



VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 38

## GLOBAL VOICES

# TEACHING RESPECT FOR WOMEN-THE POWER IS IN DAD'S HANDS

## SECONDARY RESOURCES



A student places a candle at a vigil for the victims of the recent killing rampage near Los Angeles, California.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- On May 23, 2014, 22-year-old Elliot Rodger went on a rampage, killing six people with knives and guns, and wounding 13 others in Isla Vista, California. Two of the dead and most of the wounded were women. In letters and YouTube videos released before the attack, the killer expressed his hatred for all women because women rejected him romantically.
- In Canada, on December 6, 1989, Marc Lepine brought a rifle to the college École Polytechnique in Montreal. He killed 14 female engineering students, saying he was “fighting feminism.” Like Rodger, Lepine wrote letters expressing his hatred for women, saying they were taking men’s jobs and men’s place in society.
- According to Statistics Canada, half of all Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual abuse. Police reports show that, in 2011, 173,600 Canadian women were victims of violent crime—higher than the rate of violent crime against men.
- Women are 11 times more likely than men to experience sexual violence.
- On an average night, 3000 women across Canada will sleep at women’s shelters to escape abuse from their husband or partner.
- Young women between 15 and 24 are most at risk for becoming victims of violent crime.

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

### KEY TERMS

**Misogyny**—Hatred towards or prejudice against women.

**Feminism**—Advocating for rights and equality for women.

**Homage**—Praise or celebration of a person and their accomplishments.

## THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS

- Themes: Women's Rights, Values and Ethics, Global Issues, Local Issues
- Course Connections: English, Social Sciences and the Humanities, Canadian and World Studies

## MATERIALS

- Copies of "Imperative" by Esther Morgan

## SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in oral, visual or text form.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express and defend a position on an issue.

## DISCUSS

1. Did you hear about the mass killing in California? If so, where did you learn about it? Did you discuss it with friends or with your family?
2. What do you think of the "social media storm" this event caused? Are you surprised people defended the killer or felt some empathy for him?
3. Is social media a good place to have such a debate? What are pros and cons of expressing your opinions about violence against women on social media?
4. Do you agree with the column that murderers like the ones in California and at the École Polytechnique are "an extreme expression of attitudes that are all too prevalent"? Explain.
5. Albert Dubreuil began to understand his role as a father of young boys is to be a positive role model for them. Do you agree that that is the best way to teach respect for women? Discuss.

## DIVE DEEPER

Despite its pervasiveness violence against women is not natural or inevitable. It is an expression of historical and cultural values and patriarchal structures. As the column indicates, gender stereotypes and violence against women often occurs at home.

Write the word "home" on the front board. Ask students to take a moment and think about the meaning of the word. Ask: What does home mean to you? What would your ideal of home be like? (keep in mind that some students' home situations might be far from ideal). As a class, come up with a clear definition of home. Write "domestic violence" on the front board. Ask students to list all the things they can think of that could be described as domestic violence.

Distribute copies of the poem "Imperative" by Esther Morgan. Ask students to read it to themselves quietly before asking for a volunteer to read it out loud.

### Imperative

This morning don't go down to the kitchen  
in bare feet. Put on your gardening gloves,  
Fetch the dustpan and brush from the cellar  
and sweep these pieces up quickly but carefully,  
making sure you get every last sliver  
from the darkest corners of the room  
(later they may be held against you).  
Wrap the fragments in newspaper  
so no one cuts themselves.  
Put back the dustpan and brush, the gloves'  
upturned, amputated hands.  
Make yourself a cup of tea  
with six sugars and a nip of whisky.  
Stop shaking – he'll be down soon –  
heavy footsteps above your head, thudding down stairs.  
Stop shaking I said. Swallow this note.

As a class, do a close reading of the poem in order to further explore the subject of violence against women. Ask students to consider the following:

- What subject(s) does the poem address?
- Who is the speaker of the poem?
- What is the poem's larger context?
- What genre or mode of poem are you dealing with? (Lyric, narrative, elegy, etc.)
- Look closely at the language the poet uses: What kind of diction does the poet use?
- What is the tone/mood of the poem?
- Which images stand out and why?
- Does the poet use figurative language?
- Where does the poem take us (emotionally, intellectually, narratively, etc.)?
- Is it possible that the woman in the poem will ever be able to escape?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Photo Credit: David McNew/Getty Images