

ACTIVITY 18

Dual Identities

Purpose: Introduce the concept of identity and explore the complex relationship between our names and our identities.

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Create an Inclusive and Welcoming Environment for Reading

In this activity, advisees will read a poem written by a student reflecting on the relationship between his name and his identity. Before the advisory meeting, think about how you would like your group to read the poem. You might choose a **Read Aloud** strategy, such as “popcorn style.” Visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about the different Read Aloud teaching strategies. Some advisees might feel uncomfortable reading an unfamiliar piece out loud, especially one that includes some terms in Spanish, so it is important that advisees have a choice about reading, especially while you are still building community and establishing your advisory space as welcoming and inclusive.

2. Pacing This Activity

If your advisory meeting is shorter than 45 minutes, you can divide this activity into two parts by completing the concentric circles activity and reading the poem in the first meeting and then discussing the poem and reflecting on it in a journal response in the second meeting.

PROCEDURE:

1. Explore the Broader Identity a Name Represents

- Explain to the group that in this activity, they will be reflecting on how well they think their own name reflects who they are. Then they will use the metaphor of an online search results page to think about the characteristics that make up who they are.
- Project or write on the board some or all of the following sentence starters, and use the **Concentric Circles** strategy for paired discussions (visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about this teaching strategy). It is important that your advisees have a choice about what they share, so let individuals choose which sentence stem to start with each round. Have advisees in one circle share for one minute before switching to the other circle. For example, you might ask the outside circle to start and time them for one minute as they respond to the prompt while

APPROXIMATE TIME:

45 minutes

MATERIALS:

READING

Two Names, Two Worlds

HANDOUT

Navigating Two Worlds

advisees on the inside circle listen. Then advisees on the inside circle respond to the prompt for one minute.

- I was given my name because . . .
- I like/dislike my name because . . .
- My name is/isn't a good fit for my personality because . . .
- Describe a time when someone made an assumption about you because of your name.
- Describe a time when your name affected your behavior.

2. Read and Discuss "Two Names, Two Worlds"

- Provide advisees with copies of the reading **Two Names, Two Worlds** and the handout **Navigating Two Worlds**. Explain how the group will read the poem together.
- After reading the text, divide advisees into pairs or small groups of three to complete the handout.
- Then choose from the following questions for a circle discussion:
 - What is your favorite line from the poem, and why?
 - What one or two lines from the poem do you most relate to, and why?
 - Who is Jonathan Rodríguez? What are some of the words he uses to describe himself?
 - What do you think Jonathan Rodríguez means when he uses the phrase "two names, two worlds"? What two worlds does his name represent?
 - What are some of the worlds that you move between? In what ways is it easy to move between them? In what ways is it challenging? What are some of the strategies you've developed to help you overcome the challenges?

3. Reflect on Today's Discussion

Ask advisees to complete three to five of the following sentence starters from the poem in their **journals** and then share one with the group in a **Wraparound** format to create a group poem (visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about these teaching strategies).

- Born in _____ / But raised in _____.
- I'm not the typical . . .
- I get lost in . . .
- I listen to _____ / But don't make me _____.
- I am proud to say: . . .
- I am beginning to appreciate that . . .
- I am beginning to see that . . .
- Join me and . . .



Two Names, Two Worlds

In the poem below, Jonathan Rodríguez reflects on how his name represents his identity.

Hi I'm Jon.....No—Jonathan
Wait—Jonathan Rodríguez
Hold on—Jonathan *Rodríguez*
My Name, Two names, two worlds
The duality of my identity like two sides of the same coin
With two worlds, there should be plenty of room
But where do I fit?
Where can I sit?
Is this seat taken? Or is that seat taken?
There never is quite enough room is there?
Two names, Two worlds
Where do I come from?
Born in the Washington Heights of New York City
But raised in good ol' Connecticut
The smell of freshly mowed grass, autumn leaves
Sancocho, Rice and Beans
The sound from Billy Joel's Piano Keys
And the rhythm from *Juan Luis Guerra*
I'm from the struggle for broken dreams
Of false promises
Of houses with white picket fences
And 2.5 kids
The mountains and *campos de la Republica Dominicana*
And the mango trees
I'm not the typical kid from suburbia
Nor am I a smooth Latin cat
My head's in the clouds, my nose in a comic book
I get lost in the stories and art
I'm kinda awkward—so talkin' to the ladies is hard
I listen to *Fernando Villalona* and *Aventura* every chance I get,
But don't make me dance *Merengue*, *Bachata*
Or *Salsa*—I don't know the steps
I've learned throughout these past years

I am a mix of cultures, a mix of races
"Una Raza encendida,
Negra, Blanca y Taina"
You can find me in the parts of a song, *en una canción*
You can feel my African Roots *en la Tambora*
My Taino screams *en la guira*
And the melodies of the lyrics are a reminder of my beautiful Spanish heritage
I am African, Taino and Spanish
A Fanboy, an athlete, a nerd, a student, an introvert
I'm proud to say: *Yo soy Dominicano*
I'm proud to say, I am me
I am beginning to appreciate that I am
Una bella mezcla
I am beginning to see that this world is also a beautiful mix
Of people, ideas and stories.
Is this seat taken?
Or is that seat taken?
Join me and take a seat,
Here we'll write our own stories¹

¹ Jonathan Rodríguez, untitled poem.



Navigating Two Worlds

Directions: Inside the thought bubbles, write examples from the poem to show Jonathan Rodríguez's two identities. Then discuss the questions below with your group. Do not work on Part Two yet. It's for later!



Part One

Discuss the following questions as a group:

1. What do you think Jonathan Rodríguez means when he uses the phrase "two names, two worlds"?

2. What two worlds do you think his name might represent?
3. What advice could you give Jonathan that would help him move between these two worlds?

Part Two

Directions: Respond to the following reflection questions in your journal or in the space below. Then choose some (or all) of the sentence starters from “Two Names, Two Worlds” and write your own identity poem in your journal or on separate paper.

1. What are some of the worlds that you move between?
2. In what ways is it easy to move between them?
3. In what ways is it challenging?
4. What are some of the strategies you’ve developed to help you overcome the challenges?

My Identity Poem

Title: _____

- Hi, I’m _____.
- Born in _____ / But raised in _____.
- I’m not the typical . . .
- I get lost in . . .
- I listen to _____ / But don’t make me _____.
- I am proud to say: . . .
- I am beginning to appreciate that . . .
- I am beginning to see that . . .
- Join me and . . .