

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES  
***READ • LISTEN • TELL***

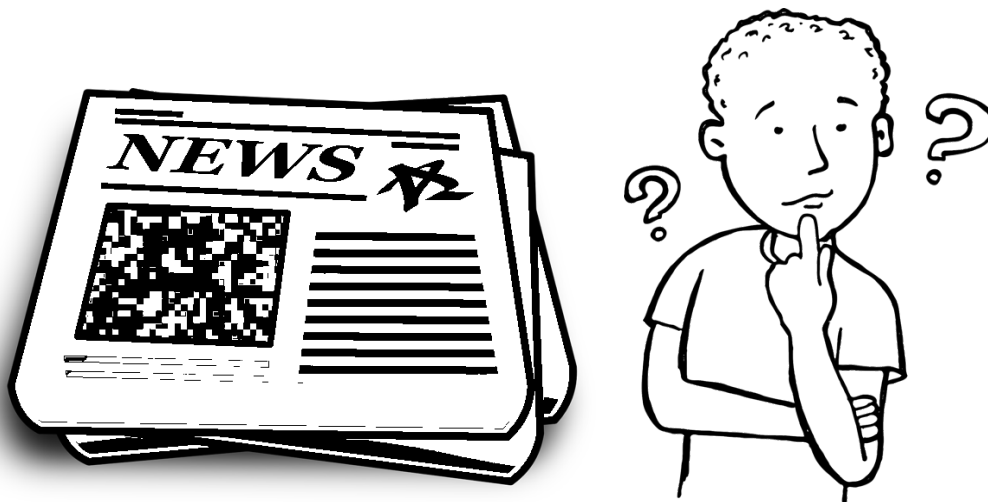


**“The Way of the Sword” by Dawn Dumont**

Created by  
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**EXTENSIONS/POSSIBLE CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS*****Activity with Article: Dawn Dumont*****Overview:**

Dumont regularly writes columns for the Saskatoon StarPhoenix Newspaper and Eagle Feather News online. Her writing ranges in topics, but often combines current political issues, lifestyle magazine articles, and humour. Each piece is frank, educational, and amusing. Have students read some of her articles and choose one to respond to. They should write a short letter to Dawn Dumont respectfully and thoughtfully expressing an opinion about something she wrote. A few articles are listed and linked below as examples, but more can easily be found online.

**Sample Articles:**

- Legal Eagle: UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=1917>
- That's What She Said: Old Kid Shows vs. New Kid Shows  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=1916>
- Dawn Dumont: Why cultural appropriation is a thing  
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/thats-what-she-said-why-cultural-appropriation-is-a-thing>
- Dumont: Online comments — free speech or free rage?  
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/thats-what-she-said-free-rage>
- That's What She Said: Info drain  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=2440>

<b>Some quotes from Dumont articles</b>	<b>Some questions to ask students to reflect on their opinions...</b>
<p>From "Dumont: Online comments — free speech or free rage?":</p> <p>"CBC shut down comments on articles about Indigenous people because the comments were so offensive they could make Donald Trump cringe."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about this decision. What should we do about trolls on the internet? Should free speech be completely free? Should there be limits on hate speech?</li> </ul>
<p>From "That's What She Said: Old Kid Shows vs. New Kid Shows":</p> <p>"Back in my day, kid shows were humble; the focus was on story, not on the wardrobe budget. So, when you turned off the TV for dinner you felt like you were a normal person having a normal life."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about TV shows today and when she was growing up. Do you think she is exaggerating about how bad TV is today? What kinds of shows do you watch on TV? What kind of show could you create that would be more representational of real life?</li> </ul>
<p>From "That's What She Said: Info Drain":</p> <p>"For some reason, children's stores seem to be at the forefront of the information collection. They say that they're going to enter you into raffles and send you coupons, but I haven't seen any yet. I have, however, had three texts from companies telling me that I'm missing out on "AMAZING SALES - TEXT NOW KNOCKOFF MICHAEL KORS" in the past week. As a result, I will be returning to my normal, no-information, stance. When cashiers request my phone number, I'll request theirs."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about the way companies collect our personal information. What do you think about her decision not to give her information? What do you think companies are doing with this information?</li> </ul>

**The Way of the Sword – Handout #1: Four Square**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How could new fictional experiences change your perspective on real, everyday life? How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others' expectations?

<p><b>Dawn describes herself as...</b></p>	<p><b>Dawn wishes she were...</b></p>
<p><b>The expectations that others have of Dawn...</b></p>	<p><b>To what extent do the expectations of others shape Dawn's actions and/or the way she views herself? Is she fiercely independent? A follower? Or somewhere in between?</b></p>

**The Way of the Sword – Handout #2: Humour**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**Let's talk about writing with humour!**

- Watch award-winning screenwriter and film producer Cheri Steinkellner's TED-Ed video "How to make your writing funnier."
- Once you have watched the video, go back to Dawn Dumont's "The Way of the Sword" and find evidence of how she has incorporated these comedic concepts into her writing.

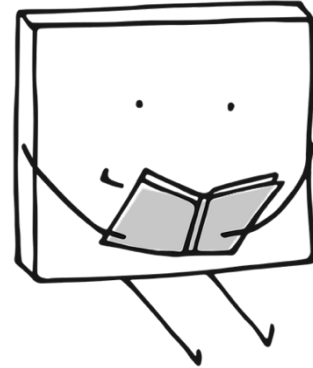
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Find the flaws</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discover the details</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Insert incongruities</b></li> <li>• <b>"Secret to humour is surprise"</b></li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Shift from observation to imagination from</b></li><li>• <b>"What is" to "What if?" (2:44)</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>"Dumb stuff that happens in real life"</b></li><li>• <b>Things that cause irritation, frustration, and humiliation</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Rule of Three (or Zig, Zig, Zag)</b></li><li>• <b>Punchline rule</b></li><li>• <b>Rule of K</b></li><li>• <b>Have fun</b></li></ul>	
<p><b>Other (Does Dumont write something humorous that does not fit these categories?)</b></p>	

**The Way of the Sword – Handout #3: Reality and Fiction**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How could new fictional experiences change your perspective on real, everyday life? How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others' expectations? Why might it be important to read stories that mirror our own experiences? Why might it also be important to read stories that reflect the experiences of others?

**Ideas to reflect on:**

*The following quotations are from two well-known TED videos, "How fiction can change reality" by educator Jessica Wise, and "The danger of a single story" by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says, "Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So, what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are" (02:36).

"It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (10:12).

Adichie further adds, "All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become

the only story [...] The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar." (13:45).

In "How fiction can change reality," Jessica Wise discusses how reading fiction allows us to "walk a mile in the shoes" of others (00:42). She explains, "Stories have a unique ability to change a person's point of view. Scholars are discovering evidence that stories shape culture, and that much of what we believe about life comes, not from fact, but from fiction" (01:02). Wise asks the viewer to consider, "how new fictional experiences might change your perspective on real, everyday life?"

### **Discuss "text to text" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

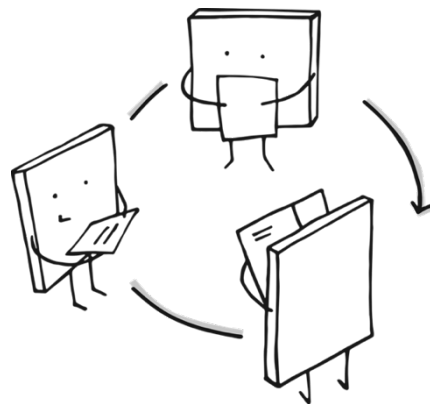
- How do these texts, "The Way of the Sword," "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality" speak to one another? What do they say?

### **Discuss "text to world" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

- How do these texts, "The Way of the Sword," "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality" speak to the world we live in today? What does storytelling have to do with power?

### **Discuss "text to self" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

- What personal connection do you feel to "The Way of the Sword", "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality"? Can you relate to them? In what way?





**The Way of the Sword – Handout #4: Writing a Humorous Personal Narrative**

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others’ expectations??

**Assignment**

Write a short humorous narrative based on an event or events from your own life.

**Think about an important moment/incident in your life:**

- Something weird you used to believe when you were younger, maybe a secret you never revealed
- An incident your family re-tells all the time to embarrass you
- An incident that made you laugh at your own expense
- A time there was a real misunderstanding between you and someone in your family. Did it lead to some form of funny conclusion?
- A sad or awful day you had in the past—is there a way to find humour in it?
- If you are struggling to think up an idea for a story, try to think of a foil to your personal narrative. For example, write a story about a childhood or current hero. If your hero were watching over your shoulder, what would they think about your life choices? How might you meet or disappoint their expectations?

*\*\* Remember you are writing a story your teacher will read and that you are expected to share with the class, so you should make sure that the story you choose is one you are comfortable sharing.*

**Details**

**STEP 1** – Write as many ideas of incidents in your life that might work quickly on a page. You will have 15 minutes.

**STEP 2** – Find two partners. You will have two minutes to pitch your story ideas to them. They will have two minutes to give you feedback. You will listen and give feedback to their story pitches.

**STEP 3** – Choose the incident you want to use for your project.

**STEP 4** – Start writing! Keep in mind the comedic concepts reviewed in class. How can you incorporate them to make your story funnier?

**STEP 5** – Submit your written story to your teacher (rubric for evaluation is in this package). Your teacher will be reading over your story and giving you feedback.

**STEP 6** – Get teacher feedback, change story as needed. Prepare to tell your story to the class. Think about ways to make your story more gripping when read out loud. Consider these oral storytelling processes:

- sharing the story from memory with others
- using vocal expression to clarify the meaning of the text
- using non-verbal communication expressively to clarify the meaning
- attending to stage presence
- differentiating the storyteller's natural voice from the characters' voices
- presenting the story efficiently
- keeping the listener's interest throughout
- using an expanding repertoire of techniques to enhance audience experience

**STEP 7** – Tell your story to the class! You are welcome to tell it to the class, or to make a video or audio recording to share; however, there should be no special effects.



<b>Writing a Humorous Personal Narrative</b>				
<b>Scale</b>	<b>MEANING</b> (ideas and information; use of detail)	<b>STYLE</b> (clarity, variety, and impact of language)	<b>FORM</b> (beginning, middle, end; organization and sequence; transitions)	<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (spelling, Punctuation, sentence structure, grammar)
<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offers an engaging perspective; individuality of the writer comes through; real life incident was successfully recounted in a humorous way featuring some maturity or sophistication in ideas</li> <li>builds a convincing personal narrative through detail, example, explanation; solid use of comedic concepts (may use more sophisticated comedic concepts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flows smoothly and naturally—sense of effortlessness</li> <li>varies language to develop subtleties of meaning and effect</li> <li>varies sentence structure, sometimes to create a particular effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develops from an engaging introduction, which usually includes a thesis statement, to a satisfying ending</li> <li>connections and relationships among ideas are clear; smooth transitions create a sense of movement from beginning to end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spelling, punctuation, and grammar are generally correct</li> <li>errors in sentence structure are usually the result of experimentation or attempts to develop complex structures</li> <li>appears to have been carefully reread and checked for errors; most errors have been eliminated</li> </ul>
<b>Fully meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develops a stance or point of view with some voice or individuality; real life incident was successfully recounted</li> <li>builds a solid personal narrative through the use of detail, example, explanations; includes sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flows smoothly; easy to read</li> <li>varies language according to topic and purpose; may choose words for effect</li> <li>uses a variety of sentence forms; although attempts sometimes result in problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develops smoothly, from a clear and often interesting introduction or thesis statement to a logical conclusion</li> <li>uses a variety of transitions to establish connections among ideas; related ideas are grouped together; paragraphing is logical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may have occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar</li> <li>may include occasional errors or awkwardness in complex sentence structures (e.g., inappropriate subordination)</li> <li>appears to have been carefully reread and checked for errors</li> </ul>
<b>Minimally meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>takes a clear stance or point of view with some relevant ideas; however, retelling of real life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally easy to read; some sense of flow from one sentence to the next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>beginning introduces the topic and attempts to engage the reader;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar occasionally</li> </ul>

	<p>incident was not engaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some development of a personal narrative through explanations and examples; often without much analysis; does not include sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• largely conversational, with some instances of more precise language for effect</li> <li>• some variety in sentence length and pattern</li> </ul>	<p>includes a clear middle and an end</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links ideas with appropriate transitions; most paragraphing is logical</li> </ul>	<p>distract the reader, but meaning is clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows basic rules for sentence construction, but may include some run-on sentences</li> <li>• appears to have been reread; obvious errors may have been corrected</li> </ul>
<b>Not yet within expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose or point of view may be unclear; often very brief; may be illogical</li> <li>• may attempt to develop or elaborate ideas; however, it is difficult to follow the writer's reasoning; does not include sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficult to read; no sense of fluency or flow</li> <li>• language may show some variety but tends to be basic and general, and may be inappropriate in places</li> <li>• sentences are short and simple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the middle and ending may be weak in relation to the beginning</li> <li>• may shift abruptly from one idea to another; often written as a single paragraph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent, repeated errors in basic spelling and grammar distract the reader and may obscure meaning</li> <li>• no sense of control in sentence structure; often includes run-on sentences</li> <li>• few corrections; little evidence that the writing has been reread and checked for errors</li> </ul>

\*\* Rubric adapted from BC Performance Standards - Writing Grade 9:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/performance-standards/writing\\_g9.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/performance-standards/writing_g9.pdf)

<b>Your own personal narrative - STORYTELLING PRESENTATION</b>				
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Content/Meaning</b>	<b>Humour</b>	<b>Delivery/Performance</b>	<b>Listening</b>
<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains a story based in a real-life experience thoroughly and insightfully.</li> <li>Two minutes or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of comedic concepts (that we explored in class) are excellently integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear expressive and confident voice.</li> <li>Enhances audience understanding of the power of oral storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full attention to the speakers during presentations.</li> </ul>
<b>Fully meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good explanation of a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Just two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of comedic concepts (that we explored in class) are integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate volume and expression. Some nervous or careless gestures occur.</li> <li>Enhances audience understanding of the power of oral storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few lapses in attention.</li> <li>No interruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimally meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superficial / minimal explanation of a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Basically, two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few comedic concepts / moments are integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking skills barely adequate.</li> <li>Lack of preparation impedes storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few lapses in attention.</li> <li>No interruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Not yet within expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal attempt made to explain a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Missed the point or lacked effort.</li> <li>Well under two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No noticeable comedic concepts were integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words are mumbled or inaudible.</li> <li>Lack of preparation impedes storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student needs reminders to show respect for others.</li> <li>Use of phone or another electronic device.</li> </ul>
<b>No attempt made</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No attempt made to explain a story based in a real-life experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refusal to present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refusal to give presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is rude and disruptive.</li> <li>Use of phone or another electronic device.</li> </ul>

*\*\* Rubric adapted from English 10 and 11 First Peoples Teacher Resource Guide by First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)*

<http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp/>