

Lesson Plan for “Come Together. Right Now.” by Guinotte Wise
published in the online anthology [Nobody’s Home: Modern Southern Folklore](#)

CCSS Standard(s): CCS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 (ELA Anchor)
or alternately: CCS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RH.11-12.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10 (Social Studies)

Objective(s): To experience Southern narratives that lie outside common conceptions; to compare two narratives about being a Southerner to students’ own experiences

Essential Question(s): A common narrative of the South has given it an infamy based on examples of intolerance, but can that infamy be applied to all Southerners? What does it mean to have the behavior of others to define you in some people’s beliefs?

Preparation for Teacher (Strategy and Purpose): Read the essay “Come Together. Right Now.” by Guinotte Wise and the excerpted portion of Noel Polk’s 1997 book [Outside the Southern Myth](#). Though Wise is the elder of the two writers, the ideas from Polk were published earlier and should inform the discussion about Wise’s text, providing a conceptual basis for relating to and interpreting Wise’s assertions and themes.

Preparation of Students (Strategy and Purpose): Provide students with the two paragraphs from the bottom page 9 and to the middle of page 10 in Polk’s *Outside the Southern Myth* as an in-class reading or homework, prior to the class period when Wise’s essay will be read and discussed. These excerpts could be discussed in advance to ensure comprehension, if students’ needs warrant that, or could be foundational with its themes and its connections to Wise’s essay becoming apparent while discussing both works.

In-class activities (recommended): After having students read the excerpts from Polk in advance, hand out copies of Wise’s essay for students to read (and annotate) in class. If it is appropriate, the teacher might post the essay on-screen and have the essay read out loud. The discussion that follows should incorporate Polk’s ideas about being defined by myths about Southern culture that do not fit his actual life and Wise’s ideas about moving through twentieth-century Southern culture in an accepting way. Students should be allowed to express their interpretations about the connections and about their own experiences.

Lesson Follow-up (Recommendations): Though it might be tempting to ask students to share their reactions to the readings or their personal experiences related to these subjects, some might not be ready or willing. Wider-ranging discussions of stereotyping could also be fruitful, but could devolve into generalizations and then arguments. The recommendation is to contain the scope by limiting discussions to ideas about the beliefs, myths, and narratives about the South and Southerners. Teachers know their students and the dynamics in the classroom, and thus, could consider allotting an extra class day or days to a continuation of the Polk/Wise discussion that is appropriate for their circumstances.

Technology: SmartBoard, Elmo, other device for sharing the texts

Tiered Instruction/Intervention/Differentiation: Accommodations per needs, IEPs, or 504s

Assessment: This lesson could be used within a larger unit, containing other comparative readings, and in that case an objective test might be appropriate. However, the analytical and interpretive nature of the exercise would be better assessed with an evidence-based query, like an essay prompt or DBQ, since the specific facts of the readings are less important to remember/learn than the ideas they are asking the reader to consider. Sample questions for these queries could include:

Homework: The teacher will ask students to pose these queries about beliefs, myths, and narratives about Southerners to someone outside the class – another student in the school, a family member, a co-worker, a coach or teammate – then return to class to share the responses they received.

Comments: This lesson plan would require either two class periods preceded by one night of homework or three class periods. Because class times and meeting days vary, the proposals included here are intentionally non-specific with respect to timeframes. Some lesson plans may tell a teacher, “In ten minutes, have students” to complete a certain task. This plan would have the teacher to define those aspects themselves.