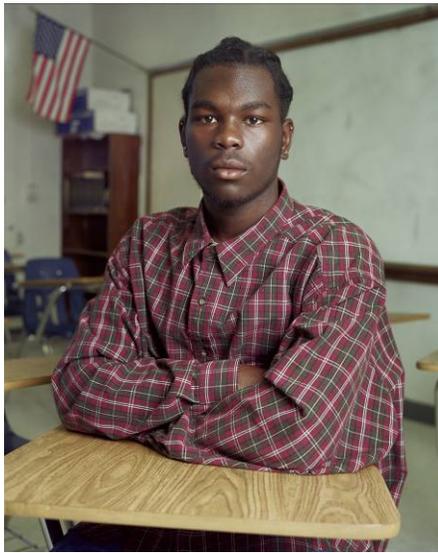


# TEACHER GUIDE

## Developing Photography & Writing Portrait Projects Inspired by *Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey*



©Dawoud Bey, *Sahendy*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.



©Dawoud Bey, *Gerard*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.



©Dawoud Bey, *Isabel*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.

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## Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey

For the past fifteen years, photographer Dawoud Bey (b. 1953) has focused his attention and his camera lens on high school students. The images in *Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey* are collected from his visits to various public and private schools across the country, including Lawrence High School and Phillips Academy. The subjects of his large scale yet intimate portraits come from various economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Individually, each photograph is an exploration of identity, self-expression, and representation. Collectively, the photographs shed light on the experience of being a teenager in the United States today.

Before making a photograph, Bey asks each student to write a personal statement. Paired alongside the portraits, these written narratives are both moving and humorous, poignant and eloquent. The statements affect how we interpret the image, either by surprising us, affirming our reactions, or challenging the many stereotypes associated with this often misunderstood population.



©Dawoud Bey, *Kevin*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.

### KEVIN

When I was about six or seven my father died. This was either the worst or best thing that ever happened to me. In fact, now that I think about it, it was both. That experience was both my blessing and my curse. I don't remember much before the death of my father. For me it feels like that's when life as I know it really began. It's not like I was saddened by the event. I hardly knew my father. His memory only survives in my head because of three scenarios: the way his coarse mustache pricked my cheek when he kissed me, the short collect calls he made from the correctional facility, and the photos that my mother keeps under her bed. After his death my mother became incredibly detached. She became a mere exoskeleton of her former self. With a dead father and a deeply depressed mother who basically stopped living, I had no choice but to take care of myself. I became as self-reliant as possible. There was no more time for childhood. I was all about business. Thanks to the death of my father I learned to value independence, hard work, and maturity. This is my blessing. Thanks to the death of my father I grew up much too fast and never learned how to ask anyone for help. I carry my own burdens . . . alone. This is my curse.



©Dawoud Bey, *Usha*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.

### USHA

I can speak four languages, I am an actress, and when I was about thirty seconds old I reached up and took my dad's glasses off of his face. When I was eight years old, I visited my cousin's school in India. They didn't have a roof, so during the monsoons they got rained on. When I went home, I raised enough money to build them a roof and buy some school supplies.

Several of the students in *Class Pictures*, including Sahendy on the cover, were photographed at Lawrence High School during Dawoud Bey's artist residency in 2005.

## LAUREN

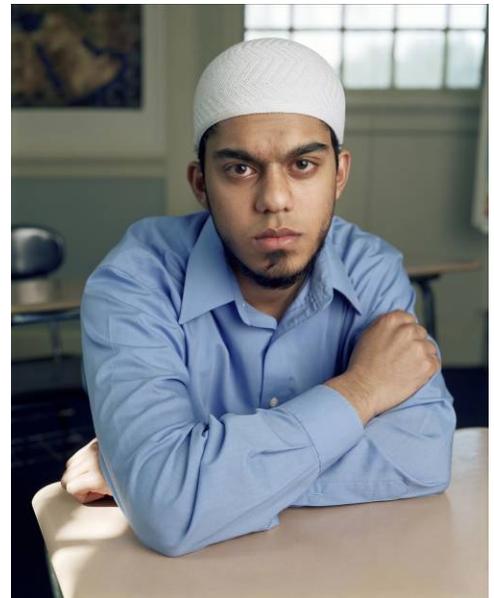
I'm glad my parents were always there to guide me and help me think of the choices I was making. I like to join a lot of activities, but once something goes wrong, my first thought is to quit. When I tell my parents what happened, they always push me to give it another try and not quit. Without that extra push I wouldn't have been able to do many things, like play basketball, volleyball, swim, or even play the piano.



©Dawoud Bey, *Lauren*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.

## OMAR

I know that I shouldn't but sometimes I wonder how other people look at me. What do they see first? My brown-ness, my beard, my cap, my clothes, the color of my eyes, the design of my T-shirt? I think that people see my skin color first. They probably see me as a brown guy. Then, they might see my black beard and my white kufi (prayer cap) and figure out I am Muslim. They see my most earthly qualities first. Brown, that's the very color of the earth, the mud from which God created us. Sometimes I wonder what color my soul is. I hope that it's the color of heaven.



©Dawoud Bey, *Omar*, digital C-print, 40 x 30 in.

## Questions for Observation and Discussion

- What can you learn about a person by looking at his or her portrait? What can't you learn?
- How can you tell what is important to someone's identity from his or her portrait?
- How does a portrait impact or limit your understanding of someone's identity?
- How is your understanding of the person affected by his or her pose, facial expression, setting, etc?
- How does the personal statement affect how you understand the person in the photograph?
- *How would you want to be pictured in your portrait? What would you write about in your statement?*

## Inspiration for Photography & Writing Projects

As Dawoud Bey's *Class Pictures* exhibition has traveled from the Addison to venues across the country, it has continued to inspire photography & writing projects in classrooms of all ages. Following are examples of projects inspired by the exhibition and book highlighting some of the different directions and approaches teachers can take with their students. We welcome you to contact us for more information or if you would like any assistance in developing a project or accessing images.

## Photography & Writing Portrait Projects Inspired by *Class Pictures*

### *The Boys and Girls of B301: Our Class Pictures and Writing* Robert Frost School, Lawrence, MA

Over the course of the school year, Ms. Ha's second-grade students created a photography and writing project that culminated with the publication of their own book. Students discussed Bey's photographs, created portraits of their toys as practice for their own portraits, and finally made their own portraits and wrote poetry for their publication, *The Boys and Girls of B301: Our Class Pictures and Writing*.

	<p>Me</p> <p>Anthony Friendly Medium Story Maker Loves School Smart Throws with Right Hand Patient Is a reader Spanish Cool Awesome Good Funny Really Nice Best Friend is Evan</p>
2. Anthony Areche	
	<p>A list of things that I love and hate</p> <p>Fantastic four --- lover Training wheels --- hater Math and money --- lover Baby brother cry --- hater Guitar --- lover Drum --- lover Gym --- lover Music --- lover Video --- lover Drawing --- lover Apple cider --- lover Jordan shoes --- lover Pink milk --- lover Spanish --- lover Pool --- lover Yu-gi-yo --- lover Science --- lover Computer --- lover Recess --- lover</p>
	
3. Adelaida Bonilla	



### *Eighth Grade Portrait Project* Sarah Greenwood School, Boston, MA

Students in Ms. Hargrove's class were inspired by the themes of identity and stereotype in Bey's work. They explored the gap between perception and reality in their own photographs and writing. Ms. Hargrove and her students were pleased to have the opportunity to share their classroom exhibition with Bey, who visited their school to discuss his and the students' work.

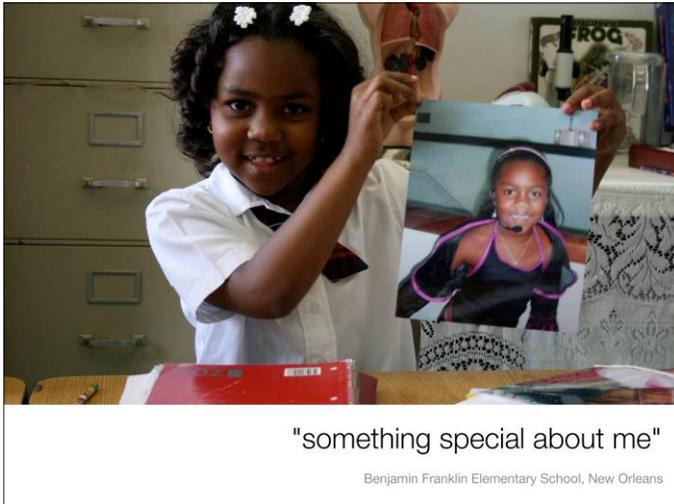
*Many people think that just because I am not the biggest or tallest person they could push me around. But little do they know, I am my own boss. I may not look like it but I like to have fun and even go out every now and then. I know looks can be deceiving but there's more to me than meets the eye.*

- Jonathan Hernandez



## *Something Special About Me, My Picture, I Am* Benjamin Franklin School, New Orleans, LA

Students in Ms. Puri's K-3 classes used the *Class Pictures* book to spark discussion of portraits and inspire ideas for their own photography and writing projects. Each classroom decided on a theme for their project, made their own portraits, produced personal statements and poetry, all of which culminated in an online published book.



## *Who Am I?* Glen Urquhart School, Beverly, MA



In connection with the seventh grade curricular theme of *Who Am I?*, Ms. Annable's students created their own exhibition of self-portraits and personal statements. Students chose how they wished to be photographed and wrote statements that reflected what they wanted others to know about them. Once the project was complete, the photographs and statements were displayed in the classroom, receiving such positive feedback from the school community that the exhibition stayed on view for the remainder of the school year.

JOSH

I am always worrying. The first thing I do when at night is ask my parents if the doors are locked, and even if they are, I sometimes double-check. I also double-check the tops on drinks to see if they pop or click. It seems even if the people I am around tell me there is nothing wrong, and that they'd bet one million dollars that nothing bad will happen, my brain won't give up, and it tries to scare me. The only thing that can calm me down is to pray. I feel the only way to tell my brain to shut up is to ask God to help me deal with the things I can't do anything about, and he helps me. The only other thing that calms me down is music. Whether I am behind my kit or have my headphones on, music can take me to another realm where I am invincible, and where I am not thinking of anything but my music. The only drug for my disease is music and religion.

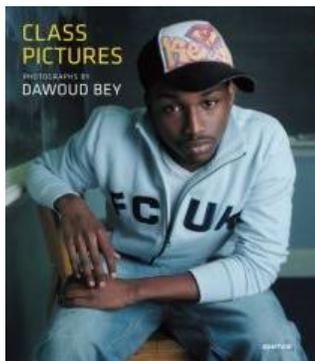


## Sample Outline for a Photography & Writing Portrait Project

**Step 1 Write a personal statement:** Possible writing prompt: What is something that someone might not know about you by simply looking at your picture? Students can write a paragraph, a poem, or an essay considering how their inner selves and thoughts may be different from what people see on the outside.

**Step 2 Generate ideas about portraits:** What is a portrait? What can we learn about a person from a portrait? What can we *not* learn? View examples of contemporary and historic paintings and photographs for ideas. Ways to access images:

- *Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey* is an excellent book to get you started. It can be borrowed from the Addison or purchased online; photographs, text, and student readings can also be accessed through: <http://www.dawoudbey.net/> and [http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/chicagoproject/exhib\\_chiproject.shtml](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/chicagoproject/exhib_chiproject.shtml).
- To view portraits from a range of time periods and mediums, explore the Addison's online collection database at [www.addisongallery.org](http://www.addisongallery.org). A selection of images can also be made into a Powerpoint for use in your classroom.
- Some museum websites have online images and classroom resources for portrait study.



**Step 3 Make a portrait:** Students can work in pairs or teams to make photographs of one another. To prepare, students discuss and/or write responses to the following questions: What do you want your portrait to reveal about you? How will you accomplish this? What clothing, pose, and background will you use? What about your facial expression or action?

**Step 4 Write another personal statement:** This time, look at the photograph you just made of yourself. What was it like to make a photograph of yourself? Does the photograph communicate what you expected? What does the photograph show that your first personal statement did not reveal?

**Step 5 Compare the two writing statements:** Read the two statements you wrote. How did making the photograph affect your writing? Did the photograph prompt you to think of additional aspects of yourself? Is one of your statements more "true"? Which tells more about who you really are – the writing or the photograph?

### Ideas for sharing student work

- Students present photographs and written statements for their classmates.
- Matching exercise: Put on one side of the board a set of the personal statements and on the other side all of the portrait photographs. Have students see if they can match the writing with the picture. This can lead into a discussion about appearances and stereotypes and how much we know or don't know about each other from outward appearances and daily classroom interaction.

### Sharing beyond the classroom – and empowering your students

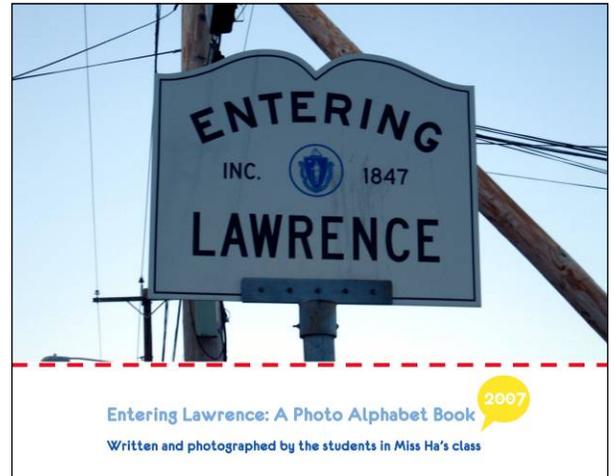
- Turn your students' work into a photography and writing book.
- Create an exhibition in your classroom, around your school, or in a local gallery, bank, or municipal building.

Above images from left to right: *Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey*, New York: Aperture Foundation, 2007, book cover; **Thomas Sully**, *Tom Wharton*, 1800s, oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 25 1/8 in., museum purchase; **George C. Gilcrest** (1812–1888), #20 – *Oval Portrait of Young Man & Woman*, n.d., salt print, 7 3/8 x 5 1/4 in., museum purchase; **Wendy Ewald**, *G from A Girl's Alphabet*, 2002, printed 2006, digital print, 15 x 12 in., gift of Robin Gates. Photographs from the collection of Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

# The Addison Photography & Writing Program

For over ten years, teachers in local schools and beyond have taken advantage of the Addison Photography & Writing Program. In addition to guiding museum visits for students, the Addison coordinates long-term, collaborative photography and writing projects with teachers, schools, and organizations. The program, developed by Addison education staff along with teachers and administrators, involves museum visits, classroom work, and student picture-making and writing; and can also include professional development, artist residencies, and publication and exhibition of student work. The program responds to curriculum standards, lending itself to complementing language arts, art, math, social studies, local history, science, literature, and health and identity.

Usually designed around themes from Addison exhibitions but not limited to these, each project takes on its own theme and character as it is adapted to meet the curriculum needs and specific interests of you and your students. Inspired by the work of artist/educator **Wendy Ewald**, the Addison's Photography & Writing Program emphasizes the use of students' own photographs to inspire autobiographical, descriptive, creative, and expository writing, as well as to enhance self expression, visual literacy, and connection to others and the community.



**M** is for mills. A mill is an old brick building that used to be factories. It is now turning into apartments and businesses. They used to make things for people like clothes. There are lots of mills in Lawrence like the Washington and the Pacific Mills. The mills are important to Lawrence because they helped stop children from working because they were getting hurt. This means after too many children got hurt, the people in Lawrence started the Bread and Roses Strike and the mills helped those people. Without mills we would not have the products we need.

by Kaitlyn Savary

Excerpts from a second-grade ABC project inspired by Wendy Ewald's *American Alphabets* series, Frost School, Lawrence.

## The Twin Crabs, by Kathryn

They are twins,  
They have claws,  
They have little eyes,  
They have shells,  
The both live in the sea,  
They are the same shape and size,  
They both are crabs,  
They both live in salt water,  
They both are in the same water as lobsters, too,  
They are very the same but one is dark and one is light.

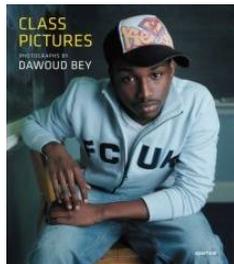


From *Home + City*, a year-long project with Mary Guerrero's 4th grade class at the Oliver School, Lawrence, in collaboration with Addison artist-in-residence Oscar Palacio and writer-in-residence Michael Armstrong.



Student photographs from an eighth-grade ABC project, Oliver School, Lawrence.

### BOOK



Bey, Dawoud, *Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey*. New York: Aperture, 2007.  
Catalogue for the exhibition with the photographs and statements of sixty students from across the US.

Bey, Dawoud, *Dawoud Bey: The Chicago Project*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003.  
Detailed account of Bey's museum-school collaboration with the Smart Museum at University of Chicago; includes photographs of the students by Bey and the students themselves as well as the students' personal statements written and oral on the accompanying CD.

Ewald, Wendy and Alexandra Lightfoot, *I Wanna Take Me a Picture: Teaching Photography and Writing to Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

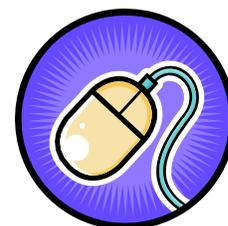
Educator's guide to organizing photography and writing projects with students of all ages. Ewald explains her teaching strategy of literacy through photography and describes every aspect of a project step-by-step and with illustrated examples.

Ewald, Wendy, *Secret Games: Collaborative Works with Children 1969-1999*, Zurich/Berlin/New York: Scalo, 2000.  
A well-illustrated chronicle of Ewald's photography projects with youth all over the world.

### WEB

Dawoud Bey <[www.dawoudbey.net](http://www.dawoudbey.net)>

Includes biographical information about the artist and photographs from former projects, as well as photographs and personal narratives from *Class Pictures*.



Dawoud Bey: The Chicago Project <<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/chicagoproject>>

A selection of photographs from *Class Pictures* with audio clips of students reading their personal narratives and an explanation of Bey's process in photographing students in three Chicago schools.

Literacy Through Photography <<http://cde.aas.duke.edu/ltp/>>

Website for Wendy Ewald's organization in Durham, North Carolina; includes information about teacher workshops.

Literacy Through Photography Project Ideas and Plans <<http://cde.aas.duke.edu/ltp/artistinclass.html>>

LTP page with lesson plans for the three photography and writing projects.

Kids with Cameras <<http://www.kids-with-cameras.org/community/>>

The Photo Community page of the Kids with Cameras website has information and links to photo projects around the globe, and information about teacher workshops.

ICP Curriculum Guide <[www.icp.org/museum/education/curriculum\\_guide](http://www.icp.org/museum/education/curriculum_guide)>

The International Center for Photography in New York's photography curriculum guide.

## Funding + Presentation Resources

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### FUNDING

#### Grants

If you are in Massachusetts, visit <<http://massculturalcouncil.org/applications/lccapp.html>> for information and forms about applying for a Local Cultural Council grant. Every town has money to give away and they love school projects. The application is simple and is due October 15 of each year, with notification by December.

If you are in Lawrence and you apply for a Partners in Education (PIE) grant, you will most likely get it. Contact LPS.

If you are outside Massachusetts, your city and state cultural councils can give you information on local government grants.

Target and other big companies have grant programs. See websites for more information.



#### Cameras + Film

You will need 5-6 cameras per 25 students.

If you are using film cameras, most stores will give you cameras, film, and developing. Go into any CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, etc. and ask the manager for a donation. Usually they will say yes and ask you to write a letter describing your project. When you develop the film, be sure to ask for the images on disc for later use in addition to getting the paper photographs.

If you would like to use digital cameras, contact the major camera companies and ask for a donation. In addition to the cameras, be sure to ask for memory cards and camera cases.

#### Exhibitions

If you need framing and hanging material or help for a class exhibition, ask your local art or frame shop to donate supplies and assistance. If you would like enlargements of student photos, ask any place that develops/prints to do this for free. Offer to put the company name and logo on your invitation and introduction to the exhibit to repay them for their donation.

### EXHIBITIONS + PUBLISHING

We strongly encourage you to empower your students, promote your school, and extend the impact of your project to the community by organizing a public exhibition and/or creating a book of your students' work.

#### Exhibitions

Ask around your community for places to exhibit your students' photographs and writing—municipal buildings, libraries, and banks are all great places to get the community involved in your project.

#### Books

On-line book publishing is easy! [Blurb.com](http://Blurb.com) and [Shutterfly.com](http://Shutterfly.com) on the internet or iPhoto software on a Mac make book production easy with ready-made design templates, click-and-drag/cut-and-paste entering, and click-and-send publishing.

#### ***Collaborate with us!***

Whether you are near or far, the Addison Education Department is glad to assist you in developing a project. Contact us to learn to find out about additional resources to help you get started.

