachers Are Using To Make Student Podcasts](#)

[How to Record a Podcast](#)

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Living Room Conversation | Race and Ethnicity](#)

[Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism, and Other Difficult Topics with Students | A Teaching Tolerance Guide](#)

[Common Core Standards PDF](#)

[Glossary | It Gets Better Project](#)

## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to work in groups to record a podcast, during which they will respond to questions about racial justice, making this lesson excellent for teaching the following standards:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A-D:

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
  - b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
  - c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
  - d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.



## OUT IN FRONT PODCAST ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	4	3	2	1
Speaking	Spoke clearly and concisely. All students could hear the speaker well	Spoke clearly and concisely. Some students had trouble hearing the speaker	Spoke at an appropriate volume but unclearly. Some points were difficult to understand.	Points were neither clear nor concise. Speaker could not be heard or understood.
Listening	Actively listened to every speaker. Paid careful attention throughout	Actively listened to every speaker. Paid some attention throughout	Actively listened to some speakers. Paid little attention throughout	Did not listen to any speakers or pay attention throughout
Participation	Contributed often with new thoughts and ideas	Contributed sometimes with some new thoughts and ideas	Spoke infrequently and rarely offered new thoughts and ideas	Did not contribute to discussion with new thoughts and ideas
Preparation	Discussion was well-organized and student showed signs of preparation for discussion	Discussion was well-organized; student showed some signs of preparation for discussion	Discussion was not organized; student showed some signs of preparation for discussion	Discussion was not organized; students did not show signs of preparation for discussion
Behavior	Very respectful to students when speaking and responding to questions	Somewhat respectful to students when speaking and responding to questions	Seldom respectful to students when speaking and responding to questions	Disrespectful, rude, or mean when speaking and responding to questions

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /20

## Victor Romero-Hernandez

HEALTHCARE FOR IMMIGRANTS (P. 21-27)



WATCH ON  
 YouTube



### INTRODUCTION

The fourth episode of *Out in Front* tells the story of Victor, who began helping undocumented, queer folks gain access to mental healthcare after years of hiding his own queer identity and undocumented status. When Victor's family immigrated to the United States with hopes of finding better healthcare for his father, he quickly realized that not everyone has equal access to such resources.

Victor always had to keep some part of himself a secret. At home, he didn't have to hide his undocumented status, but he had to hide his queer identity. Within the queer community, he could embrace his queer identity but had to hide his undocumented status. Keeping such important facets of his identity hidden put a strain on Victor's mental health, and he realized that his experience was far too common for other queer, undocumented individuals like himself.

Now Victor works with an immigrant-rights nonprofit organization called New Mexico Dream Team, running the LGBTQ+ department. As part of his work, Victor started a program that partners queer, undocumented individuals with mental health professionals so that they, too, can have access to vital mental health and medical resources.

### OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will listen to Victor's story about how he became involved in healthcare advocacy for undocumented, queer individuals before delving deeper to address the following objectives:

- Students will identify the barriers to healthcare for undocumented immigrants and how these barriers intersect with one's queer identity.
- Students will compare and contrast the unique stresses that undocumented and queer people can experience to their mental health because of how they're treated and/or perceived in society.
- Students will recognize why authorized immigration and/or obtaining citizenship is not always a viable option for some individuals/families
- Students will illustrate the challenges of immigrating to the United States and obtaining citizenship by writing a narrative journal entry through the eyes of a fictional character who is trying to find a viable path to immigration.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core Standards, check out the "Common Core Alignment" section at the end of this lesson.

**NOTE:** Before diving into this lesson, take a moment to remind your students to be respectful and considerate with their choice of words when referring to undocumented immigrants and unauthorized immigration.

Terms like *aliens*, *illegal aliens*, and *illegals* further perpetuate the idea that immigrants are criminals, foreigners, and a burden on society. These terms carry negative connotations that affect attitudes towards immigrants and people of color—immigrants and non-immigrants alike. Furthermore, hearing these terms impacts how undocumented individuals view themselves, as well as their sense of belonging, safety, and security in their community. These names suggest that it is possible for a human to be illegal, which is harmful and dehumanizing. Although actions can be unlawful, no human being is illegal.

There is no perfect word or term to encompass the experiences of millions of immigrants, but we can choose to refer to immigrants in ways that are not dehumanizing and disrespectful. Encourage students to use terms such as *undocumented immigrant* or *undocumented person*, which are more accurate descriptors of individuals who are in the United States with no authorized status.

For more information, check out Race Forward's Drop the I-Word campaign at <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/drop-i-word>.

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, watch Victor's video, [He's Helping UndocuQueer Folks Access Healthcare | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:13).



WATCH ON  YouTube

As a **bonus**, you can watch any combination of the following videos or all of them to add extra information to the discussion that will come next:

- [No Longer Afraid: An Undocumented Immigrant's Experience in American Health Care](#) (TEDMED, 12:36)
- [What it's Like to be Queer and Undocumented](#) (First Person, 8:09)
- [The Economics of Healthcare: Crash Course Econ #29](#) (CrashCourse, 10:25)
- [How Julio Salgado Utilizes Art to Express Life As a Queer, Undocumented Man | SEEN | NowThis](#) (NowThis Entertainment, 4:46)
- [Coming Out of Two Closets](#) (EmergingUS, 5:26)

After viewing the bonus content, check out the website for Victor's organization, [New Mexico Dream Team](#), and walk through the website as a class. **[NOTE: The website's content might show up in Spanish. No worries! Your web browser should offer to translate it into English for you if needed.]**

Now that students have heard Victor's story, visited his organization's website, and watched any bonus content, you can either give students a day to reflect on what they have learned or jump right into the class discussion.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

With everything that they have learned from Victor's *Out in Front* episode, any of the suggested bonus videos, the information from the New Mexico Dream Team website, and their preexisting knowledge, begin a class discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

- 1. What emotions did you feel as you watched Victor's video?**
- 2. After his father was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, Victor's family immigrated to the United States in hope of finding better healthcare for his father's condition. However, they soon learned that because of their undocumented status, they did not qualify for health insurance, meaning that his father's medical treatment would be very expensive.**
  - What do you know about healthcare and health insurance in the United States?
  - Do you think Victor's family's experience is unique to undocumented immigrants, or do you think many families who are citizens of the United States could relate to their struggles?
- 3. For much of his life, Victor felt like he always had to hide some part of himself, whether it be his queer identity or his undocumented status.**
  - How did Victor's identity as a queer man influence his experience as an undocumented immigrant?
  - Conversely, how did his undocumented status influence his experience as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

(CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

### 4. Victor's work for the New Mexico Dream Team helps connect undocumented, queer individuals with mental health professionals so that they can gain access to resources that they might not have been able to otherwise.

- What unique mental health challenges might arise from the way that someone is treated and/or perceived by society for being undocumented?
- What unique mental health challenges might arise from the way that someone is treated and/or perceived by society for being queer?
- What unique mental health challenges might arise from being someone with both of these identities?

### 5. When talking about healthcare for undocumented immigrants, the response from many is that these immigrants should have sought out authorized immigration in the first place or that they should just become citizens, if they want affordable access to such services.

- Is immigrating legally always a viable option for everyone? Please explain.
- What do you know about the path to citizenship in the United States?
- Do you believe someone should have to be a citizen of a country in order to access affordable healthcare and/or other social services? Explain your reasoning.

## ACTIVITY

After absorbing Victor's story, his organization's message, and their classmates' responses during the discussion, students will take a deeper look at immigration.

Many people say that if undocumented immigrants want access to affordable healthcare and health insurance, they should not have immigrated without authorization in the first place. Even more than that, many suggest that undocumented immigrants should simply become citizens in order to gain access to health and medical resources.

Students will explore why authorized immigration and obtaining citizenship are not always viable options. In doing so, they will come to understand that gaining access to healthcare through authorized immigration or citizenship is not as easy as it sounds.

As a class, watch [The Try Guys Try Immigrating To America](#) (BuzzFeedVideo, 16:18), in which LGBTQ+ activist Eugene Lee Yang and the other Try Guys try to find a viable path to immigration in four different scenarios.

## BONUS

Another youth highlighted in our *Out in Front* series is Cynthia Garcia, an undocumented, queer immigrant who helps other undocumented, queer folks in crisis avoid deportation. Like Victor, Cynthia's queer identity and undocumented status made it difficult to find a sense of community.

If your class has watched Cynthia Garcia's *Out in Front* episode ([here](#)), ask them to compare and contrast Victor and Cynthia's stories.

- What themes emerge from both of their stories?
- How are their stories different?
- As members of the Latinx community, what role did culture play in Victor and Cynthia's experiences?



After watching the video, students will take what they learned from Victor's story, their class discussion, and any bonus content to write a journal entry as one of the four fictional characters presented in the video.

(CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)

**ACTIVITY** (CONT'D)

**Avideh:** A single, 23-year-old university student from a high socioeconomic level in Iran who has received anonymous, threatening phone calls after speaking out against Iranian fundamentalism

**Ignacia:** A 32-year-old divorced banker from Mexico who wants to marry a man from Peru—who already has his own Green Card—and move to the United States. Ignacia wants to bring along her two young children and her elderly mother.

**Firouz:** A 55-year old widowed barber from Iran whose sister immigrated to the United States 15 years ago.

**Mariano:** A married, 43-year-old carpenter from a low socioeconomic level in Mexico who wants to immigrate to the United States to give his three children better opportunities. Mariano did not graduate from high school.

Taking on the persona of their character, students should address the following in their character's journal entry:

- The reasons why their character wants to immigrate to the United States
- Their unique challenges of their character's path to immigration
- Their character's plan to immigrate and/or obtain citizenship
- How likely their character is to successfully immigrate and/or obtain citizenship
- The risks and/or consequences of failure to immigrate and/or obtain citizenship
- Their character's dreams for life in the United States

Students should write their narratives from a first person point of view. Encourage students to be creative. Since this is a fictional piece of writing, their work does not need to be confined to the guidelines of formal writing. They can include dialogue, provide detailed descriptions of setting and other characters, and add their own style to their writing. In doing so, students should strive to develop greater empathy for their characters and better understand the struggles that immigrants face.

*At the end of this lesson, we have included a rubric that you can use to evaluate your students' work.*

**CONCLUSION**

If you would like to extend the activity, ask students to write a brief reflection piece responding to any or all of the following questions:

- What has listening to Victor's story taught you?
  - Did his story change your view about immigration in any way? Please explain.
- Did this activity change your view of how easy or difficult it is to immigrate to the United States with authorization and/or obtain citizenship? Please explain.
- After completing this activity, do you believe that access to affordable healthcare and/or other social services should be tied to one's citizenship status?
  - Access to healthcare is a major issue even for citizens of the United States. How can we make sure undocumented immigrants don't get left out of the conversation?
  - Being undocumented and queer, Victor never felt like he had a space to just be himself, and it put a strain on his mental health. How can you help create safe spaces for people like Victor in your life?

## CONCLUSION (CONT'D)

### LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

"Today you listened to Victor's story about how he began helping undocumented, queer folks gain access to crucial mental health resources. Undocumented immigrants are often denied access to medical and mental health resources because of their undocumented status, but they need these resources just as much as people who were born on American soil. People often say that if immigrants want access to the same resources as American citizens, they should just seek out authorized immigration or become citizens. As you've learned, authorized immigration and citizenship are not always viable options, and they are certainly not quick or easy things to do. As a result, undocumented immigrants are excluded from the benefits that American citizens receive. An important aspect of Victor's story is inclusion, meaning that people shouldn't be excluded from important resources and benefits based on their immigration status. Healthcare is a major issue even for American citizens, but it is especially important to include the voices of vulnerable groups—undocumented immigrants—when talking about solutions."

Remind students of times when you are available to talk, or guide them to appropriate mental health resources based on their needs. Please thank your students for their willingness to learn, hard work, and participation—we at the It Gets Better Project are certainly thankful for them!

## RESOURCES & LINKS

Here are the links for the videos and resources mentioned throughout this lesson, plus a few other helpful links for your consideration. If any of the links do not work, simply type the exact title into your search engine:

### VIDEOS

[He's Helping UndocuQueer Folks Access Healthcare | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:13)

[No Longer Afraid: An Undocumented Immigrant's Experience in American Health Care](#) (TEDMED, 12:36)

[What it's Like to be Queer and Undocumented](#) (First Person, 8:09)

[The Economics of Healthcare: Crash Course Econ #29](#) (CrashCourse, 10:25)

[How Julio Salgado Utilizes Art to Express Life As a Queer, Undocumented Man | SEEN | NowThis](#) (NowThis Entertainment, 4:46)

[Coming Out of Two Closets](#) (EmergingUS, 5:26)

[The Try Guys Try Immigrating To America](#) (BuzzFeedVideo, 16:18)

### WEBSITES

[New Mexico Dream Team](#) website

[Twitter @NM\\_Dream\\_Team](#)

[Instagram @nm\\_dreamteam](#)

[Drop the I-Word](#)

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Common Core Standards PDF](#)

[It Gets Better Glossary](#)

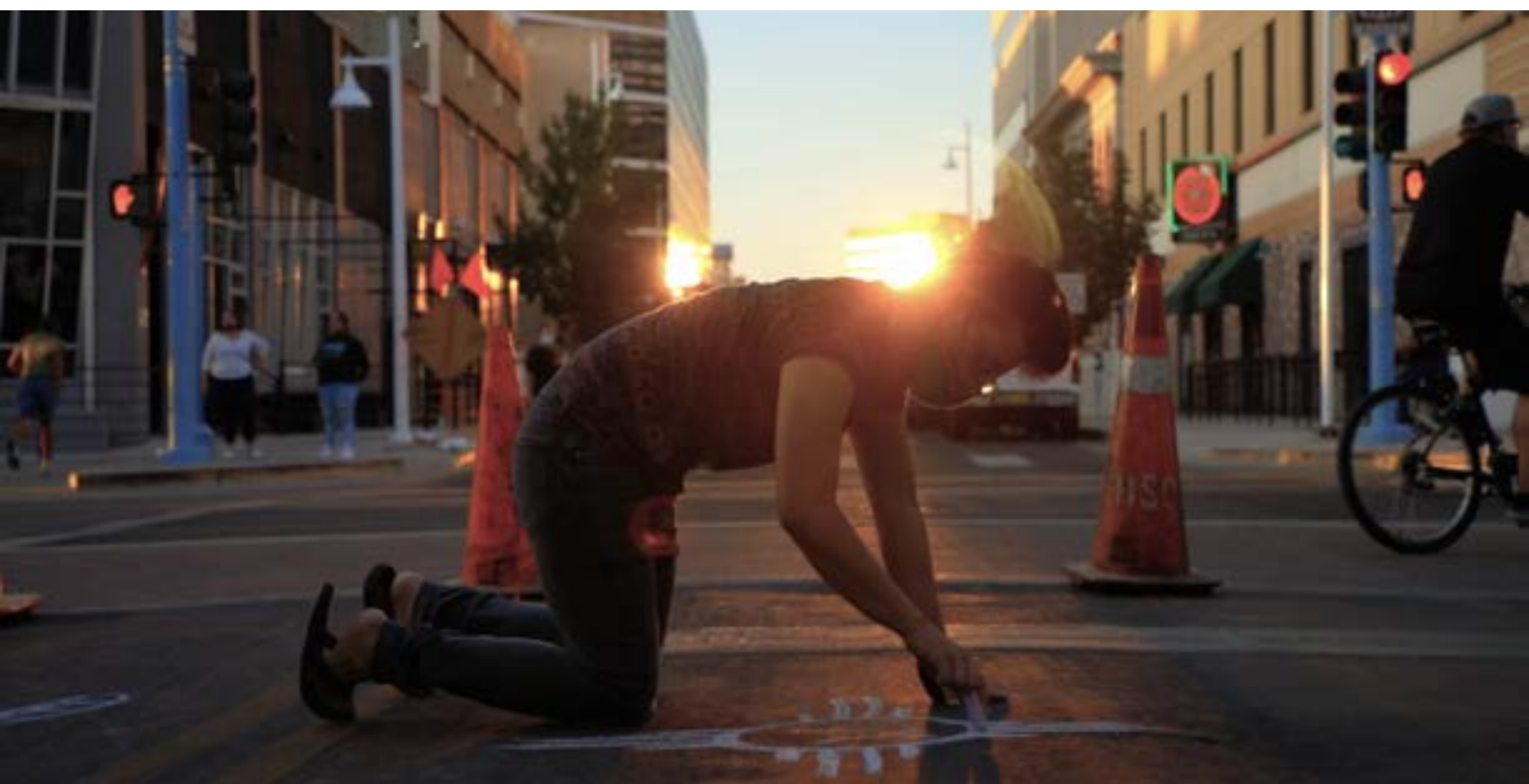
## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to write a narrative from the perspective of a fictional character who is trying to immigrate to the United States, making it a great lesson to teach the following standards in particular:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.A-E

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
  - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
  - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
  - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.



## IMMIGRATION NARRATIVE RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	4	3	2	1
Content	Writing strongly and consistently meets all task demands	Writing meets all task demands	Writing meets most, but not all, task demands	Writing fails to meet most task demands
Clarity	Writing clearly orients reader by establishing narrator, setting, and situation; maintains a smooth progression of experiences or events	Writing orients reader by establishing narrator, setting, and situation; progression of events is mostly smooth	Narrator, setting, and/or situation are somewhat unclear; progression of events is somewhat smooth	Narrator, setting, and/or situation are unclear; progression of events is confusing or unable to be understood
Use of Narrative Techniques	Writing skillfully uses many narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection, in order to develop experiences, events, and/or characters	Writing uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection, in order to develop experiences, events, and/or characters	Writing attempts to use some narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection	Writing does not include the use of narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection
Language	Writing uses precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters	Writing uses words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters	Writing uses few words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters	Writing does not use words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language and fails to convey a picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /16

# Cynthia Garcia

## IMMIGRATION REFORM (P. 28–33)



WATCH ON  
 YouTube



## INTRODUCTION

The fifth episode of *Out in Front* focuses on Cynthia Garcia, an undocumented, queer immigrant who helps other “undocuqueer” folks in crisis avoid deportation. Along with her mother and sister, Cynthia made the dangerous journey across the border in an effort to reunite with her father when she was just 15 years old. Since then, she has lived with the threat of deportation.

Coming out to her mother was like something straight out of a telenovela... but not in a good way. Her mother’s rejection left Cynthia feeling isolated, and it didn’t help that the queer community didn’t make space for undocumented immigrants like her. Facing homophobia within the Latinx community and anti-immigrant sentiments within the queer community, she struggled to find a place where she belonged.

Now Cynthia works to ensure that other undocuqueer folks don’t feel excluded like she once did. Cynthia works in deportation defense with United We Dream, an organization that fights for justice and dignity for all immigrants. Her work upholds her belief that a threat to the rights of anyone in the LGBTQ+ community—including undocumented immigrants—is a threat to all.

## OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will listen to Cynthia’s story about how she became involved in deportation defense before delving deeper to address the following objectives:

- Students will identify the ways in which one’s culture, immigration status, and sexual orientation intersect and influence one’s life experience.
- Students will define social progress and evaluate whether progress for only certain members of a community is better than no progress at all.
- Students will recognize the unique danger that deportation poses to young people—primarily students.
- Students will conduct research to evaluate the validity of different myths about immigration policy and visually present their findings to their classmates by creating a poster.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core Standards, check out the “Common Core Alignment” section at the end of this lesson.

**NOTE:** The video that students will watch before beginning the activity, “DREAMers and DACA Explained” (Stilt Inc.), mentions what language is appropriate to use when referring to individuals who have immigrated to the United States without authorization. Although students will get another reminder later in the lesson, take a moment to remind your students to be respectful and considerate with their choice of words before moving on to the class discussion portion of this lesson.

Terms like *aliens*, *illegal aliens*, and *illegals* further perpetuate the idea that immigrants are criminals, foreigners, and a burden on society. These terms carry negative connotations that affect attitudes towards immigrants and people of color—immigrants and non-immigrants alike. Furthermore, hearing these terms impacts how young people view themselves, as well as their sense of belonging, safety, and security in their community. These words suggest that it is possible for a human to be illegal, which is harmful and dehumanizing. Although actions can be unlawful, no human being is illegal.

There is no perfect word or term to encompass the experiences of millions of immigrants, but we can choose to refer to immigrants in ways that are not dehumanizing and disrespectful. Encourage students to use terms such as *undocumented immigrant* or *undocumented person*, which are more accurate descriptors of individuals who are in the United States with no authorized status.

For more information, check out [Race Forward’s Drop the I-Word campaign](#).

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, watch Cynthia's video, [Her Dream is Keeping Families Together | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:56).



WATCH ON  YouTube

As a **bonus**, you can watch any combination of the following videos or all of them to add extra information to the discussion that will come next:

- [How I Found Out I'm an Undocumented Immigrant | Vanity Fair](#) (Vanity Fair, 4:43)
- [Following the Deportation of a Teenager Whose One Mistake Changed His Life: Part 1](#) (ABC News, 12:31)
- [I Have Something to Tell You...](#) (Sara Sandoval Art, 6:24)
- Article: [The School-to-Deportation Pipeline](#) (tolerance.org)

After watching the video(s), head over to the website for Cynthia's organization, [United We Dream](#) and walk through the website as a class.

Now that students have heard Cynthia's story, visited her organization's website, and watched any bonus content, you can either give students a day to reflect on what they have learned or jump right into the class discussion.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

With everything that they have learned from Cynthia's *Out in Front* episode, any of the suggested bonus videos, the information from the United We Dream website, and their preexisting knowledge, begin a class discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

- 1. What emotions did you feel as you watched Cynthia's video?**
- 2. How did Cynthia's identity as a queer woman influence her experience as an undocumented immigrant? Conversely, how did her undocumented status influence her experience as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?**
- 3. Cynthia described her family's journey across the border as "painful" and "risky," but they were determined to reunite their family. She says, "If you wanted to reunite with your family, what would be the steps that you would take?"**
  - Would you be willing to make the same journey as Cynthia's family to reunite with your own family? Please explain.
  - When talking about immigration, do we talk enough about the danger that immigrants often face when crossing the border? Please explain.
- 4. When explaining why it is important to uplift immigrants in the LGBTQ+ community, Cynthia says, "When we're fighting for equal rights, a threat to any one of us who identifies as LGBTQ+ in the world is a threat to us here in the U.S."**
  - Is it possible for members of the LGBTQ+ community who are citizens of the United States to achieve equal rights if their undocumented counterparts do not have the same rights?
  - Do you think that progress for some members of the LGBTQ+ community is better than no progress at all? Explain your reasoning.

(CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

### BONUS

Another youth highlighted in our *Out in Front* series is Victor Romero-Hernandez, an undocumented, queer immigrant who helps other undocumented, queer folks gain access to mental health resources. Like Cynthia, Victor's queer identity and undocumented status made it difficult to find a sense of community.

If your class has watched Victor Romero-Hernandez's *Out in Front* episode ([here](#)), ask them to compare and contrast Cynthia and Victor's stories.

- What themes emerge from both of their stories?
- How are their stories different?
- As members of the Latinx community, what role did culture play in Cynthia and Victor's experiences?



## ACTIVITY

After absorbing Cynthia's story, her organization's message, and their classmates' responses during the discussion, students will take a deeper look at the central focus of Cynthia's work, deportation defense, and how deportation affects young people like themselves.

Although the threat of deportation seems far-removed from students in the classroom, deportation and immigration policy have a significant effect on school-age individuals.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), aimed at individuals who were brought to the United States as children, is a policy that allows individuals with unauthorized presence in the United States to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action for deportation and a work permit in the United States. The implementation of this policy heavily impacted young immigrants, many of whom are students.

Political figures have opposed DACA, even challenging the policy in the Supreme Court. Many everyday people oppose DACA, too. Some of the opposition against this policy comes from the many misconceptions about DACA and its impact on immigration policy.

In this activity, students will take a critical look at common beliefs about DACA and conduct research to determine the validity of these beliefs.

Start off by watching [DREAMers and DACA Explained](#) (Stilt Inc., 4:30) as a class.



(CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)



## ACTIVITY (CONT'D)

Once students have a basic understanding of DACA, divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the following myths about DACA:

- DACA encourages other people to immigrate to the United States without authorization so that they can reap the policy's benefits.
- Recipients of DACA get an unfair advantage and are allowed to "cut the line" to become citizens.
- Students who qualify for DACA get to attend college for free.
- DACA recipients do not pay taxes.

As a group, students will research the validity of their assigned myth and create a poster to illustrate their findings. Students should include the following:

- The origin of the myth—where did it originate?
- Who benefits from this myth?
- How true or untrue is this myth? Is any part of it factually correct?

Be clear about sources of information. Inform students that they should seek out credible sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, or interviews with an expert on the topic. Students should try to find information from web domains that end in .gov, .edu, and—with caution—.org. They can also find news articles from reliable publications such as The New York Times, which recently became free for high school students and educators.

Encourage students to make their posters colorful and eye-catching so that they can present their findings to their classmates in a compelling way.

Once the posters are finished, hang up each group's poster in different spots around the classroom. Ask students to do a gallery walk around the room within their groups. During this time, they should study each poster and discuss their thoughts about each myth.

## CONCLUSION

If you would like to extend the activity, hold a class discussion and allow students to respond to any or all of the following questions:

- What has listening to Cynthia's story taught you? Did her story make you change your view about immigration and/or deportation in any way? Please explain.
- How do you feel knowing that students your age are at risk of being deported? Were you aware of the threat of deportation to people your age before this lesson?
- Did the information from your classmates' posters or your own research change your perspective on immigration and/or deportation? Explain your thoughts.
- What do you think will happen in the future in regards to immigration policy? What do you *hope* will happen?

## LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

***"Today you listened to Cynthia's story about how she began working in deportation defense as part of her mission to protect the rights of all LGBTQ+ folks, even undocumented individuals. The threat of deportation makes undocumented immigrants a vulnerable community. They are constantly at risk of having their lives uprooted and having all sense of security taken away from them. More than that, undocumented immigrants often struggle to find a community where they belong. This was evident in Cynthia's story when she was rejected by the Latinx community in the United States for being queer and from the LGBTQ+ community for being undocumented. A lot of the time, rejection from those in your community stems from misconceptions that cause fear, distrust, and hatred. There are many misconceptions about immigrants and immigration policy out there, and they create plenty of harm. Moving forward, I encourage you to educate yourselves about immigration policy so that you can help create a safe, tolerant, and caring community for undocumented immigrants."***

Remind students of times when you are available to talk, or guide them to appropriate mental health resources based on their needs. Please thank your students for their willingness to learn, hard work, and participation—we at the It Gets Better Project are certainly thankful for them.

## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to write a narrative from the perspective of a fictional character who is trying to immigrate to the United States, making it a great lesson to teach the following standards in particular:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

3. Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

8. Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

## RESOURCES & LINKS

Here are the links for the videos and resources mentioned throughout this lesson, plus a few other helpful links for your consideration. If any of the links do not work, simply type the exact title into your search engine:

### VIDEOS

[Her Dream is Keeping Families Together | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:56)

[How I Found Out I'm an Undocumented Immigrant | Vanity Fair](#) (Vanity Fair, 4:43)

[Following the Deportation of a Teenager Whose One Mistake Changed His Life: Part 1](#) (ABC News, 12:31)

[I Have Something to Tell You...](#) (Sara Sandoval Art, 6:24)

[DREAMers and DACA Explained](#) (Stilt Inc., 4:30)

### WEBSITES

[United We Dream](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/unitedwedream/>

<https://twitter.com/unitedwedream>

<https://www.facebook.com/UnitedWeDream/>

Article: [The School-to-Deportation Pipeline](#)

[Drop the I-Word](#)

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Common Core Standards PDF](#)

[It Gets Better Glossary](#)

[American Federation of Teachers | "Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff](#)

[K-12 Educator DACA Decision Resource](#)

## IMMIGRATION MYTHS RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	3	2	1
Content	Information on poster meets all task demands	Information on poster meets most, but not all, task demands	Information on poster meets some or none of the task demands
Use of Evidence	Findings are consistently supported by well-chosen, accurate, and relevant evidence	Evidence used to support findings is mostly accurate and relevant	Evidence used to support findings is inaccurate and/or irrelevant
Quality of Poster	Visual materials are creative, neat, visually appealing, and enhance understanding of findings	Visual materials adequately support understanding of findings; poster is somewhat neat and visually appealing	Visual materials impede understanding of findings

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /9

After watching *OUT IN FRONT*, your students have heard stories from:



**ANDREA GONZALEZ**, a student from Staten Island, NY who became an activist for gun-reform after experiencing the threat of gun-violence on her own campus.



**JUDE KACEY**, a transgender teen from Denver, CO whose incredible activism resulted in a law being passed—in her name!



**VICTOR HERNANDEZ**, who began helping undocumented, queer folks gain access to mental healthcare after years of hiding his own queer identity and undocumented status.



**CYNTHIA GARCIA**, an undocumented, queer immigrant who helps other “undocuqueer” folks in crisis avoid deportation.



**STEPHON BRADBERRY**, a queer, Black individual who quit their dream job working in the United States Congress so that they could pursue racial justice.

## Bonus Opportunity

**p. 34–40**

Today, young people just like your students are at the forefront of social justice activism. Taking inspiration from what they’ve seen young people like themselves accomplish throughout *Out in Front*, your students will create a social media campaign to raise awareness about a topic of their choice. In doing so, they will understand what it takes to be the change they want to see in the world.

This project is intended to be a culmination of everything that students have learned from *Out in Front*. Students will be asked to conduct research, create original content, and put together a presentation. Much of their work will need to take place outside the classroom. As such, be sure to dedicate adequate time for the project, which will likely require a couple of weeks to complete.

To find out how this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core Standards, check out the “Common Core Alignment” section at the end of this lesson.

### OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will build upon what they have learned from Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia in order to address the following objectives:

- Students will apply what they learned from *Out in Front* and relate it to their own social media campaign.
- Students will plan, create, and publish content for a social media page concerning a social justice issue of their choice.
- Students will summarize, analyze, and synthesize information from diverse sources to convey the importance of the social justice issue that they have chosen to their audience.
- Students will make use of digital media to engage their audience, both on social media and during an oral presentation, and enhance understanding of their chosen topic.
- Students will work in groups, setting clear goals and deadlines for themselves and establishing individual roles as needed.

## GETTING STARTED

As a class, check out any combination of the social media pages for the organizations represented by Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia. Explore each account's content, making note of similarities and differences between each organization's page or even between platforms for the same organization.

### Youth Over Guns [Andrea Gonzalez]

[Twitter @YouthOverGuns](#)

[Instagram @youthoverguns](#)

### One Colorado [Jude Kacey]

[Twitter @One\\_Colorado](#)

[Instagram @onecolorado](#)

### We, Too, Are America [Stephon Bradberry]

[Twitter @W2AA\\_org](#)

[Instagram @w2aa\\_org](#)

### New Mexico Dream Team [Victor Hernandez]

[Twitter @NM\\_Dream\\_Team](#)

[Instagram @nm\\_dreamteam](#)

### United We Dream [Cynthia Garcia]

[Twitter @UNITEDWEDREAM](#)

[Instagram @unitedwedream](#)

While you're at it, check out the It Gets Better Project's social media platforms for even more examples:

### It Gets Better Project

[Twitter @ItGetsBetter](#)

[Instagram @itgetsbetter](#)

After viewing as many social media pages as you would like, go ahead and jump straight into a class discussion about what students just observed.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

With everything that they have seen from Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia's organizations' social media platforms and their preexisting knowledge, begin a class discussion and ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

- 1. What kinds of content were used by each organization (i.e. pictures, videos, artwork, words, polls)?**
  - What kind of content caught your attention the most?
  - Did some content appear more effective than others? Please explain.
- 2. For any of the organizations' social media pages, what was your emotional response to their content?**
- 3. Was each organization's message clear from their social media pages? Please explain.**
- 4. What were some similarities and differences between the organizations' different social media pages?**
  - What were the differences between social media platforms from the same organization (i.e. Twitter versus Instagram)?
- 5. What is the role of social media in social justice and activism?**
  - How does social media benefit activism?
  - Are there any downsides to using social media to promote social justice? Please explain.

## ACTIVITY

In this activity, students will plan, create, and publish a social media campaign to raise awareness about a social justice issue of their choice.

To begin, divide students into groups of at least six (**Note:** Based on your judgment of the activity's workload and/or your class size, groups can be made larger, but we recommend no fewer than six students per group.)

Give students time to choose a topic. They can choose one of the issues talked about in any of the *Out in Front* episodes, or they can choose a brand new topic. What's most important is that they pick a topic that they are passionate about.

Once students have chosen an issue, they will submit a project proposal. Their proposal should clearly state the following:

- The group's topic/issue
- Why the issue is important
  - Who is affected by the issue?
  - What is its impact on society?
  - Why should people care about this issue?
- Work that has already been done or is being done to address the issue
  - What have organizations, campaigns, or activists done in the past? What are they doing in the present?
- The goal of the campaign
  - Mission statement about the group's social media campaign

Students will submit their proposal for instructor approval. After their campaign is approved, students will begin creating content for their social media campaign.

Students can use any social media platform that they would like—Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok—but we recommend that they use Twitter or Instagram because it is easier to post the kind of content that will be required for their campaign.

Their social media page should have a minimum of 15 posts that encompass the following content:

- 1 video stating the project mission—meet the people behind the project!
- 1 shoutout to an existing organization or activist that is already doing work related to the project's mission
- 1 original infographic that conveys the significance of the issue
- 2 original images (photos, illustrations, artwork) that would be used to raise awareness
- 5 posts/threads about articles related to the issue, conveying the significance of the topic
  - Note: Students must include five separate articles, not multiple posts about the same article.
- 5 posts/threads about taking action—what can readers do?

In addition to the required content, students can also share relevant content from other creators to enhance their message beyond their original 15 posts.

Students must conduct research to create their content. Particularly for the articles related to their issue, be clear about sources of information. Inform students that they should seek out credible sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, excerpts from books, or interviews with an expert on the topic. Students should try to find information from web domains that end in .gov, .edu, and—with caution— .org. These posts are like the evidence that they would use in an essay or debate; they should strongly support the need to take action.

## BONUS

To enhance their research skills, ask students to produce an annotated bibliography for the five articles related to their topic. For each article, students will write a citation in the appropriate style (i.e. MLA, APA, Chicago). Each citation will be followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) summary of the article. This summary should:

- Summarize the key findings from the article
- Evaluate the authority or background of the author
- Compare and/or contrast the article to other articles that have been cited
- Explain the relevance of the article to the chosen topic

Students will submit their annotated bibliography when the completed project is due.

Encourage students to make their content as creative, visually appealing, and eye-catching as possible. Remind them that they are allowed to look at other social media campaigns for inspiration. Even more than that, students should follow their classmates' campaigns online so that they can interact with their classmates' work and get ideas for their own content.

Allow students as much time as you see fit to conduct research, plan and create their content, and publish their work. This would typically require at least two weeks.

## CONCLUSION

After completing their social media campaign, each group will present their project to the class. Each group should make strategic use of digital media (textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) to enhance their presentation.

Students should talk about the significance of the issue that they chose, highlight the existing work that has been done, showcase their original content, and remind their classmates how they can make a difference.

After each presentation, open up a discussion to the class using the following discussion questions:

- What new information did you learn about this issue?
  - Did this presentation change your perspective on this issue in any way? Please explain.
- After seeing this presentation, will you make any changes in your personal life to address the issue that was presented? Please explain.
  - Will you be following any of the suggestions mentioned in the group's presentation? Explain your thoughts.

## LESSON TAKEAWAY

Before ending the lesson, take a moment and make a concluding statement to the class to summarize the significance of what they have learned and what they should take away from this lesson. For example, you could say something like:

*“By listening to Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia’s stories, you’ve learned the importance of courage, identity, authenticity, inclusion, and community. All of these make up the foundation of social justice. By creating your own social media campaign, you’ve gotten the chance to take everything that you’ve learned from these five incredible young people and raise awareness about an issue that you’re passionate about. What I hope you take away from Out in Front is that you have the ability to tap into your power and create positive change in the world. The world needs your hearts and minds now more than ever. Thank you for your willingness to learn and listen to different perspectives, and thank you for all your hard work throughout this unit.”*

And on behalf of the It Gets Better Project, thank you for helping your students find their voices to champion a better tomorrow.

## RESOURCES & LINKS

### VIDEOS

Andrea’s Out in Front episode: [She Is Changing The Face Of Gun Violence Prevention | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:10)

Jude’s Out in Front episode: [Meet the Trans Teen Behind ‘Jude’s Law’ | Out in Front: Queer Youth Changing the World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:00)

Stephon’s Out in Front episode: [They Quit Capitol Hill To Fight For Black Liberation | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:58)

Victor’s Out in Front episode: [He’s Helping UndocuQueer Folks Access Healthcare | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 4:13)

Cynthia’s Out in Front episode: [Her Dream is Keeping Families Together | Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing The World](#) (It Gets Better Project, 5:56)

### WEBSITES

[Twitter @YouthOverGuns](#)

[Instagram @youthoverguns](#)

[Twitter @One\\_Colorado](#)

[Instagram @onecolorado](#)

[Twitter @W2AA\\_org](#)

[Instagram @w2aa\\_org](#)

[Twitter @NM\\_Dream\\_Team](#)

[Instagram @nm\\_dreamteam](#)

[Twitter @UNITEDWEDREAM](#)

[Instagram @unitedwedream](#)

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Common Core Standards PDF](#)

## COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

For detailed information about how our EduGuides can be used to teach Common Core standards, check out our It Gets Better EDU Common Core Alignment Chart.

This lesson asks students to write a narrative from the perspective of a fictional character who is trying to immigrate to the United States, making it a great lesson to teach the following standards in particular:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest..



## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Debate Topic/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Component	Points Possible	Points Earned
Completed proposal	5	
Video stating project mission (1)	5	
Shoutout to existing organization (1)	5	
Original infographic (1)	5	
Original images (2)	10	
Posts/threads about related articles (5)	25	
Posts/threads about taking action (5)	25	

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /80

## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN RUBRIC

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Debate Topic/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

	20	15	10	5
Understanding of Topic	Students display a sophisticated understanding of their chosen topic and are able to skillfully explain its relevance to society	Students display a solid understanding of their chosen topic and are able to convey its relevance to society	Students display an acceptable understanding of their chosen topic and/or have difficulty explaining its relevance to society	Students display a weak understanding of their chosen topic and/or fail to explain its relevance to society
Quality of Social Media Content	All social media posts are complete, relevant, and accurate to the topic; content is engaging to readers	All social media posts are complete, relevant, and accurate	Some social media posts are missing; some posts are irrelevant to topic or inaccurate	Many social media posts are missing; content is irrelevant and/or inaccurate
Quality of Graphic Components	All original infographics and images are visually appealing, creative, and relevant to the project's message. Images used strongly enhance the project's message.	Original infographics and images are visually appealing, creative, and help convey the project's message.	Original infographics and images are relevant to the project's message but do not enhance the project's message or promote understanding.	Original infographics and images are irrelevant to the project's message and/or get in the way of the project's message.
Presentation Materials	Group makes strategic use of digital media (textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) to enhance their presentation.	Group makes use of digital media (textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in their presentation	Group makes an effort to make use of digital media, but use of digital media could be improved to enhance findings.	Group does not make use of digital media, or digital media is used in a way that detracts from presentation.
Speaking Skills During Presentation	Group members spoke clearly and concisely. All students could hear the speakers well	Group members spoke clearly and concisely. Some students had trouble hearing the speakers	Group members spoke at an appropriate volume but unclearly. Some points were difficult to understand.	Points were neither clear nor concise. Speakers could not be heard or understood.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ /100

Overall Total: \_\_\_\_\_ /180

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

We hope you enjoyed this official EduGuide for *Out In Front: Queer Youth Changing the World*. This resource is part of a growing portfolio of materials currently made available through the It Gets Better EDU.

It Gets Better EDU exists to ensure that the uplifting stories crafted and collected by the It Gets Better Project reach LGBTQ+ youth wherever learning takes place. We do this by offering educators and student leaders easy-to-access and easy-to-use resources, information, and more. Learn about It Gets Better EDU at [itgetsbetter.org/edu](https://itgetsbetter.org/edu), and for inquiries, email us at [education@itgetsbetter.org](mailto:education@itgetsbetter.org).



**It Gets Better Project** is a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California. Its mission is to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe. With affiliates operating on 4 different continents, the It Gets Better Project boasts a truly global operation. Together, this networks use the power of story - told through online videos, social media, films, television specials, books, and more - to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.

### Connect with the Organization:

Website: [itgetsbetter.org](https://itgetsbetter.org)

Email: [info@itgetsbetter.org](mailto:info@itgetsbetter.org)

Get Help: [itgetsbetter.org/GetHelp](https://itgetsbetter.org/GetHelp)

### Follow the Organization:

Facebook: [facebook.com/itgetsbetterproject](https://facebook.com/itgetsbetterproject)

Instagram: [instagram.com/itgetsbetter](https://instagram.com/itgetsbetter)

TikTok: [tiktok.com/@itgetsbetter](https://tiktok.com/@itgetsbetter)

Tumblr: [itgetsbetterproject.tumblr.com/](https://itgetsbetterproject.tumblr.com/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/itGetsBetter/](https://twitter.com/itGetsBetter/)

YouTube: [youtube.com/itgetsbetter](https://youtube.com/itgetsbetter)

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