

Key Words and Definitions

For definitions of anti-bias words and terminology used in the following activities, see ADL's online [Education Glossary Terms](#). Note that many of the words include differentiated definitions for elementary age students.

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Activity and Overview

Read and Discuss *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem* by Amanda Gorman

The purpose of this activity is to read, analyze and learn more about Amanda Gorman's first children's book, *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem*.

Grade Level

Elementary

Materials Needed

Change Sings: A Children's Anthem by Amanda Gorman (book)

Core Activity

Before reading the book, engage students in a pre-reading discussion by asking the following questions:

- In looking at the cover, what do you think the book will be about?
- What do you think the title means? What is an "anthem?" (*An anthem is a song that has special importance for a group of people, organization, movement or country.*)
- Who is the author of the book? Do you know who Amanda Gorman is and what do you know about her?

Share with students that [Amanda Gorman](#) is a poet, writer, activist and changemaker and that *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem* is the first children's book she wrote. In 2017, Amanda Gorman was the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate. In 2021, she wrote and delivered her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. In February 2021, Gorman was highlighted in *TIME* magazine's 100 Next list

under the category of Phenoms, with a profile written by Lin Manual-Miranda. You can learn more about her and watch her recite her inaugural poem [here](#).

Use these discussion questions to engage students in a discussion about the book:

- What thoughts and feelings came to mind while you read the book?
- What different identity groups of people did you see in the book?
- What do the people in the book have in common?
- What's different about the people in the book? What does the line in the book "I'm the change I want to see?" mean?
- What is the overall message of the book? Why do you think the book is called *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem*?

After reading and discussing the book, have students choose a page(s) in the book that they find memorable, important or inspiring to them. Have them re-draw the illustration on that page with their own design and drawing style and include the same words on the page or change them to highlight their new drawing. Then, have students share the pages with each other in their class and have them placed around the school building. You could also have students record themselves (or have a teacher/school staff record them) talking about the page(s) in the book that they find memorable, important or inspiring to them, and why. An alternative to this activity is to have students write and draw a new page that illustrates: "What *Change Sings* means to me."

Activity and Overview

One, Some, Many, All: Challenging Bias

The purpose of this activity is to have students consider the distinction between “one, some, many and all” and to reflect on and express the different levels of impact each has on people challenging bias together.

Grade Level

Elementary

Core Activity

With students, define what each of the words (one, some, many and all) means and brainstorm examples of each. Examples can include **one** bicycle, **some** cousins, **many** rocks (or something else they collect) and **all** the class (the whole class). Create a brainstormed list of other examples of one, some, many and all. To further explore the difference between the words, you can use stomping feet, clapping hands or saying the word “yes” loudly. You can do this as a class or school: have one student do it, then some students (2–4 in a class), then many (15–20 in a class) and then all (all students). Invite students to reflect on the difference in impact and power.

Elicit and explain that when addressing prejudice or bias, sometimes it helps if one person does something and sometimes it makes a bigger difference and more of an impact if more people do something. Share an example in history (such as the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#)) where one or a few people may have started that movement, but when more people got involved, it had a greater impact. You can also share an example of something that happens in school, like a teasing or bullying situation and talk about what one person could do to help, what some people could do, what many could do or what all (everyone in class or lunchroom) could do. Explain that in this situation, one person saying something can make a difference but if more people do something or don't participate, the impact may be greater.

As a culmination, have students create a drawing and optionally include a slogan (a short and memorable phrase) that illustrates when one, some, many or all people challenge bias. The image and slogan can be of a specific incident or situation or a general message about people working together to challenge bias.

Use these discussion questions with students to reflect on this experience:

- What is it like when one person challenges bias?
- What happens when more people challenge bias?

- Is there a difference between one, some, many and all? How so?
- Do you think increasing the numbers increases the impact? Why or why not?
- Have you ever worked with others to address or challenge bias? If so, how did that feel? What impact did it have?
- Can you share any examples from history or from your own life where the number of people challenging bias makes a difference?

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Activity and Overview

Poems for Justice

The purpose of this activity is for students to learn about and analyze a social justice poem and then reflect on issues of social justice that are important to them and write a poem that expresses those thoughts and ideas.

[Poems for Justice](#) is a pre-approved activity in the [No Place for Hate Activity Library](#).

Grade Level

Middle School

Activity and Overview

Express Yourself: Using Your Words for Change

The purpose of this activity is for students to explore the many ways they can use their words and voices to express how to change schools, communities and society in order to make them more equitable and just.

Grade Level

Middle and High School

Core Activity

Engage students in a conversation responding to this prompt: What in school, your community or society needs changing in order to achieve justice and equity? Have them talk in pairs or small groups and share different ideas of what they believe is unfair, unjust or not equitable and what needs to be done to bring about change. Reconvene students and have students share their ideas aloud with everyone.

Then, brainstorm all the ways they can think of that people can use their words and their voices to express what they think needs to change and why. The list could look something like this:

- Poetry
- Song
- Spoken word
- 6-word story
- Chant
- Anthem
- Pledge
- Protest
- Activism
- Speech
- Letter
- Journal entry
- Short story
- Picture/poster
- Social media post
- Rant
- Meme
- Emoji/emoji story
- Picture book for a younger child

Have students then identify an issue or problem that needs to change and the way they will express that, using the list you've created. Provide students time to work on their expressions and allow them to work alone, in pairs or triads to create their expressions. Then, organize a schoolwide assembly and gallery to have students share aloud or display their expressions. Also find a way to share their expressions digitally with families and the school community as a whole, either on the school's website or social media platforms.

Use these discussion questions with students to reflect on this experience:

- How did you come up with ideas about what needs to change in school, community or society?

- What did you learn by hearing about other people’s ideas for how to make change?
- What was it like for you to express your thoughts and ideas in this way?
- Do you think it’s possible to change our school, community or society? How so?
- Can you think of examples in history or currently where people used their words and voices to make a difference in creating more equity and justice? How did they do that?
- Why do you think it’s helpful to have different ways of expressing ourselves?

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Activity and Overview

Identity, Diversity and Me

The purpose of this activity is for students to reflect on aspects of their identity that are important to them and then share this with others in order to build empathy and understanding.

Grade Level

Middle and High School

Core Activity

Brainstorm with students the different aspects and categories of identity, including some or all of the following:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Religion
- Ability/Disability
- Education
- Sexual Orientation
- Culture
- Nationality
- Socioeconomic Status
- Family Structure or Composition
- Residency Status
- Languages Spoken
- Geography (part of country, type of community e.g., urban, suburb, rural)
- Talents, Interests, Hobbies

Have students silently reflect on aspects of their identity included on this list and jot down which categories and which identity groups they belong to are most important to them right now.

Explain that in 2019, *The New York Times* did a call-out asking Gen Zers (the generation born between 1997 and 2012), the most racially diverse generation in U.S. history, to respond to the question, “What makes you different from your friends?” They asked them to identify themselves however they wanted and send a photo self-portrait. Within 48 hours, they received 2,500 submissions and then published nearly 1,000 of them. A gallery of those self-portraits [can be found here](#). Provide time for students to look at the gallery either using their phones/devices or projecting some or all of them in class. You can also have the gallery of self-portraits projected somewhere in the school building such as the library, where students can watch when they have the opportunity.

Using these photos as inspiration, have students create their own self-portraits to create a school-wide photo gallery similar to *The New York Times* online exhibit. To do this, have students identify or take a photo that best expresses and represents how they see themselves right now. If they don't have a photo that best represents them, allow them to take a photo in school or have a classmate take one of them. If there are students who don't have phones, have other students take photos of them. After selecting their photos, have them respond to the following questions, either in writing or with a partner:

- How would you describe your identity?
- What makes you different from your friends or others in school?
- In what way(s) are you unique?

Then have students take their self-portraits and using an app that adds text to photos (e.g., Word Swag, Phonto, Canva), have students include (1) their quote about themselves based on the questions above and (2) the way they identify themselves, including when they were born, their location and other identifying features such as race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. (e.g., born 2002, Mexican, Female, Bisexual, Orlando, FL). When completed, compile all of the self-portraits and create a gallery of photos for all students in the school to see and/or an online photo gallery. Be sure to let students know their self-portraits will be displayed publicly so they are comfortable with what they share.

Use these discussion questions with students to reflect on this experience:

- When you look at *The New York Times* gallery of self-portraits, what do you notice? What do you wonder?
- What pictures and quotes stood out to you?
- What identity groups are well represented?
- What groups were missing or not well represented?

- From these photos, how would you best characterize the diversity of Gen Z?
- When you look at our school's gallery of self-portraits, what do you notice? What do you wonder?
- Are there identity groups that are well represented?
- What groups were missing or not well represented?
- What is diversity?
- What is representation?
- Why are they important in our society today?
- What did you learn by doing this?

Family Connections

To make home and family connections, share these Table Talk family discussion guides.

- [Why We Need Diverse Books](#) (Ages 7 and up)
- [The Purpose and Power of Protest](#) (Ages 8 and up)
- [Diversity in Media and Why Visibility Matters](#) (Ages 8 and up)
- [Nike's Ad and Believing in Something](#) (Ages 11 and up)