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TEACHER'S GUIDE To download, visit www.paradeclassroom.com

May 7–13, 2006

MELNYCHUK/PICTUREARTS/NEWSCOM (MODEL POSED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY)

Are your students ready to declare a major?

▸This Week's Focus:

High School Majors

The Florida state legislature may require all high school students to declare majors and minors. Is this a good idea? What would be the effects of this requirement? Ask your students to decide. In other education news, a recent study shows that, in response to the No Child Left Behind Act, many schools are cutting back on the number of courses they offer. This is especially true for schools with low-achieving students,who may end up studying nothing but math and English. What are the pros and cons of such a curriculum? Finally, in our third lesson plan, we present the winners of PARADE's Tell America's Story contest. Are there sites in your area that should be preserved for future generations?

Everyday Newspaper Activity

Activity # 36: Interview Questions. Ask students to read a celebrity interview. Have them list the questions the reporter must have asked. Then ask them to choose anyone—living or dead—whom they'd like to interview. Have them develop their own list of questions.

Coming Up Next Week

- **Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month**
- **Final Exam Checklist**
- **The Great American Bake Sale**

▸ **In the News: High School Majors; Narrowing the Curriculum p.2**

▸ **In PARADE: Telling America's Story p.3**

▸ **Skills Sheets: Get with the Schedule p.4; History in the News p.5**

High School Majors

Curriculum links: Civics and government, college and careers, personal development and psychology

Briefing: High school students in Florida may soon be declaring majors. A Republican-backed bill, which passed Florida's House with a vote along party lines, would ask students to pick majors as freshmen. If the Florida Senate also passes the bill, Florida would be the first state to require majors in high school. Major subjects would range from English and physics to art and vocational subjects such as auto repair. Students would need 24 credits to graduate. This would include 15 core credits, 4 major credits, and 5 minor credits in electives. Gov. Jeb Bush supports the idea. He argues that it would make school more interesting to students and more relevant to their future careers. Bush believes that it would cut the drop-out rate in a state in which nearly one-third of students fail to graduate within four years. Critics disagree. They fear that the plan could pressure students to choose careers too early and rob them of a true liberal arts education. Others worry that students might be steered toward academic or vocational majors based on race or family income.

Classroom Debates

• **Is declaring a major in high school a good idea?** What are the pros and cons? If nothing else were changed, would majors have much effect on making high school more or less interesting? Would students be less likely to drop out if they had majors? Are you ready to declare a major? What would you choose if your high school required it? Why? Schools in at least 13 states are required to offer several study tracks, including career preparation, vocational training and college credit courses. How is this similar to Florida's plan? How is it different?

Newspaper activity: **Does your paper have an education section?** If so, what types of articles are in it? If not, in which section of the paper can you find news about education? What specifically do the stories concern?

Resources: Web sites: Read articles about the Florida plan from CNN and others.*

Narrowing the Curriculum

Curriculum links: Social studies, civics, college and careers, family and consumer science

Briefing: A new report from the Center on Education Policy (CEP) explores one result of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—a narrowing curriculum. While students' results on required tests in reading and math are improving, the number of other subjects they can take that are not tested is declining. Some 71% of school districts say that they have cut the amount of time devoted to other classes to make more time for teaching toward the math and reading tests. Many districts require lower-achieving students to take double or even triple sessions of reading and/or math, eliminating most other subjects, including social studies, science, foreign language, music and others. NCLB advocates believe that this helps lagging students catch up. Critics say that it keeps them from learning important subjects, limits creativity for both teachers and students, and cuts out subjects that might keep students interested in school.

Classroom Debates

• **What are the pros and cons of a narrowing curriculum?** Does studying only English and math help lagging students catch up? Or does it bore them to the point that they drop out of school? What is gained and lost when students study only English and math and no other subjects? Are there other ways to help these students catch up in the basics? Would you like to study only English and math? Why or why not?

Newspaper activity: **What do students think about narrowing the curriculum?** Ask them to write editorials supporting or opposing the idea.

Resources: Web sites: Read the CEP report and related articles.*

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

PARADE Classroom® is written by Karen Glenn

Preserving America

Curriculum links: History, social studies

Briefing: Last May, PARADE asked readers to uncover little-known or neglected historic sites in their communities for our "Tell America's Story" Preservation Award Contest. We received more than 2,400 nominations! A panel of judges chose 10 winning sites, which will be recognized with commemorative plaques. An 11th site will receive a $50,000 restoration grant from HGTV. Among the Top 10 sites were the cabin where country music queen Loretta Lynn lived for her first 13 years and Frederick Douglass High School (the first secondary school built for Baltimore's African-Americans), where future Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall used to be tossed out of class for cutting up. Other sites included the original Good Humor factory, an estate where George Washington worked as a surveyor, and the theater where Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz debuted. The winner of the restoration grant was Aberdeen Gardens in Hampton, Va. It was developed in the mid-1930s as a New Deal resettlement community for African-Americans. This still-vibrant enclave of 158 brick homes has become a model of sustainable neighborhood living. More than one-half of the original inhabitants and/or their family members are still there! They tend the collective garden, check on elderly residents and organize "Yard of the Month" contests. They have 22 committees for projects from youth programs to historic preservation, creating a living and evolving piece of American History. The grant will be used for roof replacement and window repair. (See the related Skills Sheet on p. 5.)

Classroom Debates

• **Take a minute to think about your own town.** What three places or memories would you like to see preserved for future generations? What are their histories? Give at least three reasons why you would like to see them saved. What would be the consequences if the sites were destroyed? For each of them, think of three things you could do individually —and three things you could do as part of a class or a group—to help.

Newspaper activity: **What stories in today's local newspaper seem most important to you?** Pick at least one national story and one local story. Where exactly did the national story take place? Where did the local story take place? If you were going to preserve one site related to each story, what would it be? Why?

Resources: Books: James Horton's *Landmarks of African American History* (Oxford, 2005) and other books in the Oxford American Landmarks series and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Saving America's Treasures* (National Geographic, 2000). Web sites: Visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the History Channel, the National Register of Historic Places and HGTV.*

ASK MARILYN

Brainteaser

Question: What do you break by just whispering its name?

Answer: Silence!

Interact: Kathie Lee Gifford was a talk-show host before she quit, following intrusive press coverage. But what if she had starred in a reality show instead? Ask students to write a one-line response. Send them to Ask Marilyn, 711 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017, or e-mail *marilyn@parade.com*.

FRESH VOICES

Coping with Grief

For class discussion or writing assignment: Hannah Huber, 17, lost her dad to a brain tumor when she was 9 years old. In this week's column, Hannah discusses how hard it was to talk to her friends and family after her dad's death—and how a camp for grieving children helped her get through that difficult period of her life. Hannah offers this advice to other teens dealing with the death of a loved one: "Cherish the things you have on Earth rather than dwell on what you don't have. And don't be afraid to cry." Have you ever experienced the death of a close friend or family member? What helped you cope?

Interact: Send students' comments to Fresh Voices, Box 5103, Grand Central Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10163-5103. Or send e-mail to *freshvoices@parade.com.*

Answer Key:

Get with the Schedule (p. 4): 1. 9 p.m., NBC; 2. Out of Practice, Courting Alex, News; 3. yes; 4. once; 5. no; 6. no; 7. yes; 8. 10 p.m.; 9. Unan1mous; 10. Answers will vary.

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Skills Sheet

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Get with the Schedule

It's Wednesday night, and you want to watch *One Tree Hill*. But what time is it on? You flip open your newspaper and read the TV schedule. Take a look at this sample schedule, and then answer the questions.

	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
Network							
CBS	Out of Practice	Courting Alex	Criminal Minds		CSI:New York		News
NBC	Deal or No Deal		Law & Order		Heist		News
ABC	George Lopez	Freddie	Lost		The Evidence		News
WB	One Tree Hill		The Bedford Diaries		News		Friends
FOX	Bones		American Idol	Unan1mous	News		Seinfeld

1. What time is *Law & Order* on? On what channel?

_____

2. What shows on CBS last less than an hour?

_____

3. If you want to watch *One Tree Hill* and then *Lost*, will you have to change channels?

_____

4. On this night, how many times does ABC show *Lost*?

_____

5. Are *George Lopez* and *Courting Alex* on the same channel?

_____

6. Without a Tivo or VCR, can you watch both *Criminal Minds* and *Law & Order*?

_____

7. Can you watch both *The Bedford Diaries* and *Heist*?

_____

8. You don't want to stay up to watch the news at 11:00. What time can you watch it instead?

_____

9. You come in at 9:29, and you don't want to watch something that has already started. What are your options?

_____

10. What's the best show on the schedule? Why?

_____

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History in the News

Take a look through your newspaper. Can you find signs of an earlier era in today's paper?

1. Read the local obituaries for several days. Pick out the person who lived the longest.

When was he or she born? _____ Where? _____

2. Write down three interesting facts about this person's life:

_____

_____

_____

3. Name at least three important historical events that he or she must have lived through.

_____

_____

_____

4. If you could have asked this person three questions, what would they have been?

_____

_____

_____

5. What places, if any, are associated with this person?

_____

_____

_____

6. Can you find any other references to history in the paper? For example, is an old firehouse being refurbished or torn down? Is there a controversy about building a shopping center on an old Native American graveyard? Something else? Keep a log for several days. Then write down at least three subjects with historic references:

_____

_____

_____

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