

ACTIVITY 25

Identity and Language

Purpose: Explore the relationship between identity and language and the decisions we make about how we choose to communicate with others.

ADVISOR NOTES: None

PROCEDURE:

1. Reflect on the Different Languages We Use

- Ask advisees to respond to the following prompt in a journal reflection:

What are the different “languages” you use when communicating with others? Consider speaking, reading, and writing for school, out of school, online, and with various audiences.
- In pairs, small groups, or as an advisory, discuss responses to the journal prompt.

2. Listen to a Student Spoken-Word Poem about Identity and Language

- Pass out the reading **Lost in Translation** and explain to the group that they will be hearing a spoken-word poem about identity and language that was written by Ruby Ibarra, a former Bay Area San Lorenzo High School and UC Davis student. She is a spoken-word poet featured in online blogs and articles from such media outlets as MTV, VH1, NPR, and BuzzFeed.
- Play the audio **Lost in Translation** (02:53) at facinghistory.org/advisory-media. Tell advisees that as they listen, they should underline or star moments in the poem that resonate with them. Then have them choose one or two moments that they underlined or starred and write in their journals or on their handouts about why they chose them.

3. Discuss “Lost in Translation”

- Have your advisees share their reflections in pairs or triads before moving into a circle for a discussion of the following questions:
 - What assumptions do people make about Ruby Ibarra based on language? What do those assumptions suggest about how they see her identity? How do these assumptions make her feel?
 - What lines or phrases resonated with you the most, and why?
 - Why do you think Ruby titled her poem “Lost in Translation”?

APPROXIMATE TIME:
30 minutes

MATERIALS:



READING

Lost in Translation



AUDIO

Lost in Translation

(see facinghistory.org/advisory-media)

4. Create a Found Poem from “Lost in Translation”

- Explain the **Found Poems** strategy (visit facinghistory.org-advisory-media to learn about this teaching strategy), and then have advisees work in pairs to create a found poem from “Lost in Translation” that addresses the theme of identity and language.
- Pairs should circle 10 to 15 words or short phrases in the poem and then arrange them in a new poem in their journals or on a piece of paper. Let them know that they can repeat their selected words and phrases, but they cannot add anything new (unless you want to allow them three “free words”).
- After pairs have drafted their poems, ask for volunteers to share with the class. Discuss any common ideas that emerge across the found poems that your group creates.