



Currency, Coping, and Carrying On: Tailoring AP English Language for 2023-24



Agenda

Introduction and Context: Renee Shea
(Bowie State University, Bowie, Maryland)

Scaffolding Difficult Texts: Natalie Castillo
(Felix Varela SHS, Miami, Florida)

Contemporary Text Selection: Ilsa Bruer
(Benson Polytechnic HS, Portland, Oregon)

Following Threads:
Florence Kelley and Divergent Topics

Summary Discussion of Approach(es)

Context

Career and College Readiness

CED and AP English Language Exam

Classroom Context and Goals

Politics, Parents, and Pedagogy

- Are students given the opportunity to immerse themselves in substantive texts—ones that require several days or weeks to read—as well as texts that can be read and reread within a single class period?
- Are students spending at least eight hours per week (both inside and outside of class) engaged in their reading and writing? Is there a clear connection between their reading and writing?
- Are students reading texts that require teacher involvement or scaffolding, or can the texts be read independently?

CONTROVERSIAL TEXTUAL CONTENT

Issues that might, from particular social, historical, or cultural viewpoints, be considered controversial, including references to ethnicities, nationalities, religions, races, dialects, gender, or class, may be addressed in texts that are appropriate for the AP English Language and Composition course. Fair representation of issues and peoples may occasionally include controversial material. Since AP students have chosen a program that directly involves them in college-level work, participation in this course depends on a level of maturity consistent with the age of high school students who have engaged in thoughtful analyses of a variety of texts. The best response to controversial language or ideas in a text might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose, or overall effect of the language or idea in context. AP students should have the maturity, skill, and will to seek the larger meaning of a text or issue through thoughtful research.

GENERAL AND TOPICAL READERS

Some AP English Language and Composition teachers may want students to explore ways that people inquire, argue, and deliberate on a variety of topics and questions. For this kind of course, many textbook publishers design “readers” that are divided into units, each featuring a collection of responses to a question that generates public controversy.

TRADE BOOKS

Contemporary trade books (investigative journalism, designed for the reading public instead of for the classroom) give students practice in reading complex, extended arguments that are historically and culturally situated. Unlike readers, which contain a collection of short texts offering various perspectives on a single topic, trade books generally provide a single, in-depth argument on a single topic. Authors of texts appropriate for study in this course include the following: Nicholas Carr, Dave Eggers, Jonathan Safran Foer, Jane Goodall, Malcolm Gladwell, Peter Singer, Rebecca Skloot, and E.O. Wilson. A good way to search for possible texts is to look at the *New York Times* Nonfiction Best Seller list.

EXTENDED TEXTS

Books by important writers of past eras also provide students with practice in deciphering and responding to complex and extended arguments from historical and cultural settings different from their own. Authors of texts that might be used in the AP English Language and Composition course include Mary Wollstonecraft, Henry David Thoreau, Charles Darwin, and Rachel Carson.

SPEECHES

Because speeches emerge from particular rhetorical occasions, they are especially good for illustrating how arguments are successfully or unsuccessfully crafted to target particular audiences in particular situations in an effort to accomplish particular purposes. Authors of speeches suitable for the AP English Language and Composition course include Abraham Lincoln, Sojourner Truth, Chief Joseph, King George IV of England, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy, Indira Gandhi, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama.

ESSAYS

From 18th-century journalists and pamphleteers to present-day essayists whose writing appears in newspapers, journals, and essay collections, the essay is a historically favored genre for the conduct of public conversation about consequential questions. Students should learn to distinguish between essays that serve primarily as personal expression or autobiographical narration and those that serve primarily as instruction, inquiry, or political or social advocacy. Students should also consider how essayists of all kinds participate in public discussion of consequential topics and questions. Well-known political and literary essayists appropriate for AP English Language and Composition reading lists include Samuel Johnson, Thomas Paine, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, Virginia Woolf, Martin Luther King Jr., Annie Dillard, John McPhee, Susan Sontag, Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, Richard Rodriguez, Oscar Wilde, Scott Russell Sanders, Joyce Carol Oates, Alice Walker, David Sedaris, and Wendell Barry. However, contributions of less canonical “literary” essayists also have a place in the course and may come from opinion pages in newspapers and magazines, personal blogs, and organizational websites.

POPULAR CULTURE TEXTS

Because the AP English Language and Composition course seeks to cultivate rhetorical reading skills, texts with persuasive purposes drawn from popular culture are suitable for inclusion in the course reading list. Advertisements, propaganda, advice columns, television and radio talk shows and interviews, newspaper columns, cartoons, political commentaries, documentary films, TED Talks, and YouTube videos



**College Board
and District
Goals &
Guidelines**

Checks and Balances

**Canonical
Texts and
Contemporary
Issues**

**Community
Values and
Teacher
Survival**



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MDCPS and Felix Varela Senior High School

3rd

largest district in the country

- 331,500 students
- 128 high schools
- School Choice (transfers, magnet programs)

~2000

students

- Global Studies, Veterinary, and iPrep Magnets
- 22 AP Courses

40%

of English Language and Composition students are English Language Learners

- Everybody tests
- Open access

Assignment Scaffolding

Sample: "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

Basic Structure

General Summary	Clarifying Details	Text	Tone	Other Analytical Observations
<i>Speaker setting the occasion</i>	<i>Begins by bringing up the exclusivity of political freedom and independence</i>	<p>Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?</p> <p>text selection here.</p>	<i>bold, defiant</i>	<i>Rhetorical questions Beginning with term "Fellow-citizens" I versus you</i>

Assignment Scaffolding

Sample: "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

More Support

General Summary	Clarifying Details	Text	Tone	Other Analytical Observations
	<p>Provide helpful context or define some words.</p> <p>“Words” here, means “I wish.”</p>	<p>Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold, that a nation’s sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish, that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation’s jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man.</p>		<p>How might the metaphors help Douglass humanize him for his listeners?</p> <p>How might these rhetorical questions function differently than the ones in the previous paragraph?</p> <p>Why is the word “hallelujahs” a significant choice?</p> <p>How is the structure of the last sentence impactful?</p>

Assignment Scaffolding

Sample: "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

Less Support

Paraphrase	Text	Tone	Other Rhetorical Choices	Commentary
<p><i>Fellow citizens: Although your cries of joy are loud, I hear the sad cries of others who suffer during your celebration. To ignore them and go along with your joy would betray them and make me seem disgusting in front of God and in front of the world. I want to talk about American slavery. Let's talk about this day and its associations from the perspective of a slave. If I were to take on the traits and perspective of of an enslaved person, I do not doubt that the character of this country seems worse today than ever before.</i></p>	<p>Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then fellow-citizens, is American slavery. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July!</p>	<p><i>Critical, disdainful, righteous, forthright</i></p>	<p><i>Juxtaposition of joy and grief</i></p> <p><i>Biblical allusion Psalm 137 "By the rivers of Babylon"</i></p> <p><i>Direct and plain speech</i></p> <p><i>Pointed word choice "blacker"</i></p>	<p><i>Demonstrates the differences between his audience members and enslaved people; sets up a dichotomy</i></p> <p><i>Connects to audience through Christian ideology; depicts enslaved people as deserving as empathy as Judeans would have been; perhaps establishes his moral credibility</i></p> <p><i>Rather than allow his audience to dodge their potential discomfort, he aims to force them to face their complicity.</i></p> <p><i>The audience would not have missed the irony of a black man calling their character metaphorically black</i></p>



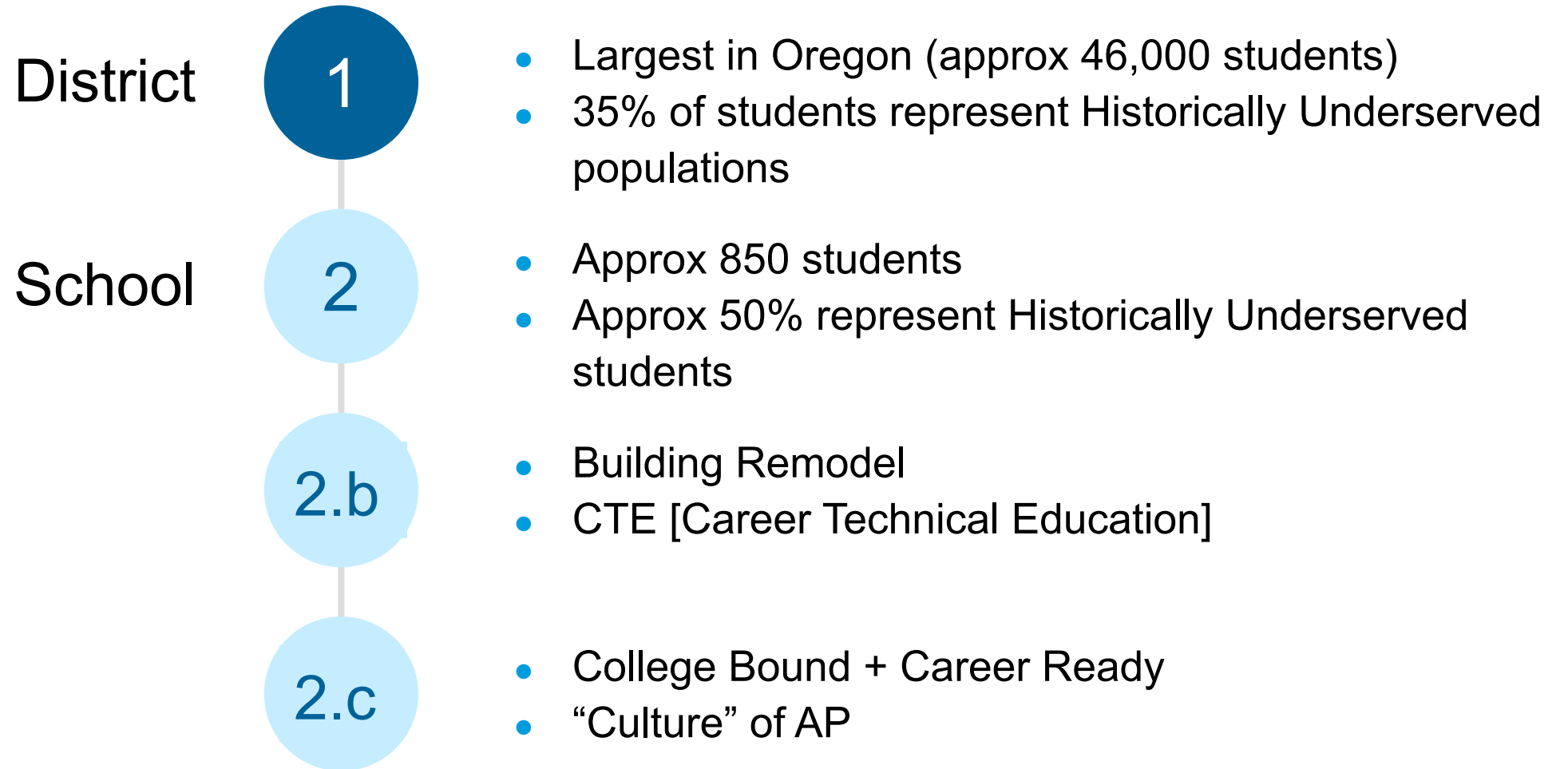
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Questions I Ponder when Planning

How do I adjust planned readings and resources in response to current events and the interest of my students?

How do you craft a course given the context (political, current events, etc.)?

How do I give students the critical thinking skills to approach information? How do I give the power to my students?

What can I do to enable students to bring the “controversy” in such that I, the teacher, serve more as a moderator?



A few text examples

Throughout the year I try to work in different styles of writing and topics that will appeal to students' interest and majors. A few examples include:

For my Health Occupations students...

[Richard Selzer's "The Knife"](#)

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot**

For my Communications and Design students...

["Is Google Making Us Stupid" by Nicholas Carr](#)

For my Tech Skills Students...

***A Place of My Own* by Michael Pollan [excerpts]**

For ALL...

A 3 quarter long research based project that includes students selecting a topic of their choosing and completing...

- ...research, annotated bibliographies persuasive speeches, an original Synthesis style prompt based on their research and finally an 8-10 page research paper that synthesizes the work

Model Text:

[“The ‘Loser Edit’ That Awaits Us All](#)

By Colson Whitehead

The ‘Loser Edit’ That Awaits Us All
The New York Times Magazine

By Colson Whitehead
March 3, 2015 [Source](#)

Paragraph Gist		Observations, Notes & Conclusions
	<p>If you have ever watched a reality TV show and said, “He’s going home tonight,” you know what the “loser edit” is. I imagine it started as a matter of practicality. If you have 20 contestants, they can’t all receive equal airtime. When an obscure character gets the heave-ho, the producers have to cobble together a coherent story line. Intersperse the snippets across the hour, and we can identify sins and recognizable human frailty that need to be punished. Anyone tuning in for the first time catches up quickly. The loser edit is not just the narrative arc of a contestant about to be chopped, or voted off the island, whatever the catchphrase. It is the plausible argument of failure.</p> <p>The concept first bubbled up out of the pop-cultural ether when competitive reality shows hit upon their formula, in the form of “Survivor” and “The Amazing Race.” TV enthusiasts — part fan, part Roland Barthes with a TiVo — congregated on online message boards like Television Without Pity, creating a new slang with which to dis and deconstruct their favorites.</p> <p>Fifteen years later, the critical language used to carve up the phonies, saints and sad-sack wannabes of reality shows has migrated, and the loser edit has become a limber metaphor for exploring our own real-world failures. Fate doles out ideas for subplots — fire her, dump him, all species of mortification — and we eagerly run with them, cutting loser narratives for friends and enemies, the people we have demoted to the status of mere character. Everybody’s setbacks or degradations have been foreshadowed if we look hard enough at the old tape. We arrange the sequences, borrowing from cultural narratives of disaster (with our) the available with a bit of hindsight — and in turn, we endure our own loser edits when we</p>	

- This particular example is a text that targets students in the Communications & Design pathway
- Use a template that is routine, regardless of the text
- Ask *students* to identify topics/issues and make connections (their majors, world, other texts we’ve read, etc.)



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Gives context for his argument

harm the 'loser edit' creates beyond reality tv into real life situations.

we all want an excuse for failure

DMP convo about content creation and social media



Give it a try...

- 1. Pick a paragraph/passage from *either* Douglass or Whitehead**
- 2. If you choose...**

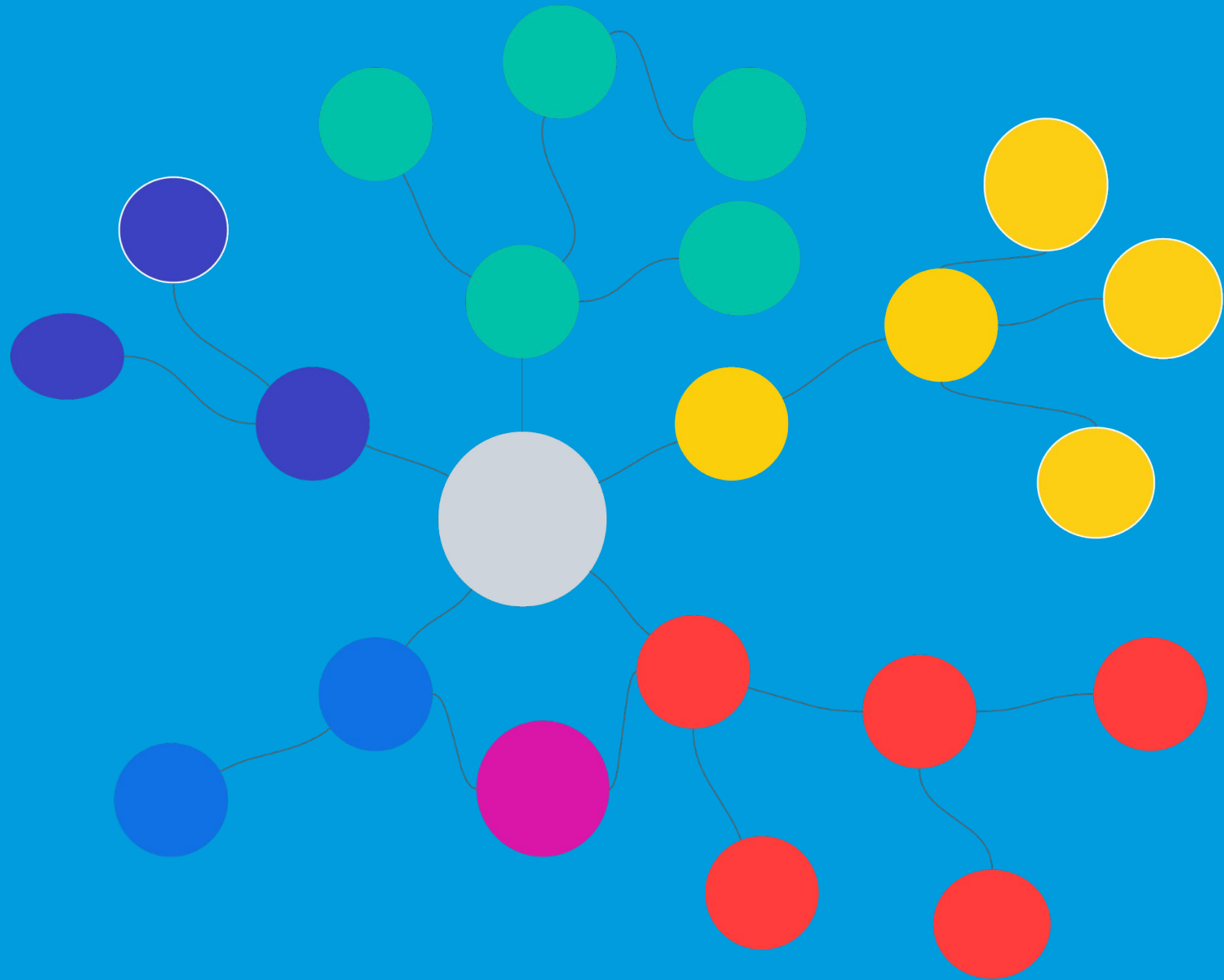
Whitehead	Douglass
<p>Record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The gist/general summary2. Observations, Notes and Conclusions (including topics/issues and connections (world, other texts read, etc.))	<p>Record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paraphrase2. Identify the tone3. Rhetorical Choices4. Commentary



Following Threads: Inviting Diverse Perspectives Into the Classroom Conversation

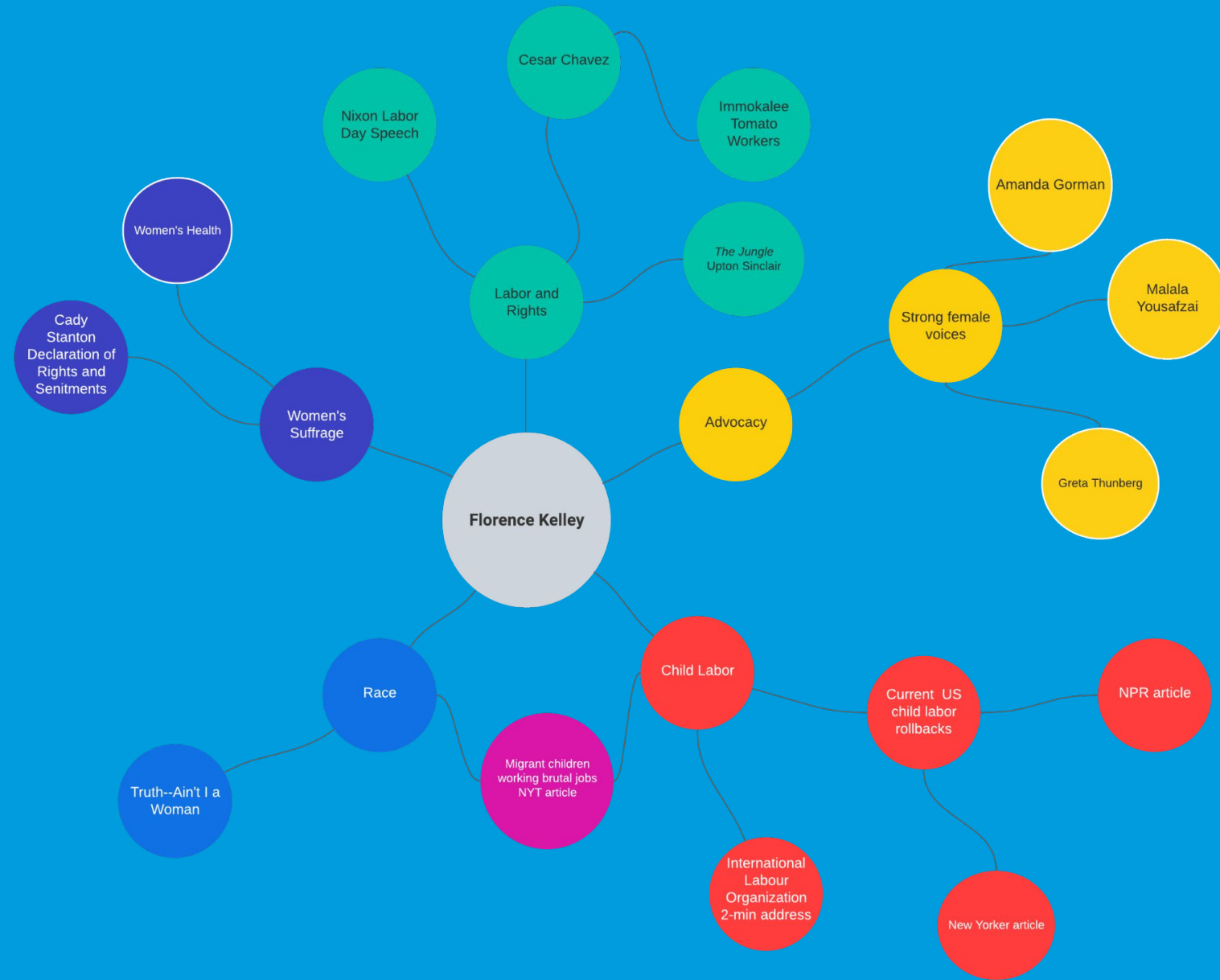


- 1. Briefly read the 2011 Question 2 document, focusing on the passage over the prompt.**
- 2. Working with a partner or group members, identify topics and ideas that you might associate with this passage.**
- 3. Create a visual representation to collect your “threads.”**
- 4. Connect those ideas to other authors, titles, pieces, historical or current events, and movements. Use your resources to research and discover.**
- 5. Share your posters with the whole group.**



**Share your group's completed chart by
emailing a picture to:**

NatalieNCastillo@gmail.com





<https://tinyurl.com/LANGCCCO>

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ibruer@pps.net

NatalieCastillo@dadeschools.net

