

Plan on a Page

Lesson 2: Identifying and Affirming Core Values

Guiding Questions:

- What matters most to you?
 - How do your values shape who you are and the decisions you make?
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Activities

Activity: Reflect on Core Values

- Have students sit in pairs and take out their poems from the previous lesson, the reading **Identity** by Julio Noboa Polanco. Explain that today, they will be thinking about values, which are the things that matter most to them.
- Prompt students to consider how they think the speaker of the poem would respond to the following question: *What matters most to you?* They should list ideas in their journals. After a few minutes, invite students to share with the class. Record their ideas on the board.
- Explain that in order to understand where we belong and the various factors that can motivate us to make choices and take actions, it can help to understand what we value—in other words, what’s most important to us and why. The class touched on these ideas in the previous lesson when considering the attitude of the speaker of Julio Noboa Polanco’s poem toward the flower and weed, and how the speaker’s values shaped their decision to take an unconventional path.

Activity 2: Engage in a Values Affirmation Activity

- Follow the procedure outlined in Teaching Note 1 on the lesson plan. Explain to students they will be doing a short written exercise to help them explore their own values, the things that matter to them. Make it clear that there are no right or wrong answers and their responses will not be collected, shared with other students, or graded. This is an opportunity for them to reflect on who they are and what they care about.

- Pass out the **What Do I Value?** handout and read the instructions together. Reiterate that students' responses are private and will not be shared. We recommend that you do the activity alongside your students in order to convey its importance.
- After students have finished, see if any volunteers would like to share *what it felt like to think about their values* (you are not asking them to share any information from their handouts). You might start by sharing your own reflections and seeing if anyone else has something to add before moving to the next activity.

Activity 3: Create a Personal Mantra

- Let students know that they will be watching a short clip of former Youth Poet Laureate and author Amanda Gorman's 2018 TED Talk in which she reflects on the people who have impacted her sense of self and purpose. Play a short clip from the video **Using Your Voice Is a Political Choice** from 00:00-02:13.
- Write Amanda Gorman's mantra on the board and read it out loud to the class: *I am the daughter of Black writers who are descended from Freedom Fighters who broke their chains and changed the world. They call me.*
- Ask students to respond to the following questions in a short class discussion or have them discuss in pairs:
 - If Amanda Gorman were to circle her two most important values from the list on the handout, what do you think she would circle and why?
 - How do you think Gorman's values influence her sense of who she is and the decisions she makes?
- Let students know that they will be writing their own mantras, or motivational statements grounded in their most important values. Have students respond in their **journals** to the following questions:
 - Whose shoulders do you stand on? Make a list of people and/or events that you think helped shape who you are today and helped you develop your values. Then choose one to write about how they have impacted who you are today.
 - What do you stand for? In other words, what are your core values? What are the things that matter? The things that you would take small or large

action for?

- Invite students to create a mantra for themselves, using ideas from one or both of the preceding questions and their values affirmation handouts. Consider providing the following sentence stem: *I am the . . . , who is/are . . .* if they are struggling to get started. Students can finish crafting their mantras for homework if there isn't time during the lesson, or if time allows, they can share their mantras using the **Wraparound** strategy.