



**EPIC**

**CURRICULA**

# The Human Rights Project



**GRADE: 9-12**

**COMMON-CORE**

Achieves Multiple Goals

**ACADEMIC**

**CIVIC**

**ARTISTIC**

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL**

# Human Rights Theatre Project

The Human Rights Project asks students to balance research and creativity in order to bring a current human rights issue to life.

Students select a news article about a current human rights violation. Inspired by their selected news article, students research, structure, write and revise a short human rights play.

Crafted for  
**THE NEW REALITY**

**BLENDED**

**REMOTE**

**SYNC + ASYNC**

**WORKING VALUES**

**ARTS INTEGRATION**

**STUDENT CENTERED**

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
&  
ANTI-RACISM**

4 Steps

**RESEARCH**

**CREATE**

**WRITE**

**SHARE**



# Empathy & Awareness

The Human Rights Project sparks awareness about human rights and develops empathy through a creative research-based project.

## **EMPATHY**

Students learn about the real people impacted by their selected human rights violation. When students delve into each person's struggle, they engage in empathy. Through identifying and imagining their objective, motivation and obstacles, they begin to see through that person's eyes.

## **AWARENESS**

Students learn more about the context and struggle surrounding the human rights violation they selected. They also learn about the human rights violations chosen by their peers.





**STEP I:**

**RESEARCH**



STEP I:

RESEARCH

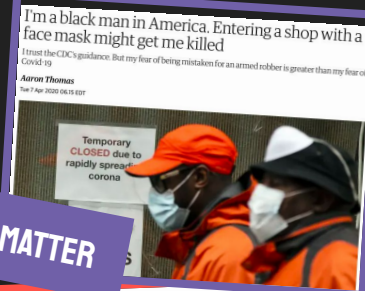
## Selecting news articles

Students identify a human rights issue that they are passionate about and select one of the news articles provided.

Each article should be centered around an individual's struggle against this human rights violation.

Using Epic's **Newspaper Theatre** techniques, students mine the article for inspiration on character, setting and conflict.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Married at 13 to man in his 70s: Child bride who's changing attitudes

By Mereso Kilusu, Special to CNN  
Updated 7:01 AM ET, Fri March 8, 2013



Teen who migrated to U.S. border to escape gangs hopes to join his mom

By Monica Campbell, Public Radio International on 02.10.19  
Word Count: 1,512  
Level: MAX



IMMIGRATION & DEPORTATION

A Victim of the Anti-Gay Purge in Chechnya Speaks Out: 'The Truth Exists'



LGBTQ+ RIGHTS



**STEP I:**

**RESEARCH**



**ERCR**

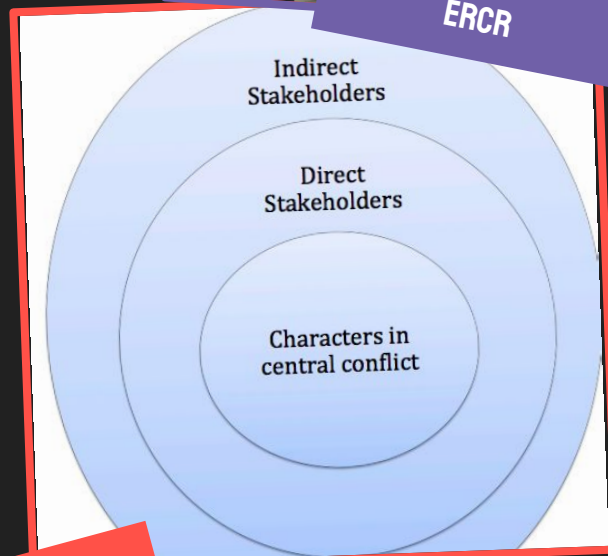
## Newspaper Theatre Process

### THE ERCR

The ERCR Exercise (Environment, Relationship, Conflict, Resolution) is a structured improvisation in which four students establish the ERCR of a scene - each student responsible for one element. An Epic artist then performs a monologue inspired by a news article and students identify the ERCR. After that performance, students read the article together and identify all settings and characters named in the article.

### THE STAKEHOLDER CHART

Students draw a circle around the main character(s) of the news article and draw another circle around it - naming all of the characters who are DIRECT stakeholders in the article. They then draw an outer circle in which they place characters who are INDIRECT Stakeholders. They also imagine the characters that were "left out" of the article and place them in those circles.



**STAKEHOLDERS**



**STEP 2:**

**CREATE**



**STEP 2:**

**CREATE**

## Creating the framework

Before students begin writing their play, they must build the framework:

- The Artist's Statement - WHY they are writing this play and what is most important/inspiring from their article.
- Choosing characters & setting.
- Creating the character objectives, motivations and obstacles.
- Creating an outline that includes exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax and denouement.

### The Framework

**ARTIST'S  
STATEMENT**

**SETTING**

**MAIN CHARACTERS**

**OBJECTIVES,  
OBSTACLES,  
MOTIVATION**

**THE PLAY STRUCTURE**





**STEP 3:**

**WRITE**



STEP 3:

WRITE

## Writing a short play

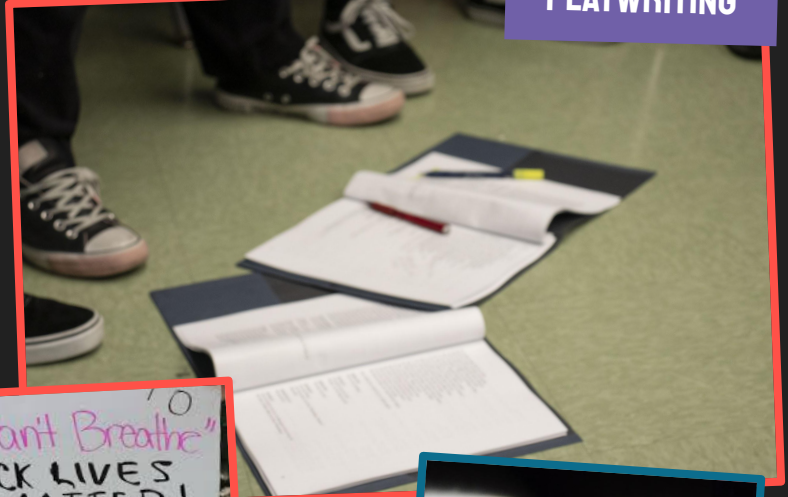
Building on their analysis of the news article, their artist statement and their play structure, each individual student begins their writing process. Students learn new playwriting skills as they write a short play inspired by their selected news article.

Those skills include:

- Character Voice
- Specificity
- Incorporation of Research
- Development of Conflict
- Monologue & Dialogue writing



PLAYWRITING



USING RESEARCH



CHARACTER  
VOICE



**STEP 4:**

**SHARE**



## STEP 4:

# SHARE

## Perform

Students share their plays with their teachers and classmates.

**Option 1:** Professional actors perform each play in live readings via livestream or live in the classroom (when we can!)

**Option 2:** Professional actors perform each play in pre-recorded videos shared asynchronously with the class, cohort or grade.

**Option 3:** Students perform their own plays with other students, possibly mentored or directed by professional theatre artists. This option requires rehearsal time!

In all options, it is critical that students respond to their peer's plays through writing assignments and group discussions.



LIVE ( WHEN WE CAN! )



STREAMING ONLINE  
( ALWAYS! )



IT WORKS



## ACADEMICS

### Common Core, English Language Arts, Grade 9-10 & 11-12

**Reading Informational Text:** RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.3, RI.11-12.1, RI.11-12.2 RI.11-12.3

**Writing:** W.9-10.3, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.6, W.9-10.8, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.6, W.11-12.8.

**Speaking & Listening:** SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.6

Inquiry Model: CWICER (Connect, Wonder, Investigate, Construct, Reflect)

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making

## RESULTS FROM ONE OF OUR SCHOOLS

29%

**increase** in attendance during and following an Epic residency.

40%

**improved graduation** rates over ten years.

98%

project **completion** rate.

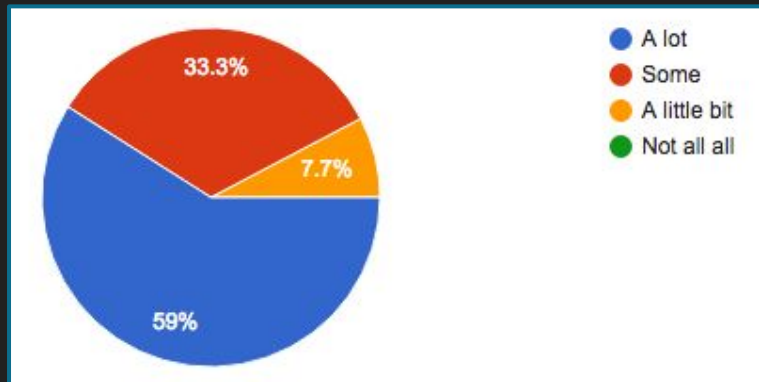
31%

**increase** in State Regents Exam passing rates ( English, US History, Global History ).

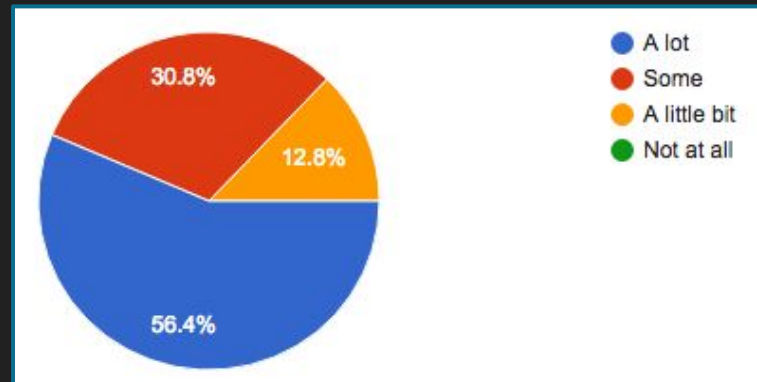


## STUDENT VOICES

Working on the Human Rights Theatre Project has helped me improve my ability to write creatively?



Working on the Human Right Theatre Project has helped me to become more interested in Human Rights issues?



Survey of around 90 students.



## ACADEMIC VOICES



“EPIC helped to build a more comprehensive narrative around the issue of school segregation and integration. It built public awareness in a way that I never could. It helped us center the public policy work in youth voices across the city.”

- **Matt Gonzales, Founder and Director of the Integration and Innovation Initiative (i3) at NYU Metro Center**

“I observed young people start at a very untutored place on the growth continuum as they sped down the line to accomplished researchers and actors, and I was stunned. The growth was extreme, and the sense of accomplishment by all concerned was exceptional.”

- **Amy Stuart Wells, Director of The Public Good at Teachers College, Columbia University**







**BLENDED**

**REMOTE**

**SYNC + ASYNC**

## Crafted for The New Reality

Three levels, accommodating any classroom situation.

### **6 SESSIONS**

Asynch, self-contained and pre-recorded. teachers lead in their own time.

### **10 SESSIONS**

Building on the 6 session track, EPIC leads more in-depth sessions in real time. In-person, blended or fully remote.

### **14 SESSIONS**

Building on the 6 and 10 session tracks, EPIC leads the most in-depth sessions in real time. In-person, hybrid or fully remote.



# Who is EPIC?

For 20 years, Epic has made theatre that empowers. Epic's artists are equal parts cyphers and mentors: they create and amaze; they teach and inspire; they translate the struggles of history into lessons for our future; they fight their way into the center of the civic dialogue. We value youth voice deeply, because we share a youthful passion for justice; we believe that theatre that embraces this passion transforms audiences from passive bystanders into active participants forging a more inclusive and collaborative vision of America.

Epic's artists challenge the institutional status quo by making theatre radically accessible, engaging thousands of students and first-time audiences in the transformative process of telling their own stories and learning to deeply empathize with those of others. At Epic, this high level of inclusiveness fosters artistic rigor and quality in all of our programs, mirroring the extraordinary professional work we present on our professional stages.



# Thanks!

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