

LESSON PLAN TITLE: “We Cannot Protect Our Guns Before We Protect Our Children.”

Writer-in-Residence: Jassmine Parks

Grade Level: 7th-12th

Model Works Used: Seventeen Funerals by Richard Blanco

Literary Learning objective(s): Students will be able to demonstrate use of non-fiction narrative in poetry and utilize cause and effect to showcase the power of language and social and self awareness.

Themes: Anti-bullying, gun violence, speaking up

MDE/SEL Standards: Social Awareness, Self Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Self Management; Demonstrates the command of conventions of standard English grammar usage when writing or speaking.

Materials Needed: Pencil/pen and paper

Opening Activity

How do you define bullying? What consequences do you believe bullying has for the bully and the bullied?

Take a couple of minutes to view the photo below. Look top to bottom, bottom to top, left to right, and right to left. After your observations answer the questions below.

Consider:

- the theme
- the lighting
- the seats and nametags
- the stats



Pre-Discussion

Celebrating the power of youth voice since 1995.

www.insideoutdetroit.org

Visual Thinking Strategies: Parkland 17 Photo

Based on the photo you spent time looking over, answer the following questions:

- Write down as many things that come to mind after observing the picture.
- There are no wrong answers, your interpretation is valid.

What do you see?	What do you think is going on?	What is the mood/themes?	What does it make you wonder?

Model Poem Discussion

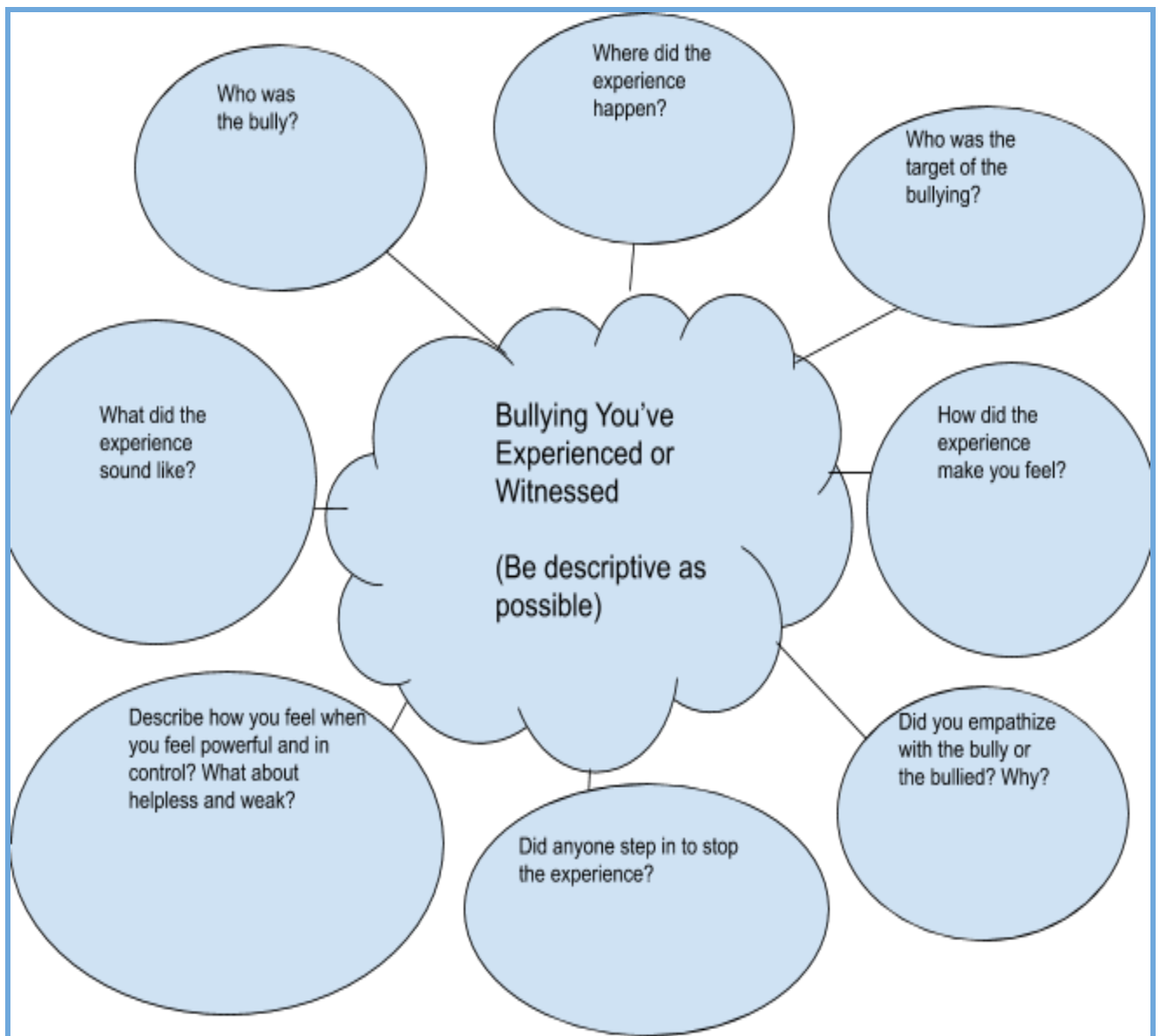
Read: “*Seventeen Funerals*” by Richard Blanco

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/148210/seventeen-funerals>

- The author, Richard Blanco, uses numbers repeatedly throughout the poem. What is the significance of this?
- “Seventeen Funerals” is a non-fiction poem (based on real events). How does that impact the poem as opposed to making up a story about bullying and gun violence?
- What do you notice about the form the poem takes? Why do you think Blanco chose to write it this way as opposed to in stanzas?
- In what ways can you relate to the normal events of the day prior to the shooting? After the shooting occurred how did you feel and why?
- “We cannot protect our guns before we protect our children.”
 - Parkland school shooting survivor.
 - What are your thoughts on this quote?

Prewriting

Fill out the brainstorm chart of bullying you've experienced or witnessed. Be descriptive with each answer as possible.



Writing Prompt

You only need to choose 1 prompt. Be sure to use similes/metaphors and imagery. Please title your poem(s).

Craft a poem centered around your brainstorm web. Walk the audience through your experience(s) using creative similes and imagery. Experiment with the form (the way the poem looks on the page) the way Blanco does.

OR

Create a poem for an anti-bullying campaign or one that expresses how you feel about gun violence. Challenge yourself to repeat a few lines that you feel are powerful. Perhaps incorporate numbers the way Blanco does.

OR

Write a compelling argument about gun violence to your state lawmakers in the form of a poem. What are the issues surrounding gun violence? What do you think would be appropriate changes and how would that change things for students? Maybe you can start your poem using the quote from the Parkland student.

Share / Reflect

Share via:

- If you have internet access & would like to share with fellow youth poets or myself use “Edublog” <https://edublogs.org/?join-invite-code=7652089-insideoutpoetry>
 - you will be prompted to create an account and then your very own blog in which you can upload your work
 - I will check the blogs on Wednesdays and Fridays to provide feedback
 - If you have any questions please leave a comment
- If you prefer to keep your work private, share with friends, family and/or teachers. Ask for feedback or comments about how your poem makes them think/feel.

Supplemental Materials

“Seventeen Funerals”

by Richard Blanco

Seventeen suns rising in seventeen bedroom windows. Thirty-four eyes blooming open with the light of one more morning. Seventeen reflections in the bathroom mirror. Seventeen backpacks or briefcases stuffed with textbooks or lesson plans. Seventeen *good mornings* at kitchen breakfasts and seventeen *goodbyes* at front doors. Seventeen drives through palm-lined streets and miles of crammed highways to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School at 5901 Pine Island Road. The first bell ringing-in one last school day on February fourteenth, 2018. Seventeen echoes of footsteps down hallways for five class periods: algebra, poetry, biology, art, history. Seventeen hands writing on whiteboards or taking notes at their desks until the first gunshot at 2:21pm. One AR-15 rifle in the hands of a nineteen year old mind turning hate for himself into hate for others, into one-hundred fifty bullets fired in six minutes through building number twelve. Seventeen dead carried down hallways they walked, past cases of trophies they won, flyers for clubs they belonged to, lockers they won't open again. Seventeen Valentine's Day dates broken and cards unopened. Seventeen bodies to identify, dozens of photo albums to page through and remember their lives. Seventeen caskets and burial garments to choose for them. Seventeen funerals to attend in twelve days. Seventeen graves dug and headstones placed—all marked with the same date of death. Seventeen names: Alyssa. Helena. Scott. Martin—seventeen absentees forever—Nicholas. Aaron. Jamie. Luke—seventeen closets to clear out—Christopher. Cara. Gina. Joaquin—seventeen empty beds—Alaina. Meadow. Alex. Carmen. Peter—seventeen reasons to rebel with the hope these will be the last seventeen to be taken by one of three-hundred-ninety-three-million guns in America.

Further Reading (if interested):

Initial Story

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/police-respond-shooting-parkland-florida-high-school-n-848101>

The Victim's Stories

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/15/586095587/17-people-died-in-the-parkland-shooting-here-are-their-names>

One Year Anniversary After The Shooting

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/us/parkland-anniversary-marjory-stoneman-douglas.htm>

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Check/Highlight all that apply

- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text

- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- A step of the writing process
- Planning & Reflection Strategy
- New device, concept or theme
- Social-Emotional Learning
 - Self-Management
 - Social Awareness
 - Relationship Skills
 - Responsible-Decision Making
 - Self-Awareness