

# **Los Angeles Poverty Department:** *Agents and Assets Curriculum and Activity Guide*

## **Table of Contents**

- I. Introduction**
  - a. L.A.P.D profile
  - b. About this Curriculum
    - i. Overall Goals
    - ii. Targeted Areas of Instruction
    - iii. How to use this guide
- II. Section one: Community Theater**
  - a. Lesson Goals
  - b. Definition & History
  - c. Playwriting Vocabulary
  - d. Drafting/Editing/Rewriting
  - e. Activities
  - f. Resources
  - g. Character Sketch Worksheet
  - h. Peer Review Worksheet
  - i. Playwriting Vocabulary Quiz
- III. Section two: Drugs in America**
  - a. Lesson Goals
  - b. Overview on Drugs in America
  - c. Activities
  - d. Resources
  - e. Drugs in America Vocabulary Quiz
  - f. Hip Hop Lyrics about Drugs
- IV. Section three: Journalistic Practices**
  - a. Lesson Goals
  - b. Nine Core Principles of Good Journalism
  - c. Journalistic Methods
  - d. Gary Webb: the man, the message, the method
  - e. Activities
  - f. Resources
  - g. “Reporting Live” Worksheet
  - h. Hip Hop Lyrics

## Introduction

### *Los Angeles Poverty Department Profile*

The Los Angeles Poverty Department (L.A.P.D.) is a community theater company for the homeless of the Skid Row section of downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 1985, the L.A.P.D. has historically used theater; along with other means of public education, organizing, partnering and activism; to call attention to the plight of the poor. Los Angeles Poverty Department creates performance work that connects lived experience to the social forces that shape the lives and communities of people living in poverty. L.A.P.D. is committed to creating high-quality, challenging performances that express the realities, hopes, and dreams of people who live and work in Los Angeles' Skid Row, and is dedicated to building community and to the artistic and personal development of its members.

Through performance art, L.A.P.D. creates direct communication between the performers and their audience. One such performance, entitled *Agents and Assets*, deals with the people whose communities have been most devastated by the drug trade and the counterproductive drug policies created by the government.

The text of *Agents and Assets* is a March 18, 1998 hearing transcript from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (the committee charged with the oversight of the government's intelligence agencies). The allegations in question in this session were made in a 1996 series of articles by journalist Gary Webb in the San Jose Mercury News, which alleged CIA involvement in crack cocaine trafficking into the Los Angeles area.

Each performance is followed by a discussion on drug policy and approaches to recovery from addiction, as well as proposed public health models that emphasize treatment rather than incarceration. These discussions are initiated by presentations from scholars, recovery professionals, drug policy reform advocates, community leaders, and politicians; and quickly become general discussions with audience members. The intent is to create a discussion in which the lived experience of community residents is engaged and presented and where all present can speak as citizens on an even footing.

### *About this Curriculum Guide*

The following is the curriculum guide for L.A.P.D.'s performance *Agents and Assets*. This guide strives to teach students about the three main themes that run throughout L.A.P.D.'s performance: The Drug Trade in America and Addiction Recovery, Journalistic Practices and Methods, and Community Theater. The lessons and activities within this guide are designed in a similar structure as the performance itself in that space for discussion is given with the hopes of engaging students. The lessons are not only designed to teach the material, but also to allow students to build their skills in the crucial areas of critical thought, self expression, and literacy. These lessons will allow students to process and understand given information, actively engage that information through analysis, research and critique the information in order to form his or her own informed opinion and truth, and subsequently transform his or her opinions and truths into a medium that can be shared and understood by others.

The four main areas of information that are targeted in this curriculum are reading, writing, discussion, and what we like to call R.A.P. (Research, Analysis, and

Presentation). Each of these modes of self expression and information are touched upon in each lesson and its subsequent activities. Each lesson provides the students an opportunity to read, write, discuss, and “R.A.P.” during and after the lesson. This guide also incorporates numerous forms of media into the classroom in order to diversify the class and to simulate and prepare students for today’s multimedia society. By the end of this curriculum, students will not only have an understanding of Community Theater, drugs in America, and journalism; but they will also have the capacity to engage and challenge their knowledge as well as express it to others in a clear and powerful way. These lessons are intended to enrich students not only in their academic lives, but in their everyday careers as citizens as well.

Each individual lesson will begin with the goals of the lesson, detailing its contents as well as its connection to the L.A.P.D. After each lesson there is a section of possible activities. Each activity covers one or more of the modes of information. The teacher may choose to do some or all of the activities, as long as all of the standards are met by the end of the lesson. Throughout each lesson, important vocabulary words are underlined, and vocabulary quizzes follow to be used at the teacher’s discretion. The lessons and activities will effectively coach the students in the mechanics of reading writing, discussion, research, analysis and presentation. In addition, this guide, its lessons, and activities are all in line with the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Standards, which can be found at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/lib/k12/Reading.pdf>. We suggest that teachers look through the standards and become familiar with them to ensure they are choosing the right activities and implementing them correctly in the classroom.

This curriculum guide was commissioned by Art Sanctuary, a Philadelphia community arts organization. Art Sanctuary works to use the power of black art to transform individuals, unite groups of people, and enrich, and draw inspiration from the inner city. As such, the aesthetic of this curriculum is much in the vein of hip hop music and culture. Hip hop is a type of journalism for urban youth, in that it reports on their lives and expressions; hip hop is like Community Theater in that it allows a forum for performance and discussion of events and ideas within communities; and hip hop, for better and for worse, deals intimately with drugs in America. Therefore, each lesson includes a section on the relevance of hip hop, and contains listening exercises and other interesting information and discussion. These sections are designed to further relate the material students learn in class with one of their generation’s largest and most pervasive cultures. As a caveat, it must be said that some material covered in these sections is explicit, and that care should be given to how it is addressed, or if it should be addressed at all. Again, full discretion is given to the teacher as to what he or she chooses to bring to the classroom, however it should be said that these sections are extremely important to the students’ development of critical thought about themselves and their cultures. In addition, much of this difficult material is what most students have already been exposed to outside of school anyway. By allowing students to openly discuss their ideas and opinions about themselves, their music, and their community in a safe and intellectual environment, we as educators allow students to integrate academics throughout their entire lives, and gain a firmer understanding of who they are and who they want to be as individuals within a community.

# L.A.P.D.

## Community Theater

### Lesson Goals

As stated in the introduction, the L.A.P.D. is a Community Theater group from the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. In order for students to fully understand L.A.P.D.'s nature and place in American social activism, they must first understand the basis of Community Theater. In this lesson, students will learn the definition, history, and various uses of Community Theater, as well as the basics of acting, playwriting and production.

The goals of this lesson guide are to learn about this under-represented form of theater, to learn how to create a form of community-based theater and, finally, to foster listening across divides and to give public voice to topics and viewpoints not generally addressed openly.

**This section begins with in-depth information on Community Theater in America. Teachers may lecture on this information, distribute it as a handout, or have students do some research on their own. Following the background information are a series of activities to be conducted in the classroom and for homework, which will help to put the students' knowledge to work.**

### Definition and History:

See Wikipedia, *Community theatre*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_theatre)

- ✚ Community Theater is a form of theater in which all or most of the participants are unpaid or "amateur" in every sense of the word. Community theatre generally resembles professional theatre in all ways except in the unpaid nature of the artists. Community theatre is often seen as adding to the social capital of a community, in that it develops the skills, community spirit and artistic sensibilities of those involved. It can also create a place for debate, self-expression and interactivity that is important for the health of a community.
- ✚ Community Theater has been around since before the Revolutionary War, however, it wasn't until the turn of the last century that the idea really took off in America. With the advent of motion picture movies, many of the small-town professional playhouses were either closed or converted to movie-houses. Yet, there was still a demand for live theater; thus amateur theater groups and associations began to form all across the country. Today, there are literally thousands of community theatre groups around the country from gypsy troupes, to more established companies, to larger associations that have built their own theatre houses in larger metropolitan areas.

- ✚ The average community theater does not aspire to professional status (although most aspire to professional standards). Only a small percentage of members go on to pursue a career in professional theatre. All, however, share a love and enthusiasm for theater. Community Theater provides a space for celebrating, promoting and performing the dramatic arts using the pooled talents and resources of the community. As such, many of these community theaters sponsor competitions, play writing contests and scholarship programs. Community Theater also creates a forum for discussion and debate about issues specific to the community itself, and thus can serve as both a diagnostic and therapeutic tool for social improvement, activism and change.

### Example:

- ✚ Art Sanctuary's *North Stars* is a unique after school arts program for Philadelphia 13-18 year old middle and high school students. The *North Stars* program uses social history as a text to provide content for the expressive arts, which also teach activism, self-worth, and literacy. The *North Stars* study with a brilliant team of artist-instructors, and bring their Community Theater performances to area schools and the greater community. (For more information on the *North Stars*, visit <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze25bq2/index.html>)

### Playwriting (Taken from Teaching Playwriting in Schools Teacher's Handbook)

- A. **Vocabulary:** While teaching vocabulary, try to get the definitions from the students themselves by asking them what they think each word means.
1. **CHARACTER**: who the actor pretends to be. (Characters want things. They have goals and objectives.)
  2. **DIALOGUE**: a conversation between two or more characters.
  3. **CONFLICT**: obstacles that get in the way of a character achieving what he or she wants. What the characters struggle against.
  4. **SCENE**: a single situation or unit of dialogue in a play.
  5. **STAGE DIRECTIONS**: messages from the playwright to the actors, technicians, and others in the theater telling them what to do and how to do it.
  6. **SETTING**: time and place of a scene.
  7. **BIOGRAPHY**: a character's life story that a playwright creates.
  8. **MONOLOGUE**: a long speech one character gives on stage.
  9. **DRAMATIC ACTION**: an explanation of what the characters are trying to do.
  10. **BEAT**: a smaller section of a scene, divided where a shift in emotion or topic occurs.
  11. **PLOT**: the structure of a play, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.
  12. **EXPOSITION**: the beginning part of a plot that provides important background information.

13. **RISING ACTION**: the middle part of a plot, consisting of complications and discoveries that create conflict.
14. **CLIMAX**: the turning point in a plot.
15. **FALLING ACTION**: the series of events following the climax of a plot.
16. **DENOUEMENT**: the final resolution of the conflict in a plot.

**Introduction to Creative Writing:** The most important stages of the writing process are editing and rewriting. The majority of students will probably not know this, and even if they do, it is very unlikely that they practice it. Teachers should stress this theme throughout the section, and emphasize that even professional authors work hard to maintain the discipline required to truly complete (i.e. sufficiently revise) a piece of writing. Below are listed suggested guidelines and practices for approaching revision in the classroom.

- + **Show it, don't say it:** Things like emotions, settings and characteristics are best described without words. In our everyday lives we usually do not narrate our feelings, rather we *show* them in how we act and behave. Therefore, in order to properly replicate emotion in a play one must *show* it. (see activity V).
- + **Spelling/Grammar**
- + **Proper Format**
- + **Peer Editing:** see attached worksheet

## Activities

- I. **Ice Breakers:** In order for students to truly engage public performance they must feel comfortable with each other and with the teacher. Ice breakers will allow students to gain this comfort. It is extremely important that the teacher participate with the fervor, excitement and open mind that they would want and expect from their students. The teacher must be the example. These activities can be done at any point during the semester but preferably at the beginning as comfort and familiarity among students will improve the effectiveness of all other activities and lessons.
  - A. **Name Game:** Have students form a circle. Have a ball of some sort that can be passed around. Start with yourself, give your name, an activity you like to do and your favorite musical artist or music genre. Pass the ball to some one else and they have to first repeat your name, your activity and your favorite artist/music genre. Then they give their own information, after which, they pass the ball to some one else and the game repeats. At the end challenge the students individually to try and remember the most people's names, activities and favorite artists/music genres.
  - B. **Commonalities:** Split the students into pairs. For the first round, each pair will have 30 seconds to find 5 things they have in common. For the second round, put two pairs together and give the foursome a

minute to find something all 4 students have in common. Keep this going, each round doubling the time and number of students. The challenge is to find out how large you can get the groups. After each round students should share what their group has in common.

II. **Free Write:** At the beginning and/or end of the class, have students take five minutes to write whatever comes to mind. If some students would like a subject matter give them something.

III. **Vocabulary Review:** (Satisfies 1.1.11. and 1.3.11)

- A. Have students read through a script (*Agents and Assets* script see resource section) or watch a play, movie or television show and identify an example of each vocabulary word (check the resource section for plays online). Make sure each student gets a chance to find an example. You can double up on some of the vocabulary if you have more than 16 students in your class.
- B. Have students take note of how the scripts are formatted. Encourage students to have similar organization in the scripts they will be writing.
- C. Have students analyze, and break down how the director/writer expresses his or her ideas and what those ideas are.
- D. Vocabulary Quiz (see resources section)

IV. **Group play:**

- A. Have the class as a group write a play, first go over the vocabulary and have them decide what they want the character(s), plot, setting etc to be.
- B. You do not need to stick to the vocabulary, rather let the students naturally work out the elements of the play intuitively as much as they possibly can.
- C. Asking questions can really make this activity take off. The more you probe your students about who their character is, what he or she wants, where the play is, what is happening, what happens next, etc... can really get your students thinking creatively.

V. **Script 1:** (Satisfies 1.4.11 A, 1.5.11. D, 1.2.11)

- A. After students have gone over in class how to write a short play, have them write, in class or as a homework assignment, a short 1-2 page script. The script should include all of the vocabulary elements. Stress that this is only an exercise and that it need not be perfect. If students want to be more ambitious in terms of page length and detail encouraged them to do so.

VI. **Show and tell: "Whoa"**

- A. Give each student an emotion, characteristic, or state i.e. angry, shy or cold, and have them act it out. Actors may speak but can only repeat the word "whoa" and must use their tone and body language to communicate its meaning.
- B. Have the other students talk about how the acting student *showed* and *expressed* his or her emotion or characteristic. What kinds of actions, facial expression, tones of voice and gestures did they make or do?

- C. Relate this activity to writing and stress how much can be said by the actions demeanor and behavior of a character or characters.

## VII. **Character Sketch:**

- A. Break the class into groups and have them appoint a secretary in each group to record the information generated. Pass out one photograph or magazine picture, containing two to four people in it, to each group.
- B. Instruct the students to examine the photographs, looking for “clues” as to what type of characters these people are and what type of situation they are in.
- C. Have the students make a character sketch of each person in the picture: give each character a name, age, occupation and set of characteristics.
- D. Ask the students to briefly describe the relationships between their characters.
- E. For a follow up assignment to the activity, have students individually create their own character and write up a character sketch for them.
- F. Follow up discussion: have the students reassess how accurate their superficial judgments are. What can you really know about someone based on how they look in a picture (color of their skin, how pretty they are, the clothes they’re wearing, etc.)? Do these appearances truly reflect their merit as individual human beings?

## VIII. **Script 2:** (Satisfies 1.5.11 E and F)

- A. After students have learned techniques of how to format and edit their plays have them either edit their original play or write another, more fleshed out play 3-4 pages in length.

## IX. **Improvisation** (Satisfies 1.6.11)

- A. Have students form a circle. Use characters from the character creation activity or others that you have made up and ask the students to assume those personalities. Without talking have the students become that character.
- B. Ask two students to go into the circle and give each of them different characters to assume. In addition, give them a situation and ask them to interact while staying in character. They should be free to talk while interacting.
- C. Again, have the other students talk about how the acting student *showed* and *expressed* his or her emotion or characteristic. What kinds of actions, facial expression, tones of voice and gestures did they make or do?
- D. Relate this activity to writing and stress how much can be said by the actions demeanor and behavior of a character or characters.

## X. **Peer Review:** (Fulfils 1.6.11.A, B, D and E, 1.5.11. E)

- A. Group students in pairs and have them read each other’s plays.
- B. After this, pass out the peer review sheet and have them fill it out, and exchange them with their partner.



- C. Keep switching the groups until everyone has read everyone else's piece and written a peer review on it.
- D. Tell students to take the reviews home and incorporate them in their editing process.

**XI. Community Theater in Hip Hop:** Listening, Reading and Discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11.B, D, G, and H)

- A. Have students listen to "Brenda's Got a Baby" and follow along with the lyrics.
- B. Discuss how this song is community theater in that it takes fictional story and uses it as a tool to discuss community issues, mainly youth pregnancy, domestic abuse and woman's issues.
- C. Have students point out the vocabulary words from the lesson as they arise in the song. Try and prompt critique of the song as well.
- D. Ask each student to pick out a certain section that they most liked or disliked and have them explain why.

**XII. Script 2 Resubmission** (satisfies 1.5.11)

- A. Have students resubmit their scripts after having edited it extensively by themselves and with their peer reviews.
- B. Edit these scripts and pass them back to the students with your revisions
- C. Make sure to be available to clarify any confusion or questions they may have about your revisions.
- D. Focus on grammar, spelling and punctuation in your revisions.

**XIII. Script 3 Final Submission**

**XIV. "Investigative Reports"**

- A. Using the playwriting skills they have learned have each student write a performance piece on either the topic they addressed in their "reporting live" piece or any issue in their lives that they or some one close to them are struggling with.
- B. Stress that topics could be anything, from violence to identity issues and can be tragic, humorous, direct and/or subtle -- as long as students take their craft seriously.
- C. Students must incorporate at least one other student in their performance piece either as a character, prop, narrator or any other sort of role.
- D. Push students to develop their own style in their piece by reminding them of the many options they have as to how they want their piece to be (i.e. monologue vs. dialogue, humor vs. drama etc.)

Resources:

1. *Agents and Assets* script:  
<http://lapovertydept.org/pdf/A&A-script.pdf>
2. Tupelo Community Theater:  
<http://www.tctwebstage.com/comunity.htm>
3. Wikipedia:

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_theater](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_theater)
4. Teaching Playwriting in Schools: Teacher's Handbook  
[www.centerstage.org/upload/PDF/06PlaywrightsHandbook.pdf](http://www.centerstage.org/upload/PDF/06PlaywrightsHandbook.pdf)
5. Taking Action: Teaching Participatory Community-based Theater  
[www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2001/09/taking\\_action\\_t\\_2.php](http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2001/09/taking_action_t_2.php)
6. Website for plays
  - a. <http://drama.eserver.org/>

# L.A.P.D

## Character Sketch

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Give your character a name, age, and physical description.
2. Where does your character live?
3. What does your character like to do?
4. Name one thing that would make your character angry.
5. Describe a typical day for your character.
6. Describe a dream your character has had.
7. Pretend your character has a secret. Why is it a secret?
8. What is your character's goal?

# L.A.P.D

## Community Theater Peer Review

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Play: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did you like about the piece?
  
2. What's the major conflict? How strong is it?
  
4. Did anything confuse you about the play?
  
5. What's the most important image or moment to you in the piece?
  
6. Did the characters all sound the same or like different people with distinct voices?  
How could the characters become more believable?
  
7. What did each character want?
  
8. Which scene or scenes were the least important to the piece?
  
9. Explain what the play is about in one or two sentences.
  
10. Is there anything you'd like to see more of? (A more developed relationship? More specific behavior from a character? Stronger needs?)
  
12. What was the climax of the play?
  
13. What was the denouement? Was it satisfying? Were there any loose ends? (Is something introduced in the play that kind of drifts away?)

# L.A.P.D

Community Theater

## Playwriting Vocabulary Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Dialogue: \_\_\_\_\_

Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_

Scene: \_\_\_\_\_

Stage Directions: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Biography: \_\_\_\_\_

Monologue: \_\_\_\_\_

Dramatic Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Beat: \_\_\_\_\_

Plot: \_\_\_\_\_

Exposition: \_\_\_\_\_

Rising Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Climax: \_\_\_\_\_

Falling Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Denouement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# L.A.P.D

## Drugs in America

### Lesson Goals

The main focus of the L.A.P.D.'s *Agents and Assets* production is the U.S. government's illegal involvement in the crack cocaine drug epidemic of the 1980s and 90s. The devastating effects of this crack epidemic on the African-American community are still being felt even today. This lesson seeks to give students a basic understanding of drugs and the drug trade in America. This lesson is given in the faith that: one, with a proper understanding of drugs, students will be able to make better informed decisions about drug usage; two, with a proper understanding of addiction recovery students will be able to take the right actions when confronted with drug addiction either personally or through a friend or relative; and three, with a proper understanding of the politics and policies surrounding drugs and the drug trade, students can form their own informed opinions on American drug policy.

High school students are one of the most highly at-risk demographics when it comes to drug abuse in all its forms. Tragically they have the most *to* risk as well, considering the important decisions they have to make in their lives (graduation, higher education, entering the workforce). Therefore it is of the utmost importance that students grasp the complexity of the roles drugs play in their society. This lesson was written under the understanding that high school students are going to make their own decisions about drug use and abuse, therefore its stance is to educate and not to coerce or convince them to do anything.

**This section begins with in-depth information on drugs in America and the War on Drugs. Teachers may lecture on this information, distribute it as a handout, or have students do some research on their own. Following the background information are a series of activities to be conducted in the classroom and for homework, which will help to put the students' knowledge to work.**

### I. Definition of a Drug

#### A. Legal

1. Alcohol (wine, beer, and liquor)
2. Over the Counter Drugs: (Ibuprofen, Tylenol)
3. Prescription Drugs: (Prilosec, Allegra)
4. Caffeine
5. Nicotine (cigarettes)

#### B. Illegal

1. Cannabis Sativa (Marijuana, Weed)
2. Cocaine/Crack
3. Heroin
4. Ecstasy or E
5. Performance Enhancing Drugs (steroids)

- C. Stimulant: Revs up the nervous system (increased heart rate, increased adrenaline, heightened sensory nerves)
  - 1. Cocaine/Crack
  - 2. Ecstasy or E
  - 3. Caffeine
  - 4. Nicotine
  - 5. Performance Drugs
- D. Depressant: Depresses the nervous system, diminishes functional activity, decreases heart rate, mutes sensory nerves)
  - 1. Alcohol
  - 2. Marijuana
  - 3. Heroin

## II. Drug Effects

### A. Short Term Effects

- 1. The High: An altered mental state usually coupled with a combination of physical relaxation, stimulation and/or feelings of immense pleasure and wellbeing. Users may also experience an increase in heart rate.
- 2. Alters brain function through interaction with the central nervous system

### B. Long Term Effects

- 1. Addiction (Psychological and Physical)
  - i. Almost ALL Drugs are addictive in nature, legal and illegal.
  - ii. Psychological addiction is the subjective feeling that the user needs the drug to maintain a feeling of well-being;
  - iii. Physical addiction is characterized by tolerance (the need for increasingly larger doses in order to achieve the initial effect) and withdrawal symptoms when the user is abstinent
- 2. Respiratory Illness (only in smoked substances such as tobacco, marijuana and crack cocaine)
- 3. Permanent Brain damage
- 4. Irregular body function and appearance (loss of appetite, extreme weight loss, low immune system, loss of teeth, etc.)

## III. Drug Dangers

- A. Disease (HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, etc.) and its spread (through the sharing of needles and unprotected sex while under the influence)
- B. Overdose: The intentional or unintentional consumption of a drug in such a large amount that it threatens the life-sustaining bodily functions of the consumer. Intentional overdose is usually an attempt by the user to commit suicide, as overdoses are usually fatal. Unintentional overdose happens many times when children or people who are unfamiliar with a drug use it indiscriminately. It also occurs when a drug is being heavily abused to the point that the user is not aware or does not care how much of the substance he or she is consuming.

C. Adulteration: When Powdered Drugs are mixed with other, harmful substances of similar look and/or effect.

D. Negative Community Effects

1. Illegal drug use creates addicts, who cannot fulfill their civic and familial duties.
2. Illegal drug sellers risk going to jail with increasingly severe sentences. Inmates cannot fulfill civic or familial duties.
3. Increased poverty
4. Increased crime
  - i. Gang violence over drug selling territories and consumers
  - ii. Violence between Gangs and the Police
  - iii. Addicts robbing in order to finance their drug addictions
  - iv. Violence due to broken homes caused by the effects listed above.
5. Children raised in broken, poverty stricken, and violent homes cannot receive the upbringing they need to become good citizens and thus cannot fulfill their civic and familial duties.

## IV. Drug Rehabilitation\*

A. Five Steps

Stage 1: Awareness and Early Acknowledgment

- ✚ The tasks involve a shifting of perspective from outright denial to a willingness to consider the possibility of addiction.

Stage 2: Consideration

- ✚ A willingness to further explore ideas about addiction and recovery. The primary movement during this stage involves increasing knowledge about the realities of addiction and the impact it's having on the addict's own life and on the lives of others.

Stage 3: Exploring Recovery and Early Activity

- ✚ A clear resolution to quit the addiction. Tasks involve exploring ideas and activities of abstinence, moderation, treatment, and recovery; during this stage, people actively move towards stopping the addiction, and beginning treatment of some kind.

Stage 4: Early Recovery and Re-habitation

- ✚ The entry into full, but early, recovery. During this stage, people learn the skills, develop the behaviors, adopt the habits, and build the relationships needed to maintain a lifetime of freedom from addiction.

Stage 5: Active Recovery and Maintenance

- ✚ For many this is a stage without an end, for which recovery is a lifetime process. By the time people enter Stage 5, they are actively monitoring themselves, their feelings, thoughts, behaviors, activities, and relationships.



\* few people can go this route alone, without the support of family, friends, and the community of help that's easily available. For everyone though, recovery is possible.

B. Addiction is a three fold disease

1. Chemical recovery

✚ Abstinence is the only way to a full recovery

2. Emotional recovery

✚ Many times people turn to drugs as a remedy for something wrong in their lives, such as loneliness (lack of love, affection and attention), poverty (lack of money and the liberties and freedoms it provides), low self esteem (lack of confidence or a sense of self worth). Emotional recovery requires an addict to confront that empty space in their lives that they are trying to fill with their drugs.

3. Spiritual recovery

✚ Recovery can only be achieved through faith in oneself or one's God. Therefore, a recovering addict must get in touch with him or her self and/or his or her God to find the spiritual strength needed to get over addiction.

C. Recovery Tips

- i. Keep in contact with people who have good recovery. Avoid the temptation to hang out with persons who are having a lot of difficulties staying clean.
- ii. Take advantage of all proper recovery assistance that is available. Medicating is not usually a good idea, however, it is better than relapse.
- iii. Keep going to 12 step meetings on a regular basis, if you don't like the group you are at; try other groups. For fledgling 12 step members, an open Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meeting is always helpful.

D. How Can I Help?

- i. If you know some one who is addicted to drugs the best thing you can do is be truthful with that person. Let them know that they are hurting you, others and themselves with their addiction. If you do not feel comfortable confronting them on your own, get other people to do it with you.
- ii. If this person understands that they are addicted and that they need help, make sure you know the local rehab program in your area. You can search online or in the yellow pages. If you find a place, go with that person to the program to check it out. Not all programs will work for them, make sure you find the environment that best suites their needs and can properly accommodate them.
- iii. The best way to help a recovering addict is to simply be there for them through their recovery process. Recovery is

HARD, and is a continual struggle, with no end. Recovery must become a way of life for a recovering addict. Let them know that you are always there for them mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

## V. History of The War on Drugs

The War on Drugs started with President Richard Nixon, who declared it shortly after his presidential election in 1968. He received tremendous support from both the Republican and Democratic parties. This was partly because at the time, heroin addiction was a large problem for soldiers returning from the Vietnam War. The war on Drugs focused mainly on four key issues: treatment, law enforcement, interdiction and eradication.

**Treatment** focuses on the rehabilitation of drug users, with the assumption that this is a medical or mental health issue rather than a criminal one.

**Law enforcement** Deals with drug possession and drug selling as criminal matters and punishes offenders through the justice system.

**Eradication** attempts to reduce production of the illegal substances in other countries.

**Interdiction** involves reducing the flow of illegal drugs into the United States by more vigilant patrolling of the nation's borders.

As the years went on, the War on Drugs grew more and more expensive rising from \$80 million at its inception to over \$600 million in 1972, a 750% increase. This perpetual cost growth continues to plague The War on Drugs to this day and is one of its main areas of critique. Another area of great concern and critique is the War's increased emphasis on law enforcement and punishment. Many officials, even those within the law enforcement systems, began to seriously challenge this new approach, arguing that increased resources for law enforcement agencies and harsher sentences for drug related convictions did little to solve the problem of illegal drugs in America. Yet politicians in their effort to not appear "soft" in the public eye on the issue of illegal drugs have continued to stress this approach, however ineffective it may be.

Because of this approach, there has been a great increase in incarceration. Half of these new inmates have been incarcerated for drug charges, two thirds are minorities and half of those minorities are black. Many people believe that the War on Drugs has a racial agenda as well, considering the fact that although 50% of inmates imprisoned on drug charges are black, the vast majority (approximately 75%) of American drug addicts are white. According to a recent Frontline research team, one out of every three black males is involved in the criminal drug system.

Their female counterparts' statistics are rising drastically as well. It is safe to say that such statistics as these are detrimental to the black community at large, yet the policies and laws of the War on Drugs are rarely changed. It is also important to know that the war on drugs is still in operation to this day.

## VI. The Drug Business:

- A. The illegal drug trade has turned into a \$400 billion multi-national business. Americans spend \$58 billion a year on narcotics, with most of that money coming from 5 million regular users. More money is spent buying illegal narcotics than is spent on the War on Drugs (\$58 billion verses \$42 billion) on a yearly basis.
- B. Money Laundering: Much of the money made from the drug trade is shuttled into legal business in order to disguise its illegality. This is called money laundering. Many companies, including Fortune 500 companies, take in money from the drug trade and launder it.

## VII. Governmental Involvement in the Drug Trade:

- A. There have also been serious allegations made against the United States government that claim that it has itself had illegal dealings within the drug trade and made considerable amounts of illegal money. What is worse is the fact that the alleged money was made off of poor minority communities.
- B. Mercury Article: Gary Webb's 1996 SJ Mercury News Exposé (you can touch on this and provide a synopsis of the article, but more on this will be seen in the next section: journalistic practices. This can be used as a point of transition.)

### Activities

- I. **Legal vs. Illegal** Discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.6.11)
  - A. Facilitate a discussion with students about which drugs should be legal and which should be illegal and why, considering all that they have learned.
    - 1. Why should a drug be legal or illegal?
    - 2. Which drugs should be legal or illegal?
    - 3. Why has our society deemed some drugs legal and others illegal?
- II. **Vocabulary Review** Writing/Reading Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11 A and E)
  - A. Go over the vocabulary words from the lessons with the students
  - B. Make sure to add any additional words students are unfamiliar with to the vocabulary review and quiz.
- III. **Vocabulary Quiz** Writing Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11 A and E)
  - A. See Resource Sheet
- IV. **Drugs in Hip Hop** Reading, Listening, Research, and Discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11.B, D, G, and H, 1.6.11)
  - A. There is no coincidence that the emergence of hip hop in the early 1980s and 1990s occurred simultaneously with the crack epidemic in America.

Not only has money from the drug trade allegedly funded the growing hip hop industry, but the lyrical content of some hip hop, especially “Gangsta” rap, has repeatedly addressed ties to illegal drug trade and trafficking. Many artists profess involvement in the drug trade, and condone the illegal activity as a viable and respected means of accumulating wealth in America.

- B. Have students research Hip Hop Artists online and their stance on drugs.
  - 1. Example: Young Jeezy: Atlanta based rapper nicknamed “the Snow man” put out a Snowman t-shirt, on which is printed a simply drawn snowman with a menacing face. “Snow” is a nickname given to cocaine because of its white crystalline appearance (Wikipedia).
  - 2. Facilitate a discussion about why hip hop artists would condone such activity and promote it in their music. Is hip hop music perpetuating the problem of drugs in America?

## V. “10 Crack Commandments”

- 1. Have students listen to “10 Crack Commandments” and follow along with the lyrics.
- 2. Is this encouraging drug selling?
- 3. If so, after all we have learned about crack’s effects on the black community, how could crack selling become so glamorous and acceptable in black music?
- 4. Have students listen to “Drug Dealer” and follow along with the lyrics.
- 5. Compare the messages in the two songs and discuss the messages.
- 6. Have students write their own raps about the drug trade from what they learned from this lesson.

## VI. The War on Drugs Review Writing Exercise (Satisfies 1.8.11 A, 1.5.11, 1.4.11 B, C and D)

- A. Have students write essays on The War on Drugs. The focus of the essays should be to answer these questions:
  - 1. Is the war on drugs having a positive or negative effect?
  - 2. How could The War on Drugs be improved?
  - 3. What parts of The War on Drugs have worked?
  - 4. How has The War on Drugs affected you and your community?
  - 5. Do you think The War on Drugs can be won? If so, how?
- B. Have interested students send their essays to the ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy), whose address is listed in the resource section.

## VII. Assessing the Media’s Influence on Drug Use R.A.P Exercise (Satisfies 1.2.11. B, 1.4.11. B, 1.5.11. A and B, 1.8.11)

- A. Ask the students to take note of every time a drug (legal or illegal) is brought to their attention through the media for either a day or a whole week. Have them write down when each instance happens, the details of the instance, mainly what or who it was, where it happened (in school, at

home or neither), why and how it brought drug use/abuse to their attention, what drug it was, how the drug was viewed or displayed (in a positive or negative light) and when the instance happened (what time of day) etc.

- B. Stress to the students that they can record ANY instance as long as it has a direct relation to drugs and drug use/abuse. Anything from music lyrics or videos, television, movies, billboards, video games, conversations, magazines, newspapers, books, and events. Tell them not to go out and look for drug references, but rather to just be more sensitive to them as they occur in their daily lives.
- C. Have them bring their data into class and compile it. Make sure that the data rubric is consistent so that compiling data is easier. Compile the data with students and create a graph either on the chalkboard or in graph-making software such as Excel. If using Excel, teach students to make graphs of their own personal data as well. If needed, a tutorial in Excel is listed in the resource section. Students should be surprised at how many instances they record and it should be interesting to see when, where and through what media these instances occurred most.
- D. Have students discuss what message about drugs the media is sending to the public. Is there a different message being sent to young people compared to older people (i.e. through video games and hip hop music versus newspapers and TV news stations)?

## Conclusion:

The drug trade has been woven into the American economy and politics as a whole and has thus become an incredibly complex and difficult problem. The question becomes: How, amidst all of this confusion and complexity, do we solve these problems? The answer starts with being well informed.

## Resources and Bibliography

1. “Drug Wars” Frontline Series in Collaboration with NPR  
PBS 1995-2006 WGBH educational foundation
2. “The Deal with Drugs” BBC World Service: Science and Technology/Health  
© BBC World Service, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, UK
3. Encyclopedia.com “drug addiction and drug abuse”
4. “Recovering from Addiction: The Stages of Recovery” Phil Rich, Ed.D., MSW
5. [http://www.addictionz.com/addiction\\_recovery.htm](http://www.addictionz.com/addiction_recovery.htm)
6. The Architecture of Modern Political Power:  
<http://www.mega.nu/ampp/webb.html>
7. ONDCP (office of national drug control policy)
  - a. Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 6000 Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
Phone: (800) 666-3332
  - b. <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/index.html>
8. “Ten Crack Commandments” Biggie Smalls, “Life after Death” Bad Boy Records

# L.A.P.D

## Drugs in America

Vocabulary Quiz

Stimulant: \_\_\_\_\_

Depressant: \_\_\_\_\_

Overdose: \_\_\_\_\_

Adulteration: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Law enforcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Eradication: \_\_\_\_\_

Interdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Money Laundering: \_\_\_\_\_

Narcotic: \_\_\_\_\_

Psychological Withdrawal: \_\_\_\_\_

# L.A.P.D

## Drugs in America

Listening and Discussion Exercise

### “10 Crack Commandments”

Notorious B.I.G.

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"

(Biggie)

Uhh, it's the ten crack commandments

What, uhh, uhh

Nigga can't tell me nothin bout this coke, uh-huh

Can't tell me nothin bout this crack, this weed

To my hustlin niggaz

Niggaz on the corner I ain't forget you niggaz

My triple beam niggaz, word up

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"

"TEN"

I been in this game for years, it made me a animal

It's rules to this shit, I wrote me a manual

A step by step booklet for you to get

your game on track, not your wig pushed back

Rule nombre uno: never let no one know

how much dough you hold, cause you know

The cheddar breed jealousy 'specially

if that man fucked up, get your ass stuck up

Number two: never let em know your next move

Don't you know Bad Boys move in silence or violence

Take it from your highness (uh-huh)

I done squeezed mad clips at these cats for they bricks and chips

Number three: never trust no-bo-dy

Your moms'll set that ass up, properly gassed up

Hoodie to mask up, shit, for that fast buck

she be layin in the bushes to light that ass up

Number four: know you heard this before

Never get high, on your own supply

Number five: never sell no crack where you rest at

I don't care if they want a ounce, tell em bounce

Number six: that god damn credit, dead it

You think a crackhead payin you back, shit forget it

Seven: this rule is so underrated

Keep your family and business completely separated  
Money and blood don't mix like two dicks and no bitch  
Find yourself in serious shit  
Number eight: never keep no weight on you  
Them cats that squeeze your guns can hold jobs too  
Number nine shoulda been number one to me  
If you ain't gettin bagged stay the fuck from police (uh-huh)  
If niggaz think you snitchin ain't tryin listen  
They be sittin in your kitchen, waitin to start hittin  
Number ten: a strong word called consignment  
Strictly for live men, not for freshmen  
If you ain't got the clientele say hell no  
Cause they gon want they money rain sleet hail snow  
Follow these rules you'll have mad bread to break up  
If not, twenty-four years, on the wake up  
Slug hit your temple, watch your frame shake up  
Caretaker did your makeup, when you pass  
Your girl fucked my man Jake up, heard in three weeks  
she sniffed a whole half of cake up  
Heard she suck a good dick, and can hook a steak up  
Gotta go gotta go, more pies to bake up, word up, uhh

Crack king, Frank Blizzard  
Uhh

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"  
"Ten"

Artist: Boogie Down Productions  
Album: Sex And Violence  
Song: Drug Dealer  
Typed by: OHHLA Webmaster DJ Flash

All over the world...

Chorus:

Black drug dealer, you have to wise up  
And organize your business so that we can rise up  
If your gonna sell crack then don't be a fool  
Organize your money and open up a school

Verse One:

Drug dealer, understand historical fact  
Every race got ahead from sellin drugs except Black



We are under attack, here comes another cold fact  
In the 30's and 40's a drug dealer wasn't black  
They were Jewish, Italian, Irish, Polish, etc. etc.  
Now in 90 their live's a lot better  
They'll sell you a sweater, a pair of pants cold hearted  
But first sellin drugs and killin people is how they started  
Drug dealer, black and Hispanic, stop killin one another  
Cause in the ghetto we're all brothers  
Organized economically, understand the psychology  
America is the drug monopoly  
They own the block and kill your brother for  
Therefore, we got the same enemy - what's more, I go on tour  
But who do you think picks up the bill?  
A hard workin fireman? Chill

Repeat Chorus 2X

Verse Two:

Eighty percent of American business is created illegally  
This is a fact I don't ask you to believe in me  
If you're really in the drug game to win it  
Eventually you're gonna get shot, open a clinic  
Again, if you're really in the drug game to win it  
Invest in a prison, therefore you can be put in it  
Everyone else did it now they chillin  
Above the law, while your under the law still killin  
One another, wake up my Hispanic brother, my African brother  
America's not your mother  
Or your father, so don't bother with right or wrong  
Just check out the logic in the song  
Organize, realize, become un hypnotized  
To the lies that your livin for the get high  
See many people have forgotten the fact  
That America was never ever built for Black  
So when some people are gonna run and buy crack  
Take the money and put it back into Black  
It's only logic, see KRS-One will rock it  
With knowledge, education for the people I'll never stop it  
Organize and legitimize your business  
Remember, everybody else did this

Repeat Chorus 2X

# L.A.P.D

## Journalistic Practices

“The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society.”

–Handbook of Independent Journalism

### Lesson Goals

The L.A.P.D.’s main objective in *Agents and Assets* is to report on the injustices done by the government in regard to the cocaine epidemic. The performance itself is at its core a work of journalism and thus, this lesson teaches students the practices, principles and methods used to create accurate and reliable journalism. Both journalism and the L.A.P.D. are based on the idea that an informed society is a free society. This lesson will teach students how to research and present a topic or story.

**This section begins with in-depth information on the discipline of journalism. Teachers may lecture on this information, distribute it as a handout, or have students do some research on their own. Following the background information are a series of activities to be conducted in the classroom and for homework, which will help to put the students’ knowledge to work.**

### Nine Core Principles of Good Journalism (According to Project for Excellence in Journalism)

- I. Journalism’s first obligation is to report the truth**
  - A. Without accuracy and integrity, journalism is not valuable.
  - B. Journalists must be forthcoming and honest about their methods and sources.
  - C. Journalistic truth is a process that begins with assembling and verifying facts. A journalist must then present those verified facts and give a fair and reliable account of their meaning to citizens.
- II. Journalism’s loyalty is always to the people**
  - A. This is the basis of journalism’s credibility. Advertisers, sponsors, and shareholders of news organizations all will try intentionally and unintentionally to slant, tamper with, or change the news. It is up to the journalists to not allow this by serving the people first, meaning every citizen of the general public. Ignoring certain citizens or certain groups of citizens has the effect of disenfranchising them.
  - B. It is the shared belief of modern journalistic organizations that credibility will foster a larger and more loyal audience and that economic success will follow. Therefore the journalist has both a moral and economic obligation to the people.
- III. Journalism is a discipline of verification**

- A. The journalistic method is much like the scientific method, in that an attempt is made to eliminate all untruths through a consistent process of testing information, much like a scientist tests a hypothesis.
- B. The journalist is entitled to his or her own bias and beliefs. It is the method that is objective, and not the journalist.
- C. This discipline of verification is what separates journalism from other modes of communication, such as propaganda, fiction, or entertainment.

**IV. Journalism's practitioners must maintain independent from those they cover**

- A. In order to be reliable, journalists must keep some distance between themselves and the event or people they cover. While no one can be neutral about everything, journalists must be independent of what they cover in both spirit and mind.
- B. Journalists must suppress any temptation to have an arrogant, elitist, or nihilistic approach to what they cover, in order to maintain their credibility and accuracy.

**V. Journalism must serve as an independent monitor of power**

- A. To protect the freedom of the public and the democracy of society as a whole, journalism must be a watch dog over those individuals and collectives whose power and position have the most effect on citizens.
- B. Journalism is a line of defense against despotism and tyranny in any and all levels of public and private life in the community.

**VI. Journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.**

- A. Public discussion must be informed by verified facts. It is journalism's purpose to inform that forum of discussion. Journalism also should strive to fairly represent the varied viewpoints and interests in society, and to place them in context rather than highlight only the conflicting fringes of debate. Journalism can be a problem solving tool when it can find points of congruence and common ground in debates and conflicts.

**VII. Journalism must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.**

- A. There is always the balancing act between entertainment and education of the general public. Considering that the news is only allotted a limited amount of time, only a limited amount of information can be chosen. Journalists then must balance their newscast with information the public wants (in order to keep an audience), with information the public needs (in order to fulfill its purpose), and with information the public does not anticipate needing or wanting but may need or want. This means journalists must continually ask what information has most value to citizens and in what form.

**VIII. Journalists must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.**

- A. Again, there is a balancing act that must occur in good journalism. One could think of the news as a map of the society with which citizens can navigate their environment. In order to create a helpful map, journalists must present a variety of information and yet key in on the most important facts. This is best achieved by newsrooms with a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives.

**IX. Journalism's practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.**

- A. News organizations do well to nurture this independence by encouraging individuals to speak their minds. This stimulates the intellectual diversity necessary to understand and accurately cover an increasingly diverse society. It is this diversity of minds and voices -- not just numbers -- that matters.

## The Rights and Obligations of Citizens

**I. Citizens must engage in critical thinking.**

- A. You as a citizen must have a desire for the truth and must actively seek it. Although ideally journalists and news organizations should uphold the above principles, many times they do not, and thus it is up to the citizen to be mindful of the great amount of misinformation being proliferated.

## Journalistic Practices: The Method (taken from "News Writer's Handbook")

**I. Editing**

- A. Verify the spelling of all names.
- B. Verify all facts with at least two sources.
- C. Write in third person and avoid using You, I, we, or us unless in a quote. The writer should not be a part of the story.
- D. Read the story at least three times.
- E. In announcing an event, identify the event and then the details in this order: Place, day, date, time.

**II. Interviewing**

- A. Be prepared
  - 1. Define the purpose of the interview.
  - 2. Have enough background knowledge in the subject so that you can engage the interviewee in a good conversation.
  - 3. Schedule ahead of time a set time and place with the interviewee for the interview when possible.
  - 4. Have preliminary questions ready, but remember to allow the interview freedom to go wherever it needs to go, the key is getting information, not following a guide.
  - 5. Prepare conversation starters/ice breakers.
- B. Establishing Rapport: People are only forthcoming with information if

they are comfortable with you.

1. Remember social amenities (good eye-contact, respectful tone, interested demeanor).
2. If possible, always interview people in their own environment (office, home, school).
3. Listen non judgmentally. An interviewee is entitled to their own opinion; in fact that is what you want to capture in the interview so let them be themselves.
4. Paraphrase their comments to make sure you understand what is being said.
5. An interview is a conversation NOT an interrogation; make sure to keep the conversation open, and as casual as possible. Find the balance between guiding the discussion towards answering your questions and allowing it to branch off towards other answers you didn't anticipate.

C. Asking the right questions

1. Avoid asking questions that get you only "yes" or "no" answers.
2. Answers are always more important than questions in an interview, so make sure you are listening and not thinking about the next question you need to ask.
3. Make sure to get the most from each question; many times an answer will lead to many other questions. Don't just stick to your script of questions; allow yourself the freedom to explore other questions that are brought up in the interview.

D. Follow Up

1. Ask your interviewee for a way to contact him or her in case you have further questions or need any clarification.
2. Follow up any leads that he or she may give you.

## Gary Webb: The Man and the Message

### I. The Man

✚ Gary Webb was born in Corona, California on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1955. He began his career as a journalist at the age of 15, writing editorials for his high school newspaper. Webb went on to study journalism at the University of Northern Kentucky where he again was on the staff of the student newspaper and came in first place for a specialty column from the Kentucky Intercollegiate Press Association. He would go on to earn many other awards as an investigative journalist, including the Pulitzer Prize award for general news reporting in 1990, the Journalist of the Year award from the Bay Area Society of Professional Journalists in 1996, and the Media Hero award from the 2nd Annual Media & Democracy Congress in 1997. In 1996, he published a series of investigative reports in the San Jose Mercury News entitled "Dark Alliance." These reports would become his most memorable and controversial work, and would usher in both his rise and fall in the media world.

## II. The Message

✚ The “Dark Alliance” exposé detailed a C.I.A operation in Nicaragua to try to overthrow the rebel faction that had taken over the government. “Dark Alliance” alleges that C.I.A operatives either allowed or were directly involved in the trafficking of cocaine into the black communities of Los Angeles in order to raise funds for this operation. The cocaine was said to have been supplied by a known drug trafficker by the name of Oscar Danilo Bandon and then distributed into the community through a young high school dropout by the name of Ricky Ross. Ricky Ross had connections with the infamous street gang “The Bloods” who, using a newly developed chemical process, produced a cheaper and much more powerful form of cocaine called “crack”. Because this form of cocaine was much cheaper, it catered to the lower income black communities of Los Angeles. This, coupled with its greater potency and addictive nature, made crack the drug of choice for both seller and user and ushered in what would later be called the crack epidemic of the 1980s and 90s. Once Ricky Ross realized how lucrative crack was he began to bring the substance to other cities in California and ultimately across the United States. Because his ties were in the black community, the crack epidemic was relatively exclusive to the black population of the United States. This meant that the incredibly destructive power of crack was suffered almost exclusively by the black communities of America. Crack use and addiction causes addicts to abandon all other responsibilities, duties and roles in the community (more of this can be seen the Drug Dangers section). Therefore, the allegations made by Gary Webb’s “Dark Alliance” exposé of the United State’s Government’s involvement in the crack epidemic caused nationwide controversy and led to an all out investigation and numerous congressional hearings, the records of which form the script of the *Agents and Assets* performance.

### Activities:

#### A. Who’s Truth?

1. Bring to class a picture you have cut from a magazine or newspaper. Make sure that whatever is depicted in the picture is ambiguous enough to allow many different interpretations. The picture will serve your purposes better if it has some kind of iconography that is tied to a major source of news or conflict.
2. Ask the class to make guesses as to what is being depicted in the picture and what possible news story it could be related to. If students need to be prodded, ask them to guess where, when, and of whom the picture was taken. Ask them what is happening.
3. List ALL of the students responses on the board.
4. After all of the guesses have been listed go through them with the class. Take note of any stereotyping that may occur, as well as bias

that may come from being a teenager, or living in the city, or being American, etc.

5. You can reveal what the caption and story was to the picture either now or at the very end of the lesson, this is entirely your preference.
6. The most important part of the lesson is getting the students to realize how many different stories and “truths” can come from a singular event. Differences in stories can be due to the prejudices, biases, or different points of view of those who report them. Drive home the importance of being critical investigators, both as journalists and citizens. Also, stress that there is never one absolute truth, that there are always many different interpretations of the truth and thus as a reporter and as a citizen one must always investigate and confirm the information one receives.

## **B. Journalism in Hip Hop: Listening and discussion** (fulfills 1.1.11. G, H)

1. Have students listen to “The Message” and follow along with the lyrics. After the song, discuss what is being reported. How are the nine core principles of good journalism operating here?
2. Have students listen to “Mathematics” and follow along with the lyrics. After listening, discuss what is being reported and how it connects to Gary Webb.
3. Have students listen to the “I’m Not A Writer, I’m A Biter” Cam’ron Dis on Jay-Z.
  - a. Show how the DJ has researched, analyzed, and performed.
  - b. What are Cam’ron and the DJ trying to say? What is the argument?
  - c. Explain how the DJ has used many different sources in his argument. (The third core principle of good journalism)
  - d. Ask students what core principles are in play and what core principles are being violated.

## **C. Mock Interview**

1. Stage a mock interview with a student volunteer. Do all of the wrong things, then prompt a discussion on what you did wrong, right, and how you should conduct an interview. (Do this before the interview lesson).
2. Get two other student volunteers to stage an interview in front of the class.
  - a. Bring a random prop and ask one student to be a specialist on it. Tell them to imagine it is some made up product or artifact.
  - b. Let the other student interview them about it.
  - c. Make sure that during the exercise students remember to follow the rules of interviewing.

## **D. Gary Webb Video, Reading and Writing Response:** (Fulfills 1.6.11. B, and F)

1. The Movie can be found at:

<http://www.gnn.tv/videos/video.php?id=30>

The Reading can be found at:

<http://www.laweekly.com/index.php?option=com LAWCONTENT&task=view&id=8832&Itemid=#Continuation>.

The movie is an interview with Gary Webb in which he recounts the events surrounding his 1996 three part series nicknamed “The Dark Alliance”. The reading is an in depth analysis of the unethical response to Gary Webb’s work by a few media groups (mainly LA Times, Washington Post and New York Times) and their subsequent campaigns to assassinate his character.

2. Have students write a response to the video, reading, and lesson. In the response, students are to compare the Nine Core Principles of Good Journalism with how Gary Webb reported and how the government, media and his own San Jose Mercury News Editors responded. How many of the core principles were violated? How many were withheld? Who violated them and which did they violate? Who upheld them and which were upheld? How?

**E. Reporting Live** (Fulfils all sections of 1.8.11., 1.5.11. A, B, C, F and G, 1.6.11. A, E, 1.4.11 B,

1. Students choose an issue, problem, story or event to do a report on. Encourage students to pursue stories that directly effect and interest them. Possible Ideas:
  - a. Report on the state of gender relations in today’s youth (interview classmates on what they think about their gender counterparts and their relations with them).
  - b. The story of a family member who has lived an interesting life (interview them, their friends and other family members).
  - c. The underground hip hop scene in the community.
2. Students must first go out and investigate by conducting interviews and researching sources. Students should use a minimum of 3 interviews and 6 additional sources (websites, books, magazines etc). Stress proper documentation (citing sources, using quotes, notating interviews). Interviewees must be authorities on the subject of their report with the appropriate credentials. Students should keep in mind the guidelines of journalism and the journalistic methods lessons.
3. While working on the report students should work to answer these three questions:
  - a. Why is this important / interesting to the reader?
  - b. Why should the reader believe you?
  - c. What should the reader understand and learn from reading your article?
4. Students should be given no less then 3 weeks for this project, provided is a worksheet to facilitate the process of reporting a story. (See Resource Section).

**F. Class Publication** (Fulfils 1.5.11. G)

1. Compile all of the stories and create a class journal.



2. Review “New Writer’s Handbook” Picture and Page section for the look and proper format.  
(<http://www.jea.org/resources/curriculum/stylebook.pdf>)

## Resources and Bibliography

1. “A Statement of Shared Purpose” Journalism.org
2. “News Writer’s Handbook”
  - a. Rob Melton, 2002 <http://www.jea.org/resources/curriculum/stylebook.pdf>
3. “Gary Webb: In his Own Words” -Produced at the School of Authentic Journalism  
Mexico, 2003
  - a. Gurilla News Network <http://www.gnn.tv/videos/video.php?id=30>
4. “Gary Webb, RIP *no thanks to the L.A. Times*” -Marc Cooper
  - a. LA Weekly Thursday, December 16, 2004
5. Wikipedia.com
  - a. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary\\_Webb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Webb)
6. Volume II: The Contra Story
  - a. <https://www.cia.gov/cia/reports/cocaine/contents.html>
7. “The Message” Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five
  - a. The Message 1982 Sugar Hill Records
8. “Investigative Reports” GZA featuring the Wu-Tang
  - a. Liquid Swords November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1995 Geffen Records
9. “Mathematics” Mos Def
  - a. Black on Both Sides October 19<sup>th</sup> 1999
10. Sing365.com

# L.A.P.D

Journalistic Practices

## "REPORTING LIVE" Project Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Source 1

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM

Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Source 2

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM

Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Source 3

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM

Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

# L.A.P.D

## Journalistic Practices

Listening and Discussion Exercise

### “The Message”:

Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder  
How I keep from going under  
It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder  
How I keep from going under

Broken glass everywhere  
People pissing on the stairs, you know they just  
Don't care  
I cant take the smell, I cant take the noise  
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice  
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back  
Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat  
I tried to get away, but I couldn't get far  
Cause the man with the tow-truck repossessed my car

Chorus:  
Don't push me, cause I'm close to the edge  
I'm trying not to loose my head  
Its like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder  
How I keep from going under (X2)

Standing on the front stoop, hangin out the window  
Watching all the cars go by, roaring as the breezes  
Blow  
Crazy lady, livin in a bag  
Eating out of garbage piles, used to be a fag-hag  
Search and test a tango, skips the life and then go  
In search of a prince it seems she lost her senses  
Down at the peepshow, watching all the creeps  
So she can tell the stories to the girls back home  
She went to the city and got social security  
She had to get a pimp, she couldn't make it on her  
Own

Chorus:  
It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder  
How I keep from goin under

My brothers doing fast on my mothers TV  
Says she watches to much, is just not healthy  
"All My Children" in the daytime, "Dallas" at night  
Cant even see the game or the sugar ray fight  
Bill collectors they ring my phone  
And scare my wife when I'm not home  
Got a bum education, double-digit inflation  
Cant take the train to the job, there's a strike  
At the station  
Neon King Kong standin on my back  
Cant stop to turn around, broke my sacroiliac  
Midrange, migraine, cancered membrane  
Sometimes I think I'm going insane, I swear I might  
Hijack a plane!

Chorus:

My son said daddy I don't wanna go to school  
Cause the teachers a jerk, he must think I'm a  
Fool  
And all the kids smoke reefer, I think it'd be  
Cheaper  
If I just got a job, learned to be a street sweeper  
I'll dance to the beat, shuffle my feet  
Wear a shirt and tie and run with the creeps  
Cause its all about money, ain't a damn thing  
Funny  
You got to have a con in this land of milk and  
Honey  
They push that girl in front of a train  
Took her to a doctor, sewed her arm on again  
Stabbed that man, right in his heart  
Gave him a transplant for a brand new start  
I cant walk through the park, cause it's crazy  
After dark  
Keep my hand on the gun, cause they got me on the  
Run  
I feel like an outlaw, broke my last glass jar  
Hear them say you want some more, livin on a  
Seesaw

Chorus:

A child was born, with no state of mind  
Blind to the ways of mankind

God is smiling on you but he's frowning too  
Cause only God knows what you'll go through  
You grow in the ghetto, living second rate  
And your eyes will sing a song of deep hate  
The places you play and where you stay  
Looks like one great big alley way  
You'll admire all the number book takers  
Thugs, pimps, pushers and the big money makers  
Driving big cars, spending twenties and tens  
And you wanna grow up to be just like them huh  
Smugglers, scrambles, burglars, gamblers  
Pickpockets, peddlers and even pan-handlers  
You say I'm cool, I'm no fool  
But then you wind up dropping out of high school  
Now you're unemployed, all null n void  
Walking around like you're pretty boy floyd  
Turned stickup kid, look what you done did  
Got sent up for a eight year bid  
Now your manhood is took and you're a may tag  
Spend the next two years as an undercover fag  
Being used and abused, to serve like hell  
Till one day you was found hung dead in a cell  
It was plain to see that your life was lost  
You was cold and your body swung back and forth  
But now your eyes sing the sad, sad song  
Of how you lived so fast and died so young

Chorus:

\*\*\*\*\*

## “Investigative Reports”

GZA featuring U-God, Reakwon, Ghostface Killa

Intro/Outro: U-God

[here we go, come on]

[A, A battle was fought, in Brooklyn...]

[Hessian Soldiers killed 3,000 men; much of the fighting  
took place in what is now Prospect Park in Greenwood cemetery,  
as well as the Park Slope and Gowanas neighborhoods.]

[This was the first battle, of America.]

Rugged rhymesters, crooked crimesters  
Dime droppers, Twenty-five-to-lifers  
Backstabbers, low blowers  
Illegal... cocaine growers

Starvation, profanity  
Anxiety, brothers tryin me  
Gun slingers, dead ringers

Verse One: Raekwon the Chef

Yo, my slang's out of this world  
Mix collaboration man, little man and his girl  
Way of life got me thinkin, plus I'm analyzing young  
youths on roofs, you know, three time felony brutes  
Roll together, tropical trees puff, whatever  
Yo, we could go run up on kids for leathers  
What drug? Faculties bubble keys for G's  
Cream flow like seven seas, hit chicks Guayanese  
Word up, hold your head before you fall out  
The morgue route, the devil want that  
Let's get my niggaz locked all out  
Change for better, that be my only vendetta  
in life, feed your seed right, it's breathin indeed right  
Chef, remarkable, sparkable, raps and tackable gats  
Never get jacked, see ya then move, black  
Paradise trife, plush with much ice  
gettin nice, layin back, speak on my life  
Word up!

Chorus: U-God

[The battle of Brooklyn depicted was the bloodiest  
clash of the American revolution. Soldiers killed  
3,000 men, much of the fighting took place in what is now...]

Crack patients, dime smokers  
Vial carriers, mocha tokers  
Burnt buildings, brothers building  
Save yo' children, investigative reports!

Verse Two: GZA

Callin all cars, callin all cars! Ghetto  
Psychos, armed and dangerous, leavin mad scars on those  
Who are found bound, gagged and shot when they blast the spot  
Victims took off like astronauts  
Get with this, even your best can't  
come on down, you're the next contestant!  
Get your pockets dug from all your Chemical Bank-ins  
Caught him at the red light - on Putnam Avenue and Franklin

They used to heat up the cipher with a shot that was hyper  
than your average JFK sniper  
He just came home to spark it  
Rolling like Kaufman, and lay that ass out like carpet  
Stop the stuttering boy, save the planes for the five-oh  
Then praise the God - chk-a-chk POW!  
They released shots and premeditate to grab...  
...and then they jet back to the lab  
And then remain in Shaolin  
An endangered island  
Shorties lose blood by the gallon

Chorus

[Have integrate a number of corrupt cops, judges...  
...into high-level positions, to insure the continued  
success of the drug smuggling and money laundering operations]

Verse Three: Ghost Face Killer

Yo, I grab the pen for revenge and let loose, see  
Like Muslims, standing on the block, rocking a khufi  
The hundred-dollar kick rockin kid's back for more  
startin gun wars, for black Reeboks and Velours  
Jungle way of life, livin villain  
Packed with visions, copy written  
Throwin bread to pigeons, Christ has risen, King Elegant  
Slang-Master jackets, expensive noodle hats  
In sixty-nine, old times was time that brothers shot craps  
The baggy blue Guess jeans, pull strings off of palm springs  
I'm locked in the bing, Rocky ring labelled rap king  
The corner emperor - the golden thieves play the benches  
Rednecks be hanging big niggaz down in Memphis  
Back in Now-Y, hit the bull's eye with loaded nines  
Life is like Tarzan, swingin from a thin vine  
Shatter dreams, then mirrors don't need a press spirals  
Aim at the white shadows with big barrels  
of Moet-ahs, the bald headers, milk and Amarett-ahs  
Who fear none, crushin all personal vendettas, yo  
They use guns, while we angrily shot arrows  
You better keep your eye on the sparrow!

Intro/Outro

[Have integrated a number of corrupt cops, judges and lawyers

into high-level positions -- to insure the continued success of the drug smuggling and money laundering operations.]

\*\*\*\*\*

## “Mathematics”

Mos Def and DJ Premiere

Booka-booka-booka-booka-booka

Ha hah

You know the deal

It's just me dog

Beats by Su-Primo for all of my people, negroes and latinos  
and even the gringos

Yo, check it

Verse 1:

One for Charlie Hustle, two for Steady Rock

Three for the fourth comin live future shock

It's five dimensions, six senses

Seven firmaments of heaven to hell

8 Million Stories to tell

Nine planets faithfully keep in orbit

with the probable tenth, the universe expands length

The body of my text possess extra strength

Power-liftin powerless up, out of this, towerin inferno

My ink so hot it burn through the journal

I'm blacker than midnight on Broadway and Myrtle

Hip-Hop past all your tall social hurdles

like the nationwide projects, prison-industry complex

Working class poor better keep your alarm set

Streets too loud to ever hear freedom ring

Say evacuate your sleep, it's dangerous to dream

for cha-ching cats get {{they}} CHA-POW, {{you}} dead now

Killin fields need blood to graze the cash cow

{{It's a numbers game}}, but shit don't add up somehow

Like I got, sixteen to thirty-two bars to rock it

but only 15% of profits, ever see my pockets like

sixty-nine billion in the last twenty years

spent on national defense but folks still live in fear like

nearly half of America's largest cities is one-quarter black

That's why they gave Ricky Ross all the crack

Sixteen ounces to a pound, twenty more to a ki

A five minute sentence hearing and you're no longer free

40% of Americans own a cell phone

so they can hear, everything that you say when you ain't home



I guess, Michael Jackson was right, "You Are Not Alone"  
Rock your hardhat black cause you in the Terrordome  
full of hard niggaz, large niggaz, dice tumblers  
Young teens and prison greens facin life numbers  
Crack mothers, crack babies and AIDS patients  
Young bloods can't spell but they could rock you in PlayStation  
This new math is whippin motherfuckers ass  
You wanna know how to rhyme you better learn how to add  
It's mathematics

Chorus: scratched by DJ Premier (repeat 2X)

"The Mighty Mos Def.."  
"It's simple mathematics" -> Fat Joe  
"Check it out!"  
"I revolve around science.."  
"What are we talking about here?"

.. "Do your math" -> Erykah Badu (2X) ..  
.. "One.. t-t-two.. three, four" -> James Brown ..  
.. "What are we talking about here?" ..

Verse 2:

Yo, it's one universal law but two sides to every story  
Three strikes and you be in for life, mandatory  
Four MC's murdered in the last four years  
I ain't tryin to be the fifth one, the millenium is here  
Yo it's 6 Million Ways to Die, from the seven deadly thrills  
Eight year olds gettin found with .9 mils  
It's 10 P.M., where your seeds at? What's the deal  
He on the hill puffin krill to keep they belly filled  
Light in the ass with heavy steel, sights on the pretty shit in life  
Young soldiers tryin to earn they next stripe  
When the average minimum wage is \$5.15  
You best believe you gotta find a new grind to get cream  
The white unemployment rate, is nearly more than triple for black  
so frontliners got they gun in your back  
Bubblin crack, jewel theft and robbery to combat poverty  
and end up in the global jail economy  
Stiffer stipulations attached to each sentence  
Budget cutbacks but increased police presence  
And even if you get out of prison still livin  
join the other five million under state supervision  
This is business, no faces -- just lines and statistics  
from your phone, your zip code, to S-S-I digits  
The system break man, child, and women into figures

Two columns for who is, and who ain't niggaz  
Numbers is hardly real and they never have feelings  
but you push too hard, even numbers got limits  
Why did one straw break the camel's back? Here's the secret:  
the million other straws underneath it - it's all mathematics

Chorus

{closing scratch} "Mathematics.."

\*\*\*\*\*