

Plan on a Page

Lesson 7: Negotiating Belonging in Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*

Guiding Questions:

- In what ways can cultural, linguistic, and racial boundaries influence characters' experiences of belonging?
 - What steps can individuals take to find belonging in the spaces they occupy?
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Activities (Day 1)

Activity 1: Present a Brief Overview of South African History

- Project the **A Brief Overview of South African History during Apartheid** slides. Use the content on the slides and talking points in the Speaker Notes to provide students with historical framing for Trevor Noah's memoir.
- Let students know that they will be reading a chapter titled "Chameleon" from Trevor Noah's memoir. Have them do a quick pair share to predict, based on what they learned about South African history during apartheid, what the chapter might be about.

Activity 2: Read "Chameleon" by Trevor Noah

- Pass out the reading **Chameleon from *It's Trevor: Born a Crime*** and explain Reading Stations if you are using this procedure (**See Teaching Note 1**). For the first read through, instruct students to jot the annotations using the key at the top of the reading.
- Explain to students that while the story is written in English, there are places where Trevor Noah, who is multiracial and multilingual, writes in Xhosa (pronounced kō-sə), Zulu, and Afrikaans and then provides an English translation. Review your **classroom contract** to set the tone for a respectful reading of the story and establish expectations for how the class should address these points in the text when reading aloud.
- Explain to students that as they read, when they encounter italicized sections in Xhosa, Zulu, or Afrikaans, they should pause a beat to scan the text to themselves.

Then they can pick up again with the English translation in the next sentence. Explain that accurate pronunciation is very important when saying people’s names and using languages other than the ones we already speak, and that when there is any uncertainty about how to pronounce something correctly, reading silently instead of out loud is a gesture of respect to the languages and cultures reflected in the text.

- Model reading aloud with the first three paragraphs while students listen and jot annotations. Then move students into their Reading Stations to finish reading the chapter.

Activity 3: Reflect with a Golden Line Journal Response

- Let students know that they will be discussing Trevor Noah’s story in the next class. To reflect on the text, have students choose a “golden line”—one or two sentences that resonate with them, perhaps because they reflect something about their identities or experiences, teach them something about the world, or because of how they are crafted.
 - Instruct students to copy their “golden line” in their **journals** and then explain why it resonates with them. They can finish this task for homework as needed. Let them know that they will be sharing their responses with a peer in the next class.
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Activities (DAY 2)

Activity 1: Create an Identity Chart for Trevor Noah

- Start the class with students sitting in pairs. Invite them to share their Golden Line **journal** responses from the previous lesson.
- Then explain to students that they will be working with their partner to create an identity chart for Trevor Noah to help them consider how aspects of Noah’s identity influence his sense of belonging in his neighborhood and school.
- Follow the instructions on the **Identity Chart** teaching strategy. Generate a list of factors that make up an individual’s identity and write them on the board. Then start to create an identity chart for Trevor Noah on the board while students record ideas in their notes. Because they are central to “Chameleon,” include race and language. It is important to remind students what they learned in the previous class: racial categories during apartheid in South Africa differed from

how race is constructed in the United States. Then have pairs to continue to add to Noah's identity chart, referring to the text for ideas.

- Create groups of four from the pairs. They can share their identity charts, adding any new information to their own charts. Once they have completed identity charts for Trevor Noah, discuss the following questions as a class:
 - What parts of his identity does Trevor Noah choose for himself?
 - What parts of his identity are determined for him by others or by South African society?
 - Whose opinions and beliefs have the greatest effect on how Trevor Noah thinks about his own identity?

Activity 2: Engage in a Notable Quotable Discussion

- Let students know that next, they will be thinking about the ways in which our identities can influence the groups we belong to and the ones we are excluded from. Remind students that they discussed “in” and “out” groups in a previous lesson when they read **The Importance of Belonging**.
- Students should remain in their groups of four. Pass out the **Notable Quotable Passages from Chameleon by Trevor Noah** and instruct groups to spread them out on their tables. Give students a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the passages by reading them silently, or you can read them out loud.
- Explain to students that they will be using the passages to help them discuss four questions about “Chameleon.” Project the questions one at a time. Model the first activity by discussing the first question as a whole class. Then have groups work on their own for the next two questions. Give groups about five minutes to discuss each question. Circulate during their discussion.
 - **Question 1:** Why do you think Trevor Noah titled this chapter of his memoir, “Chameleon”?
 - **Question 2:** What are some of the boundaries Trevor Noah negotiates in “Chameleon”?
 - **Question 3:** How do these boundaries influence his experiences of belonging in school and in his neighborhood?

- **Question 4:** What steps does Trevor Noah take to gain acceptance from others and deepen his sense of belonging in the spaces he occupies, for example his family, neighborhood, peer groups, and school?

Activity 3: Discuss “Chameleon” as a Class

- Invite volunteers from groups to share their responses to the three discussion questions with the class, supporting their ideas with examples from the text.
- Then project and discuss the following questions as a class:
 - How can we reduce barriers to belonging for ourselves and others in our school and community?
 - What lessons can we apply from “Chameleon” from *It’s Trevor: Born a Crime* and other recent texts to help us answer this question?