

Street Photography: Zooming in on Social Inequality

Audience: Middle or High School Students

Rationale: You live in a place and time where many social inequalities are still visibly present. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate your awareness and perspective of social inequality through a form of art—photography.

Social inequality is the result of a society treating people differently on the basis of their age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, education, occupation, class, language, country of origin, or other similar features. This leads to the unfair distribution of societal resources, prestige and power. Consequently, conflict often arises when inequality is present. The purpose of this assignment is to push students to use an everyday tech tool (cell phone) to critically examine and document social inequalities in their immediate community. Students will consider how these social inequalities affect their lives directly or indirectly.

This assignment could be provided to students at various points in a unit around social inequality.

Objectives: By the end of this assignment, students will be able to

- understand their ability to identify and document social injustices and inequalities in their immediate communities;
- analyze how inequalities in their community affect them directly and indirectly;

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.-10.A

Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

Materials:

Computer/Projector/Internet
Video
PowerPoint slide
Cell Phone
Street Photography Assignment

Time: 30 minutes

Procedures:

5 min: Do Now: What is inequality? Provide 5 examples of inequality in society (past or present).
5 min: Allow students to share their responses, and briefly preview/explain that their upcoming assignment will ask them to document inequalities.
2 min: Show this video of a journalist documenting air pollution on his cell phone.

<http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/air-pollution-clouds-beijing-skies> (The purpose of showing this video is to highlight how a tech tool as simple as a cell phone can be used to educate others about local, national and global issues of concern).

8 min: Think, write, turn and ask: Ask students to independently come up with 4 questions each to ask their partner about the video and their partner must try to answer it.

10 min: Hand out and review assignment (this assignment is intentionally left a little vague to promote students' creative writing).

Street Photography Assignment

- ❖ Take and submit **4 photos*** that display social inequality in _____.
- ❖ All photos must be connected to a single theme that is **meaningful to you**. Think about the examples of inequality that you came up with during the Do Now.
 - What issue do you care about most? What do you know a lot about or want to know more about? What do you observe often? What issues are prevalent in your community?
- ❖ Include short captions and the location of where the pictures were taken under each photo.
- ❖ Write a **3 paragraph essay** that describes and analyzes your photos.
 - 1 paragraph should focus on the issue that you are “zooming” in on
Questions to consider: What is the social inequality you are displaying through photography?
How prevalent is this issue in _____? In the US? In the world? Who does it affect?
Is it an ongoing issue or recent phenomenon?
 - 1 paragraph should describe and analyze the photos in the context of the social inequality.
Questions to consider: How do your photos capture this societal inequality?
Does the public openly discuss this issue or is it ignored?
 - 1 paragraph should explain your experience taking these photos.
Questions to consider: What was your experience of looking at your community through a lens?
Did you interact with your subject? How did you feel when you were taking these pictures?

Recommendations:

- ❖ Take more than 4 pictures so then you can sort through them and pick out the best ones. **DO NOT FILTER THE PHOTOS.** Raw, real footage can be extremely powerful.
- ❖ Be ethical, be safe and use common sense. *Please be mindful that if you are taking pictures of humans that you may need their permission. Use your best judgment!
- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings. If it is safe and appropriate, engage in a dialogue with your subject if they see you taking a picture of them so you do not make them feel uncomfortable. Talk to them—what is their story? What do they want the world to know about them? Do not make people pose for you—this is not studio photography.

The photos and accompanying essay should be e-mailed to _____ by _____.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using the following rubric (can be modified based on class)
 This will be an assessment grade for a total of **55 points**. You will receive credit as follows:

<p>Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submitted on or before the due date ▪ Preparation and effort are apparent 	4 points
<p>Essay - Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective analysis of photography; ▪ Thorough understanding/curiosity of social inequality; ▪ Thoughtful connection between photos and social inequality; ▪ Answers many of the questions listed above ▪ Incorporates vocabulary discussed in class 	20 points
<p>Essay- Writing Written Expression (4); Writing Knowledge of Language and Conventions (3); Sentence Skills (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aligned to PARCC Rubric 	11 points
<p>Photos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must submit four <i>different</i> photos (cannot be one shot taken at different angles) ▪ Creative and clear photos (subject/image should be evident) 	20 points
Total:	55 points