

Foshay in the Bad Days

by **Jervey Tervalon**

Illustration by **Jervey Tervalon**

Curriculum developed by **Griffin Davis**

Supplementary curriculum and copy editing by **Athena Villard**



OVERVIEW

Quick Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

Student Population	
Age/Grade Level Appropriateness	* Ages 13+ * Grades 8+
Genre/s	* Creative nonfiction * Essay
Length	2,367 words
Content Advisories	* Racial prejudice * Violence in school * Rough neighborhood * Poverty * Riots
One Sentence Summary	Black teachers at Foshay, a school in south central Los Angeles, are fired for identifying racial issues at the school, and the school erupts.

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	Topics * Racial identity and community * Class identity * Trust and transparency in school environment * Rebellion * Freedom of speech * Questioning the status quo * Privilege * Hierarchy * Human rights

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Keeping your head above water in a tough situation * Realizing that a place that is supposed to be a sanctuary, like school, is not always so * How ideas of race can both unify and divide * Embracing free speech even when it's hard * Realizing the irony that even though a place like school, that teaches free speech and is supposed to encourage it, might have systems in place that actually prevent it from practicing it.
Historic Events / Time Periods for Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Watts Riots and the Rodney King Riots * Black Panther Party * Civil Rights and Martin Luther King Jr. * History of black enslavement and subsequent freedom * 40 acres and a mule promise post war in 1865/ reconstruction era * South Los Angeles and racial segregation * Tinker vs. Demoinés
Complementary Classic and Historic Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Article: “Do Students Still Have Free Speech: https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/ (https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/) * This article highlights the issue in our country of shaming students and how New Mexico recently solved the problem with the Hunger-Free Students’ Bill of Rights (https://www.nmlegis.gov/Legislation/Legislation?Chamber=S&LegType=B&LegNo=374&year=17). * Interview with Jervey Tervalon: http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/22/opinion/la-oe-tervalon-foshay-20110522 (http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/22/opinion/la-oe-tervalon-foshay-20110522) * This radio piece and accompanying article by NPR explains the phrase “40 acres and a mule”. https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/01/12/376781165/the-story-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule (https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/01/12/376781165/the-story-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule)

Lesson Planning	
Author and Artists Information	Jervey Tervalon is the founder of Locavore Lit LA and a novelist living in Altadena, CA.
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B

Author Biography

Jervey Tervalon was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, but moved to the Jefferson Park/Crenshaw area of Los Angeles, California, with his family as a young boy. He attended the University of California at Santa Barbara where he graduated with a BA in Literature. He received his MFA from UC Irvine where he studied with Thomas Keneally and Oakley Hall. His thesis project became the novel *Understand This* for which he won the 1994 New Voices Award from Quality Paper Books was based on his experiences teaching at Locke High School. He's had four novels and a collection of stories and two anthologies and numerous short stories, essays and articles published. He is also the founder of Locavore Lit LA.

SYNOPSIS

Jervey Tervalon narrates his experience attending Foshay in South Central Los Angeles in his youth. He recounts when two black teachers at a school assembly inspired students who couldn't afford lunch to feel un-ashamed about using free lunch tickets. In their speech, the teachers cite the ongoing fight for Civil Rights and the unclosed wounds caused by slavery in the United States. The teachers were fired soon after the assembly, inciting disruption and chatter at Foshay. Anger and accusations of racism spread throughout the school, and the student body erupts into chaos. After a food fight breaks out that culminates with the school's shutdown, Jervey feels unsafe outside and runs to his nearby home.

CURRICULUM

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

Topic and Main Ideas

Have you ever thought about how an organization's leadership might determine the types of speech used at the organization? Break into teams and choose an organization. It could be a real organization, like the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), or it could be a made up one. Assign a team leader for each group who will speak on behalf of the organization. Have the teams decide what types of rhetoric (ex: messages, inspirational speeches, marketing language, missions statements) the leader should use to promote the organization, then end the activity by having the leader promote their organization to the class for a full minute. After their talks, analyze the rhetoric used with the class and ask the groups discuss why they chose the messages they did.

Passage-Specific Themes

Read the following passage from “Foshay in the Bad Days”:

At noon, everyone was in line to get the submarine sandwich, and apple with a four pack of Oreos, lunch. I wanted the lunch, but I couldn't get a ticket, both my parents worked and made too much. That pissed me off because It was the same thing I was paying fifty cents for.

Research concepts of identity and privilege, then break into groups and talk about these concepts. Talk about how having more or less can make one feel left out. Why would having more make someone feel left out? Why would having less? On a deeper level, why do people feel like they have to be like their peers?

After each group has finished, present to the class what your group surmised.

Universal Themes

In groups, have students research the issue of free speech in U.S. schools. Make sure the students know how to choose reputable sources. David R. Wheeler's “Do Students Still Have Free Speech in Schools” from The Atlantic is great article to begin with:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/> (<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/>)

After reading this article and conducting additional research, have the students discuss the pros and cons of the arguments made about how much free speech students should have, as well as how much free speech they have at their own school. Encourage debate regarding whether they need more free speech at their school.

Key Vocabulary

Definitions are very context-dependent. Make sure that any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
assembly	coexistence	fire (in context)
afro	controversy	jacked
sufficient	confiscate	stomped
slaves	desperation	pootbutt
encourage	shears	scrubs
auditorium	militant	Criplets
stale	beserk	Chicken Head
black	throwing blows	dashiki
political	precious	Black Panther
cautious	isolation	40 Acres and a Mule
detour		exposition
authority		mugwug
control		

Vocabulary Activity Options

1. There is much unique dialect in “Foshay in the Bad Days.” Research the word dialect. What does it mean? Why might a writer use a lot of dialect in a story? Identify the dialect in this story. Make a list of the words which you would consider dialect. After you are finished making the list, define them using a dictionary. If you are struggling to find the meanings of the words, attempt to use context clues to help you.
2. Draw hierarchical chart of the authority figures at Foshay. Who do you think has the most power in their voice? Who has the least? Outline your opinions in a chart, then write a brief paragraph explaining why you placed the people in the order that you did.
3. What does the word militant mean? If you are unsure, look it up. What kind of person would be considered “militant”? After doing a bit of research on the word, write a short paragraph about a character of your invention who is “militant.”

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. What is free speech? Do you support it in all of its forms? What rights and limitations are there for free speech in America?
 - Additional articles for research on free speech:
<http://billofrights.org/educate/educator-resources/landmark-cases/freedom-of-speech-general/> (<http://billofrights.org/educate/educator-resources/landmark-cases/freedom-of-speech-general/>)
 - <http://www.newseum.org/first-amendment-center/topics/freedom-of-speech-2/speech-overview/> (<http://www.newseum.org/first-amendment-center/topics/freedom-of-speech-2/speech-overview/>)
 - <http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/essayworks/104079-essay-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-free-speech> (<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/essayworks/104079-essay-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-free-speech>)
 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2017/09/28/free-speech-and-good-vs-bad-polls/?utm_term=.4b8cba016401 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2017/09/28/free-speech-and-good-vs-bad-polls/?utm_term=.4b8cba016401)
 - <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/> (<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-students-still-have-free-speech-in-school/360266/>)
2. Break into small groups and discuss why you thought the teachers were fired in “Foshay in the Bad Days.” Was this wrong? Talk about the barriers around speech in your own school, and what you think teachers can and can’t say.
3. Consider the student body’s response to the teachers’ firing by the administration. Do you think this was a reasonable reaction to the school’s actions? Could there / should there have been a different way to react but still send the same message?
4. What are your experiences with protest? Have you protested something yourself? Have you read about or seen a protest? What was it about? In your journal, write about your personal protests and protests you’ve observed for 5 minutes, then share some of your experiences with your class. Discuss whether these were peaceful protests or not and the difference between the two.

Text-Dependent Question Options

1. The school seemed to be a chaotic place in “Foshay in the Bad Days.” There were locations within the school that the narrator pinpointed as being more safe than others. Name a few of the safe locations, as well as some of the more chaotic ones. Cite the text.
2. What was the action that sent the school into chaos? Pinpoint the tipping point.
3. Who were the “authority figures” in “Foshay in the Bad Days”? Was their authority ever questioned? How? Reference the text in your response.
4. What does the phrase, “Didn’t have a pot to piss in” mean? What type of literary device is this? See if you can identify any more of these phrases in the story.
5. What type of person is the narrator? How does he compare to most of his fellow classmates? Find some examples from the text that set him apart.
6. Bubbles are usually seen as a symbol of innocence, which is a quality often associated with school children. As was evident in “Foshay in the Bad Days,” however, school can be the opposite of an innocent place. How does the photographer subvert the innocent activity of blowing bubbles in the same way the author subverts the innocence of school?

Writing Exercise Options

Narrative

Write a short story (fiction or nonfiction) about a time when order was lost in a place where it is usually expected. Was it at school? In public? At the park? A baseball game? What were the reasons? What were the consequences and the results?

Descriptive

What is the most memorable lunch that you’ve ever had at school? Whether you brought it from home, or bought it at the cafeteria, channel your inner food critic, and write a creative nonfiction essay about your lunch in which you describe it in detail.

Analysis

In a brief 2-3 page essay, clearly define the argument that the teachers presented that unified the student body into using their lunch tickets. How did the argument that once unified them cause an intense protest that got out of hand later in the story? What did the experience of unification and protest have in common with the historic Civil Rights movement? Include research on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil Rights to support your argument.

Complementary Reading Text Option

Read this article about the Tinker vs. Demoinis U.S. Supreme Court Case, which set the precedent for free speech in United States schools:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/supreme-court-landmarks/tinker-v-des-moines-podcast> (<http://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/supreme-court-landmarks/tinker-v-des-moines-podcast>)

Writing Exercise

Ask students to research the history of free speech in schools, particularly the Tinker vs. Demoinis U.S. Supreme Court case. Then, have them write a 5-page research essay in which they outline what happened in the case and whether the court decision has been upheld since 1969. Have them cite other, more recent articles as proof of why or why not this is the case.

Activity Options

Classroom Activity One

Ask students to research speeches by famous civil rights activists and social reformers, including both ones mentioned and not mentioned in “Foshay in the Bad Days” (Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Coretta Scott King, Mahatma Gandhi, to name a few). After they have done some research, have each student pick their favorite speech and recite a section of it to the class.

Classroom Activity Two

Were the protests in “Foshay in the Bad Days” peaceful or violent?

Ask the students to discuss this question in small groups or as a class, and then discuss some issues at their school that they think might deserve a peaceful protest. Help them to unify and agree on something. It is perfectly acceptable for this to be a lighthearted issue, like “softer toilet paper in the bathroom.” Once the class is unified around a topic, help them stage a peaceful protest within the classroom. Guide them to make sure it is indeed a peaceful protest. Help them learn the difference between a peaceful protest and a violent one.

Home Activity

Ask students to discuss with parents their perspectives on race, racism, and prejudice when they were growing up. How does this compare with their current perspective? Ask students to write brief discussions of what they learned that was surprising or not surprising to them, and share some of their responses (if comfortable sharing) in class.

Ask students to discuss with their parents what Los Angeles was like during the Rodney King riots. If their parents are not from Los Angeles or were not here during that time, have the students ask their parents if they've ever been a part of a mass protest or lived near a place where one occurred. Then, the students can write a brief discussion of their parents' experience and whether they learned anything surprising. from it.

Guest Speaker

Option One: Ask a speaker from the California African American Museum in Los Angeles to come and speak about the history of racism and racial segregation and times of peak racial tension in Los Angeles.

Contact: <https://caamuseum.org/about/contact> (<https://caamuseum.org/about/contact>)

Option Two: Ask the author / illustrator Jervey Tervalon, who is also the founder of Literature for Life, to come and speak to the class.

Field Trip

Visit the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. After touring the main collection, visit the research library. Have the students browse the special collections, pick an item, and write a brief description of the item and its relevance to African American history (included in the collection is a first edition of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, among many other gems).

Contact: <https://caamuseum.org/about/contact> (<https://caamuseum.org/about/contact>)

TEST PREPARATION COMPONENT

Writing Exercise

Toward the end of "Foshay in the Bad Days," a student starts a food fight after finding a bug in his free sandwich. Metaphorically, what do you think this bug represents and why? What about this moment made the student decide to create an uproar? Write a one- to two-page response in which you cite the text.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Complementary Reading Text Writing Exercise

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.