



# Young Adult Literature and Action Research

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# Invitation to Write

Why do we read Young Adult Literature?

What purpose does reading these novels serve?

What do we hope to get out of novels, and more importantly, what do we want our students to get out of YA Novels?

A person is holding a lit sparkler, with bright sparks emanating from the tip. The person's face is partially visible in the background, and they are wearing a dark jacket. The entire scene is framed by a white, splattered, paint-like border.

# Hello!

I am Alice Hays

You can find me at

@haysalice

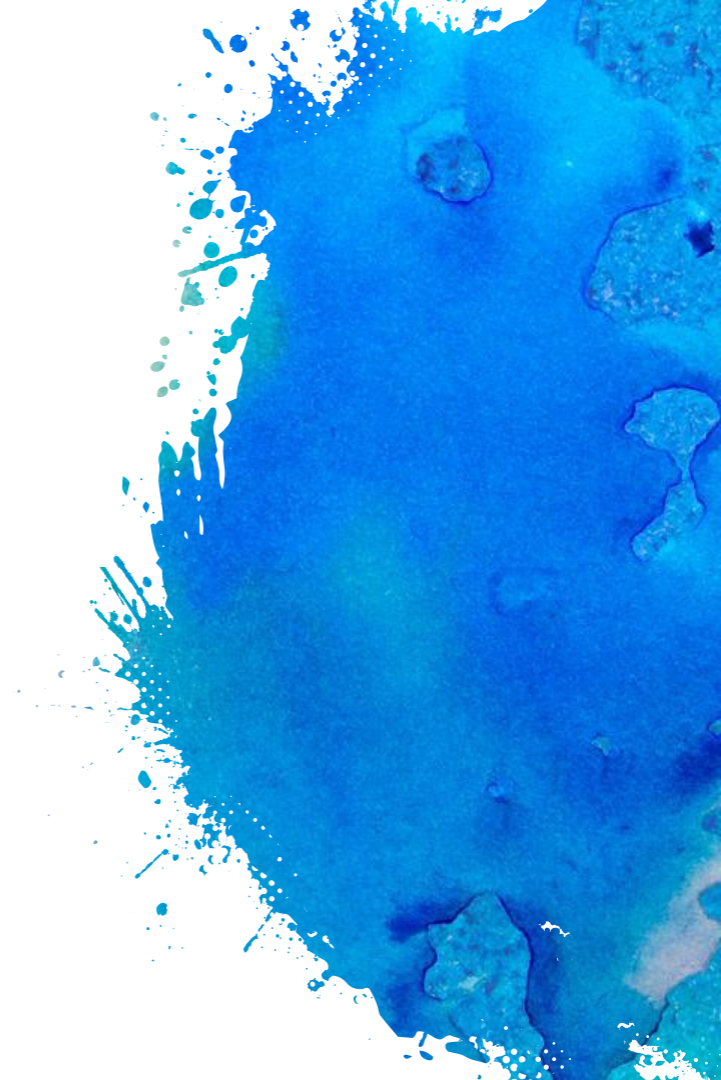
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# NCTE's Resolution on Social Justice in Literacy Education- November 20, 2010

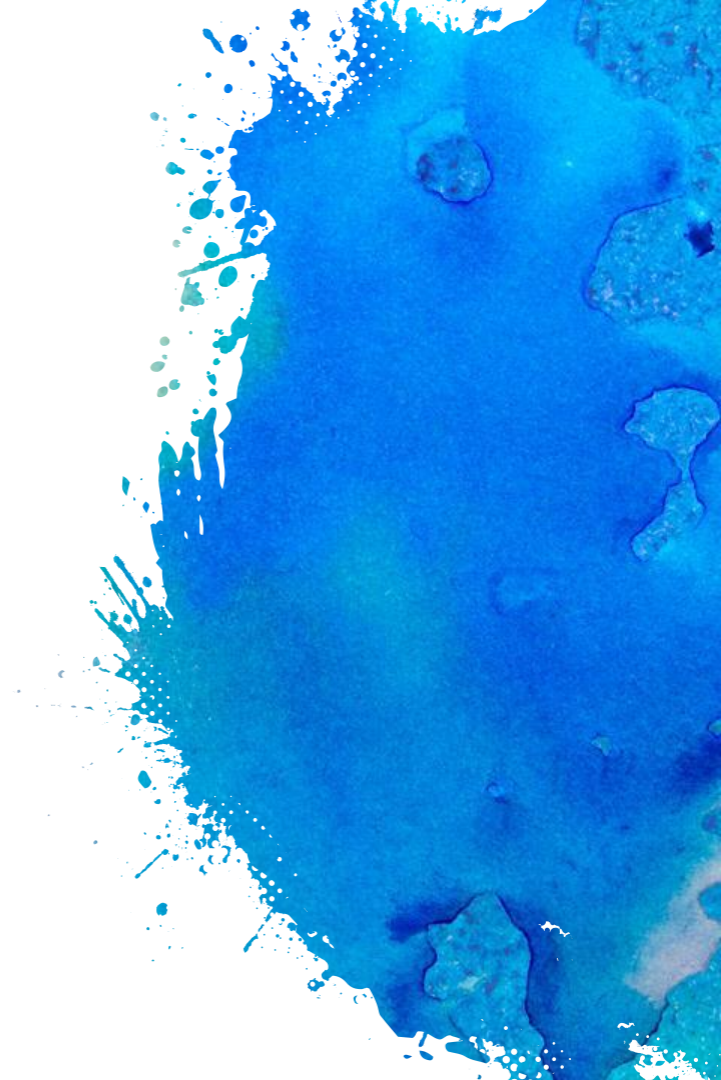
# NCTE pledges to:

support efforts by educators to teach about social injustice and discrimination in all its forms with regard to differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender expression, age, appearance, ability, national origin, language, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic circumstance, and environment



# NCTE pledges to:

advocate for equitable  
schooling practices that  
reinforce student dignity  
and success



# YAL that reflects student experiences

- × We are increasingly seeing a push for diverse literature for students (We Need Diverse Books, YAWednesday.org, Children's Literature Assembly, NCTE).
- × Realistic fiction can address multiple levels of student experience including race, class, community, family structures and values, to name a few.
- × These experiences can serve as mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990).

# Stepping through the Sliding Glass Door into Civic Engagement

- × As there has been a call for more diverse literature, so too, has there been a call for more civic engagement.
- × (i.e. American Educational Research Association, Literacy Research Association, National Council of Teachers of English.)





# YPAR

Youth Participatory Action Research

# YPAR

Places the student at the center of the curriculum.

Students decide what issue they want to focus on.

Students participate in the research process, which often includes primary sources.

Students decide what action to take and how to take it.

# Examples of Successful YPAR

<http://yparhub.berkeley.edu>

Torre, M., Fine, M., Alexander, N., Billups, A. et al. (2008) "Participatory action research in the contact zone", *Revolutionizing Education* (Chapter 3; pages 23-44)

These students took performance oriented approaches to challenge the school to prison pipeline.

Broderick, D. (2014). Collaborative Design. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(3), 198-208.

She and her students created a mixed media journal to give students voice.

# What does this curriculum look like?

YPAR can be a daunting task, but students are eager for a challenge that addresses real world issues that they read about in YA.





# How is YA relevant to YPAR?

Students with little experience with a social justice issue are exposed to a more nuanced understanding of the issue from a more human point of view. This may inspire them to feel more connected to the people who suffer from the issue.

Students with experience with the issue will see that their experiences are not only their own. This also leads to a more nuanced understanding of the issue from a different point of view.

# What are the components to this unit?



# Brainstorming issues

It is important that students feel like they have a say in their topic if this is to be successful.

Encourage them to keep the issues locally based if possible!

# Potential topics may include:

| Bullying        | Racism          | Refugees    | Poverty   |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Environment     | School Violence | Immigration | LGBTQ     |
| Gender equality | Mental Illness  | Abuse       | Democracy |



# Narrowing the topic choices:

You'll have to narrow the topic choices to no more than 7-8 because each different topic will require its own novel/grouping.

Think about how many you want for your class.

This can be done through democratic means, or district limitations, or your own dictatorship. 😊

# Finding the books

Goodreads and YALSA are most clearly labeled resources,  
but finding the right book does take time.

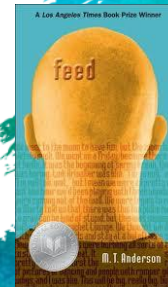
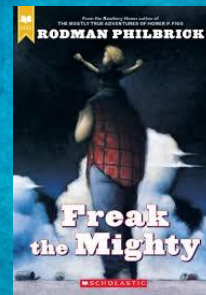
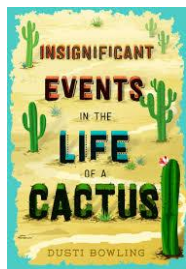
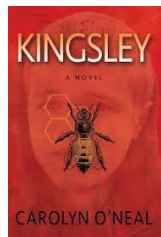
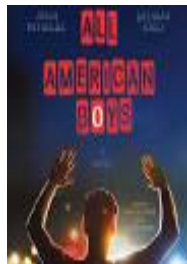
# Buying the books

Where: Amazon, book companies, publishers. How: Grants, Go  
Fund Me, Students\*\*More time!

# Reading the books

Literature Circles, read alouds, as homework, mini-book clubs

# Books I've used in the past:





# Research, research, research





# How is this research different?

## Students become the researchers

For this project, students should move beyond using secondary sources. If they have chosen a community based issue, they will find value in getting information from the people in the community who deal with the issue.

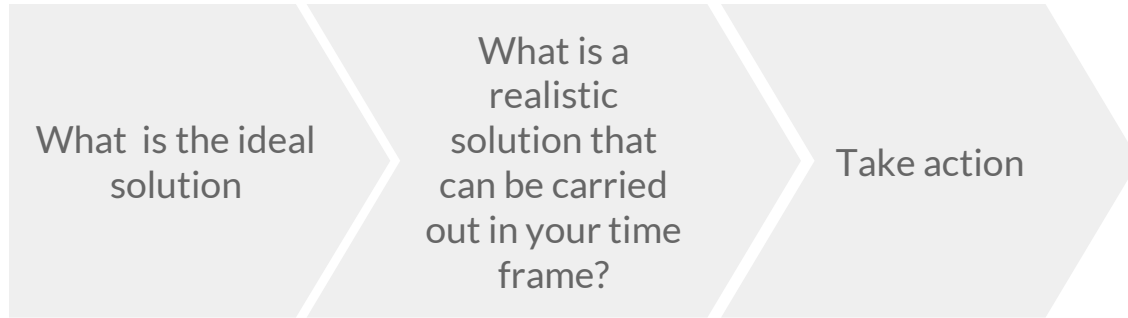
## Students reach out to people “in power”

**By reaching out to legislators, directors of organizations and community leaders, students find their own interests validated. Additionally, this allows them to see their work as more authentic .**

## Students present their findings

These presentations can occur at multiple points along the curriculum. I have had teachers require their students to do several presentations. One that is simply about the research that they find, and another that is about the action plan that they create, and I have had other teachers only do one final presentation at the end.

# Developing an action plan and following through



# What do you need to do as the teacher?

## **Provide time to do this work!**

This takes a significant amount of time to do well. You might want to break the project up throughout the course of the year. In the initial run of this, the 9 week plan ended up taking an entire semester. The teacher added speeches, non-fiction excerpts and critical reading to support the project so she could meet her standards without changing the focus.

## **Be prepared with suggestions.**

Students will want to take action but will have NO idea how to go about getting started typically. Suggestions may include:

Starting a school club

Doing a drive

Contacting legislators, schoolboards, Ambassadors

Starting Twitter or Instagram accounts

Creating a video to share with the school.

Writing a magazine for the school.

# One more thing

## Be flexible in your expectations

Every student I have seen has vastly different results, but upon interviewing them, sometimes the students who have the most emotional growth are able to do the least for their project.

Be gentle with grading!

## But wait... how do I grade

Great question!

Lots of grading “parts” are probably necessary.

Peer review

Holistically

Effort based

Research separate from Action



# Let's plan out a unit

## INVITATION TO WRITE:

What issues do you think your students might want to address?

What CCSS ELA standards do you feel like you need to address? Are there any that tend to get left by the wayside?

## LET'S SHARE

Share with your elbow partner what you came up with.

What do you have in common? Where do you differ?

# What books might you use?

Using your accessible resources, find books that might be age appropriate that address the issues you identified.

Where can they be found? How much are they?

What approach could you take to getting them?

# How will you read the book?

- × Take time in your partners to discuss the approach you might take to reading the book.
- × Lit Circles, Daily journal entries, book talks, centers?
- × Things to consider:
  - × How do you hold students accountable for reading?
  - × How do you support students who struggle?
  - × What is the ultimate goal of reading the novels?

# What supplementary materials might you need?

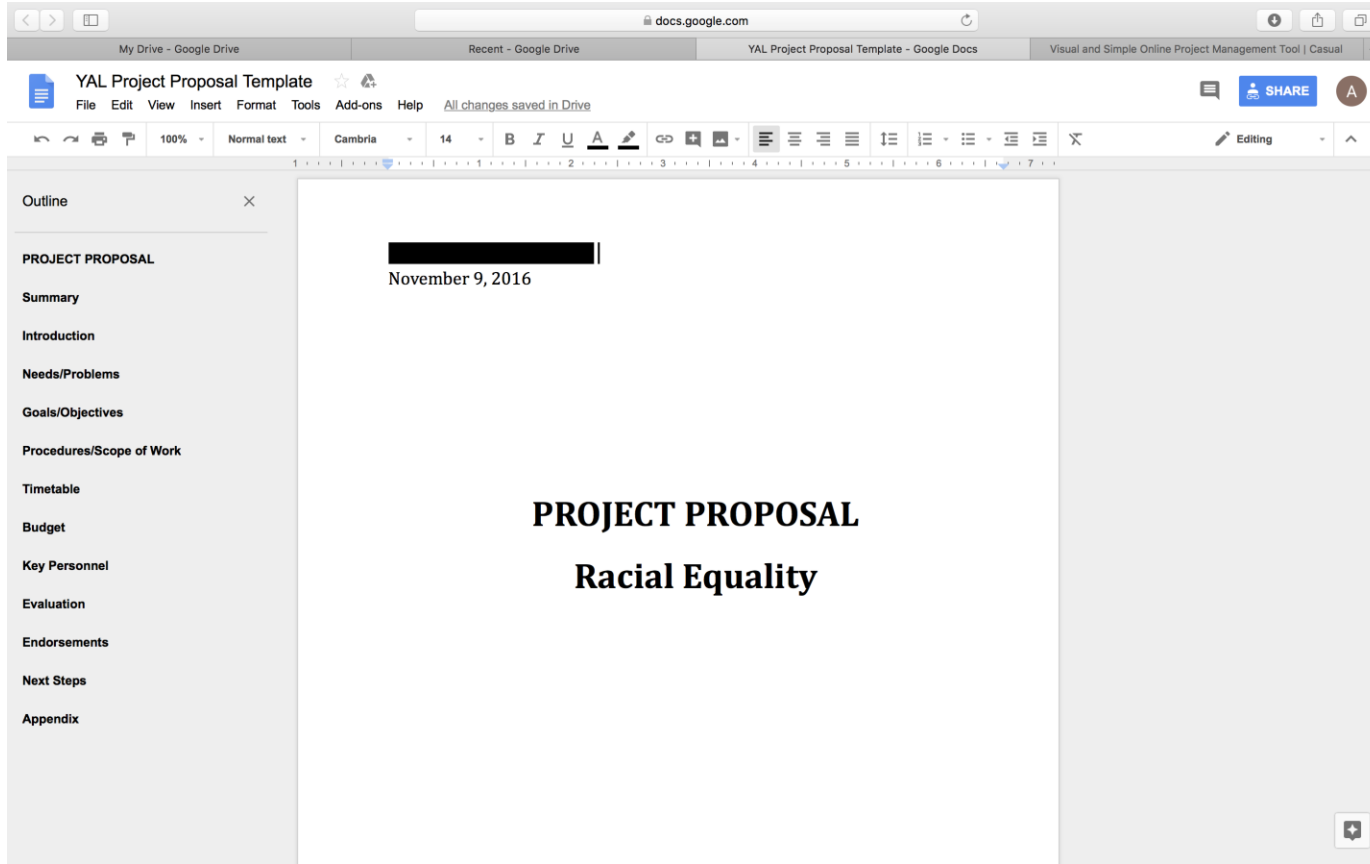
- × As part of your novel reading, you may also want to start bringing in newspaper articles etc. to start students thinking about the realistic aspect of their issue. What could you use? How would you incorporate it into their reading plan?
- × Things to consider:
  - × How will you access the readings?
  - × What will be on the reading level?
  - × How will you keep the readings up to date?
  - × How much and how often will the students read non-fiction pieces?



# What will you require from their research paper and/or action plan?

- × Not everyone has the freedom or luxury to implement all of this.
- × How much will you require of the students?
- × Things to consider:
  - × What standards will be met?
  - × How much of the plan should be realistic vs. idealistic?
  - × What support can you give them to enact the action piece?

# One approach



The screenshot displays a Google Docs document titled "YAL Project Proposal Template". The interface includes a top navigation bar with tabs for "My Drive - Google Drive", "Recent - Google Drive", and the current document. Below this is a menu bar with options like "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Tools", "Add-ons", and "Help". A toolbar with various editing tools (bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, bullet points, etc.) is visible. On the left side, there is an "Outline" panel with a list of sections: "PROJECT PROPOSAL", "Summary", "Introduction", "Needs/Problems", "Goals/Objectives", "Procedures/Scope of Work", "Timetable", "Budget", "Key Personnel", "Evaluation", "Endorsements", "Next Steps", and "Appendix". The main editing area shows a redacted header with a black box and the date "November 9, 2016". The title "PROJECT PROPOSAL" is centered in a large, bold, serif font, followed by the subtitle "Racial Equality" in a slightly smaller, bold, serif font. The bottom right corner of the document area features a small icon for adding new documents.

docs.google.com

My Drive - Google Drive Recent - Google Drive YAL Project Proposal Template - Google Docs Visual and Simple Online Project Management Tool | Casual

YAL Project Proposal Template

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive

100% Normal text Cambria 14 B I U A

Outline

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Summary

Introduction

Needs/Problems

Goals/Objectives

Procedures/Scope of Work

Timetable

Budget

Key Personnel

Evaluation

Endorsements

Next Steps

Appendix

November 9, 2016

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Racial Equality

Editing

# Let's share

Let's take a few minutes to talk about what you came up with and what potential snags you foresee.



# Thanks!

## Any questions?

You can find me at:

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# Resources

Literature Circle Packets can be found by googling literature circle packets. You can find advanced roles as well as those for middle school. They were all adapted from Harvey Daniels (1994) ideas. The sample lit circle packet I gave you was from the CSUN site.

Action Plan Templates.

<http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/ActionPlanTemplate-e-writable.pdf>

Peer Review Template  
(Handout)

Sample Assignment Sheet  
(Handout)

# Further Reading

- Ames, M. (2013). Engaging “apolitical” adolescents: Analyzing the popularity and educational potential of dystopian literature post-9/11. *The High School Journal*, 97(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2013.0023>
- Bautista, M., Bertrand, M., & Morrell, E. (2013). Participatory action research and city youth: Methodological insights from the council of youth research. *Teachers College Record*, 115(October), 1–23. Retrieved from [http://www.tcrecord.org/DefaultFiles/SendFileToPublic.asp?ft=pdf&FilePath=c:%5CWebSites%5Cwww\\_tcrecord\\_org\\_documents%5C38\\_17142.pdf&fid=38\\_17142&aid=2&RID=17142&pf=Content.asp?ContentID=17142](http://www.tcrecord.org/DefaultFiles/SendFileToPublic.asp?ft=pdf&FilePath=c:%5CWebSites%5Cwww_tcrecord_org_documents%5C38_17142.pdf&fid=38_17142&aid=2&RID=17142&pf=Content.asp?ContentID=17142)
- Mirra, N., Filipiak, D., & Garcia, A. (2015). Revolutionizing inquiry in urban English classrooms: Pursuing voice and justice through youth participatory action research. *English Journal*, 105(2), 49–57.
- Wolk, S. (2009). Reading for a better world: Teaching for social responsibility with young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(May), 664–673. <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.52.8.2>

# Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- × Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- × Photographs by [Unsplash](#)
- × Watercolor textures by [GraphicBurguer](#)