

DAMN.: The Art and Importance of Storytelling

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do Kendrick Lamar's album *DAMN.* and the work of photojournalist Gordon Parks tell stories that bring attention to social issues?

OVERVIEW

Note: For this lesson, teachers will need access to Kendrick Lamar's album *DAMN.* This lesson contains strong language and references to abuse, sex and drug use. It is intended for upper grade levels. Teacher discretion strongly advised.



In this lesson, students will analyze several tracks from Kendrick Lamar's Pulitzer Prize-winning album DAMN. They will answer questions about selected songs from the album together as a class. Students will also participate in a gallery walk composed of stills from the music video for Kendrick Lamar's "ELEMENT." and the work of Gordon Parks that inspired the video, exploring how photos tell stories and tell us about race in the United States. The lesson will conclude with students using inspiration from Lamar and Parks to create their own creative storytelling project.

In April 2018, rapper Kendrick Lamar made history when he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his 2017 album *DAMN.* Not only was Lamar the first non-jazz or classical musician to receive a Pulitzer, but *DAMN.* was the first hip-hop album to win the prestigious award. After already being widely celebrated by critics and fans and appearing on numerous end-of-the-year "Best Album" lists in 2017, the Pulitzer jury recognized the album as "a virtuosic song collection unified by its vernacular authenticity and rhythmic dynamism that offers affecting vignettes capturing the complexity of modern African-American life."

DAMN. recounts Lamar's experience after the mega success of his magnum opus *To Pimp a Butterfly*, an album detailing some of the struggles and experiences within the Black community in the United States. *To Pimp a Butterfly* was immortalized when Harvard University decided to archive it in its Hip Hop collection, as well as through the song "Alright," which became widely considered the unofficial anthem of the Black Lives Matter movement and one of the most influential songs of the 2010s.

While *To Pimp a Butterfly* was widely praised, it still drew backlash, especially from American conservatives. After an award show performance of "Alright," reporters on the Fox News network proceeded to bash Lamar's song and performance, arguing hip hop was more "dangerous" than racism for Black American youth. The song, which was made to instill hope in the aftermath of

several high profile police brutality cases in the United States, was painted as anti-police and anti-American. This backlash (along with the praise), spurred Lamar into the spotlight as not only a political performer, but one of the leading voices in hip hop.

In *DAMN.*, Lamar addresses such conservative critiques, using the 14 tracks to confront his critics and haters while telling the story of his upbringing in Compton, California, his feelings towards fame, and his experience as a Black American after the presidency of Barack Obama.

Lamar's storytelling transcends the 14 tracks on *DAMN.* through the six music videos created for the album. In the music video for "ELEMENT." Lamar pays homage to another great storyteller: photojournalist, director, and activist Gordon Parks. After working odd jobs, Parks eventually landed a job with the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the 1930s, focusing his work on the segregation of Washington D.C. After the FSA closed in 1943, Parks freelanced as a photographer until he landed a job at Life Magazine from 1948 to 1972 as the first Black photojournalist for the publication. While at Life Magazine, Parks focused his photos on fashion, celebrities, but also social injustices of everyday people. Some of his most well known photo essays focused on racism, poverty, and the struggles of people systemically distanced from power. With his photos, Parks was able to tell the stories, in addition to giving a platform to people who were regularly ignored and discriminated against in The United States.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- Kendrick Lamar's album *DAMN.* and its cultural impact
- The work and activism of Gordon Parks
- The art of storytelling and how it can be done through photos and music

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE

- Students will be able to better understand the craft of storytelling by analyzing Kendrick Lamar's 2017 Pulitzer Prize-winning album *DAMN* and the work of photojournalist Gordon Parks.

ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Ask students:

- In what ways can we tell stories? Where do you hear or learn stories?
- Can you give an example of a story you find compelling? What makes it compelling? How is the story told? What does the storyteller do to make the work engaging or intriguing?
- What are some of the roles the media plays in telling stories (TV, music, movies, social media, etc.)?

2. Tell students that in this lesson they will be examining the Kendrick Lamar album *DAMN.* Ask students:
 - Have you ever heard of Kendrick Lamar, or this album? What do you know about the artist or the album?
 - How might an album be an example of storytelling?
 - In April 2018, Lamar was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the album. Pulitzer Prizes are awarded for “excellence in newspaper journalism, literary achievements, and musical composition.” Why might have Lamar’s Hip Hop Album won this award? What kind of perspective might it offer?

PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out **Handout 1 - Primary Source Documents**. Have students read *Document 1: Transcript of Fox News’ The Five reaction to Kendrick Lamar’s BET performance of “Alright”* either on their own, with another classmate, or out loud as a class. Then ask students:
 - What are the show hosts’ reaction to Kendrick Lamar’s performance? Why don’t they appreciate the performance?
 - How do you think Lamar responded to the criticism about his work?
2. Have students read *Document 2: “DNA.” by Kendrick Lamar*. Then ask students:
 - Who do you think Lamar is addressing with this song?
 - Why do you think Lamar included the snippet of the criticism from FOX News anchor Geraldo Rivera? Do you think the song serves as a response to it? If so, explain Lamar’s position.
3. Have students read aloud *Document 3: Gordon Parks Introduction*. Then, display the above images. Tell students that the images
 - come from Parks’ “A Harlem Family” series which feature the Fontenelle Family referred to in the handout. Ask students:
 - What stands out to you about these images?
 - What message might Parks be trying to get across through these images?
 - How might a typical *Life Magazine* reader in 1967 respond to this photo essay?
 - Read the quote at the bottom of Document 3. In what way might these photographs speak to Parks’ “Personal Project?”
4. Print and place the **Gallery Walk Images** throughout the classroom. Pass out **Handout 2: Gallery Walk Observations** to students. Tell students they will be looking at pairs of images, one from Gordon Parks and the other from the Kendrick Lamar video “ELEMENT.” Ask students to record their initial response to the images in Handout 2, considering what emotion and message each image might be trying to convey. After the Gallery Walk, ask students:

- What can we infer about America through Gordon Parks images?
- What can we infer about America through the stills from the “ELEMENT.” video?
- Why might have Lamar sought inspiration from Parks’ work? What does this say about America today?

5. Ask students to examine *Document 4: “XXX.” ft. U2 by Kendrick Lamar* in Handout 1. Before playing song, ask students to pay attention to:

- The tone of voice Lamar uses
- The topics covered in the song
- The words or lines that are particularly interesting to you.

6. Play the song “XXX.” ft. U2, beginning at 4:14. Ask students:

- Who or what is Lamar addressing in this song? How does he interact with these ideas or people?
- Who might “Johnny” be? Why might “America love him”?
- What are some examples of contradictions found in the song? (For

example: Lamar tells his friend that he would kill another person if they killed his loved ones while on his way to speak to kids about gun control.) What purpose might such contradictions serve in the song?

- There are few references to religion. Why might Lamar refer to religion?
- How is America characterized in the song? What events is this characterization based off of?

7. Direct students’ attention to *Document 5: “Fear” by Kendrick Lamar* in Handout 1. Play the song “FEAR.” from 0:37-6:30. and ask students to follow along with the lyrics, making notes of anything that stands out. Ask students:

- What are some of Kendrick Lamar’s fears? How do they differ at the ages he speaks of (ages 7, 17, 27)?
- The song opens with a sample of the 1973 song “Poverty’s Paradise” by The 24 Carat Black, which details a man’s experience growing up in poverty and not being able to provide for his family. How might this sample connect to Lamar’s “FEAR.”? Why might have he chosen this sample?
- How is the tone and subject of “FEAR.” different than other songs previously listened to?

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Ask students:

- How does Lamar tell stories from his lived experience on *DAMN.*? What emotions or feelings does he experience? What parts of the songs listened to in class best represent such feelings and experiences?
- Why do you think the album garnered critical acclaim, including winning a Pulitzer? How does it represent an American experience?
- What similarities might exist between the work of Kendrick Lamar and Gordon Parks?

2. Outside of class time, have students take pictures or write accounts about aspects of their everyday life. Students can focus their project on their neighborhood, their family, an interest or hobby or another creative aspect. Encourage students to consider the work of Gordon Parks in which their photos or writings together tell a story. Students can create a slideshow and share their stories with their class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Listen to *DAMN.* in its entirety. After listening, write a one page summary of the album. Pay attention to any motifs or repetitions of certain lines. What story is Kendrick Lamar trying to tell? How does the end of the album compare to the beginning? According to Lamar, the album can be played in reverse (Starting with “DUCKWORTH.” and ending with “BLOOD.”). If you would like, you may listen to the Collector’s Edition of *DAMN.* which features the reverse tracklist, available on streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music. Does the story change at all compared to the standard version of *DAMN.* (beginning with “BLOOD.” and “DUCKWORTH.”)? If so, how is it different when the order of the tracklist is reversed?
2. Research and write a two page paper about one of Gordon Parks’s most famous photographs, “American Gothic” (1942). Consider the following resources while you research the significance of the photograph:
 - A New York Times biography of Ella Watson (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/14/lens/ella-watson-the-empowered-woman-of-gordon-parks-american-gothic-.html>), the subject of the photograph.
 - Information on Grant Wood’s “American Gothic” (1930) from the Art Institute of Chicago (<https://archive.artic.edu/modern/american-gothic/>) or Google Arts and Culture (<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/american-gothic/5QEPmOjCc183Aw>), which inspired Park’s image with the same name.

When writing the paper, consider the following questions:

- How are the two pieces similar? How are they different visually?
- Why do you think Parks chose to reference Wood’s piece?
- How do these two pieces depict America?
- In what ways might Park’s “American Gothic” provide commentary to Wood’s “American Gothic”? Is he presenting anything Woods neglected?

Use details from both artworks and the information gathered from your research to support your arguments and reflections.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Reading 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Reading 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (Extension Activities Only)

Text Types and Purposes 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Text Types and Purposes 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Text Types and Purposes 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Language 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in a word meaning.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)

Core Music Standard: Responding

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

- Handout 1 - Primary Source Documents
- Handout 2 - Song Lyrics
- Gallery Walk Images

Lesson Materials



Gordon Parks “A Harlem Family” Series Photographs



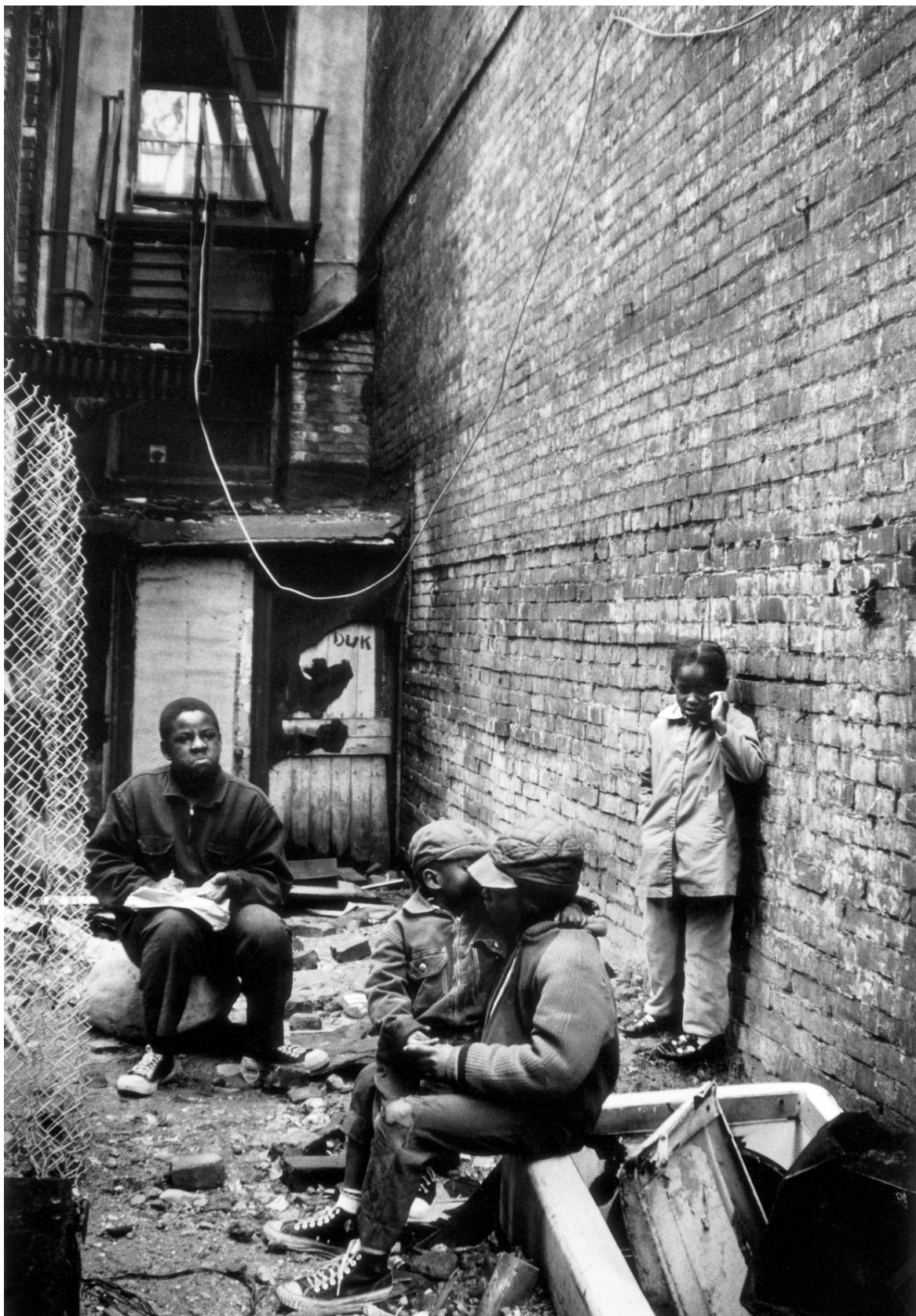
“Bessie Fontenelle and Richard Climb the Stairs, Harlem, New York, 1967”



"Family Crowds Around Open Oven for Warmth, Harlem, New York, 1967"



“The Fontenelles at the Poverty Board, Harlem, New York, 1967”



"Fontenelle Children Outside Their Harlem Tenement, Harlem, New York, 1967"

Handout 1 - Primary Source Documents

Document 1: Transcript of Fox News' The Five reaction to Kendrick Lamar's BET performance of "Alright" (June 2015)

Eric Bolling: Rapper Kendrick Lamar raised some eyebrows last night when he opened the BET Awards singing atop a vandalized cop car.

(Footage plays from Kendrick Lamar's performance of the BET Awards, singing a censored version of "Alright"): "...would you know we've been hurt and down before, hitta!, when our pride was low, looking at the world like where do we go? hitta! And we hate po-po wanna kill us dead in the street fo'sho, I'm at the preacher's door, my knees getting weak and my gun might blow but we gon be alright..."

Bolling: Did you catch that? Ah, Lamar stated his views on police brutality with that line from the song quote, "and we hate the po-po wanna kill us in the street fo-sho." KG?

Kimberly Guilfoyle: Ugh, please. Oh, I don't like it. You know I don't like it, that's why you came to me. I-I get it, it's his right to express himself, let the free market decide. Personally, it doesn't excite me, it doesn't turn me on, doesn't interest me, I'm not feeling it.

Bolling: Geraldo, how helpful are the song lyrics?

Geraldo Rivera: To say the least, not helpful at all. This is why I say hip hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years. This is exactly the wrong message and then to conflate what had happened in the church in Charleston South Carolina with these tragic incidents involving um-um-excessive force of um- use of force by cops is to equate that racist killer with these cops. It is so wrong, it is so counterproductive, it gives exactly the wrong message, it doesn't recognize that a city like Baltimore where, remember Freddie Gray?, that a homicide a day since Freddie Gray. No one's protesting that. Baltimore, a tiny city, seven percent the size of New York, has just as many murders as New York. You know, we've gotta wake up at a certain point and understand what's going on.

Bolling: Dana, timing's everything and this may be a little too soon...

Dana Perino: Well the thing I was thinking about this too, it's not like it was somebody on cable news who just happened to say something that they regretted and that they had then go apologize for. This was planned. There were probably a thousand people, at least several hundred if not a thousand, who all knew this was all going to happen. Nobody raises their hand and say "maybe this isn't the best idea to do?" (Several people talking over each other)

Guilfoyle: Yeah, terrible.

Bolling: But what's going on Tommy, look at that police car

Guilfoyle: It incites violence!

Tom Shiulle: You sure it was planned? It looks like a spontaneous demonstration to me-

Perino: *Who pushed the video?*

Shiulle: Nooo, another rapper who's anti-police? I mean it's never happened before. (Laughter)

Document 2: "DNA." by Kendrick Lamar

[Verse 1]

I got, I got, I got, I got—
 Loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA
 Cocaine quarter piece, got war and peace inside my DNA
 I got power, poison, pain and joy inside my DNA
 I got hustle though, ambition flow inside my DNA
 I was born like this, since one like this, immaculate conception
 I transform like this, perform like this, was Yeshua new weapon
 I don't contemplate, I meditate, then off your fucking head
 This that put-the-kids-to-bed
 This that I got, I got, I got, I got—
 Realness, I just kill shit 'cause it's in my DNA
 I got millions, I got riches buildin' in my DNA
 I got dark, I got evil, that rot inside my DNA
 I got off, I got troublesome heart inside my DNA
 I just win again, then win again like Wimbledon, I serve
 Yeah, that's him again, the sound that engine in is like a bird
 You see fireworks and Corvette tire skrrt the boulevard
 I know how you work, I know just who you are
 See, you's a, you's a, you's a—
 Bitch, your hormones prolly switch inside your DNA
 Problem is, all that sucker shit inside your DNA
 Daddy prolly snitched, heritage inside your DNA
 Backbone don't exist, born outside a jellyfish, I gauge
 See, my pedigree most definitely don't tolerate the front
 Shit I've been through prolly offend you, this is Paula's oldest son
 I know murder, conviction
 Burners, boosters, burglars, ballers, dead, redemption
 Scholars, fathers dead with kids and
 I wish I was fed forgiveness
 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, soldier's DNA (soldier's DNA)
 Born inside the beast, my expertise checked out in second grade
 When I was 9, on cell, motel, we didn't have nowhere to stay
 At 29, I've done so well, hit cartwheel in my estate
 And I'm gon' shine like I'm supposed to, antisocial extrovert
 And excellent mean the extra work
 And absentness what the fuck you heard
 And pessimists never struck my nerve
 And Nazareth gon' plead his case

The reason my power's here on earth
 Salute the truth, when the prophet say

[Bridge: Kendrick Lamar & Geraldo Rivera]

I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA
 This is why I say that hip hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years
 I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA
 I live a better life, I'm rollin' several dice, fuck your life
 I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA
 I live a be-, fuck your life
 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
 This is my heritage, all I'm inheritin'
 Money and power, the maker of marriages

[Verse 2]

Tell me somethin'
 You mothafuckas can't tell me nothin'
 I'd rather die than to listen to you
 My DNA not for imitation
 Your DNA an abomination
 This how it is when you in the Matrix

Dodgin' bullets, reapin' what you sow
 And stackin' up the footage, livin' on the go
 And sleepin' in a villa
 Sippin' from a Grammy, walkin' in the buildin'
 Diamond in the ceilin', marble on the floors
 Beach inside the window, peekin' out the window
 Baby in the pool, godfather goals
 Only Lord knows I've been goin' hammer
 Dodgin' paparazzi, freakin' through the cameras
 Eat at Four Daughters, Brock wearin' sandals
 Yoga on a Monday, stretchin' to Nirvana
 Watchin' all the snakes, curvin' all the fakes
 Phone never on, I don't converse
 I don't compromise, I just penetrate
 Sex, money, murder—these are the breaks
 These are the times, level number 9
 Look up in the sky, 10 is on the way
 Sentence on the way, killings on the way
 Motherfucker, I got winners on the way
 You ain't shit without a body on your belt
 You ain't shit without a ticket on your plate
 You ain't sick enough to pull it on yourself
 You ain't rich enough to hit the lot and skate
 Tell me when destruction gonna be my fate
 Gonna be your fate, gonna be our faith
 Peace to the world, let it rotate
 Sex, money, murder—our DNA

Document 3: Gordon Parks Introduction

Widely acclaimed photojournalist, director, and activist, Gordon Parks was born on November 30, 1912, in Fort Scott, Kansas. Parks was the son of two farmers, and the youngest of their 15 children. After an turbulent adolescence, he held numerous odd jobs to make ends meet, including working as a waiter, a piano player, railroad porter, and a semi-pro basketball player.

In 1939, Parks became a photographer for the St. Paul YWCA and International Institute. He had exhibitions of his work in major Midwestern cities such as St Paul, Minneapolis, and Chicago. Parks also began shooting for journalistic publications, including the *Chicago Tribune*.

By 1942, he was granted a fellowship for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), a program part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. For the FSA fellowship, photographers were tasked with shooting rural and urban areas in America during the Great Depression. Parks stayed in cities like Washington D.C., where he took his now iconic photo of a Black office cleaner Ella Watson in front of the American flag, entitled "American Gothic."



The FSA eventually disbanded, however Parks continued with photography. His work led him to one of the most popular American publications at the time, *Life* magazine. Parks was the first Black photographer at *Life* and in his two decades there produced some of his most memorable photo essays, including "A Harlem Family," a series of photos that captured the everyday struggles of the Fontenelle Family. Parks' photographs captivated readers, some being so moved by Parks' images that they would donate money to help the subjects of his essays, such as the Fontenelle Family. Aside from using his photography to highlight issues like poverty, racism, and segregation, Parks also photographed celebrities and fashion spreads for *Life* magazine.

Parks' career was not only limited to still photography; he participated and directed several films as well. In 1969, he released his first film, *The Learning Tree*, which was based on his 1963 book of the same name. Two years later, he released his second film, *Shaft* which some credits as the first and most popular blaxploitation film. *Shaft* was successful, and its soundtrack earned the film an Academy Award for Best Original Song.

Parks continued to expand his career, co-founding the magazine *Essence* and dabbling in painting. He continued with his photography towards the end of his life. Parks passed away in 2006 at the age of 93. His legacy survives through the Gordon Parks Foundation in Pleasantville, NY and the Gordon Parks Museum and Center in Fort Scott, Kansas.

"I got fed up with hearing all these people, even Negroes, ask, 'Why are those people rioting?' My personal project was to show them why." - Gordon Parks, *Life*, March 8, 1968.

Document 4: "XXX." ft. U2 by Kendrick Lamar

[Intro: Bēkon & Kid Capri]

America, God bless you if it's good to you
America, please take my hand
Can you help me underst—
New Kung Fu Kenny

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

Throw a steak off the ark to a pool full of sharks, he'll
take it
Leave him in the wilderness with a sworn nemesis,
he'll make it
Take the gratitude from him, I bet he'll show you some-
thin', whoa
I'll chip a nigga lil' bit of nothin', I'll chip a nigga lil' bit of
nothin'
I'll chip a nigga lil' bit of nothin', I'll chip a nigga, then
throw the blower in his lap
Walk myself to the court like, "Bitch, I did that!," X-rated
Johnny don't wanna go to school no mo', no mo'
Johnny said books ain't cool no mo' (no mo')
Johnny wanna be a rapper like his big cousin
Johnny caught a body yesterday out hustlin'
God bless America, you know we all love him

[Verse 2: Kendrick Lamar]

Yesterday I got a call like from my dog like 101
Said they killed his only son because of insufficient
funds
He was sobbin', he was mobbin', way belligerent and
drunk
Talkin' out his head, philosophin' on what the Lord had
done
He said: "K-Dot, can you pray for me?
It been a fucked up day for me
I know that you anointed, show me how to overcome."
He was lookin' for some closure
Hopin' I could bring him closer
To the spiritual, my spirit do know better, but I told him
"I can't sugarcoat the answer for you, this is how I feel:
If somebody kill my son, that mean somebody gettin'
killed."
Tell me what you do for love, loyalty, and passion of
All the memories collected, moments you could never
touch
I'll wait in front a nigga's spot and watch him hit his
block
I'll catch a nigga leavin' service if that's all I got
I'll chip a nigga, then throw the blower in his lap
Walk myself to the court like, "Bitch, I did that!"

Ain't no Black Power when your baby killed by a cow-
ard
I can't even keep the peace, don't you fuck with one of
ours
It be murder in the street, it be bodies in the hour
Ghetto bird be on the street, paramedics on the dial
Let somebody touch my momma
Touch my sister, touch my woman
Touch my daddy, touch my niece
Touch my nephew, touch my brother
You should chip a nigga, then throw the blower in his
lap
Matter fact, I'm 'bout to speak at this convention
Call you back—

[Break: Kendrick Lamar]

Alright, kids, we're gonna talk about gun control
(Pray for me) Damn!

[Chorus: Bono]

It's not a place
This country is to me a sound
Of drum and bass
You close your eyes to look around

[Verse 3: Kendrick Lamar]

Hail Mary, Jesus and Joseph
The great American flag is wrapped in drag with explo-
sives
Compulsive disorder, sons and daughters
Barricaded blocks and borders
Look what you taught us!
It's murder on my street, your street, back streets
Wall Street, corporate offices
Banks, employees, and bosses with
Homicidal thoughts; Donald Trump's in office
We lost Barack and promised to never doubt him again
But is America honest, or do we bask in sin?
Pass the gin, I mix it with American blood
Then bash him in, you Crippin' or you married to
Blood?
I'll ask again—oops, accident
It's nasty when you set us up
Then roll the dice, then bet us up
You overnight the big rifles, then tell Fox to be scared
of us
Gang members or terrorists, et cetera, et cetera
America's reflections of me, that's what a mirror does

Document 5: "FEAR." by Kendrick Lamar

[Intro]

Poverty's paradise

I don't think I could find a way to make it on this earth
(I've been hungry all my life)

[Bridge 1: Charles Edward Sydney Isom Jr. & Kendrick Lamar]

Why God, why God do I gotta suffer?

Pain in my heart carry burdens full of struggle

Why God, why God do I gotta bleed?

Every stone thrown at you restin' at my feet

Why God, why God do I gotta suffer?

Earth is no more, won't you burn this muh'fucka?

I don't think I could find a way to make it on this earth

AkcuF'hum siht nrub uoy t'now ,erom on si htraE

Reffus attog I od doG yhw ,doG yhW

Teef ym ta 'nitser uoy ta nworht enots yrevE

Deelb attog I od doG yhw ,doG yhW

Elggurts fo lluf snedrub yrrac traeh ym ni niaP

Reffus attog I od doG yhw ,doG yhW

Teef ym ta 'nitser uoy ta nworht enots yrevE

[Verse 1: Kendrick Lamar]

I beat yo' ass, keep talkin' back

I beat yo' ass, who bought you that?

You stole it, I beat yo' ass if you say that game is broken

I beat yo' ass if you jump on my couch

I beat yo' ass if you walk in this house

With tears in your eyes, runnin' from Poo Poo and Prentice

Go back outside, I beat yo' ass, lil' nigga

That homework better be finished, I beat yo' ass

Your teachers better not be bitchin' 'bout you in class

That pizza better not be wasted, you eat it all

That TV better not be loud if you got it on

Them Jordans better not get dirty when I just bought 'em

Better not hear 'bout you humpin' on Keisha's daughter

Better not hear you got caught up

I beat yo' ass, you better not run to your father

I beat yo' ass, you know my patience runnin' thin

I got buku payments to make

County building's on my ass, tryna take my food stamps away

I beat yo' ass if you tell them social workers he live here

I beat yo' ass if I beat yo' ass twice and you still here
Seven years old, think you run this house by yourself?
Nigga, you gon' fear me if you don't fear no one else

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

If I could smoke fear away, I'd roll that mothafucker up
And then I'd take two puffs

I'm high now (Huh), I'm high now (Huh)

I'm high now (Huh), I'm high now (Huh)

Life's a bitch, pull them panties to the side now

(Pull them panties to the side now)

I don't think I could find a way to make it on this earth

I'll prolly die anonymous, I'll prolly die with promises

I'll prolly die walkin' back home from the candy house

I'll prolly die because these colors are standin' out

I'll prolly die because I ain't know Demarcus was snitchin'

I'll prolly die at these house parties, fuckin' with bitches

I'll prolly die from witnesses leavin' me falsed accused

I'll prolly die from thinkin' that me and your hood was cool

Or maybe die from pressin' the line, actin' too extra

Or maybe die because these smokers are more than desperate

I'll prolly die from one of these bats and blue badges

Body-slammed on black and white paint, my bones snappin'

Or maybe die from panic or die from bein' too lax

Or die from waitin' on it, die 'cause I'm movin' too fast

I'll prolly die tryna buy weed at the apartments

I'll prolly die tryna defuse two homies arguin'

I'll prolly die 'cause that's what you do when you're 17

All worries in a hurry, I wish I controlled things

[Chorus: Kendrick Lamar]

If I could smoke fear away, I'd roll that mothafucker up
And then I'd take two puffs

(I've been hungry all my life)

I'm high now (Huh), I'm high now (Huh)

I'm high now (Huh), I'm high now (Huh)

Life's a bitch, pull them panties to the side now

(Pull them panties to the side now)

Now

[Verse 3: Kendrick Lamar]

When I was 27, I grew accustomed to more fear

Accumulated 10 times over throughout the years

My newfound life made all of me magnified

How many accolades do I need to block denial?
The shock value of my success put bolts in me
All this money, is God playin' a joke on me?
Is it for the moment, and will he see me as Job?
Take it from me and leave me worse than I was before?
At 27, my biggest fear was losin' it all
Scared to spend money, had me sleepin' from hall to hall
Scared to go back to Section 8 with my mama stressin'
30 shows a month and I still won't buy me no Lexus
What is an advisor? Somebody that's holdin' my checks
Just to fuck me over and put my finances in debt?
I read a case about Rihanna's accountant and wondered
How did the Bad Girl feel when she looked at them numbers?
The type of shit'll make me flip out and just kill some-thin'
Drill somethin', get ill and fill ratchets with a lil' some-thin'
I practiced runnin' from fear, guess I had some good luck
At 27 years old, my biggest fear was bein' judged
How they look at me reflect on myself, my family, my city
What they say 'bout me reveal if my reputation would miss me
What they see from me would trickle down generations in time
What they hear from me would make 'em highlight my simplest lines

[Verse 4: Kendrick Lamar]

I'm talkin' fear, fear of losin' creativity
I'm talkin' fear, fear of missin' out on you and me
I'm talkin' fear, fear of losin' loyalty from pride
'Cause my DNA won't let me involve in the light of God
I'm talkin' fear, fear that my humbleness is gone
I'm talkin' fear, fear that love ain't livin' here no more
I'm talkin' fear, fear that it's wickedness or weakness
Fear, whatever it is, both is distinctive
Fear, what happens on Earth stays on Earth
And I can't take these feelings with me, so hopefully, they disperse
Within fourteen tracks, carried out over wax
Searchin' for resolutions until somebody get back
Fear, what happens on Earth stays on Earth
And I can't take these feelings with me, so hopefully they disperse
Within fourteen tracks, carried out over wax
Wonderin' if I'm livin' through fear or livin' through rap
Damn

[Bridge 2: Bēkon]

God damn you, God damn me
God damn us, God damn we
God damn us all

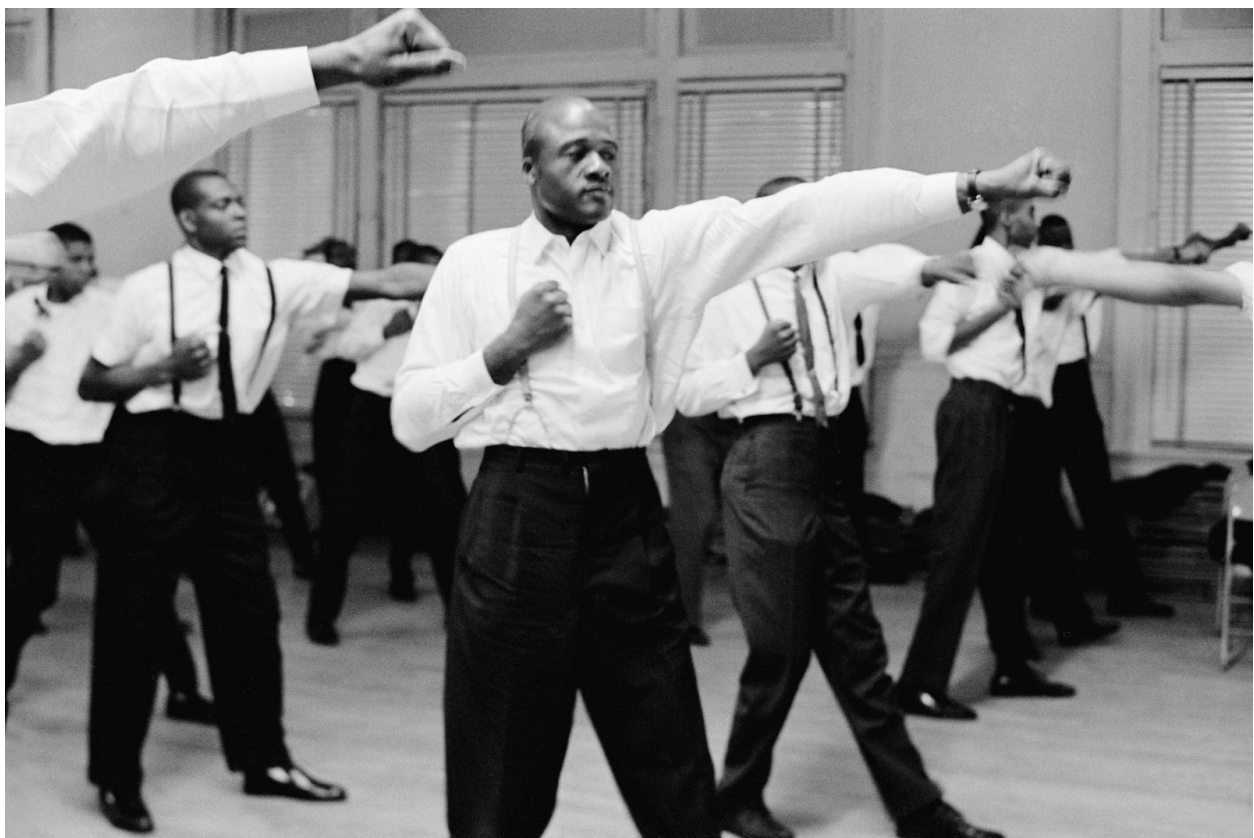
Gallery Walk Images



Untitled. Gordon Parks (1956)



Ethel Sharrieff, Chicago, Illinois. Gordon Parks (1963)



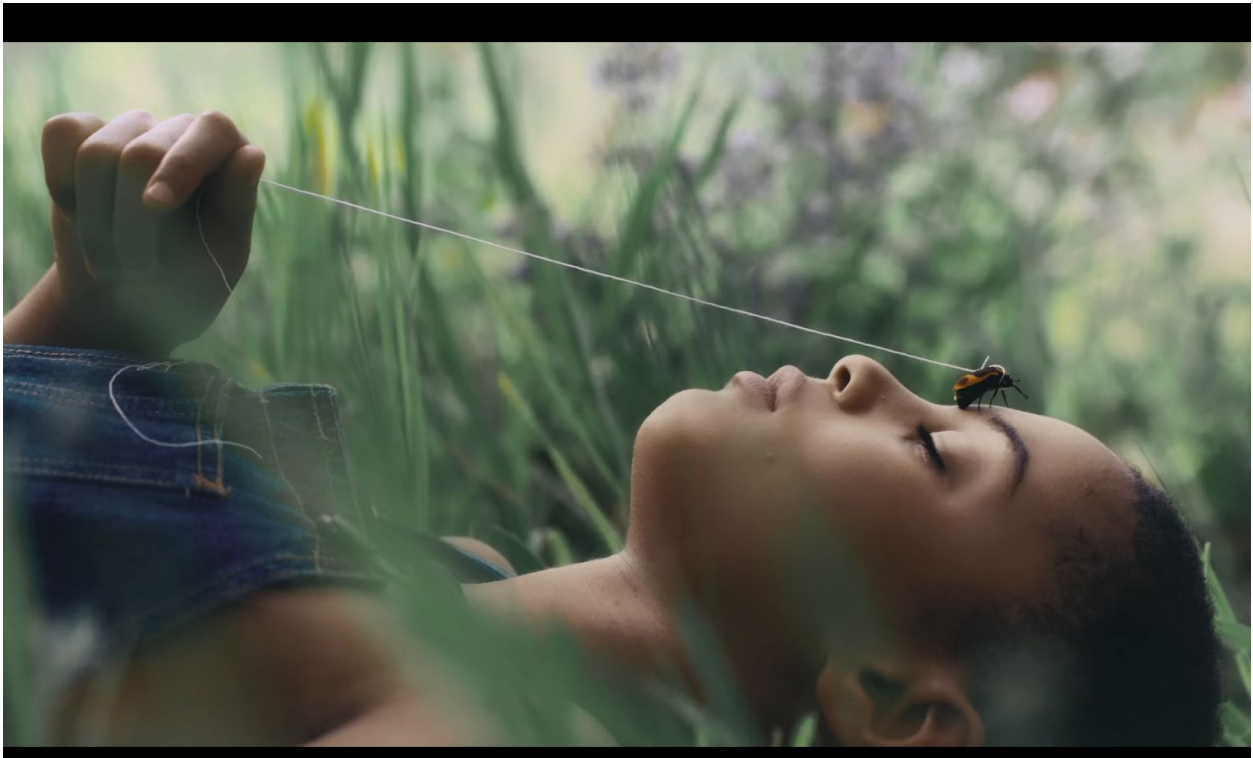
Black Muslims Train in Self-Defense, Chicago, Illinois. Gordon Parks (1963)



Untold Story, Chicago, Illinois. Gordon Parks (1957)



Ali and a young boy in Miami. Gordon Parks (1966)



Boy With June Bug, Fort Scott, Kansas. Gordon Parks (1963)

Handout 2 - Gallery Walk Observations

Instructions: *Examine each of the image pairs, and note your observations in the appropriate row below. Consider what emotions the images evoke for you, and what story the images might be telling.*

Untitled. Gordon Parks (1956)

Ethel Sharrieff, Chicago, Illinois. Gordon Parks (1963)

Black Muslims Train in Self-Defense, Chicago, Illinois. Gordon Parks (1963)

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