Beginning Again: Stories of Movement and Migration in Appalachia Curriculum

At a Glance:

Introduction to *Beginning Again: Stories of Movement and Migration in Appalachia* Curriculum

For centuries, Appalachia has served as a center of movement and migration. The twelve stories represented in this book examine the complexities of these journeys, ranging from refugees who have resettled in the area to generations-long residents with deep roots in the region. These narratives reflect not only the current realities of living in Appalachia, but also highlight the history of this region that has always carried gripping, diverse stories in its soil. While the most common stereotype may be a monolithic image of white poverty, *Beginning Again* offers a more nuanced look at the people of Appalachia.

Katrina (Katy) M. Powell, editor of *Beginning Again*, reminds us of this deep history in her introduction: "Native peoples such as the Monacan, Manahoac, and Tutelo, among others, were forcibly removed from their lands during colonization; Africans were forcibly displaced from their homelands, enslaved, and brought to the region; coal miners and their families were forced to relocate after resources were depleted and mines were closed; landowners have lost their lands for public use projects such as a national park, a pipeline, and highways; the red spruce tree has been depleted due to climate change." Movement, migration, and displacement are embedded into the very land that Appalachia sits on. By reading individual oral histories, these unique voices help us draw connections from the history of this region to the contemporary, lived experiences of these narrators.

The five lesson plans included in this curriculum are designed to widen student perspectives around why people stay, why people leave, and the overarching forces that interact with individual choice. Voice of Witness developed these lessons using an Ethnic Studies lens, with *Beginning Again* serving as a counternarrative to the dominant voices that speak about Appalachia rather than listening to Appalachians. As Katy says, "The narrators in *Beginning Again* do not see themselves as victims. They don't really see themselves as heroes, either. They're just ordinary people—they get to the daily business of living their lives in their communities, even in the face of adversity." These "ordinary" stories are crucial to understanding Appalachia and emphasize the importance of community storytelling as a method of connection, healing, and growth.

Our sincere thanks to all of the *Beginning Again* narrators for their bravery and Katy Powell for her thoughtful stewardship of these stories. We would also like to thank Deirdre Hand and Janet Hanks for their expertise and advice on these resources. Finally, we are forever grateful to Babikir, a narrator in the book, for sharing his words directly in a letter below to teachers and students.

If you found this curriculum useful, please consider supporting our work at voiceofwitness.org/donate.

With respect,
The Voice of Witness Education Team

Letter from a Narrator

Babikir

Dear Reader,

I was born in a peaceful community where a simple life was valued. Everything was pure; no electricity, no rent, no utilities, no bills at all. It was so simple that anyone could give you any name at birth, and it would be acceptable, just like my aunt naming me Babikir on behalf of my parents.

Everyone in the village had enough to make a happy life out of it. What a perfect village to have to lose! I had no plans to meet with the editor of *Beginning Again* to tell my story in the first place. This story was just by chance: I was connected to the editor through a concerned citizen. This friend and the editor are truly compassionate, connecting the disconnected. Sharing personal stories with the public is never easy, but their dedication and care for humans motivated me to share.

Important note: some of the numbers used in the story are underestimated to simplify. I aim to help answer the following questions in my story: *How does war change a simple human? How do we become refugees, immigrants, and aliens? What does a refugee camp look like? What is a home? Can one pursue one's education and dreams without having a home, land, family, friends, and standard language? Where do we find our happiness?*

To the teachers: To honor my compassionate citizens and my family, I reveal a short piece of my life, trusting you will carry the connection further. If there is any occupation needing appreciation, it's you, teachers, for your hard work in helping us understand ourselves in this "disconnected world." I don't think teaching is about money. If it were, we wouldn't have enough money to pay a teacher. Sometimes, this world is described as "one village," but I still have not found my people in this village. Incorporating my story into your teaching curriculum is critical to integrating my people into this "one village."

To the students: As you read my story, I want you to know I am one of your fellow Appalachian inhabitants. Imagine where I was and how I ended up in Appalachia. You often hear about the following titles: "refugees, immigrants, displaced people, and aliens." I have carried every title at some point in my life. Whether you are one of these or simply an observer, please consider that these titles are not as bad as they sound; everything happens for a reason. As a result of these monikers, I was promoted to the following new titles: "son, husband, father, family, friend, teacher, student, employee, and American." The truth is that no matter how often one mixes these labels, the result is always "human." As students of today and tomorrow's teachers, we must connect the remaining disconnected dots to make this world "one village." Be your voice, be a witness, be the connection, and "humanity" will be produced.

From the unintegrated village,

Babikir

Preface for Educators

The stories in *Beginning Again* work together to fight an existing "single story" that others project onto Appalachia; one that defines the region by a single race, income level, and industry. The following lessons are designed to push students to reconsider preconceived notions about the area, and for those from Appalachia, to learn skills they can use to push back against the dominant narrative themselves. Before diving in as an educator, we recommend taking the time to read the introduction and appendices inside *Beginning Again* for more context. Students may find the essays and timeline at the end of the book useful for framing the history of Appalachia as well.

For classrooms based both within and outside of Appalachia, starting with an understanding of Tribal Communities in Appalachia can be a useful framework to recognize the Indigenous lands this area covers. Nearly 10% of Appalachians live in designated rural counties, and this comparison of rural Appalachia can help shed light on the specific challenges this region faces compared to other rural counties across the country.

It is important for the lessons to properly frame Appalachia as a diverse community rather than a monolithic one. Listening to this NPR story, "For Some People of Appalachia, Complicated Roots" can further the awareness of the range of ancestry within the population, and looking at the UNHCR figures on displacement can provide more background information on how many across the world have been resettled, similar to the narrators who share those stories in *Beginning Again*.

For more audio resources to kick off this unit, we recommend this clip of Nikki Giovanni reading her poem, "If I have to Hospital," on SoundAffect (from 9:32-11:15). She provides some context for Appalachian history before the poem as well. We also recommend a variety of episodes from *Inside Appalachia*, a podcast from WVPB Radio and Mason Adams.

To prepare the classroom for discussions around stereotypes and breaking down those preconceived notions, Chimamanda Adichie's "The Danger of the Single Story" can be shared alongside community-building resources in our Stagg High School VOW Class Toolkit, as well as this Teaching Tolerance resource on having difficult conversations. This is an important practice both for students who have no lived experience in Appalachia and students from the region who may be highly aware of external perceptions of their hometowns. The goal is to create a space for students to speak honestly, openly, and with curiosity guiding their questions rather than judgment.

VOICE OF WITNESS

Beginning Again Curriculum Map

Theme	Appalachia and Stereotypes	Migration and Displacement	Education and Access
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. RI.9-10.2,.L.9-10.6, L.11-12.6	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY .RL.9-10.1, .RL.11-12.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.11-12.2, RI.9-10.3,.RI.11-12.3, W.11-12.2.D, W.9-10.3.D	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2,.RI.11-12.2, SL.9-10.4, .SL.11-12.4, SL.9-10.1.C, .SL.11-12.1.C
Recommended Narrator(s)	All narrator bios	Mekyah Davis Elvir Berbić Cindy Sierra Morales	Claudine Katete Rufus Elliott Sohaila Babikir
Student Objectives	Students will be able to form analytical and personal responses to texts discussing insider and outsider narratives. Students will be able to use vocabulary terms around intersectional identities to self-reflect and to discuss the central text.	Students will use evidence from *Beginning Again* to form a nuanced understanding of migration and displacement in Appalachia. Students will learn trauma-informed interview practices and will write open-ended interview questions in preparation for a "migration story" interview.	Students will make thematic connections across texts, using oral history narratives and personal experience to engage in a group discussion around educational journeys and opportunities. Students will use ethical practices to interview a classmate and create a student guide for navigating educational systems.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Stereotypes • Social identity • Community identity	• Migration and displacement • Access to resources	• Barriers to education • Systems of liberation and oppression

Theme	Community and Belonging	Narrative Tapestry	
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1, W.9-10.1, SL.11-12.4, SL.9-10.4, RI.11-12.7	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4, L.11-12.4	
Recommended Narrator(s)	Amal Hannah Martin Peter Lewis Sheng Thao	All narratives	
Student Objectives	Students will analyze personal narratives and construct an analytical paragraph around personal and community values. Students will understand the components of community and cultural wealth, and will be able to apply those principles to different communities, including their own.	Students will construct a definition of "narrative tapestry" and discuss the impact of this narrative style. Students will create their own narrative tapestry to represent their classroom community.	
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Value systems • Community and cultural capital	• Complicating dominant narratives • Representation • Community celebration	

Lesson Plan: Appalachia and Stereotypes

Time Needed: 2 class periods

Materials:

- Readings
  - "Hillbillies Need No Elegy" by Meredith McCarroll
  - "Appalachia" by Muriel Miller Dressler
  - *Beginning Again* narrator bios
- Handouts
  - "Hillbillies Need No Elegy" Analysis
  - Social Identity Wheel

Objectives:

- Students will be able to form analytical and personal responses to texts discussing insider and outsider narratives.
- Students will be able to use vocabulary terms around intersectional identities to self-reflect and to discuss the central text.

Related Curriculum Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6

Essential Question(s):

- How are stereotypes formed? How are they combatted?
- What components make up individual identity? The identity of a community?
- What does "home" mean to different people, especially those who have been displaced, marginalized, or oppressed?

Day One

Appalachia and Stereotypes

Overview
In this lesson, students will read supplemental texts to frame Beginning Again as a way to investigate the importance of individuals telling their own stories. Students will read one article and one poem, forming both an analytical and a personal response to the lesson's essential question.

Introduction (5 minutes)
Project the following question and give students time to think and discuss in partner pairs and/or as a whole class: • Have you ever encountered a stereotype about you or your community? How do you think that stereotype was formed?
Reading and Annotation (15 minutes)

1. Give students ~15 minutes to read the article "Hillbillies Need No Elegy" by Meredith McCarroll independently or in reading groups, whatever structure is most effective for your classroom.
2. As they read, ask students to underline or highlight sentences that help them answer the lesson's essential questions:
  ○ How are stereotypes formed?
  ○ How are stereotypes resisted or disproven?

Collaborative Analysis (20 minutes)
1. After reading, put students into partner-pairs and assign each pair a number from 1-6. The pair's number corresponds to the quote they will analyze on the "Hillbillies Need No Elegy" Analysis handout. 2. Partner-pairs will read their assigned quote and write a "GIST" statement: a summary of the quote that captures the author's main point or central idea in 20 words or less. 3. After each pair has written their GIST statement, students will form *number-alike* groups (i.e., all students who analyzed Quote #1 will form a group together.) Each partner-pair will share the GIST statement they created. Then, the group will collectively decide which GIST statement *best* represents the main idea of the quote. 4. Each number-alike group will share out their *best* GIST statement to the class. Teacher records each GIST statement on board for students to copy into their handouts. 5. As a class, students will collectively construct a final GIST statement that synthesizes all ideas and summarizes the overall main point of the article. (This can be framed as the article's response to the essential question: How are stereotypes formed and how are they combatted?)
Poetry Response (15 minutes)
1. Introduce the poem "Appalachia" by Muriel Miller Dressler to the class: this is another piece from an Appalachian author with similar ideas and themes. Read the poem aloud to the class or give students time to read the poem independently.

2. Prompt students to choose one line from the poem that resonated with them and record it at the top of a blank sheet of paper. Below the line, ask students to form a response to that line. The response can be in any format: a drawing, a poem, a letter, a series of questions, a diagram, etc. Since students have already done an analytical response to the essential question, prompt them to form a creative or personal response, perhaps focusing on what emotions come up or on making connections to their personal lives or community.

Closing (5 minutes)

Explain to students that the purpose of today's class was to introduce some ideas that will be important when reading the central text, *Beginning Again: Stories of Movement and Migration in Appalachia,* which is a collection of oral histories (or people telling their own stories) from people living in Appalachia. Based on today's lesson, ask students to write **one expectation** they have about reading *Beginning Again* as an exit ticket. The following questions can be used to guide thinking:

- What might I learn from reading people's stories in their own words?
- How might these stories compare to an outsider's view of Appalachia?

Day Two

Appalachian Identity

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine the many components that make up identity. They will use identity terms to describe themselves and the narrators in Beginning Again, reflecting on the nuances of intersectional identities and diverse populations.

Identity Journaling (10 minutes)

1. Distribute the Social Identity Wheel handout. Review terms with students, clarifying definitions if necessary and reminding students that not all aspects of identity are captured on this wheel.
2. Ask students to write (or think about) their personal identity markers in each segment of the wheel. Remind students that their responses in this activity will be private.
3. Give students ~7 minutes to journal around any of the following prompts:
    - What parts of your identity are the most important to you? Which are you the proudest of?
    - What important parts of your identity are *not* on this chart?
    - What parts of your identity present challenges for you?
    - Which parts of your identity have the biggest impact on how people perceive or define you?
    - Do people ever make incorrect assumptions about any part of your identity?

Appalachian Identities (20 minutes)
1. Break students into small groups (3-4). Each group will read the short bios of the narrators from *Beginning Again* that occur at the beginning of each chapter. (There are 12 narrators in the book, so each student should be responsible for around 3-4 narrator bios.) After reading each bio, students will record any identity markers they find on the reverse side of the Social Identity Wheel handout. 2. After they have finished reading all bios and recording identity markers, give students time to share out in small groups and record each other's answers to their own notetakers. By the end of the shareout, students should have the identity markers of all 12 narrators on their notetakers. (Note: It is possible that students may not be able to fill out every segment of the wheel–that is okay.)
Jamboard Discussion (10 minutes)
1. Set up a classroom jamboard using a digital platform or poster paper and sticky notes using the following questions: • What do common stereotypes or outsider narratives get *wrong* about the people living in Appalachia? • What might be some of the advantages or positive aspects of living, growing up, or resettling in Appalachia? 2. Give students some time to write their responses on sticky notes, add them to the posters, then independently read over each other's answers. 3. Lead a quick class debrief using the following questions: • What might be some of the challenges of living, growing up, or resettling in Appalachia? • What is a response that you found particularly insightful or thought-provoking? • What connections did you make to your own identity or community?
Closing (5 minutes)
As an exit ticket, ask your students to write a 1-2 sentence response to one of the following prompts: • Have your ideas about Appalachia and Appalachian identity changed at all over the past two days? Why or why not? • What do you still want to know about Appalachia or Appalachian identity?

Lesson Plan: Migration and Displacement

Time Needed: 3 class periods

Materials:

- Readings
  - "Sasha's Poem" by Sarah Dooley
  - "An Ode to Home" by Anthony Wiles
  - "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon
  - Recommended *Beginning Again* narratives:
    - Mekyah Davis
    - Elvir Berbić
    - Cindy Sierra Morales
- Handouts
  - Stay or Leave Home Matrix
  - Oral History Project Consent Form
  - Oral History Interview Questions
  - Oral History Found Poem
- Classroom Supplies
  - Post-Its or Index Cards
  - Colored Markers

Objectives:

- Students will use evidence from *Beginning Again* to form a nuanced understanding of migration and displacement in Appalachia.
- Students will learn trauma-informed interview practices and will write open-ended interview questions in preparation for a "migration story" interview.

Related Curriculum Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Essential Question(s):

- What does "home" mean to different people, especially those who have been displaced, marginalized, or oppressed?
- Why do people leave home? Why do people stay?

Day One

Why do people leave home?

Overview
In this lesson, students will read multiple narratives of migration and displacement from Beginning Again. Students will use evidence from the narratives and from supplemental texts to answer the essential question Why do people leave home?

Poetry Warm Up (10 minutes)
1. Introduce the poem "Sasha's Poem" by Sarah Dooley to the class: this is a piece from an Appalachian author that examines the theme of "home." Read the poem aloud to the class or give students time to read the poem independently. 2. Give students ~7 minutes to use lines, imagery, or ideas from the poem to formulate a response to one (or both) of the essential questions: • What does "home" mean to different people, especially those who have been displaced, marginalized, or oppressed? • Why do people leave home? Why do people stay?
Narrative Reading (15 minutes)
1. Break students into reading groups (3-4 students per group or use an alternative reading structure that works for your class.) Assign each group with a narrative from *Beginning Again*. We recommend: Mekyah's narrative, Elvir's narrative, and Cindy's narrative. You may want to limit students' reading to a particular section or break the narrative up into parts and assign a part to each student in the group. 2. As students read, instruct them to follow these annotation guidelines: • *Underline* reasons this narrator wanted or was forced to leave home • *Circle/box* reasons this narrator wanted or was forced to stay home
Categorizing Evidence (15 minutes)
1. Distribute the Staying or Leaving Home Matrix. You may choose to print one copy for each student, or one copy per reading group. Ask students to fill the matrix with quotes from their narrative, determining which quadrant of the matrix to place each quote–more neutral quotes should go towards the center of the matrix, and more extreme quotes go towards the corners. Let students know that their narrative may not contain quotes that fit in all four quadrants–some narratives skew more positive or negative, and some narratives focus more on leaving than staying, or vice versa. 2. After students have filled their matrix with quotes from their narrative, share out as a class. Project the matrix onto a whiteboard and call on student groups to share quotes that fit in different quadrants. Try to generate at least two examples for each quadrant, asking students to generate ideas outside of the text if necessary.

Surfacing Values (15 minutes)

1. Distribute Post-Its or index cards and colored markers to students. Project the following prompt and categories on the board, highlighted with corresponding colors:

   If you were choosing a place to call home, what would be your top 3 priorities?

   - Family, Friends, & Community (Red)
   - Job Opportunities (Orange)
   - Safety (Yellow)
   - Cost of Living (Green)
   - Access to Education (Blue)
   - Weather & Natural Spaces (Purple)
   - Culture & Diversity (Pink)
   - Health & Accessibility (Grey)
   - Familiarity (Brown)
   - Other Reason (Black)

2. After giving students time to choose their top 3 priorities, instruct them to draw three lines on their card with the corresponding colors, putting their top priority on top, second priority in the middle, and third priority on the bottom.
3. Tell students to find someone in the room who they share at least one color in common with (regardless of the color's position on the card.) Since answers will vary, students should also be able to form small groups of 3-4. After forming groups, students will ask each other the following questions:
   - Why is [category] something you want in the place you call home?
   - Why did you select this as your [first, second, third] priority?
   - Do you feel like you have [category] in the place you live now? Why or why not?
4. Now, tell students to find someone in the room who they do not share *any* colors in common with. (Again, a mixture of pairs and small groups will likely be necessary.) In their new groups, students will ask each other the following questions:
   - What was your thought process selecting these as your top 3 priorities?
   - What was a category that almost made it to your list? Why did you ultimately decide to leave it off?
   - Based on your priorities, do you think you want to leave here or stay? Why?

Closing (5 minutes)

On the back of their card from the previous activity, ask students to respond to the following prompt as an exit ticket:

- Name two people in your life who you think might have an interesting story to share about the theme of "home": this could be leaving home, creating a new home, or staying rooted in one home. Why do you think this person would be interesting to talk to about this theme?

Homework: Ask one of the people you've identified if they'd be willing to do a brief 15-minute oral history interview for a project around the theme of "home" where you will be using their words to create a poem. If they say yes, ask them to sign a consent form. If they say no, ask the second person you've identified.

Day Two

Oral History Interview Prep

Overview
In this lesson, students will discuss the importance of ethical storytelling practices when handling firsthand accounts, especially those that discuss difficult topics. Students will learn trauma-informed interview practices and will write open-ended interview questions in preparation for a "migration story" interview with a family or community member.

Before the Lesson
Ensure that students have identified a narrator to interview and have obtained signed consent forms. As a backup, you may want to ask a few school community members if they would be willing to have an interview with students who are struggling to identify a narrator.

Poetry Warm Up (10 minutes)
1. Introduce the poem "An Ode to Home" by Anthony Wiles to the class: this is a piece from an Appalachian author that examines the theme of "home." Read the poem aloud to the class or give students time to read the poem independently. 2. Give students ~7 minutes to use lines, imagery, or ideas from the poem to formulate a response to one (or both) of the essential questions: • What does "home" mean to different people, especially those who have been displaced, marginalized, or oppressed? • Why do people leave home?
Safe and Brave Spaces (15 min)
1. Remind students of the objective of the project: students will be interviewing a family or community member around the theme of "home." In this activity, students will be discussing how to create a safe, comfortable environment for their narrators to discuss a potentially vulnerable topic. 2. Project question on the board: *What would you need to feel safe and brave enough to tell your story?* Ask students to spend 1-2 minutes thinking on their own and writing their responses in the notetaker. 3. Call on students to share their answers. Record their responses on the board and prompt students to add to their notes • If students are struggling to generate answers, you may supplement their responses with the following suggestions: ○ Purpose: Explain project, who it will be shared with, etc. ○ Environment: quiet/private space, comfortable seating, snacks ○ Confidentiality: pseudonyms, ability to skip questions ○ Respect: eye contact, active listening, minimize distractions

Narrator Pre-Writing (5 minutes)
Distribute the Interview Questions Notetaker. Instruct students to jot down some notes about what they already know about their narrator. These notes will help form the basis of the questions they will ask in their interviews. The notetaker has some topics to help guide students' thinking.
Writing Interview Questions (20 minutes)
1. Conduct a brief 5-minute mini lecture on the differences between closed questions, open-ended questions, and follow-up questions: • Closed Questions: Have a brief, one-word, or yes/no answer. Used to establish the topic of conversation or to collect basic facts. • Open-Ended Questions: Have detailed, descriptive answers. Used to invite narrators to recollect memories and tell stories. • Follow-Up Questions: Have detailed, descriptive answers. Used to invite narrators to add on to previous answers, giving examples or reflecting on the experience. 2. Give students independent work time to develop five "sets" of interview questions, each set containing one closed, one open-ended, and one follow-up question. One set has been completed as a model on the notetaker. The three questions in each set should focus on the same topic. • If needed, provide students with the following topics to choose from as they write their question sets: ○ Life in original home ○ Deciding to leave home ○ Process of moving ○ Adjusting to a new home ○ Favorite parts of home ○ Hard parts of home ○ How home has changed over time ○ What "home" means to you ○ Future homes
Closing (5 minutes)
Homework: Conduct your oral history interview! Record your interview using the Voice Memo app on your phone, the Vocaroo app on laptops or Chromebooks, or Soundtrap (if your district has a subscription to this service.) Bring your recorded interview to class by [date].

Day Three

Our Migration Stories

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect listen to their interview recording, identifying key quotes and using words and phrases from the quotes to create a "found poem" in response to the essential question Why do people leave home?

Poetry Warm Up (10 minutes)
1. Introduce the poem "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon to the class: this is a piece from an Appalachian author that examines the theme of "home." Read the poem aloud to the class or give students time to read the poem independently. 2. Give students ~7 minutes to use lines, imagery, or ideas from the poem to formulate a response to one (or both) of the essential questions: • What does "home" mean to different people, especially those who have been displaced, marginalized, or oppressed? • Why do people leave home?
Interview Review (15 minutes)
Prompt students to review their recordings or transcripts of their interview, pausing to collect quotes with sensory details in the Oral History Found Poem notetaker. Students should find 15-20 details from their interviews. If a student's interview contains few sensory details, prompt them to collect quotes that evoke strong emotions.
Crafting the Poem (15 minutes)
Now, students will use the quotes they pulled from their interviews as raw material to craft a found poem around the theme of "home." Students may use the poem sentence frames from the Found Poem Frames Handout, or they can choose a different format (haiku, cinquain, etc.) In a found poem, students should use only words from their interview–they can put the words in any order they want and make simple changes (such as changing a verb tense or adding linking words), but the vast majority of the poem should come directly from their narrator.
Share Out (10 minutes)
Form small groups (3-4) for students to share out their found poems. After each student reads their poem out loud, their group members should share one appreciation for the speaker.
Closing (5 minutes)
Lead the class in a brief discussion around the following prompts: • How did you feel creating and sharing your poems today? Why? • How did the details in the poems help you deepen or expand what "home" means to people?

Lesson Plan: Education and Access

Time Needed: 4 class periods

Materials:

- Readings
  - Suggested *Beginning Again* narratives:
    - Claudine Katete
    - Rufus Elliott
    - Sohaila
    - Babikir
- Handouts
  - Path to Education Storyboard
  - Peer Interview Questions Handout
  - Peer Interview Quote Organizer
  - Student Guidebook Template
- Classroom Supplies
  - Colored pencils or markers (optional)

Objectives:

- Students will make thematic connections across texts, using oral history narratives and personal experience to engage in a group discussion around educational journeys and opportunities.
- Students will use ethical practices to interview a classmate and create a student guide for navigating educational systems.

Related Curriculum Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

Essential Question(s):

- What role does education play in a person's life and the opportunities they have access to?
- What barriers to education exist, and how do people overcome them?

Day One
Path to Education

Overview
In this lesson, students will identify what factors limited or granted access to education for the narrators in Beginning Again, and what opportunities were afforded to the narrators as a result of their education.

Journaling Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Give students time to journal around their education journeys thus far. In their journals, students may answer any of the following questions: *What were your first experiences at school like? What do you remember most about your early years in school? What has motivated you throughout your education? What setbacks or challenges have you faced? What type of education do you want to pursue in the future? What do you want to be able to do as a result of your education?*
Narrative Reading (20 minutes)
1. Divide students into groups of four. Have each student in the group read one of the following narratives from Beginning Again: Claudine Katete, Rufus Elliott, Sohaila, and Babikir. 2. As they read, instruct students to locate quotes in the narrative that helps them answer the following questions located on the first page of the Path to Education Storyboard Activity: • What was the narrator's educational experience like in their early life and/or country of origin? • What factors influenced the narrator to pursue further education (college, grad school, trade school, etc.)? • What steps did the narrator need to take in order to obtain their education? What obstacles did they face, if any? • What is the narrator able to do now as a result of their education? How has their education affected their life? 3. After reading, give students some additional time to transfer quotes from the narrative to their notetaker (abridged quotes with page number citations encouraged.)
Storyboarding (15 minutes)
1. Instruct students to individually review their notes and to summarize the narrator's responses to a 1-2 sentence "caption" in the corresponding parts of the Path to Education Storyboard Activity. 2. For each caption, students will draw a corresponding picture underneath, creating a 4-panel storyboard depicting the narrator's path to education. If available, provide colored pencils or markers for students to create their storyboards.
Share Out (10 minutes)
In their groups of 4, students will each have two minutes to share the storyboard they created. Students should introduce their narrator with brief information from their bio such as age, country of origin, and

current city. Then, students will present each of the four steps in their narrator's path to education, reading the caption and describing the pictures they drew.

Closing (5 minutes)

As an exit ticket, have students complete a 3-2-1:

- 3 things I remember from the stories I heard today
- 2 thoughts I have about the stories I heard today
- 1 question I have now

Day Two
Barriers

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine how the expectation to speak and write in "standard English" relates to barriers within education. Students will engage in a discussion about the ways in which education systems can create opportunity and can also perpetuate oppression.

Journaling Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Give students time to journal around specific moments in their education journeys. In their journals, students will respond to one or both of the following prompts:

- *Write about a moment when someone at school made you feel especially seen, valuable, or confident. Who was this person and what did they do to make you feel this way?*
- *Write about a moment when someone at school made you feel especially misunderstood, devalued, or insecure. Who was this person and what did they do to make you feel this way?*

Standard English (10 minutes)

1. Project Appalachian Dialect or Standard English? Place is the Answer for students to watch.
2. As students watch, ask them to consider the following questions:
    - What challenges do speakers of Appalachian dialect face in educational settings?
    - How does the speaker argue with the idea that Appalachian dialect is "bad English"?
    - How did the speaker

Discussion Prep (10 minutes)

1. Set up expectations for discussion–the goal is to reach a nuanced understanding collaboratively, not to have a debate. Agreeing and adding on, asking follow-up questions, citing textual evidence, and respectfully disagreeing are all strongly encouraged discussion moves.
2. Give students time to preview the discussion questions and to jot down quick notes to support them in formulating responses during the discussion:
    - Essential Question: What role does education play in a person's life and the opportunities they have access to?
        - What are general reasons why people want to pursue an education?
        - How did getting an education affect the lives of narrators in *Beginning Again*?
        - What personal connections can you make to these stories? Do you have family members, friends, community members who have pursued education in order to gain new opportunities in life?
        - Do you think location (country, state, city/town, etc.) changes a person's educational experience? Why or why not?
    - Essential Question: What barriers to education exist, and how do people overcome them?
        - What barriers did narrators in *Beginning Again* face on their path to education? Did they overcome those barriers, and how?
        - Are there times when education can play a hurtful or negative role in a person's life? What are some examples?
        - Have you (or someone you know) experienced judgment in a school setting because of the way you speak? What about some other aspect of your identity? How did you react to this situation?
        - What needs to change in order to make the experience of getting an education better for everyone?

Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Divide students into discussion groups. Use the structure that works best for your classroom, or create even groups of 6-10 students each.
2. Assign one facilitator in each group who is responsible for asking the questions, paraphrasing if necessary, and moving on to the next question when ready. Assign one tracker in each group, who is responsible for maintaining an equitable discussion, inviting quieter group members into the discussion, and gently reminding more talkative group members to take a step back if needed.
3. During discussion, float between groups, trying to intervene as little as possible. If necessary, pose additional questions or offer some thoughts to help further discussion.

Closing (5 minutes)

As an exit ticket, have each discussion group collaboratively complete a 3-2-1:

- 3 ideas or insights that came out of today's discussion
- 2 things our group did well
- 1 thing we can improve on in our next discussion

Day Three

Peer Interviews

Overview
In this lesson, students will identify "leading questions" and will discuss why avoiding leading questions is important in ethical storytelling. Students will write questions and engage in peer interviews around the benefits and drawbacks of the education they have experienced so far.

Journaling Warm-Up (10 minutes)
Give students time to journal around specific moments in their education journeys. In their journals, students will respond to one or both of the following prompts: • *If you could give advice to your younger self (or to a younger student) about navigating school and being successful in your education journey, what would you say? Write about the personal experiences that have helped you learn these lessons.* • *If you could have your future self (or an older student) give you advice about the education journey you still have ahead of you, what would you want to know? Write about the hopes, doubts, or uncertainties that come up for you thinking about the future.*
Leading Questions (5 minutes)
1. Introduce the day's assignment: classmates will be interviewing each other about their experiences in school: the things they like, the things they would change, as well as hopes for the future. Since everyone has a very different experience with school, it is important to avoid asking leading questions in your interview. A **leading question** is a question that is formulated with an answer already in mind. An example: "What are the top three reasons you hate math class?" assumes that the person you're interviewing hates math, which may not be true! 2. Ask students to translate the following leading questions into open-ended questions on the front side of their Peer Interview Question sheet: • Do you agree that the dress code policy at school is too strict? o *Ex. What are your thoughts about the dress code policy at school?* • Where do you want to go to college? o *Ex. Have you thought about what your plans after graduation will be?* • Did you ever get bullied or something like that when you were younger? o *Ex. What is an example of a challenge or difficulty you faced when you were younger?*
Writing Questions (15 minutes)
1. Assign or allow students to choose a partner for their peer interview. Ensure that every student is paired with someone they can be successful with–students should take the interview seriously and practice creating a safe and brave space as an interviewer. If the class does not already have discussion or community norms, the following can be used: • Speak and listen from the heart. • What's said here, stays here.

- Share what's safe: "skip" or "pass" on questions is OK.

2. Students should work together to form a set of interview questions that they will ask each other–students will record their questions on their Peer Interview Questions sheet. Students may use the suggested topics on the sheet to guide their thinking, or you may choose to form new topics to align with your learning objectives.

Peer Interviews (20 minutes)

1. Set a timer for 10 minutes: this time is for Partner A to interview Partner B. Instruct Partner A to record a voice memo (on their phone or computer) to record the interview. Encourage students to fill the entire 10 minutes with conversation, asking follow-up questions until the timer has gone off.
2. Reset the timer and switch roles: this time Partner B interviews Partner A and records on their device. Similar to last time, Partner B should continue to ask questions for the full 10 minutes.

Closing (5 minutes)

As an exit ticket, have each discussion group collaboratively complete a 3-2-1:

- 3 things you remember from your partner's interview
- 2 thoughts/feelings you have about your interview
- 1 appreciation for your partner

Day Four

Making Connections: Student Guidebook

Overview

In this lesson, students will review the peer interviews they conducted in the previous lesson and will choose key insights from each interview to include in a student guidebook, created with the objective of helping younger students navigate school systems.

Journaling Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Give students time to journal around specific moments in their education journeys. In their journals, students will respond the following prompt:

- *If you could get everything on your wish list of life, what would your life look like? Think of career, family, financial goals, experiences, etc. Now, write about how your future education journey may (or may not) get you closer to those goals.*

Peer Interview Review (15 minutes)
1. Pair students with the partners they interviewed in yesterday's peer oral history interview. Each student should individually review the recording of their narrator's interview, selecting key quotes to record in the Peer Interview Quote Organizer. Students should aim to identify quotes that include insights, stories, or advice that may be helpful for younger students. 2. While they are selecting quotes, students should check in periodically with their partner (narrator) to approve each quote, allowing narrators to provide edits as necessary. (This practice of informed, ongoing consent is crucial in supporting the Voice of Witness Ethical Storytelling Principles.) 3. After selecting at least five quotes, students should brainstorm a few titles for their narrator's student guidebook page. Again, students should work with their narrator to choose a title that best represents their story.
Create Student Guidebook Page (30 minutes)
The majority of class time will be dedicated to students creating a page for a student guidebook: the guidebook is meant to be shared with younger students to provide valuable insights and advice to help them navigate your school community or the education system in general. Students should use quotes and paraphrased information from their peer interview to create a page for the classmate they interviewed (narrator). You may use the following Student Guidebook Template and Example to help students get started–however, students should be encouraged to take creative license, adding photos, colors, or changing the layout of the page to more accurately represent their narrator's story.
Closing (5 minutes)
Before leaving, students should show the draft of their finished product to their narrator for approval. Students will then submit pages in to be compiled into a digital or physical book.

Lesson Plan: Community and Belonging

Time Needed: 3 class periods

Materials:

- Readings
  - Suggested *Beginning Again* narratives:
    - Amal
    - Hannah Martin
    - Peter Lewis
    - Sheng Thao
  - "All American Town" Photo Project
- Handouts
  - Community Values Paragraph
  - Community Cultural Wealth Handout

Objectives:

- Students will analyze personal narratives and construct an analytical paragraph around personal and community values.
- Students will understand the components of community and cultural wealth, and will be able to apply those principles to different communities, including their own.

Related Curriculum Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

Essential Question(s):

- How do individuals and communities identify and demonstrate their values?
- What assets make individuals and communities wealthy?

Day One
Community Values

Overview
Students will identify common values that individuals and communities hold. Students will read a narrative from Beginning Again and write a structured analytical paragraph identifying the narrator's values using evidence from the text and students' own reasoning.

Opening (10 minutes)
Project the following prompt. As a class or in small groups, try to generate as many examples as possible: • The term "values" is defined as "a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life." What are some values that are held either by you personally or your family, your community? Think outside the box and try to come up with as many examples as possible!
Narrative Reading (15 minutes)
1. Assign each student one of the following narratives from *Beginning Again*: Amal, Hannah Martin, Peter Lewis, Sheng Thao. Students may also choose to read a specific story. 2. Distribute the Community Values Paragraph handout. As students read their narrative, instruct them to highlight passages that indicate the narrator's values. If students need examples of common values, they may use the word bank on the top of the handout.
Pre-Writing Organization (10 minutes)
1. After reading, students will review their notes and determine their narrator's primary values and secondary values. (Note: You may also choose to focus on a primary value, given time constraints and grade level.) They may choose values provided in the word bank or generate their own. 2. Once they have selected the narrator's primary and secondary values, students will fill out the sentence frame provided in the Community Values Paragraph handout to create the central claim of their paragraph. 3. Students should locate at least one piece of evidence to support each part of their claim (an extra space is provided but is not necessary).
Paragraph Writing (25 minutes)
The second page of the Community Values Paragraph handout provides space for students to turn their claim, evidence, and reasoning into a full paragraph. The overall goal of the paragraph is to support a central claim using evidence from the text and original reasoning. Depending on the unique learning objectives of your class, you may choose to add a different emphasis on writing skills.
Homework
If needed, students can complete the Community Values Paragraph as homework.

Day Two
Community Cultural Wealth

Overview
Students will learn about Yosso's Cultural Wealth Model, defining the six forms of cultural capital in the model. Students will then create cultural wealth posters, choosing one form of cultural capital and using one narrator from Beginning Again as an example of possessing that form of cultural capital.

Opening (10 minutes)
Project the following prompt. As a class or in small groups, try to generate as many examples as possible: • The term "capital" is defined as "wealth, both in the form of money and other assets possessed by a person or group." What are some **non-monetary** forms of capital that could make a person or community wealthy? Think outside the box and try to come up with as many examples as possible!
Intro to Community Cultural Wealth (10 minutes)
1. Distribute the Community Cultural Wealth handout. As a class, review the definitions of the six forms of cultural capital set forth by theorist Dr. Tara Yosso, trying to generate an example for each. If needed, prompt students' thinking with the following examples: • Aspirational Capital: A BIPOC woman aspires to have a career in an industry that she knows has a history of employing predominantly white males. She may continue to pursue opportunities and education even if she has been rejected for jobs multiple times. • Familial Capital: A person who maintains close connections not only with immediate family, but extended family and even "chosen family": friends and community. They can both provide support and receive support from this larger family. • Social Capital: Different groups fighting for social justice (Black Lives Matter, Stop AAPI Hate) join together in solidarity to "lift each other up as we climb" (Yosso). • Navigational Capital: A Latino student joins a Latinx Student Union at a mostly-white college to discuss the challenges of being in a place designed without their community in mind (and in some cases may even be actively hostile) • Resistant Capital: "Black mothers teach their daughters to assert themselves as intelligent, beautiful, strong and worthy of respect to resist the barrage of societal messages devaluing Blackness and belittling Black women" (Yosso). • Linguistic Capital: A student comes from a family of immigrants, and grows up helping translate for their parents at doctor's appointments, filling out paperwork, etc. Could also relate to cultures that express themselves through song, storytelling, etc. 2. Ask students to reflect on the definitions and choose the two forms of capital they feel most connected to. In the Community Cultural Wealth handout, students should write 1-2 sentences explaining why they feel they possess each form of capital.
CCW Posters (25 minutes)
1. Form affinity groups of up to five students who chose the same form of cultural capital as their top choice. There may be multiple groups focusing on the same form of capital. Similarly, if there

are not enough students who chose a particular form of capital, students may join a different group based on their second choice.

2. Each group will collaboratively create a poster showcasing the form of cultural capital they have chosen. The poster should feature:
    - A quote or paraphrased example of this form of cultural capital from each of the group members
    - An example of a narrator from *Beginning Again* who displays this form of cultural capital

Presentations (15 minutes)

1. Invite each student group to give a very short (~2 min) presentation about their poster. In their presentation, students should answer the following questions:
    - What is _____ capital?
    - What examples of _____ capital do people in your group have?
    - What narrator from *Beginning Again* has _____ capital? How do you know?
2. Audience members should write a question or appreciation for each presenting group and turn it in at the end of class as an exit ticket.

Day Three

Community Photo Essay

Overview

Students will analyze photos from the student project "All American Town," discussing how to capture the values and assets of a community in visual form. Students will identify the values and assets of their own community and go on a photo walk, capturing images that reflect these ideas.

Opening (10 minutes)

Project the following prompt. In pairs or small groups, ask students to share their responses:

- Is a picture worth 1000 words? Do a quick scroll through your camera roll or social media and find a school-appropriate photo that you think says something about you, your family, friends, or community. Show the photo to your partner(s) and explain what you feel the photo conveys.

Photobook Exploration (15 minutes)

1. Project the slideshow featuring pages from "All American Town," a photo project by The Rural Arts Collective, a group of students from Bellaire High School in Bellaire, Ohio. Give students time to quietly observe each set of photos, jotting down initial observations or reactions if desired.

2. Allow students to choose one set of photographs to analyze more in depth. Form groups of 3-4 of students who are interested in analyzing the same set of photographs. Once in their groups, ask students to discuss the following questions:
    - What do you see in each picture? What thoughts or emotions are evoked for you from each picture?
    - Why do you think the artist chose these two pictures to go together on the page? Why do you think the artist chose the quote to accompany these two pictures?
    - Overall, what does this page communicate about the values and assets of this community?
3. Ask one representative from each group to briefly share (~1 minute) a summary of what their group discussed.

Photo Walk (25 minutes)

Lead the class on a photo walk around your school's campus, the surrounding neighborhood, or another location of your choosing. Throughout the walk, students should take photographs of people, buildings, plants, animals, or other details that stand out to them in their community (if there is limited access to cameras or smart phones, students may pair up or form small groups.) Encourage students to follow their interest and their instinct, taking photos of whatever captures their attention. Each student (or group) should aim to take ~20 photos.

Closing (10 minutes)

1. After returning to the classroom, ask students to choose one photo from their photo walk to share with a small group.
2. In small groups of 3-4, students will take turns sharing the photo they chose. Group members should respond with an observation or appreciation, using the following sentence starters if necessary:
    - *I appreciate that you captured...*
    - *This photo makes me think about...*
    - *Something I like about this photo is...*

Homework

If desired, students may choose to do an additional photo walk in their own homes, neighborhoods, or favorite places. Students will then choose two photos to juxtapose on opposite pages, similar to the pages in the "All American Town" photo project. On their page, students should also include a quote. This quote could come from an oral history interview from earlier in the unit, or students can write their own phrase they feel corresponds well with the photos they chose and represents the values of their communities.

Lesson Plan: Narrative Tapestry

Time Needed: 1 class period

Materials:

- Readings
  - *Beginning Again: Stories of Movement and Migration in Appalachia*
  - Appalachian Love Story Zine from the STAY Project
  - *Hale County This Morning, This Evening* Trailer
- Handouts
  - Narrative Tapestry Vocabulary Square
- Classroom Supplies
  - Crafting materials: markers, scissors, glue, colored paper, etc.

Objectives:

- Students will construct a definition of "narrative tapestry" and discuss the impact of this narrative style.
- Students will create their own narrative tapestry to represent their classroom community.

Related Curriculum Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

Essential Question(s):

- How do we complicate the idea of Appalachia as a monolith?
- What can we learn from collecting diverse narratives from our community?

Day One

Narrative Tapestry

Overview
In this optional project, students will synthesize ideas and learnings from previous lessons in the unit. Students will explore different "narrative tapestries" of Appalachia, including Beginning Again and a zine published by The Stay Project. Students will create their own zine which presents a narrative tapestry of their own classroom community.

Narrative Tapestry Exploration (20 minutes)
1. Distribute the Narrative Tapestry Vocabulary Square handout. Explain that students will be exploring three different examples of narrative tapestries in order to generate a definition. This can be done as individual work, but small groups of 2-3 is recommended. 2. Each group should have a classroom copy *Beginning Again: Stories of Movement and Migration in Appalachia* and at least one digital device to access the following texts: • Appalachian Love Story Zine from the STAY Project • *Hale County This Morning, This Evening* Trailer 3. Ask students to explore the texts for about 10 minutes, taking note of things like content, form, style, character, plot, audience, purpose, and other genre features. 4. After exploration, students will work in groups to complete the Narrative Tapestry Vocabulary Square. If needed, you may share the following dictionary definitions: • **Narrative** (n): a story or description of a series of events; a particular way of understanding or explaining events • **Tapestry** (n): a piece of cloth with a pattern or picture that is created by weaving different colored threads; something that is made of many different parts 5. After groups have generated definitions, lead class through the following discussion questions: • What is a narrative tapestry? What are some examples of narrative tapestry? • What makes a narrative tapestry different from other narratives like a novel or movie? • What might be some benefits of creating or reading narrative tapestries?
Zine Project Intro (5 minutes)
Explain to students that they will be making their own narrative tapestry of their classroom community. Each individual student will make their own page, and all pages will be compiled into a zine, digital book, or whatever format best suits your needs. Students' pages can incorporate elements of the oral history activities they did in previous lessons–the oral history found poem, student guidebook, and/or photo walk. Student can choose any format or style for their page, which can include: interviews, poetry, prose, reflections, photo, illustration, collage, recipes, advertisements, etc. There is no prompt or constraint for students' pages, other than the page should tell a story about the individual who created it.
Work Time (30 minutes)
The rest of class time should be dedicated to working on the page. Students should complete their pages as homework and will compile and present their narrative tapestry in future class sessions.

Beginning Again Ideas and Resources for College-Level Curriculum

At Voice of Witness, we strive to provide educators with a diversity of support and resources as they begin planning how they will use our books in the classroom. Below, we have outlined several potential assignments around which to center your teaching of *Beginning Again*, as well as a list of suggested resources to pair with the book. We hope these assignments and readings will facilitate critical thinking, broaden literacy and language skills, increase cultural awareness and competency, and foster connection in the classroom and greater community.

Policy Analysis Paper
After reading a selection of narratives from *Beginning Again*, students research 3-4 government policies that directly address residents of Appalachia. The purpose of a policy analysis paper is not to argue a particular view; rather, it is to explore the current, existing policies surrounding an issue. Papers should include evidence and analysis of the intent and outcomes of the specific policies.
TED Talk
Through a combination of narratives from *Beginning Again* and independent research, students can create a presentation or speech that mimics the style of a TED Talk, in order to inform an audience about a specific aspect of the themes presented in the narratives. Speeches should have a central argument, supported by textual evidence as well as personal experience (personal to the student or the narrators in the book).
Braided Essay
A braided essay weaves together two or more distinct "threads" into a single piece in order to explore a particular topic or theme from multiple angles. For example, a braided essay can weave together a memoir piece, literary criticism, and oral history narratives that all center stories about the importance of food in family and culture. Using a narrative from *Beginning Again* as one of the "threads," students can create a braided essay on a topic of their choosing. The other "threads" can draw from personal experience, research, and original analysis.

We recommend the following resources to pair with *Beginning Again:*

- *Another Appalachia: Coming Up Queer in and Indian in a Mountain Place*, a memoir by Neema Avashia https://wvupressonline.com/node/903
- *Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to Hillbilly Elegy*, a collection of essays and creative work edited by Anthony Harkins and Meredith McCarroll https://wvupressonline.com/node/774
- *Country Queers*, a podcast by Rae Garringer https://www.countryqueers.com/
- *Hillbilly*, a 2019 documentary by Ashley York and Sally Rubin http://hillbillymovie.com/
- *Inside Appalachia*, a podcast by Mason Adams https://wvpublic.org/podcasts/inside-appalachia/
- *King Coal*, a 2023 experimental documentary by Elaine McMillion Sheldon https://www.kingcoalfilm.com/

- *Lost in Transition: Removing, Resettling, and Renewing Appalachia*, a history of 20th century removal and resettlement projects in Appalachia by Aaron Purcell https://utpress.org/title/lost-in-transition/

- *In Place: Conversations about Displacement in the Commonwealth*, a podcast by the Virginia Tech Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies https://www.inplacepodcast.com/

- "Mapping Appalachia's Boundaries: Historiographic Overview and Digital Collection," an article and virtual collection of historical maps by Stewart Scales, Emily Satterwhite, and Abigail August https://mapappalachia.geography.vt.edu/about-2/

- The work of Frank X. Walker https://www.frankxwalker.com/

- *Resisting the Trauma Story: Ethical Concerns in the Oral History Archive*, a short research article by Katherine Randall, Katrina Powell, and Brett Shadle https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/items/9116ac89-4b94-4fb4-92b0-ddc1bc60a1ba

- *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*, a nonfiction book by Elizabeth Catte https://beltpublishing.com/products/appalachia

Beginning Again: Discussion Questions

1. *Beginning Again* seeks to complicate simplistic stories about displaced people and to resist stereotypes of Appalachia as a region. In what ways did these stories add depth to flattened perceptions of the Appalachian region and its people?

2. Though many narrators discuss being displaced from their country of origin and resettling in Appalachia, there are also many ways in which the narrators rebuild community and create a new home in the region. How did individual narrators in *Beginning Again* discuss the idea of "home"?

3. Mekyah Davis says, "If we all just decided that Appalachia is irredeemable and can't be safe, then who's going to fix it while we're all away?" How does Mekyah's narrative both acknowledge the difficulties and celebrate the positive aspects of living in Appalachia?

4. Many narrators bring up different barriers to accessing education and opportunity. How can this issue be addressed, both on a community level and on a national or societal level?

5. Sohaila says, "Everyone says, 'Sohaila, you should be happy now. You have an apartment. You have a good job. A is happy in school. Why are you still so sad?'" What does Sohaila's narrative tell us about the nature of trauma, and what can we learn about supporting the people in our lives with traumatic experiences in their past?

6. Rufus Elliott, Barte Laney, Cindy Sierra Morales, and other narrators discuss whether or not they identify as Appalachian. What factors go into whether or not narrators call themselves Appalachian? For the narrators that do consider themselves to be Appalachian, what does the term mean to them?

7. Hannah Martin's narrative highlights the popular perception of Appalachia as a discriminatory, non-inclusive region for LGBTQIA+ individuals. What does Hannah's story tell us about this portrayal? How do other narrators with marginalized identities describe their experiences living in Appalachia?

8. Narrators like Sheng Thao, Babakir, and Claudine Katete shed light on the experiences of refugee individuals and families living in Appalachia. What was the impact of reading their firsthand accounts? What can we learn from these narratives, and what actions can be taken?

9. Elvir Berbić discusses volunteering with a soccer program for refugee boys, saying "I give back this way because I remember those years, and I never had anybody to guide me." What do the narratives in *Beginning Again* tell us about the significance of community?

10. What other themes emerged for you reading *Beginning Again*? What surprised, challenged, or impacted you the most? What have you learned about migration, Appalachia, and the people who live there?