

ALL-AMERICAN PASTIME

GOAL:

1. Students will analyze the poem *All-American Pastime* for point-of-view, tone, diction and details.
2. Students will reflect on the content of the poem and relate it to their own real-world experiences.
3. Students will analyze the content of the article I Was a Racist Cop for content, details, description and tone.
4. Students will compare and contrast the point-of-view, and information in the poem and the article.

INSTRUCTIONS:

ANALYZING THE POEM

- Read the poem *All-American Pastime* and discuss what is being described.
- Why do you think the poem is titled *All-American Pastime*?
- How does the poet feel about the incident and what in the poem indicates the poet's feelings?
- Do you agree or disagree with the poet's feelings about what happened?
- Do you think the police officer was right in his actions?

ANALYZING THE ARTICLE

- After you discuss the poem read the article, I Was a Racist Cop.
- This article was written by a former police officer and he recounts his experiences as he worked in that profession for over a decade. Discuss the article and experiences the author describes.
- Review the poem and discuss the poet's experience in light of what the author of the article shares.

See the next page for the poem

ALL-AMERICAN PASTIME

we stand packed
14 to 17 years old
at the downtown
San Bernardino
bus stop

 sun a blaring
 white ball
 of rays
 beating us
 like a bat
 'til skin
 bleeds sweat

mouths full of
sizzling phlegm
boys hack and spit
on the sidewalk

cop strolls up
book in hand
demands
names
presses tickets
 in black boys' palms

PENAL CODE ———
ILLEGAL TO SPIT IN PUBLIC

we spit protest
sunflower seed chompin'
tobacco chewin' ballers spit
boxers rinse and spit
footballers rinse and spit

cop blank stares us
hand on belt
he turns his head
 spits
a blaring white ball

foul on the way home
no umpire to intervene
we retreat to benches

learning the first strategy
in survival is knowing
who not to trust

the loud buzz
of a fat fly
threatens us to swat

the second strategy
in survival is knowing
when to swing

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