

Language, Gender, and Culture

Developed by Mira-Lisa Katz and Nelson R. Graff

MODULE: STUDENT VERSION

Reading Selections for this Module

- Brooks, David. "Honor Code." *New York Times* 6 July 2012, New York ed.: A23. Print.
- Butler, Judith. "phylosophe." *YouTube*. 23 Feb. 2007. Web. 8 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLnv322X4tY>>.
- Lorde, Audre. "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." *The Cancer Journals*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1980. 18-23. Print.
- Tannen, Deborah. "His Politeness Is Her Powerlessness." *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990. 203-5. Print.
- Young, Vershawn Ashanti. "Prelude: The Barbershop." Preface. *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007. xi-xvi. Print.

Reading Rhetorically

Prereading

Activity 1

Getting Ready to Read

Choose two of the five quickwrite topics below, and write your responses in your Language, Gender, Identity, and Culture Reflection Journal:

Quickwrite 1: Some people assert that just one or two generations ago men and women seemed to have more rigid codes for how to behave: for example, men could be loud and assertive while women were expected to dress modestly and to use a "feminine" voice. Do you think these codes or "rules" for male and female behavior still hold true today? What experiences and observations can you point to as support for your position?

Quickwrite 2: Families have their own rules for how male and female members should talk and behave. Think back to the advice you have heard in your family or to the rules you have noticed family members following. Describe your family's implicit (unspoken) or explicit (articulated) rules about polite talk and behavior.

Quickwrite 3: How do children and young adults learn what is “appropriate” behavior, either in general or for them as boys and girls or young men and women? What happens when a young person acts in some way his or her family or friends consider “not normal”? How is he or she treated? Refer to your own experiences and observations to support your points.

Quickwrite 4: Characterize some of the differences you have observed between how American men and women generally walk. What aspects of walking behavior or style make a person’s walk seem “feminine” versus “masculine”? (Consider speed, size of steps, carriage of the shoulders and hips, gaze [focus of the eyes], etc.) Describe an example of any individuals you’ve known whose walk could be characterized as typically “masculine” or “feminine.”

Quickwrite 5: Based on your own observations, how do American women typically speak in their conversations? Consider volume and pitch of voice, choice of words, body posture (open or closed), proximity or closeness to other speakers, gaze/eye contact, use of hand gestures while speaking, etc. Now consider and describe the way American men typically speak.

Activity 2

Watch Butler Video, Read Transcript, and Compose Quickwrite on Butler Video

Reflection: Reread the quickwrite you wrote for Activity 1, and then answer both of the following questions. (You can write these additional reflections right underneath your quickwrite for Activity 1.)

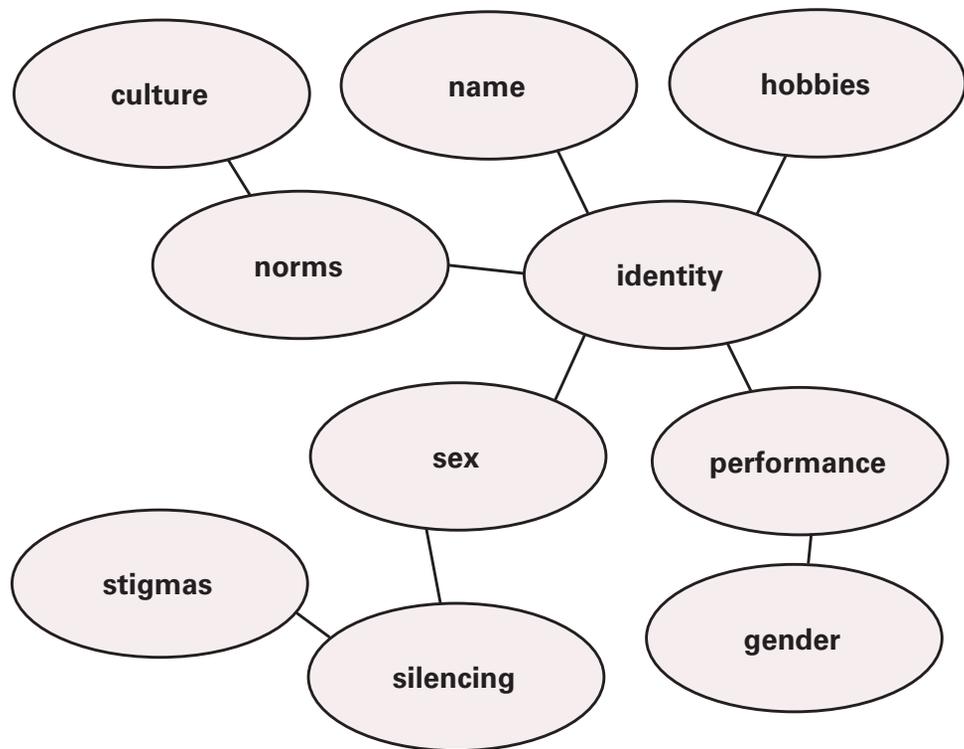
- Though you may not know any examples as extreme as the one described by Butler, have you seen or heard of similar instances in which gender norms have been enforced through violence or bullying?
- How does this story deepen your understanding of the relationship between identity, gender, and culture?

Activity 3

Create a Concept Map

Concept Map: Consider groups of ideas that both join and separate the terms culture and identity. Discuss the meanings of these terms and related terms—norms, gender, performance, and coercion—and create a concept map with these and related words and phrases that help you to understand these terms both as individual words and in relationship to one another. Here is an example.

Concept Map



For instance, “norms” occupies a space between culture and identity, as every culture has norms for the kinds of identities available to participants in that culture. Likewise, “gender” occupies the space off of “Identity” and Performance” because culture specifies (or at least tries to control) the range of acceptable gender performances that can become part of one’s identity. Terms such as “stigmatas” and “silencing” could appear in bubbles connected to “norms” because they are tools for enforcing norms.

Activity 4

Quickwrite

What have you learned from this discussion about the relationships between language, gender, identity, and cultural norms?

Activity 5

Connecting Texts and Their Authors

For each of the four following texts in this module (Brooks, Tannen, Young, and Lorde), do the following: 1) examine the titles, and make a prediction about the content of each piece; 2) note the types of texts and genres (*New York Times* Op-Ed piece versus book excerpt), and make any relevant predictions about the content or rhetorical stance of each piece; and 3) examine the brief author biographies provided below, and then imagine how each author’s identity and gender—as described in those biographies—might influence the text’s language, content, or purpose.

Judith Butler—This YouTube video clip is from an interview uploaded to YouTube in 2007.

Judith Butler is a Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her PhD in Philosophy from Yale University. She is the author of many books, including *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* She is also active in gender and sexual politics and human rights, anti-war politics, and Jewish Voice for Peace. She is presently the recipient of the Andrew Mellon Award for Distinguished Academic Achievement in the Humanities.

David Brooks—“Honor Code” is an Op-Ed piece from *The New York Times* (2012).

David Brooks is a political and cultural commentator as well as a columnist for the *New York Times*. He has written for numerous publications, including the *Washington Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Weekly Standard*, *Newsweek*, and *Atlantic Monthly*. He graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in History and later taught at Duke University in Public Policy. His books include *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (2000); *On Paradise Drive: How We Live Now (And Always Have) in the Future Tense* (2004); and *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character and Achievement* (2011).

Deborah Tannen—“His Politeness Is Her Powerlessness” is excerpted from *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990; 2001).

Deborah Tannen earned a PhD in Linguistics from the University of California, Berkeley. She is Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University and author of many books and articles about how the language of everyday conversation affects relationships. She is best known as author of *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, which was on the *New York Times* best seller list for nearly four years. This book brought gender differences in communication style to the forefront of public awareness. Deborah Tannen is a frequent guest on television and radio, and she has written for many major newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, and *People*.

Vershawn Ashanti Young—“Prelude: The Barbershop” is the introductory section to the book *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity* (2007).

Vershawn Ashanti Young earned a PhD from the Department of African American Studies and English at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is an expert on the contemporary African American experience, and he is particularly interested in issues dealing with African American language, literature, gender (masculinity), and

performance/performativity. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity* (2007) and two recent collected volumes, the first in African American literary and performance studies, *From Bourgeois to Boogie: Black Middle-Class Performances* (2011), and the second in sociolinguistics and literacy, *Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance* (2011).

Audre Lorde—“The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” is a speech from her collection titled *The Cancer Journals* (1980).

Audre Lorde (1934-1992) earned a BA from Hunter College and an MA from Columbia University in Library Science. The author of numerous collections of poetry and prose, Lorde was deeply concerned with issues of class, race, age, gender, and health, particularly as they related to the experiences of women in the 1960’s. A librarian, writer, poet, teacher, feminist, and lesbian, Lorde won numerous awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts grant and the American Library Association Gay Caucus Book of the Year Award in 1981 for *The Cancer Journals*. She died of liver cancer in 1992.

Activity 6

Making Predictions About Authors’ Purposes and Arguments (Tannen, Lorde, Brooks, and Young)

Now that you have surveyed the texts and considered the titles of the pieces as well as the dates of their publication and you know a bit about each author based on the brief bios provided above, you can begin to make some predictions about the authors’ purposes and arguments.

- What do Tannen’s and Lorde’s chapter titles tell you about the texts’ topics and purposes?
- What questions do the titles of Brooks’s and Young’s pieces raise for you?

Read only the first two paragraphs of each of the four longer texts (Tannen, Brooks, Young and Lorde).

- What predictions can you make about each text based on the opening paragraphs?
- What questions do those paragraphs raise for you that you hope the reading will answer?
- Based on only the first two paragraphs of each text, what can you infer about the audiences and purposes each author seems to have imagined for his or her text? Explain.

Activity 7

Synonym Chart for Butler, Brooks and Tannen

Using the vocabulary and synonym table below, review the list of key vocabulary words for each author, checking off any words and/or their synonyms you know (meaning you would recognize and understand these words if you saw them in another context). Then, working individually or in pairs, brainstorm an additional fifteen synonyms in the far right column for any of the key vocabulary words that you find particularly intriguing or useful. You can find synonyms using a number of resources: ask a classmate, use your cell phone to find definitions, use electronic or print dictionaries, or search on a classroom computer for acceptable synonyms.

Synonym Chart for Butler, Tannen, and Brooks

Author	Vocabulary Word or Phrase	Synonym or similar phrase	Another synonym or similar phrase
Judith Butler	negate	deny	
	expunge	wipe out	
	eradicate	eliminate	
	comply	obey	
	gender norms	sex-linked behaviors	
	coercion	intimidation	
Deborah Tannen	linguistic strategy	language-based approach or plan	
	inherent	innate, intrinsic	
	ambiguity	uncertainty	
	to do someone's bidding	to do what someone requests	

	prerogative	privilege, right	
	rapport	connection, bond	
	protocol	procedure	
	underhanded	sneaky	
David Brooks	rambunctious	very active, noisy	
	plummet	drop	
	lewd	vulgar	
	eminent	well-known	
	social engineering	using social policies based on social science to deal with social problems	
	homogeneous	all the same	
	cretin	idiot, stupid person	

Reading

Activity 8

Reading Brooks for Understanding: Annotating Points of Interest and Questions

Read David Brooks's article "Honor Code" silently, annotating any particular points of interest or noting any places that need clarification; then answer the following questions about it:

- Looking back at the predictions you made based on the first two paragraphs you analyzed in Activity 6, which of your predictions turned out to be true?
- What surprised you?

- If your prediction was inaccurate, what words or phrases in the text misled you?
- What, if anything about this piece, do you find confusing?

Write a single sentence in your own words that states Brooks's argument.

Activity 9

Mapping the Organizational Structure of Brooks's Article

Create an idea map of Brooks's article, putting the main ideas into bubbles with supporting ideas, evidence, and examples connected to those bubbles.

Activity 10

Annotating Tannen's Article

Read Deborah Tannen's article, "His Politeness is Her Powerlessness" silently, annotating any particular points of interest or noting any places that need clarification; then answer the following questions about it:

- Looking back to the predictions you made based on the first two paragraphs you analyzed in Activity 6, which of your predictions turned out to be true?
- What surprised you?
- If your prediction was inaccurate, what words or phrases in the text misled you?
- What, if anything about this piece, do you find confusing?

Write a single sentence in your own words that states Tannen's argument.

Activity 11

Labeling Components of Argument

Re-read Tannen's argument, and label these possible elements in the left-hand margin as you reread:

- Most compelling arguments (the points that either surprised you the most or made the most sense to you)
- Most compelling examples (the ones you find most consistent with or most different from your own experiences as well as those you might want to use in your own writing)
- Author's explanations of the importance of those examples
- Note in the right margin your reactions to what the author is saying.

- Personal connections that support or refute the author’s points
- Reflections on the quality of the evidence or examples (taking note, for example, how the author is using ethos, pathos, and/or logos)
- Questions about the author’s ideas or assumptions
- Challenges to the author’s inferences or conclusions

Postreading

Activity 12

Reflecting on How Writers Use Logos, Ethos, and Pathos to Shape Our Thinking

Deborah Tannen and David Brooks both write about how others interpret and respond to individual people’s behavior. Did one article change your thinking about how people respond to each other’s behavior more than the other? If so, why?

Questions about Logic (Logos)

1. What is Tannen claiming, specifically about male and female behavior?
2. What is Brooks arguing? Is his argument limited to boys?
3. What evidence does Tannen offer to support her claims?
4. At what point does Brooks begin using evidence? How does he use that evidence?
5. How relevant and valid do you think the evidence is for both authors? How sound is the reasoning?
6. What function does the Hal story serve in Brooks’s argument?
7. What counterarguments has each author addressed?
8. Why does Tannen focus her discussion on women?
9. Why does Brooks focus his discussion on boys?
10. How have each author’s ideas developed over the course of the text?

Questions about the Writer (Ethos)

11. What can you infer about Tannen from her article?
12. Why does she refer both to her own research and the research of other authors?
13. What can you infer about Brooks from his article?
14. Why does he use a character from Shakespeare to make his point?

15. Based on what you read in her chapter, does Tannen have the appropriate background to speak with authority on this subject?
16. Based on what you read in his article, does Brooks have the appropriate background to speak with authority about educational policy?
17. What does each author do to appear knowledgeable?
18. Based on the biographies you read at the beginning of this module, does each author have appropriate background to write with authority about these issues?
19. What does Tannen's style and language tell the reader about her?
20. What does Brooks's style and language tell the reader about him?
21. Do the authors seem trustworthy? Why or why not?
22. Do the authors seem deceptive? Why or why not?
23. Do the authors appear to be treating the issue seriously? Does Brooks or Tannen seem to be more serious?

Questions about Emotions (Pathos)

24. Does one of the two pieces affect you emotionally more than the other? Which one? Which parts of the piece affect you? In what ways?
25. Do you think Tannen is trying to manipulate the readers' emotions? In what ways? At what points?
26. Do you think Brooks is trying to manipulate the readers' emotions? In what ways? At what points?
27. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
28. How does Brooks use humor or irony? How does that affect your acceptance of his ideas?
29. Does Tannen use humor or irony? How does that affect your acceptance of her ideas?

Prereading

Activity 13

Synonym Chart for Young and Lorde

Using the key vocabulary and synonym table below, review the list of vocabulary words for each author, checking off any words and/or their synonyms you know (meaning you would recognize and understand these words if you saw them in another context). Then, working individually or in pairs, brainstorm an additional fifteen synonyms in the far right column for any of the key vocabulary words that you find particularly intriguing or useful. You can find

synonyms using a number of resources: ask a classmate, use your cell phone to find definitions, use electronic or print dictionaries, or search on a classroom computer for acceptable synonyms.

Synonym Chart for Young and Lorde

Author	Vocabulary Word or Phrase	Synonym or similar phrase	Another synonym or similar phrase
Vershawn Ashanti Young	prelude	introduction	
	vicarious	experienced through another person	
	demeanor	manner, conduct	
	ambivalence	conflict or uncertainty	
	cachet	status	
	innuendo	implication	
	patronize	be condescending	
	anomaly	irregularity	
Audre Lorde	elucidate	explain	
	omission	leave out, exclude	
	censure	criticism	
	mortality	humanity	
	tyranny	oppression	
	scrutinize	examine carefully	
	pertinence	relevance	

Reading

Activity 14

Annotating Young's Text

Read Young's "Prelude: The Barbershop," annotating as you read. Make notes in the margin marking points you find especially moving or important, sections you need to revisit to resolve confusions, questions that arose for you, and sections you disagree with or want to discuss further.

Once you have finished your reading and annotation, turn to a neighbor and discuss your reactions, questions, and confusions.

Activity 15

Creating a Conversation Among Authors

Composing using another writer's voice and perspective helps us attend to the unique way each writer puts words, sentences, and paragraphs together as it encourages us to develop greater awareness of how each writer uses language stylistically to convey his or her ideas and persuade others. Choose two or three authors whose text you have read in this module so far, and imagine a conversation that these authors might have together about the relationships between language, gender, identity, and/or culture. You can write this piece in one of three ways: as a conversation between the authors, as if you are the host a radio or TV talk show interviewing these writers as your guests, or as a journalist meeting these authors in a coffee shop or restaurant for an interview. Given what you know about their concerns based on your reading of their texts, try to stay true to their authorial voices and stylistic choices as you write, imagining what they might really want to talk about together.

Activity 16

Revisiting Predictions for Lorde

Read Audre Lorde's speech, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action."

- Looking back to the predictions you made based on the first two paragraphs you analyzed in Activity 6, which of your predictions turned out to be true?
- What surprised you?
- If your prediction was inaccurate, what words or phrases in the text misled you?
- What, if anything about this piece, do you find confusing?

Write a single sentence in your own words that states Lorde's argument.

Activity 17

Making a Descriptive Outline for Lorde

Reread Audre Lorde’s speech, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action.” As you examine it more closely, mark up the text in the following ways to help you understand how Lorde organized her speech. The following guidelines for annotation will help you to create a descriptive outline of Lorde’s text.

- Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there several introductory paragraphs? Is it in the middle of a paragraph? How do you know that the text has moved on from the introduction?
- Draw a line across the page where you think the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How does the author use language, punctuation, and other features of text structure to indicate that the text has reached the conclusion?
- At the end of each section, specify what the section says (content) and, then, what it does (rhetorical purpose).
- At the end of the text, describe the overall content and purpose of the text.

Activity 18

Imitating an Author’s Style and Creating a Visual

In small groups, revisit your vocabulary and synonym charts from Activities 7 and 13, and together, choose 10-12 words that you find compelling (this may include the synonyms provided or those you added in the third column) to use in a paragraph that you write together imitating the style of your favorite writer in this module.

Once you have completed co-authoring your paragraph in one author’s style, create a complementary visual—a symbol, scene, image, or comic strip that highlights an important dimension of your paragraph’s meaning.

Activity 19

Rhetorical Effects of Sentence Length and Complexity

Sentence length and complexity help shape every author’s style. While some writers craft long, circuitous sentences, others employ short ones. Both styles can pack a punch. David Brooks, Vershawn Ashanti Young, and Audre Lorde make different stylistic choices about the effects of sentence length and repetition. In “Honor Code,” for example, Brooks uses many short sentences. Look back at his article, and write out five short sentences that typify his style. What are the effects on readers of using this kind of sentence structure?

In contrast, Vershawn Ashanti Young sometimes use long, complex sentences, while Audre Lorde sometimes uses a deliberate variety

of long and short sentences. Choose one of the two passages below to explore in more detail, analyzing the author’s stylistic choices as indicated in the directions that follow.

Vershawn Ashanti Young, “Prelude: The Barbershop”

In contrast to Brooks’s use of short phrases, Vershawn Ashanti Young sometimes uses a thoughtful combination of short and long sentences that include repetition of certain words and phrases. The following excerpt from the second to last paragraph of his “Prelude” is a good illustration of varied sentence length as well as strategic repetition of words and phrases.

It might seem like a good thing that I was kicked out. It might seem as if this exile expedited the leave I was seeking. But the problem that this bit of personal history presents, the problem that my monograph theorizes, the problem that my trip to the barbershop illustrates is this: because I ain’t no homeboy—though I long to be and would do anything short of killing to gain that identity—I’m not ghetto enough for the ghetto. Because I’m not a white boy, I’m not white enough for white folks. And because I wasn’t born in the middle class, I’m not completely accepted by the mainstream. And sometimes, if you can believe it, I’m not ghetto enough for the mainstream or middle class enough for the ghetto or black enough for white folks! The psychoemotional pain that this liminal existence creates, the pain of negotiating multiple cultural and racial worlds, is far too great for many. I’ve been doing it for a long time and have been able to cope only by transforming my personal problem into an intellectual one. In some ways I’m chipping away at the burden. But far too many are not able to do this. And why should they have to?

Count the number of words in each sentence in this paragraph, and compare sentence lengths. What are the effects of altering sentence length to this degree?

Now, imitate Young’s prose style by writing a 10-sentence paragraph in the spirit of his voice, maintaining his sentence length and structure, but writing about yourself and your own experiences with language, gender, culture, race, masculinity, femininity, or identity.

OR

Audre Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action”

In contrast to Brooks’s use of short phrases, Audre Lorde sometimes uses a combination of short and long sentences that include repetition of certain words and phrases. The following excerpt, the sixth paragraph from “The Transformation of Silence into Language

and Action,” is a good illustration of varied sentence length as well as strategic repetition.

What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am a woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself—a Black woman warrior poet doing my work—come to ask you, are you doing yours?

Next, count the number of words in each sentence in this paragraph and compare sentence lengths. What are the effects of altering sentence length to this degree?

Finally, imitate Lorde’s prose style by writing a five-sentence paragraph in the spirit of her voice, maintaining her sentence length and structure, but writing about yourself and your own experiences with language, gender, culture, race, masculinity, femininity, identity, or silence.

Postreading

Activity 20

Composing a Rhetorical Précis for Lorde

Compose a rhetorical précis that analyzes the content, purpose, and rhetorical strategies of Lorde’s speech by following the 4-sentence pattern below:

Sentence 1: The name of the author, the genre, and title of the work, and the publication date in parentheses; a rhetorically accurate verb; and a clause containing the major assertion or thesis statement in the work.

Sentence 2: An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.

Sentence 3: A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase.

Sentence 4: A description of the intended audience, the relationship the author establishes with the audience, or both.

Activity 21

Quickwrite to Rank Texts in Language, Gender, and Culture

If you had to rank the four texts in this module (Brooks, Tannen, Young, and Lorde) from easiest to hardest, how would you rank them and why? How did the ease or difficulty of each reading affect your willingness to consider the authors’ arguments? What did you do during your reading to make sure you understood the difficult texts? Be sure to include your evaluation of all four texts.

Chart to Rank Texts in Language, Gender, and Culture

Charting text difficulty: Below is a chart to help you consider some of the features that contribute to how easy or hard a text is to read: (a) difficulty of vocabulary, (b) sentence length and complexity, (c) method of delivery, (d) topic difficulty, and (e) complexity of argument each author sets forth. This table may help you sort out your thinking about how to rank these authors' texts. Use a scale of 1-5, 1 being easy and 5 being difficult, to give a numeric value to each author's text. Then total each author's scores and review your findings.

Ranking Text Difficulty Chart

	Judith Butler (Video Clip/ Transcript)	Brooks "Honor Code"	Tannen "His Polite- ness is Her Powerless- ness"	Young "Prelude: The Bar- bershop"	Lorde "The Trans- formation of Silence into Lan- guage and Action"
Difficulty of Vocabulary (Diction)					
Sentence Length and Complexity					
Method of Delivery: Written or Spoken					
Topic Difficulty					
Complexity of Argument					
Additional Text-based Features					
Score Totals for Each Author					

Connecting Reading to Writing

Discovering What You Think

Activity 23

Rhetorically Analyzing the Writing Task

Read the writing assignment carefully. In particular, try to answer the following questions about the assignment:

- What genre is the prompt asking you to generate? Is it a letter, an essay, a report, an email, or something else?
- What format will this follow?
- What are the reader's expectations for this genre likely to be?
- What is your rhetorical purpose (raise readers' awareness, persuade people to behave differently? entertain?)?
- What kind of support would be most appropriate to use?
- How will you use the readings to inform and support your writing?

Writing Assignment

Among other issues, each of the articles in this module considers how we might respond to the ways that social environments and norms constrain us. About a boy finding that school culture does not value his preferred ways of behaving, David Brooks imagines,

In Kindergarten, he'd wonder why he just couldn't be good. By junior high, he'd lose interest in trying and his grades would plummet.

Then he'd rebel. If the official school culture was über-nurturing, he'd be über-crude. If it valued cooperation and sensitivity, he'd devote his mental energies to violent video games and aggressive music.

In his book's prologue, "Prelude: The Barbershop," Vershawn Ashanti Young describes his ambivalence about trying (and failing) to fit in as a "homeboy" and discusses the academic and economic success he eventually chose to pursue. Because of his choices, he reflects, "I didn't have to fight to get out of the ghetto. I was kicked out."

And finally, Audre Lorde suggests that people may try at all costs to accommodate socially imposed constraints, writing, "What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?"

Lorde, however, also suggests an alternative to either suffering silently to fit in or rebelling—she encourages listeners and readers to speak out and use language and action to change the social conditions of our lives.

After you have considered Lorde’s question above and the alternative she subsequently proposes, write a speech, a letter (to an individual or organization privately or openly—that is, addressed to an individual but public), or a public service announcement that proposes meaningful change in your community related to the issues raised in these readings. Decide on an audience to address—your classmates; parents; younger (or older) students; coaches; administrators; teachers; church, city, or community officials—and compose an argument both describing a particular “tyrann[y]” or challenge and proposing changes that may improve the lives of those who endure it. Like Butler, Tannen, Brooks, Young, and Lorde, you may use your own or others’ personal experiences (including those of the five authors in this module), hypothetical situations, and reflections to make your case.

Activity 24

Comparing Two Authors’ Evidence and Adding Your Own

Some would argue that cultural cohesion requires everyone to conform to norms of language, gender, and culture, and the authors in this module give examples that suggest there is sometimes a heavy price to pay for failing to do so. (Recall, for example, Butler’s description of a teenage boy who walked with a “swish,” Tannen’s examples of women judged as impolite for using directness versus indirectness in conversation, or Brooks’s example of young boys who are classified early on as “uncommunicative testosterone-driven cretins” because they cannot sit quietly in school.) But some of the authors in this module also suggest that there is an equally heavy price to pay for complying with norms pertaining to language, gender, identity, and culture; complying in some cases, they suggest, is akin to giving in to the pressures of social coercion.

Compare two authors’ examples (of themselves or others) in which individuals dare to defy social norms in specific social settings, and briefly relate the consequences those individuals face. Then, based on your own experiences and/or observations, describe one concrete example of a time when it seemed advisable to comply with language, gender, or cultural norms, and then offer another example describing a time when you or someone you know found it necessary to speak out or take action against such norms.

Activity 25

Creating a Double-Entry Journal

Create a double-entry journal or a t-chart, in which you label the left column “example” and the right column “significance.” Begin this stage of the writing process by revisiting your earlier annotations of the articles, quoting or summarizing the examples that seem most relevant to the issue you want to address in your piece. Write those examples in the left column of your table. Remember to note the author and page number of any example you take from one of your readings.

As you collect examples, make a few notes in the right column about how you want to use each example, what it means to you, or how it relates to the argument you want to make in your own writing.

Double-Entry Journal

Example	Significance
Example: Lorde describes her daughter’s explanation that whatever we keep inside will fight to escape (21).	Example: I could use this to discuss my own experience of feeling like I needed to speak out.

Activity 26

Reviewing Notes and Generating Ideas

Review your written responses to the previous two activities (Taking a Stance and Gathering Evidence), and reread the writing in your Reflection Journal in response to earlier prompts in this module. As you do so, reconsider the kind of text you plan to create (a speech, letter, or public service announcement), and think again about the audience you will address (your classmates; parents; younger or older students; coaches; administrators; teachers; church, city, or community officials). Next, based on the writing you’ve done so far, make a list or outline, or if you prefer, create a visual (cluster or web), to organize the main points you plan to address in your final piece of writing (a speech, a letter, or a public service announcement that proposes meaningful change in your community). The points you choose may be ones you’ve already discussed, or new ones may spring to mind as a result of all the thinking you’ve done throughout this module. Finally, write down a position statement that captures your overarching idea—the proposal you will make for meaningful change—and share it with classmates.

Writing Rhetorically

Entering the Conversation

Activity 27

Organizing and Ordering Ideas

Keep in mind the kind of text you plan to generate, and consider how your organizational structure can best fit the genre you've chosen—a speech, letter, or PSA.

All of these forms will benefit from having a beginning, middle, and end. Below are some ideas about what each of these parts might include.

1. Introduction

Your introduction provides an opportunity to identify a specific problem or issue your proposal will address and establish your perspective on the problem. You may want to describe any relevant direct experience you have with the issue as a way of establishing ethos.

2. Middle

This section presents arguments or ideas in favor of your proposal. It may cite and respond to ideas from the readings or from your own experiences.

3. Conclusion

The conclusion should make a strong final point and then advocate a course of action.

Activity 28

Bringing Ideas Together to Create a Draft

Now that you have spent some time prewriting—considering your purpose and stance, collecting evidence, and brainstorming—bring those ideas together in a first draft. As you create a first draft, keep in mind that writers take risks, explore ideas, and think on paper, knowing that you will have an opportunity later to revise and edit. While you will want to keep your audience in mind throughout the writing process because thinking about audience is a guide to effective writing, the first draft is generally “writer-based” and discovery-oriented in that it serves to help the writer—you in this case—to think through the issues and take a position. The first draft is often where you actually discover what you really think about the issue or topic.

Activity 29

Getting Feedback About Using the Words of Others

Revisit the evidence you collected in Activity 25 and used in the draft you composed for Activity 28. In small groups, discuss the extent to which you made appropriate choices for incorporating summary, paraphrase, and quotations and consider whether there are any ways you could improve these aspects of your draft.

Activity 30

Using a Graphic Organizer to Analyze Voices

When we incorporate the experiences and voices of others and weave them together with our own in the context of writing a paper, it’s important to reread the paper in order to smooth out the transitions between our own words and the words of people we summarize, quote, or paraphrase. Reread your draft now thinking about how the various voices you’ve included “speak” to one another on paper. Will the relationships between these voices be clear to readers? What might you do to clarify the exchange between voices in your proposal? One way to see connections is to create a visual to help you “see and hear” the balance of voices in your speech, letter, or PSA. The graphic organizer below offers a visual to help you understand which voices are dominant. For some voices to be more dominant than others is fine; the point of this activity is to give you additional information to help balance the multiple voices conversing through your writing.

Graphic Organizer for Negotiating Voices

	Example/ Point 1	Example/ Point 2	Example/ Point 3	Example/ Point 4	Example/ Point 5
Your voice					
Voice 2					
Voice 3					
Voice 4					
Voice 5					

Revising and Editing

Activity 31

Writing a Rhetorical Précis for Your Own Piece

For this activity, you will work in pairs. Write a rhetorical précis (please see Activity 20 for directions) for your own essay and then for the essay of a partner. Once you have both finished, compare what you have written and answer the following questions:

- Did your partner identify the same overall claim that you identified?
- Did your partner describe the development of your argument in the same way you did?
- Did your partner identify the same purpose and audience that you did?

For each of these questions, discuss with your partner any differences between your understandings of your text, and explore what revisions you could make to help your partner see your argument as you do.

Activity 32

Making Stylistic Decisions

It's helpful to think about the word choices and sentence structure you have used before turning in your proposal. Read the draft with the following questions in mind and mark areas you think might benefit from some further attention. Consider the stylistic choices you analyzed earlier in this module in the writings of Brooks, Tannen, Young, and Lorde. Examine these same features in your own writing by asking the following questions:

- Are sentences varied in length—some short, some longer?
- Are any sentences so long that they are confusing?
- Look at the beginnings of your sentences. Do they start in a variety of ways (rather than beginning repeatedly with the same words)?
- Are words well chosen? Are there any you are unsure about?
- Are any words too formal—or informal—for the kind of text you are writing (speech, letter or PSA)? Again, consider your audience and the type of language they will expect.
- Is the level of language you use consistent with the genre you've chosen? Put another way, if your text will be spoken aloud (speech or PSA) as opposed to read and studied (letter), is your text's complexity level appropriate? (Note: Spoken language tends to be less dense and more repetitive than written language; writing tends to be more streamlined and precise than speech. This is in part because listeners/viewers often have only one chance to understand the message, whereas readers can review a text as many times as they like. That said, speech can be formal or informal just as writing can be formal or informal. Both occur along a wide-ranging spectrum.)
- Have you avoided excessive repetition of words or phrases but perhaps been able to use repetitions strategically for emphasis (as the authors you read have done)?
- Is punctuation appropriate?

Using an Editing Checklist for Peer Feedback and Self Evaluation

Use an editing checklist to review your own or each other's drafts.

You may also want to make use of the Writing Evaluation Rubric included in this module.

Writing Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Superior	Strong	Approach- ing success	Struggling
Focus	The piece makes an insightful point about language, gender, and/or culture, well supported with a variety of relevant evidence.	The piece provides a coherent discussion about language, gender, and/or culture, well supported with relevant examples.	The piece comments on a variety of aspects of language, gender, and/or culture in a diffuse manner, supported with some examples.	The author struggles to discuss language, gender, and/or culture effectively and/or does not support the points made.
Attention to Audience	The author's choices—particularly framing of discussion, evidence, diction, and style—match the intended purpose and audience well.	The author's choices—particularly framing of discussion, evidence, diction, and style—stray toward conventional academic style.	The author's choices—particularly framing of discussion, evidence, diction, and style—lean too heavily in the direction of academic argument to suit the intended target audience and purpose.	The author's choices do not suit the audience and purpose, perhaps similarly deviating from academic style.

Criteria	Superior	Strong	Approach- ing success	Struggling
Voice	The piece resonates with an appropriate and individual voice, a sense of the presence of an individual speaker on the page. The piece displays the use of multiple strategies that help achieve voice, such as characteristic rhythm, coherent diction, consistent point of view, repetition.	The piece shows a strong individual voice, a sense of the presence of an individual speaker on the page. That voice may be not entirely consistent or not entirely appropriate to the purpose or effect of the piece. The piece displays the use of strategies that help achieve voice, such as characteristic rhythm, coherent diction, consistent point of view, repetition.	The piece includes enough distinctive language use to show some sense of voice, but the overall effect may be somewhat flat, perhaps overly academic or too irregular to establish a strong individual voice.	The piece displays little sense of voice, perhaps overly academic or inconsistent.
Sentence Fluency	Appropriate sentence variety and the absence of all but the most minor or stylistic deviations from conventional usage and punctuation characterize the writing.	Significant sentence variety and the presence of some deviations from conventional usage and punctuation characterize the writing.	Only a little sentence variety or enough errors to weaken its effectiveness characterize the writing.	Choppiness and/or egregious deviations from conventional usage and punctuation mar the writing.

Choosing Which Feedback to Incorporate into Your Draft

When you receive the paper you wrote with feedback from your teacher and/or peers, look carefully at their marks and comments. Try to understand how and why readers responded the way they did, and think about how reader comments and questions can help you make your text more reader-friendly and accessible. How could you get the lowest score possible on the text difficulty ranking you used earlier to analyze the other authors in this module? Put another way, how can you make your text more accessible and fun to read? This doesn't mean you should use only simple words and write only short sentences; rather, as you revise, consider what you liked about the texts you analyzed previously and see if you can incorporate some of the stylistic elements Brooks, Tannen, Young, and Lorde used into your own writing. What changes could make more people want to read the letter you've written or listen more attentively to your speech or PSA? As you make a plan for revision, think about these questions and consider those below as well:

- What are my reader's main concerns with my draft?
- If there were multiple readers, do they agree on what I should do to improve the proposal?
- What global changes should I consider (position statement, examples to support my position, overall organization)?
- What could I add to improve the reading/listening experience for my audience?
- What could I delete to improve the reading/listening experience for my audience?
- What sentence-level and stylistic issues can I correct?
- What kinds of grammatical errors should I correct?

Writing about Your Writing

Quickwrite—Now that you have completed your essay, take a few minutes to reflect on your writing process by answering the following questions:

- How did your decisions about genre, purpose, and audience affect the **content** of your writing?
- How did your decisions about genre, purpose, and audience affect the **style** of your writing?
- How did your decisions about genre, purpose, and audience affect the **process** of your writing?

- How did “writing about your writing” influence the way you developed your text?
- In what ways has this assignment helped you to become a better writer?
- What can you take away from this assignment to make your next paper more successful?