

## UNIT 2: NAMES POINT COUNTERPOINT

### EXPLORING NAMES: CULTURE AND ETHNIC PERCEPTIONS



*Shaneika*..... 15

*The Sound of Color*..... 14

**POETRY DEVICE FOCUS:** Alliteration, Repetition, Assonance

**BIG QUESTIONS:** *What does a name indicate about a person's ethnicity or culture?*

*What types of bias does society have regarding names?*

#### **SETTING THE MOOD:**

Play [THE NAME GAME BY SHIRLEY ELLIS](#)

**TALKING POINTS:** Discuss the song and why it was made and why it was a hit. What commentary is it making about nicknames? Discuss the concept of nicknames. Are they a term of endearment or disrespect? When is it okay to give someone a nickname?

**READ AND ANALYZE:** *Shaneika*

**LITERARY DEVICES:** Alliteration, repetition, rhythm, onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor **CULTURAL ANALYSIS:** What ethnicity is *Shaneika*? Explain your response. What is the tone of the poem? Explain your answer by pulling quotes from the poem to support it. What literary devices are used in the poem?

#### **THE NAME GAME:**

- Distribute 2 slips of paper.
- Have students write two different names that they think someone from a particular culture or ethnicity might have. They shouldn't discuss this with fellow classmates.
- Collect the slips of paper and put them in a basket and mix them up.
- Have students randomly choose a slip of paper without revealing the name they have on the paper.

#### **WRITING PROMPT:**

Give students 10-15 minutes to write a poem using the name on the slip of paper. The poem should be positive and reflect a positive image of the person with that particular name.

Students should try to use two literary devices and avoid clichés.

Have Author's Chair.

Remind students that satire is the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize stupidity or vices. Play the *Key & Peele* video. (**WARNING:** there is some cursing in it)

[KEY & PEELE: SUBSTITUTE TEACHER](#)

**TALKING POINTS:** Was this video funny? Why or why not? What obvious assumptions did the substitute teacher make? Why was he getting upset? What do we learn about the teacher's background from this skit? What commentary is being made about names?

Imagine if the substitute teacher was any other ethnicity besides black and the students were from a variety of ethnicities. Would it still be funny? Why or why not?

Play the [BUZZ FEED VIDEO : 9 STRUGGLES OF HAVING A UNIQUE NAME](#)

**TALKING POINTS:** Was this video funny? Why or why not? What obvious assumptions do we see people make? What do you do when you meet someone with a name that you don't know how to pronounce? Do you get offended when someone doesn't remember your name or habitually mispronounces it?

**ROLL CALL DISCUSSION:** Has this experience ever happened to you or to someone you know:

The teacher mispronounces the name, teases the student because of the name, and/or expresses assumptions about the student based on the name.

The student attempts to correct either the mispronunciation or assumptions.

The teacher acknowledges the error, excuses it with an explanation, or dismisses it.

What are some of the ways the errors is acknowledged, explained or dismissed?

What assumptions are made about the teacher based on this experience?

**READ:** In Chapter 16 of the memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* Maya Angelou describes an event where her name is changed. Discuss the tone of the chapter. What does the employer's attitude reveal about her assumptions? Explain by citing examples from the story. Do you think Maya's actions were appropriate for the situation?

**READ AND ANALYZE** *The Sound of Color* (Counterpoint)

**LITERARY DEVICES:** Alliteration, repetition, parallelism, onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor Cultural Analysis: What ethnicity are the people that are talking about the former employee? Explain your response with excerpts from the poem. What is the tone of the poem? Explain your answer by pulling quotes from the poem to support it. What literary devices are used in the poem?

### WRITING PROMPT:

Have students use the same name they previously wrote about. Students now write a poem or reflection comparing it with the expectations society might have of that particular person based on their name. How might that person feel about those expectations?

Students should try to use two literary devices and avoid clichés. Have Author's Chair.

### IN THE MIX:

- [BARACK OBAMA'S DNC 2004 SPEECH](#) mentions his name and acceptance despite it. (1:59 -2:08)
- Former first African American woman - Secretary of State **Condoleezza Rice** was successful despite her name, Roots of her name is derived from the Italian musical term con (with) dolcezza (sweetness)". It is unusual and uncommon and did not impede her success.
- There are many very successful people with 'unusual' or 'foreign' names who are successful: **Sanjay Gupta** – neurosurgeon and CNN Media Reporter, **Fareed Zakaria** – CNN political pundit with a weekly program and writes a column for the Washington Post with several published books and articles. **Cruz Bustamante** - California's Lieutenant Governor, **Rosario Marin** former U.S. Treasurer, **Raul Grijalva** – Arizona U.S. Congressman. Can you think of other successful people? Does this negate the claim that name bias exists?

### Name Bias?

The website [Project Implicit – Harvard] has a quiz with specific instructions.

[IMPLICIT BIAS](#)

This quiz requires that each student take the test individually on a computer.

Follow the instructions. Take the quiz for the following category:

Arab-Muslim. The results of the test will indicate your preference (bias).

**DISCUSS** your results and what you learned about yourself.

### TALKING POINTS: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE DISCUSSION

- When hearing a particular name is there an assumption about the ethnicity of the person or personality type? Why? Is it a matter of bias based on previous experiences or observations?