



## WRITING LIFE IN RESPONSE TO MOTHERS IMPACTED BY POLICE VIOLENCE

Note: Lessons are designed for 40-minute sessions and may be adapted to small group and/or workshops for middle school, high school, college and adult program settings.

For more information about WeWriteLife contact: [info@renewtoday.net](mailto:info@renewtoday.net)

Items	Key Notes
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Copies of Second Wave article - <a href="#">From 'average mom' to activist: Sybrina Fulton talks about son, Trayvon Martin, racism, gun violence</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Sybrina Fulton video protesting a specific insurance policy (known as Murder Insurance) for gun owners</a></li><li>3. The New York Times video featuring Eric Garner's mother (May 2018 Opinion) - <a href="#">Eric Garner's Mother to Mayor: 'This Is Your Last Chance for Justice'</a></li><li>4. Pens, paper, envelopes and stamps</li></ol>
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE &amp; OVERVIEW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will write letters to mothers impacted by police violence to encourage their ongoing activism.</li><li>• This lesson is designed to engage students in writing letters to mothers impacted by police violence as a tool of social engagement and activism.</li></ul>
<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION</b>	<i>How can letter-writing be used to impact social change?</i>
<b>OPENING</b>	Who can become an activist? Explain your view. What does it mean to be an activist? Give an example.
<b>LINK</b>	Students share responses to Do Now. Activists are any person who takes action to encourage social change.
<b>ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT</b>	<p><b>FOCUS:</b> <i>What might move someone who consider him or herself as 'average' to become an activist?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read Second Wave article - <a href="#">From 'average mom' to activist: Sybrina Fulton talks about son, Trayvon Martin, racism, gun violence</a></li></ol> <p>AND/ OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Watch <a href="#">Sybrina Fulton video protesting a specific insurance policy (known as Murder Insurance) for gun owners</a></li><li>3. Have students take notes on what stands out to them and/or what they have questions about.</li></ol> <p>AND/ OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Watch The New York Times video featuring Eric Garner's mother (May 2018 Opinion) - <a href="#">Eric Garner's Mother to Mayor: 'This Is Your Last Chance for Justice'</a></li><li>5. Discuss the article and/or video: What about what Trayvon Martin or Eric Garner's mothers shared relates to your personal experience or the experience of someone you know? Why have these mothers become activists? What were their other choices? What questions would you ask of them? How can we encourage them to keep pursuing justice?</li></ol>

<p>Items</p> <p><b>MODIFICATIONS</b></p>	<p>Key Notes</p> <p>Students can be provided with either the video or the article to discuss this issue rather than using both. Students can also be provided the opportunity to discuss what they currently know about police violence to engage their prior knowledge at the outset of the session. Students may also have access to excerpts of the text with highlighted sections and/or the means to highlight the text while they read it. During the Independent Work students may have access to writing prompts.</p>		
<p><b>JUSTACTS (Independent Work)</b></p>	<p><b>JustActs are WeWriteLife's call to action. Now is the time to demonstrate the power of words.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Let's spend time writing letters of encouragement to mothers impacted by police violence. They meet once annually and feel there is healing and hope in community.</li> <li>2. Have students identify key themes they want to discuss in writing to the mothers.</li> <li>3. Have students self-edit their letters using the Self and Peer Editing Checklist.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>HOMEWORK</b></p>	<p>Invite students to find another article showcasing another activist (perhaps a youth from around the world) who may otherwise consider him or herself as "average". Discuss how youth and others pursue activism in their local contexts.</p>		
<p><b>RESOURCES</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District of Columbia Public Schools - <a href="#">Preparing to Discuss Mike Brown in the Classroom Teacher Guide</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">PBS Newshour Feature on how to talk to kids about Ferguson</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">CNN feature on how to talk to youth about race and class</a></li> </ol>		
<p><b>STANDARDS</b></p>	<p><b>Common Core Standards Writing Standards:</b></p> <p>Common Core English Language Arts Learning Standards: Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p><b>Teaching Tolerance Justice and Action Anchor Standards:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="457 1346 941 1950"> <p><b>Justice</b></p> <p>Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.</p> <p>Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).</p> <p>Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.</p> <p>Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.</p> <p>Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="972 1346 1498 1950"> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.</p> <p>Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice.</p> <p>Students will speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias.</p> <p>Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Justice</b></p> <p>Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.</p> <p>Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).</p> <p>Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.</p> <p>Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.</p> <p>Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.</p> <p>Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice.</p> <p>Students will speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias.</p> <p>Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.</p>
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Items

Key Notes

Once students have written and edited letters, final copies can be mailed with information about the purpose of this letter-writing to the following address:

**NEXT STEP**

The Trayvon Martin Foundation at Florida Memorial University  
15800 NW 42nd Avenue  
Miami Gardens, FL 33054  
(786) 504-4235 | [info@trayvonmartinfoundation.org](mailto:info@trayvonmartinfoundation.org)