



# Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



## Taking up Space

by Reynaldo Hinojosa

DURATION: 1.5 hours  
GRADE LEVEL: High School  
WRITING LEVEL: All levels

FOCUS: identity  
KEY TERM: imagery  
EXAMPLE TEXT: [To Take up Space](#)  
by Sabrina Sexauer

Check in | 15 minutes

What 3 images describe how the COVID-19 quarantine makes you feel?

WATCH | [The Girl becomes Gasoline by Reagan Myers, YouTube](#)

READ | [Slam Poet Reminds Men That Women Have The Right To Take Up Space, Huffington Post](#)



OVERVIEW | Being in quarantine is an exploration of the physical space we occupy. Gender identity, race, sexual orientation, among other characteristics, can be the basis of our human expression. These identities can also be tools for oppression, inequality, and prejudice. Today, we'll examine what it means to "take up space" as individuals and through a collective identity.

Resource Building | 15 minutes

EXERCISE | Explore the broader social groups we are a part of (race, ethnicity, nationality, etc.). Make a list of images that describe:

- The spaces the group occupies
- What it means to be a part of the group
- How this group shapes its environment
- The group's history

KEY TERM | **IMAGERY** is descriptive language used to add depth to writing by appealing to the reader's human senses.



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Close Reading | 20 minutes

WATCH | [Take Up Space by Vanessa Kisuule](#)

READ | [To Take up Space by Sabrina Sexauer](#)

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What do you like about these poems? What resonates with you the most?
- What are the themes or motifs within these pieces? How does the audio/visual amplify or obscure what is being said?
- What language is effective? What lines, images, or phrases make you feel something?

Writing Prompt | 20 minutes

**Write a piece about your space and how you occupy it.** What obstacles prohibit your body, voice, or existence? How do you overcome these obstacles? Include imagery to give your work life.

OR

**Write about a space outside of your physical body.** Name that space and the cost to occupy it.

Share Out | 15 minutes



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## To Take up Space

by Sabrina Sexauer

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I take up space  
Five feet, ten inches high  
And as my hips are wide.  
I've always taken up space  
It's a bare necessity of being human.  
Space in our lungs  
Space through our veins  
But when I was twelve years old  
I hated the space that I deigned-  
The weight I carried on my lower abdomen  
The baby curve of my baby face  
I wanted to take up less space.  
So I made my words less  
I made my thoughts less  
To take up less.  
That was when others took my space  
They took the air out of my lungs and the blood out of my veins because I wouldn't claim them.  
Because I couldn't claim them. To be a good girl you can't take up space.  
You can't stretch your arms wide or use hot tears to cry or muster the energy to pull yourself over the peaks of the mountains you wish to summit.  
But it's easier now, to take up the space that God granted me: All lungs and veins and baby faces and belly fat,  
it's the space I deign, the kingdom I reign.  
The space I take up.

[To Take up Space by Sabrina Sexauer, Power Poetry](#)