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By 2013, women will make up 57% of college undergraduates. What are the possible effects of this widening college gender gap?

► This Week's Focus:

The College Gender Gap

A recent report reveals that many more girls than boys are attending college. What are the possible effects of this trend over time? Why are boys lagging behind? Ask your students what they think. In another lesson plan, we look at the recent school shootings in Red Lake, Minn., and consider ways to stop school violence. And, finally, we celebrate National Poetry Month and showcase the winning poems from PARADE's annual Teen Poetry Contest. Enjoy.

Everyday Newspaper Activity

Activity #34: Tech Talk. Ask students to look through the paper for new words and phrases that technology has added to our language (e.g. cyber, online, spam, iPod). Have them look up the words in the dictionary. Are they listed yet? Are they in online dictionaries? Ask students to write a poem using as many of the words as possible.

Coming Up Next Week

- File-Sharing Before the Supreme Court
- Asian-Pacific Heritage Month
- The Immune System

► **In the News: College Gender Gap; Stopping School Violence p.2**

► **In PARADE: National Poetry Month p.3**

► **Skills Sheets: Stop the Violence Now p.4; Poetry Tools p.5**

► **SPECIAL: PARADE Teen Poetry Contest Winners pp.6-9**

College: Where the Boys Aren't

Curriculum links: Current events, social studies, education and careers, personal development

Briefing: Back in 1970, the majority (58%) of college students were male. But that had changed by 2001, according to a study from the National Center for Education Statistics. Women have gradually become the majority (56%). By 2013, the report projects, women will make up 57% of college undergraduates, while only 43% will be men. What happened? Admission directors are picking the strongest students, and girls are doing better in high school than boys. They make better grades and are involved in more extracurricular activities. Boys do marginally better on the SATs, but a few SAT points are not enough to make up for the girls' academic achievements. What's more, a greater number of girls are applying to college. This is true across all ethnic and age groups, the report says, but particularly among minorities. Some 63% of African-American college students are female. Females make up 56% of Hispanic college students and 51% of Asian-American college students. In recent years, women also outnumbered men at law schools and many professional schools. However, once out of school, males with the same degrees still make higher salaries than women.

Classroom Debates

- **Is the gender gap in college a problem?**
What might be the cause(s) of this gap? Would you like to go to a college where girls vastly outnumber boys? What effects might the continuation of this trend have on our society? Why are boys falling behind in school? Do boys put too much emphasis on athletics? Is it considered uncool for boys to do well academically? Why do men who graduate in the same subject areas as women earn more money? Is this justified?

Newspaper activity: Look for positive articles about students in the paper (e.g., lists of honor roll students, articles about students who won prizes, sports stories, etc.). How many girls are mentioned? How many boys? What about negative stories (e.g., disciplinary measures, car thefts)? Do boys or girls dominate? What conclusions, if any, can you draw?

Resources: Books: Colin Noble's *Getting It Right for Boys and Girls* (Routledge Falmer, 2000). Web sites: Read the NCES report as well as reports from ERIC, PBS and others.*

Stopping School Violence

Curriculum links: Current events, health and safety, psychology, family and consumer science, civics

Briefing: On March 21, Red Lake High School in Red Lake, Minn., experienced the worst incident of school violence in the U.S. since the 1999 Columbine massacre. Jeff Weise, a 16-year-old student, first shot and killed his grandfather and his companion at home. Then he went to school, where he killed seven more people and wounded 14 others before committing suicide. Weise was a teen with family problems (a father who committed suicide, a mother who was bound to a wheelchair in a nursing home after a car accident). A loner who was often teased, Weise developed an interest in Nazism. This recent school tragedy has reopened the discussion on how to prevent such violence in the future.

Media activity: Ask students to keep notes on the violence that they notice on TV, in the movies, in music videos and lyrics, and in the paper. What message is being sent in each instance? What could the media do to discourage violence?

Resources: Books for teachers: Katherine Newman's *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings* (Basic Books, 2004) and Barbara Coloroso's *The Bully, the Bullied & the Bystander* (HarperResource, 2004). Walter Dean Myers' YA novel *Monster* (HarperCollins, 2001) will generate discussion on crime and responsibility. Web sites: Learn the warning signs of violence from the American Psychological Association. Visit the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center and read articles from Education World.*

Classroom Debates

- **Is your school safe? Why or why not?**
Many school shooters kill in response to feeling bullied. What is your school's social atmosphere? How can it be improved? Which methods, if any, might prevent potential violence in your school: School-based police officers, metal detectors, surveillance cameras, teachers carrying guns, anti-bullying and peer-counseling programs? Former President Clinton supported legislation to make adults liable if juveniles obtained their weapons and used them in crimes. Would you support such a law? If you were in charge of developing programs to stop school violence, what would you do?

*Visit www.paradeclassroom.com/links for links to all mentioned Web sites.

National Poetry Month

Curriculum links: Language arts, poetry appreciation, creativity, critical thinking

Briefing: April is National Poetry Month, the perfect time for PARADE to present the winners of its teen poetry contest. This guide includes the Top 13 student poems, ranging from the first-place poem about a child at play, to others about loneliness, hot cars, birds' nests, July, wasting time and more. The winning poem, "Today," and an interview with its author, also appear in this week's "Fresh Voices" column in PARADE. (See the related skills sheet on p. 5 of this guide and the Top 13 Poems, beginning on page 6.)

Newspaper activity: Many poems have been written about news events. Ask students to find a newspaper article that evokes a strong response, either positive or negative. Then have them respond to it by writing a poem. Alternatively, ask students to write a poem about a photo in the paper that affects them.

Resources: Books: Ralph Fletcher's *Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out* (HarperTrophy, 2002), Ron Padgett's *The Teachers and Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms* (Teachers and Writers, 2000) and Naomi Shihab Nye's *What Have You Lost?* (Greenwillow, 1999). Web sites: Former Poet Laureate Billy Collins started a Web site especially for high school students that features a poem a day.*

Classroom Debates

• Ask students to read the poetry that appears in this guide (and on our Web site at www.paradeclassroom.com). Have them pick their five favorite poems, ranking them from 1 to 5, with 1 being the best poem. Why did they pick these particular poems? What did they like most about them? Do they agree with the rankings of the PARADE judges? Why or why not? Why do people write poetry? What is important about it? In many countries, poetry is an important force for social change. Does it have the same effect here? Why or why not? What is your favorite poem by an adult author? Why?

ASK MARILYN

Wordteaser

Question: What do the following words have in common: fill, fund, fuse, move, place, run, turn, wind?

Answer: If you put re- in front of them, they make new words.

Interact: Students can send questions or comments to Ask Marilyn, PARADE, 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, or e-mail her at marilyn@parade.com.

FRESH VOICES

Poetry Winner

For classroom discussion or writing assignment: Jessica McKeon, 18, of Allegan, Mich., won the fifth annual PARADE Classroom Poetry Contest. Jessica wrote the poem "Today" about a kid playing Batman. She says, "I was just going for something happy. Everyone in my class was writing something deep or heartbreaking. I try to see the upside." Do you think that poetry should be about only certain types of subjects? Why or why not? Should poetry rhyme? What makes something a poem?

Interact: Send in your students' stories! Write to Fresh Voices, Box 5103 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-5103, or e-mail freshvoices@parade.com. Students whose letters are published will receive a Fresh Voices T-shirt.

Answer Key:

Stop the Violence Now! p. 4: Answers will vary. **Tools of the Trade** p. 5: 1. the sea or a sapphire; 2. like a lion; 3. answers will vary; 4. The night is compared to a cool black envelope and the afternoon is compared to a burnt yellow ray; 5. answers will vary; 6. aa/bb/cc/dd/ee/ff; 7. Summer is personified as a woman who swings her long gold legs; 8. answers will vary.

Stop the Violence Now!

What can you do to stop school violence? As an individual? As part of a group? What can your school do? What can the state or federal government do? Take time to brainstorm. Then discuss the answers in class.

1. What can you do as an individual to help prevent school violence? Come up with at least three ideas.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. What could you do to help stop school violence as part of a group such as Students Against Violence Everywhere? Write down three ideas below.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. If you were a teacher, what would you do to help prevent school violence?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. If you were the principal, what three policies would you implement right now to reduce the potential for violence.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

5. What else could your school do?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

6. If you were the parent of a teenager, what could you do?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

7. If you were in charge of a media organization, what steps would you take to prevent school violence?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

8. What laws should Congress pass to help prevent school violence?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

9. What should the President do to help stop school violence?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

10. Who else should be involved in an anti-school-violence campaign? What steps could they take?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Tools of the Trade

Poetry is all about feeling, but it also requires skill and technique. Here you'll find some techniques often used by poets—including the winners of the PARADE Classroom[®] poetry contest (see pages 6-8).

SIMILE

A simile compares two unlike things by using the words "like" or "as." For example, the sentence "My life is like a runaway train" is a simile. The writer means that his or her life is out of control.

1. In his poem, "The Boy and the Bird's Nest," Marc Williamson compares the color of a robin's egg to:

2. In her poem, "My Dream Car," Shanetta Green says that the red car growls like:

3. Try writing some similes of your own:

a. The sound of his car in the driveway was like

b. The ticking of the clock is like

c. The strange color of her eyes was like

METAPHOR

A metaphor is similar to a simile. It compares two things, but it does not use the words "like" or "as." For example, the sentence "Carmelo is a lion on the basketball court" is a metaphor. The writer means that Carmelo is as swift and powerful as a lion.

4. In her poem, "Lazy Grey," Danielle Brandys uses a metaphor to compare morning to a promise. What two other metaphors does she use?

5. Try writing some of your own metaphors:

a. My life is a _____

b. The song is a _____

c. His heart is a _____

RHYME SCHEMES

A poem definitely does not have to rhyme. But some poets like to use rhyme to create interesting sounds in their poems. Sometimes a rhyme is random. At other times, the rhymes follow a particular pattern. For example, in the poem "Masquerade," Tyler Moss rhymes the first two lines (aa).

6. What is the rhyme scheme for Tyler Moss's entire poem?

PERSONIFICATION

When poets use personification, they ascribe human traits or actions to beings or objects that are not human. For example, in Sally Wolff's poem "July," a dandelion begs and July has sweet breath.

7. How does Sally Wolff personify summer?

8. Write your own sentence using personification.

Winning Poems

Today

Today he is Batman
His true identity concealed
via his jet-black cape still damp from the dryer

Today he duels evil
Racing against time
in his convertible top, two-door plastic
Playschool car

Today he breaks cryptic codes
Hacking into his Etch a Sketch and
disabling reactor buttons on his mom's cell phone

Today he saves Gotham City
One cruel-intentioned
peace-threatening plush toy at a time

Tonight he departs to the Bat Cave
After a long day of portraying Batman
he closes his eyes and ponders what is to come tomorrow

Tomorrow he is Captain Hook
and Barbie is walking the plank

By Jessica McKeon, 18
Allegan High School
Allegan, Mich.



My Dream Car

I want a shiny red Honda
I want it so shiny and sparkly that it
brightens the night better than the day
I want the red to be so applely and juicy
that everyone's eyes drool with tears
of thirst and hunger

I want an engine so powerful that it growls
like a lion and rumbles like my tummy
after no dessert

I want it to be so strong and fierce that
they'll need David to slay this beast

I want a four-wheel drive that gallops through
the night awakening all the people giving
them the urge to want to come and ride

I want smooth milky leathery seats poured
into my little red Honda, topped off
With letters engraved in them saying
"BEAUTIFUL RED STALLION"

Laced in red velvet

I want speakers so loud that
I have to SHOUT to read
this poem.

By Shanetta Green, 15
John F. Kennedy High School
Paterson, N.J.



The Boy and The Bird's Nest

I found a broken pale blue robin's egg on the lawn,
Blue as the sea or a sapphire.
I thought about making a bird's nest.
I gathered up moss, hay, mud, and grass.
Then I started weaving, pasting, sewing, tucking.
I made a nest the color of my sun-tanned skin.
I put it in the rhododendron near the hedge.
Then I went home, hoping for a song
And a feathery phenomenon.

*What was that boy doing in the hedge?
I think I'll go see for myself.
Spreading my wings, gliding with the wind,
Down, down into the green hollow wall.
Hey! It's my new summer home!
That boy is a bird-homing architect!*

The next morning as I was peering into the hedge,
I saw a puffed-up present.
Its eyes were as colorful as embroidered cloth.

I danced on the front lawn,
Wishing I had wings.

By Marc Williamson, 12
Strath Haven Middle School
Swarthmore, Pa.



Lonely Girl

Lonely girl,
Desperate pair of eyes,
Walks home the same way every day
Evading the media's trap of lies;
Dressed to impress

Originality: No one.
Her only hobby.
Authors:
Her only friends.
I'm o.k., she says.
Only kidding.
Her room:
Sanctuary.
Isn't it scary to think about the lives of the lonely?
The Beatles were right.

Once more
She steps out into the world—
Feigned carelessness;
Drowning alone.

By Katlyn Van Dunk, 18
Riverside University High School
Milwaukee, Wis.

Untitled

Play on with your soul,
As the piano taxi drives off with your mind.
With your security of thought.
Entranced with an array of taps and dribbles,
As the snare drum ticks away time.
A calm pitter-patter of reason,
Reason to stay in this world,
And in this world, flooded with the smooth,
Sensual steadiness of the sax,
The same saxophone that lets you slip and slide down
The abyss that is to be shared by a voice.
And take the microphone, the magic carpet,
And fly away to an endless flow
Of relaxing notes that will eventually take you home.
So play on with your soul,
I'll be waiting for the taxi.

By Christopher Alig, 17
St. Pius X High School
Perkiomenville, Pa.

I Will Tell...

Sing me a song,
One of your strange lullabies.
You remember which,
The one from deep in your heart.

Where the night pulls you in,
As quick as a heartbeat;
And the moon and the stars
Create a lonely duet.

Where people laugh while they cry,
Their teardrops turn to ice;
And the deep southern sky
Reaches down to the river.

It's the one thing I remember
From our something's past.
Tell to create.
Create and I will tell.

By Roxann Acuña, 18
Communication Arts High School
San Antonio, Tex.

Honorable Mentions

Priority

I must memorize an English verse before the day is done,
And can't forget a paper on "The Movements of the Sun,"
This grammar book needs opening so the pages don't decay,
It cannot be put off a single solitary day! Yet...

Just a little peek outside to feel the wind rush through my hair,
To breathe a burst of lilac blossom's perfume in the air,
And all hope of doing any chore of high authority,
Is lost amidst the great outdoors - I've lost priority.

The bedroom needs a good cleaning (it's been a week or four),
I hope to see the carpet through the dust piled on the floor,
The silver begs a polish as it rusts upon the shelf,
I better get to work right now, for it will not clean itself. Yet ...

Just a little peek into this book—have imagination soar,
Through a window of a cottage and out a castle door,
In a combat with a knight of sword superiority,
I awoken with a sudden start - I've lost priority.

Even now as I write down this silly little ditty,
Bits of work accumulate in a pile not-too-pretty,
I sadly join the distressed group—a great majority,
Who save their work for later and lose all priority!

By Mary Serafino, 18
Mother of Divine Grace School
New Haven, Mo.

Masquerade

The moonlight ignited a fatal glow,
Enveloping the dancing figures below,
Sporting masks dark and grey,
Common man's hideaway,
All the same in shape and size,
Leaves on the surface no surprise,
Under the costume holds no place,
But pleasing periphery to the human race,
Life behind society's mask,
To swim with the current a simple task.
Above the masquerade an eagle flies,
The future in his blazing eyes . . .

By Tyler Moss, 16
Clacakmas High School
Portland, Ore.

Honorable Mentions

July

How sweet she fell
before she flew,
her warm, sweet breath
a reckless hue;
the hot and spotted light she drew
sprung the grass
amidst its dew.
Summer swung her long gold legs
across the leaves
as dandelion begs
to grow her weeds,
to wipe earth dry;
green to red as migrants fly.

By Sally Wolff, 17
Mountlake Terrace High School
Lynnwood, Wash.

Lazy Grey

Because the morning is
A bright orange promise
Because the night was
A cool black envelope
The afternoon may be
A burnt yellow ray.
I long for the evening,
My lazy grey.

By Danielle Brandys, 18
North Gwinnett High School
Braselton, Ga.

Who Am I?

I have been to mountain tops and back.
I was there when Moses parted the Red Sea.
I was there when Martin Luther King, Jr. said his first speech.
I was in the eyes of thousands of slaves struggling to be free.
I was there when Jackie first picked up a bat.
I was there when Rosa Parks sat on the bus.
And I was there when Jesse started to preach.
I was there when you were born,
And I helped you when you felt life could not carry on.
I am the air you breathe.
I am the flowers and the trees you see.
I am there to live an eternity.
Now you tell me who I am.

By Derick Felton, 12
Westlawn Middle School
Huntsville, Ala.

Honorable Mentions

Welcome Us

The stars will shine today
Fairies dancing in the light
Green earth, deep water
Rejoice to join the song
With the children of happiness—
Children of sunrise—
Who drink soft rainbows when flowers give them life—
Who spread gossamer shimmerings and soar glorywards—
You open wide your embrace
Saying, "Come, dance with us!"

But we, the dark-cloud, raindrop, autumn children
Who cannot face the sun—
We, the wraith-like, misty, winter children,
Who hide within the forest
We—
With our dirges, our orphan souls, and our fallen crystal tears—
Do you welcome us, too?

By Kyra Sherwood, 18
Heritage Christian School
Anchorage, Alaska

Mirage

Now that I have come of age,
The ranks have closed around me.
Will I, like them, so young and strong
Lie dead in distant dust as strangers dance?

Now that I have come of age,
Elected men select my fated future,
And I am forced to follow foreign paths,
Away from all I ever hoped to be.

Now that I have come of age,
They slash and burn the homeland of my plans,
Annihilate my future, frag my dreams.
My work is carried off by desert storms.

Now that I am dead, I see
My dreams are scattered,
Just as my body lies askew
Along a dirt path, tattered.

By Matthew Tupper, 19
University Mary Washington
El Cajon, Calif.