

CLASSROOM (COLLEGE) READING GUIDE

About the Book

Nonwhite and Woman: 131 Micro Essays on Being in the World, edited by Darien Hsu Gee and Carla Crujido, is a collection of true stories made up of 300 words or less. We'd love to support you in guiding your students to write their own micro essays and explore the micro form.

This guide will help students reflect on literary and storytelling choices made by the *Nonwhite and Woman* writers and inspire students to write creatively. We have provided several ideas for assignments that will encourage students to analyze the micro form and engage in discussions about the intersection of race and gender in America.

Discussion Questions

The following may be used as discussion questions for students to reflect on or answer before class, to be discussed in small groups, or to lead class discussion. These questions can also be further developed into longer form essay topics.

1. Which essay(s) feels most aligned with your own experiences? Which piece diverges the most?
2. Which essay(s) make you feel uncomfortable? Can you share why?
3. The book's title was taken from a poem by Lucille Clifton. How well does it work with the essays contained within? How do you feel about the term "nonwhite"?
4. What new ideas and/or questions surface for you as you read through this anthology?
5. What's your response to the micro essay form? How might this anthology feel different if the pieces had been longer?
6. How did these authors choose to tell their stories? What did you notice about the various storytelling styles? How does this compare to other personal narratives you've read?

Optional

- Play the video of Lucille Clifton reading her poem, *won't you celebrate with me*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM7q_DUk5wU&t=1s
- Invite one of the contributors for a live Zoom to read her work and engage in a Q&A with the students.

Writing Micro Assignment

Have the students write their own micro essay using the “Crafting a Micro Essay” guide (pp. 241-212) as a starting point. Students can use a prompt (pp. 245-246) or come up with a theme or topic of their own.

Here are two suggestions for assignments that will help students reflect on the micro form and their writing process:

- Write a reflection paper on their experience writing in the micro form. Possible questions students may consider:
 - What did you find most difficult about writing in such a short form?
 - How was this form different from the type of writing you're used to?
 - What are the advantages/disadvantages to writing this way?
 - What was most surprising about writing micro?
 - What details did you leave out? How did you choose what to leave out and what to keep?
 - If you were to revise your micro essay, what changes would you make?
- Conduct a workshop in which students share their micro essays and provide feedback for other members of the group. Before the workshop, establish guidelines about how to provide respectful constructive feedback. Students should play an active role in shaping the rules and best practices for the workshop.

Teacher Resources

A full resource list is available at the back of the book (pp. 251 -256). In addition, you may find this helpful:

- YouTube video of Lucille Clifton reading *won't you celebrate with me*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM7q_DUk5wU&t=1s
- Diversifying Curriculum: “Why Diverse Texts are Not Enough”: <https://triciaebarvia.org/2019/07/18/why-diverse-texts-are-not-enough/>

- *Literacy is Liberation* by Dr. Kimberly N. Parker
- Girls Write Now annual anthologies: <https://girlswritenow.org/stories/anthologies/>

Book Information

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