

Name: _____

Student Journal

Bronx Masquerade

by Nikki Grimes

Reading Schedule

Group members: _____

<i>Bronx Masquerade</i>	Student Journal	Due Date	Discussion Date
Introduction	Pages 2–4		
Pages 11–45	Pages 5–6		
Pages 46–85	Pages 7–8		
Pages 86–123	Pages 9–10		
Pages 124–145	Pages 11–12		
Pages 146–167	Pages 13–14		
The Exchange			
Assessment			

THE EXCHANGE

Is poetry more
powerful than
conversation?

Getting Started

What If?

You really like someone at school and have wanted to date this person all year long. You are very shy—too shy to actually have a conversation with the person. You are a good writer, so you decide to write a poem that tells this person how you feel.

You show your poem to your best friend, but she thinks your poem is silly. She also thinks you will scare the person away with emotional poetry. She thinks that you would make a much better impression if you just start a conversation. You really want to tell the person how you feel, but now you are more confused than ever.

Make notes about how this would affect you.

- What decision would you make?
- Why would you choose either the poetry or the conversation?
- How would you react if someone wrote you a poem?

Connect to The Exchange Question Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: **Is poetry more powerful than conversation?** Summarize your discussion.

Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 7–8 in *Bronx Masquerade*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- the author’s background and inspiration
- the differences between open mikes and poetry slams
- how poetry changes the lives of the characters in the story

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. Where is the author from? What inspires her?

2. What are open mikes? What are poetry slams?

3. How does poetry affect the characters in the story?

Introduction: Key Concepts

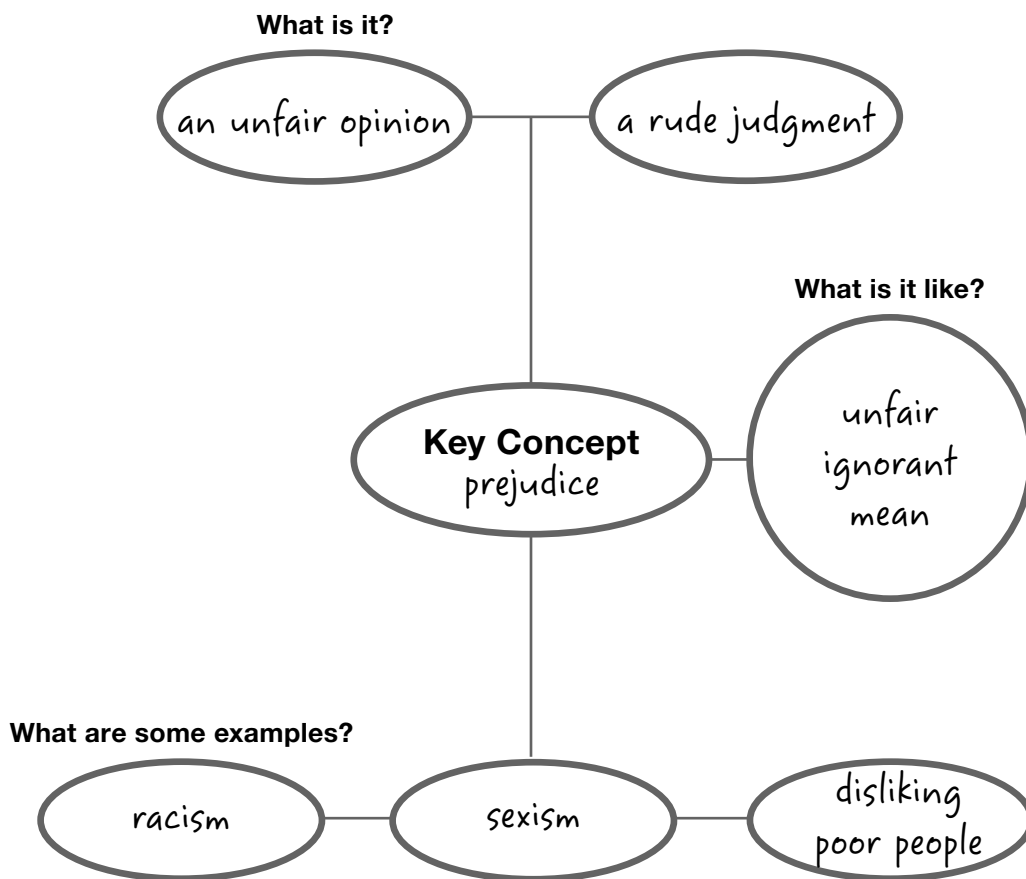
Definition Map

Study the **Definition Map** for *prejudice*. Write a sentence using the word *prejudice*.

Key Concepts

encourage
express
participate
prejudice
unique

Definition Map



On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar **Definition Map** for each of the **Key Concept** words. Write a sentence for each one.

Respond to Pages 11–45

- 1. Personal Response** Although the students share poetry, some of them also express their feelings in other ways. Tyrone raps. Raul paints. How do you express yourself? Why?

- 2. Major Character** What makes Tyrone the main character? Use the word *participate* in your response.

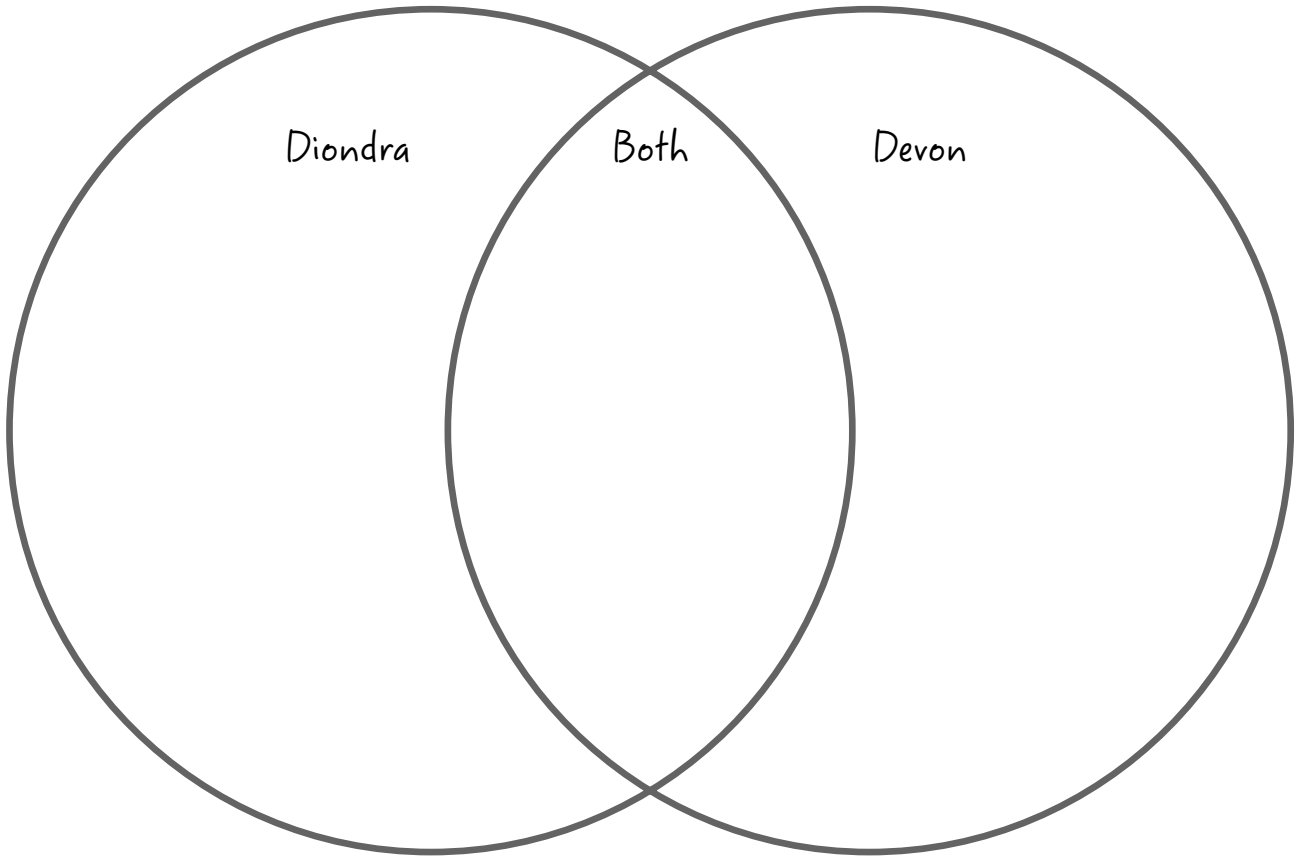
- 3. Paraphrase** What does Chankara mean on page 20 when she says about Johnny, “. . . I looked in his eyes and saw my sister’s reflection”?

- 4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

Respond to Pages 11–45, continued

5. **Irony** Think about Diondra’s and Devon’s feelings, interests, actions, and poetry. List their main characteristics in the **Venn Diagram**.

Venn Diagram



What is ironic about the similarities between Diondra and Devon? How might a friendship between the two of them make their lives better?

Respond to Pages 46–85

- 1. Personal Response** Gloria feels overwhelmed with the responsibilities of raising a child and going to school. What responsibilities do you think teenagers your age should take on? Why?

- 2. Character’s Point of View** Reread page 53. How does Janelle describe Open Mike Friday? How does reading her poem make her feel? Use the word *express* in your response.

- 3. Paraphrase** What does Leslie mean on page 58 when she says, “Dead is dead, and lonely is lonely, and they both stink”?

- 4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

T Chart

Insecurity About Appearance	Loneliness

Respond to Pages 86–123

- 1. Personal Response** Sheila wants to be called by a different name because she thinks it will better express who she is. If you could change your name, would you? Why or why not?

- 2. Conflict** Reread pages 86–87. Mike is prejudiced against people who like to read for fun. How does Mike’s attitude affect Devon? Use the word *prejudice* in your response.

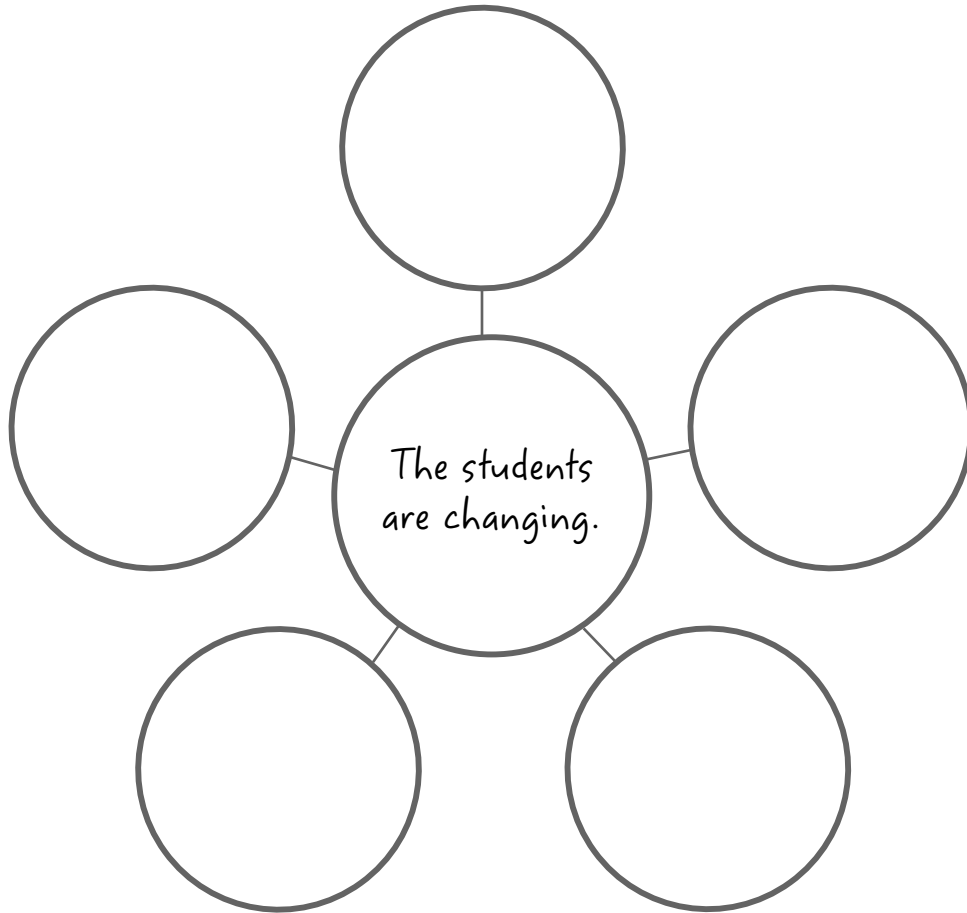
- 3. Opinion** Raul tells Steve, “If a dream is in your heart, you never lose it.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

- 4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

Respond to Pages 86–123, continued

- 5. Character** The students are changing because of Open Mike Fridays.
List how they are changing in the **Details Web**.

Details Web



What has each character gained from participating in Open Mike Fridays?

Respond to Pages 124–145

- 1. Personal Response** After Steve proves he can “flow,” Tyrone wonders what else Steve can do. What is a talent or passion you have that others might not know about?

- 2. Judgments** Is it important that Wesley encourages Sheila to stop trying to be something she’s not and just be herself? Why or why not? Use the word *encourage* in your response.

- 3. Metaphor** The newspaper article about the Open Mike session is titled “Student Poets Bloom in the Bronx.” What is the reporter comparing the students to? Why?

- 4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

Respond to Pages 124–145, continued

5. **Opinion** Raynard, Steve, Sheila, and Janelle share their poems in this section. List what the characters do or feel and what this shows about them. Use the **Chart** to answer the question.

Character Description Chart

Character	What the Character Does	What This Shows About the Character
Raynard		
Steve		
Sheila		
Janelle		

Which character takes the biggest risk to share his or her poem? Why is sharing the poem so risky? Would you be able to share your feelings like this character?

Respond to Pages 146–167

- 1. Personal Response** Lupe, Diondra, and Tyrone are all making plans for what they will do after high school. What are your goals for the future? How do you plan to reach those goals?

- 2. Mood** What is the mood in this section? Why do you think the mood has changed as the students have learned to express themselves? Use the word *unique* in your response.

- 3. Character's Motive** Why does Porscha decide to participate in Open Mike Fridays?

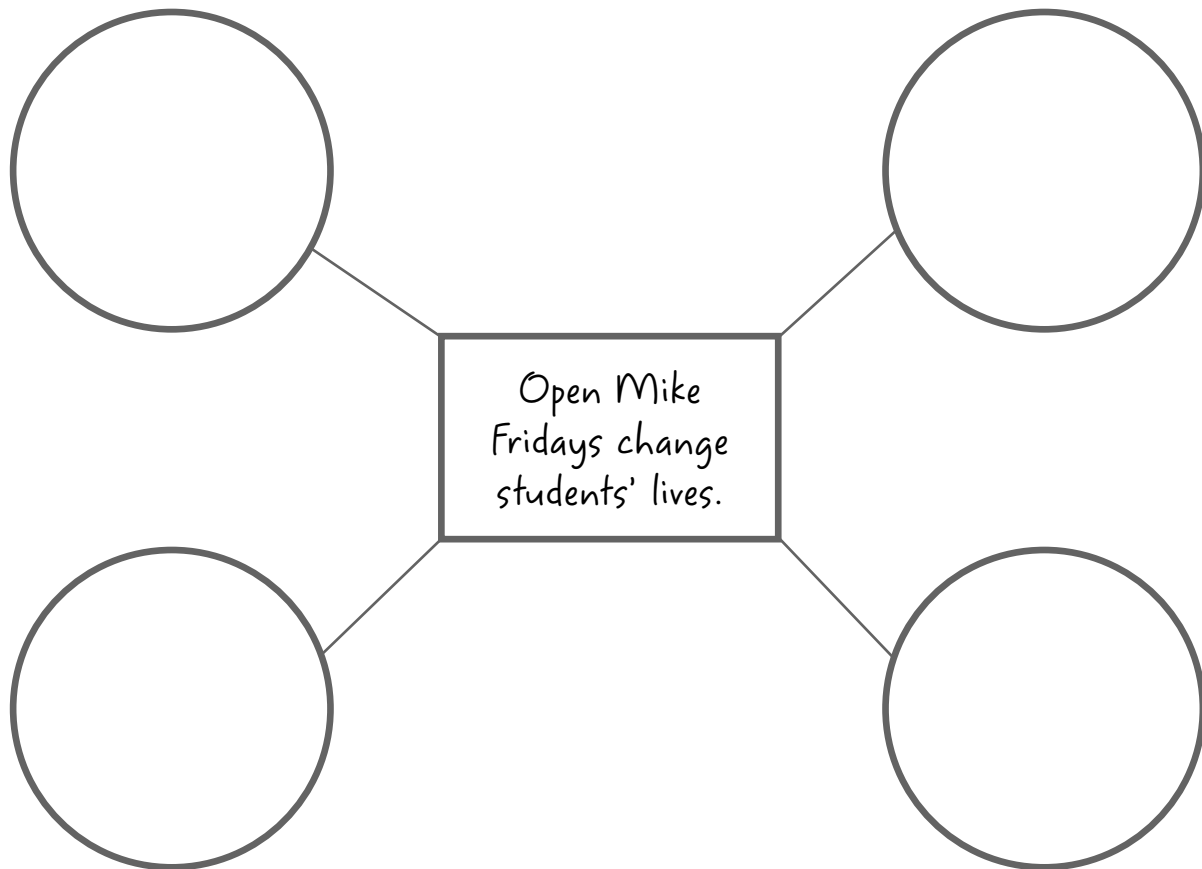
What If?

- 4. Connect** Look at your notes on **Student Journal, page 2**. Think about what might happen if you had to choose how to best express yourself. Compare this to *Bronx Masquerade*. Did the students learn more about each other by talking or by sharing their poetry?

Respond to Pages 146–167, continued

5. **Conclusions** Open Mike Fridays are affecting the students in a positive way. List four students and how they feel now or feel about the future in the **Idea Web**.

Idea Web



Based on what you know about how the Open Mikes are affecting the students you listed above, how will the Open Mikes affect the school and community in the future?
