

GLOBAL VOICES

Global Voices Information Sheet

“Magic” Johnson and HIV/AIDS



Earvin “Magic” Johnson tells the world he has HIV on November 7, 1991.

Background Info

- Earvin “Magic” Johnson was born in 1959 to a working class family in Lansing, Michigan.
- Johnson was sent to a mostly-white high school where he helped speak out against and end racial tensions and violence in the school.
- A local sports reporter gave Johnson his nickname “Magic” when he played for his high school basketball team.
- Johnson was the first person in his family to go to college.
- In 1979, a professional basketball team, the Los Angeles Lakers, made Johnson their first draft pick.
- Johnson held a public press conference on November 7, 1991, to announce he had been diagnosed with HIV. He said he would retire from basketball to dedicate his life to publicly fighting the disease.
- Johnson started the Magic Johnson Foundation in 1991 to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and help those affected by the disease. The Foundation also works to support disadvantaged youth in urban communities by providing education opportunities, health care, and social programs.
- Johnson is a successful businessman. Magic Johnson Enterprises, owns movie theatres, restaurants, coffee shops and health clubs. His businesses employ more than 40,000 minority workers.
- In 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 33.4 million people worldwide had HIV/AIDS, 2.7 million more people were being infected with HIV each year, and 2 million people were dying of AIDS every year.
- World AIDS Day, an international day to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, happens every year on December 1.

Key terms

- **HIV** — Human Immunodeficiency Virus. A virus that infects important cells in the human immune system. HIV can only be spread by sharing infected bodily fluids like blood, semen or breast milk. Without treatment, HIV can lead to the disease AIDS.
- **AIDS** — Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. A disease caused by HIV which destroys the immune system, making the infected person less able to fight other diseases. There is no known cure for AIDS.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: HIV/AIDS, prejudice, Magic Johnson, overcoming obstacles.
- Course Connections: The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Language, Social Studies.

Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Screen and projector
- Computer and internet
- Paper and drawing utensils
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Reading Comprehension

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.

- iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
- c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn to read.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
- d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
 - i. What is the message in this column?
 - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
 - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
 - iv. What is HIV/AIDS?
 - v. Who is Magic Johnson?
 - vi. What is stereotyping and prejudice? Provide examples.
 - vii. What did you learn from Magic Johnson in this column?

Thinking

1. Know, Want to know, and Learned (KWL) Chart (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Activate students' prior knowledge about HIV/AIDS by asking them to complete individual KWL charts.
 - b. In this chart, students must indicate what they already know, and what they want to know about HIV/AIDS. Students will fill in what they have learned at the end of this activity.
 - c. Ask students the following questions about HIV/AIDS:
 - i. When was the first time you heard about HIV/AIDS? What did you hear?
 - ii. What thoughts and emotions do you have about HIV/AIDS?
 - iii. Who does HIV/AIDS affect?
 - iv. How is it transmitted?
 - v. What is HIV?
 - vi. What is AIDS?
 - d. Explain to students that **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)** is the virus that causes AIDS. This virus severely damages the immune system by infecting and destroying certain white blood cells. HIV is passed from person to person via blood, semen or mucous membranes. Pregnant women may pass HIV to their baby during pregnancy, delivery or breast feeding. Some people will develop AIDS as a result of their HIV infection. An HIV positive test result does not mean a person has AIDS.
 - e. Explain that **Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)** is developed after a person has been in contact with HIV. AIDS is a collection of infections and cancers that people with HIV might develop. AIDS weakens the immune system making it difficult for a person to fight illness. If a person gets one of these infections or cancers after they are HIV+ they are said to have AIDS. Many of these infections that cause AIDS are harmless to a healthy immune system.
 - f. Tell students that people can contract HIV in multiple ways:
 - i. Unprotected sex with an infected person.

- ii. Sharing needles with someone who is infected.
- iii. Transmission from a mother to her unborn fetus.
- g. Explain to students that you cannot get HIV through daily contact such as:
 - i. Hugging
 - ii. Shaking hands
 - iii. Sharing a swimming pool or toilet
 - iv. Coughing, sneezing, tears or insect bites.
- h. Following this discussion, ask students to complete the Learned section on their KWL chart.

Communication

1. Prejudice and Misunderstanding (estimated time: 60 minutes)
 - a. Begin by discussing with students how people often use labels or categories to describe others and how these labels can be based on such characteristics as clothing, looks, the way a person talks, or the groups to which he or she belongs.
 - b. Ask the class to brainstorm categories that are used at school to group people. Categories could include labels such as “jocks” or “brains.” Write each category the class generates onto the board and then have students narrow that list down to five major categories.
 - c. Ask students to explain how this categorization causes them to treat other people.
 - d. Explain to students that stereotypes are popular beliefs about people of social groups based on previous experience while prejudice is making a judgment or assumption about someone or something before having enough knowledge to be able to do so with guaranteed accuracy.
 - e. The Global Voices column addresses the prejudice that Magic faced when he announced his diagnosis. He states:
 - i. “Other players, people he had once counted friends, lashed out. They refused to play him for fear of being infected... He learned that prejudice and misunderstanding could only be solved by patience and conversation, and by being the better person. “Don’t be afraid to challenge different people. Help them to come together.”
 - f. Discuss what prejudice looked like in Magic’s situation and ask students to describe how this made him feel and how he overcame this.
 - g. Ask students to think about a time they encountered prejudice in their own life and how this made them feel.
 - h. Ask students to create a drawing representing prejudice. This drawing can be made with symbols, drawn people or in the form of a collage and it can be about a moment in their life, something they have observed or something they have heard about.
 - i. When students have completed their drawings, ask them to explain their drawing to another student in the room.
 - j. Students will hand in completed drawings for grading.

Application

1. A Letter to Magic Johnson (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Watch the following video of the Magic Johnson’s press announcement in 1991, where he informed the public of his diagnosis
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSfy4AhDDnw>
 - b. After viewing this video, ask students the following suggested questions:
 - i. How did this press conference make you feel?
 - ii. What were the risks of Magic going public with his diagnosis?
 - iii. What do you think was the public’s reaction to this announcement?
 - iv. What was Magic’s take on the situation, what was your impression of his attitude?

- v. What can you learn from Magic in this situation?
- c. Following this discussion, ask students to write a letter to Magic Johnson. In this letter encourage them to discuss everything they know about HIV/AIDS, the stigma behind this disease and the impact Magic's actions have had on themselves and the public.
- d. Completed letters will be handed in for grading.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Free The Children – www.freethechildren.com

We Day Teach - <http://www.weday.com/teach>

The Magic Johnson Foundation - <http://magicjohnson.com/>