

Teacher Notes



Localizing Urban Legends

Activity 1 Exploring Urban Legends

Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** English
- ◆ **Subject Area:** English/Language Arts
- ◆ **Category:** Literary Genres: Folklore
- ◆ **Topic:** Localizing Urban Legends
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 9 - 12
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** None
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 60 minutes

Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus or TI-83 Plus Silver Edition
- ◆ LearningCheck™ Application
- ◆ LearningCheck™ File: **Urban Legends.edc**, using the sections **Urban Legends Anticipation Guide** and **Elements of an Urban Legend**
- ◆ Student Work Sheet: **Getting Started on Your Urban Legend**
- ◆ Instructions for Accessing the LearningCheck™ Application

Activity Overview

Students will read samples of urban legends and practice searching for clues that reveal the truth beneath their specious facades.

Tip

An excellent urban legends resource can be found at: www.snopes.com. The site's editors, Barbara and David P. Mikkelson, place urban legends in context, rate them for veracity, and provide detailed bibliographic information for the more serious researcher.

Arguably the oldest site on the topic is *The AFU and Urban Legend Archive* at: www.urbanlegends.com.

David Emery maintains a detailed site at: <http://urbanlegends.about.com/> Emery's site offers an email newsletter for those interested in staying on top of the most current urban legends.

There are dozens of urban legends appropriate for classroom use and dozens that are not. Do your research. Many students may have learned the term *urban legend* from the two R-rated horror movies, *Urban Legend* and *Urban Legends: Final Cut*. The movies are not appropriate for classroom use due their

depictions of violence, gore, and sexuality, but you may want to watch them on your own time to get an understanding of how students who may have seen the movie/s conceive of the term *urban legend*.

Directions

Before the Activity Begins

Send the **Urban Legends.edc** LearningCheck™ file to the students. Use the **Urban Legends Anticipation Guide** section of the file to survey the students and promote discussion.

Preview the lesson for the students:

- ◆ Activity 1: Students will read, discuss, and analyze urban legends.
- ◆ Activity 2: Students will rewrite/adapt existing urban legends in a local setting.
- ◆ Activity 3: Students will share newly-localized urban legends in a “campfire setting.”

Have the students complete the **Urban Legends Anticipation Guide**, and then initiate a brief introductory discussion about urban legends.

During the Activity

Students will read samples of urban legends individually before discussing the stories as a class.

After the Activity

Using the **Elements of an Urban Legend** section of the LearningCheck™ file (or optional Student Work Sheet), explore the underlying similarities between urban legends. Get the students thinking about the commonalities that run through all the legends they read in class.

Homework

Give each student a copy of the student work sheet entitled **Getting Started on Your Urban Legend**. Each student should complete this sheet and prepare a rough draft of her/his urban legend. Students will meet in revision groups tomorrow to discuss rough drafts.

Student Work Sheet

Name: _____

Getting Started on Your Urban Legend

Date: _____

Your assignment is to take one of the urban legends you read, and retell the story as if it happened in your community. If you know of a recent urban legend that is alleged to have taken place in your community, you may use that to complete this assignment. Do not be afraid to embellish. All good storytellers take stories, transform them, and make them their own.

The questions below will help you brainstorm for your urban legend.

- ◆ Who told you the urban legend? (Have fun coming up with a chain of acquaintances and/or relatives.)

- ◆ Where specifically in the community did the urban legend take place?

- ◆ The urban legend, though plausible, must ultimately be too good to be true. What is one clue you will give to the reader/listener that lets him/her know the story is fictitious?

- ◆ Who is the person who is punished in your urban legend? What societal taboo does the person violate?

- ◆ Why was this extraordinary and newsworthy event ignored by journalists?

- ◆ How does your urban legend end? (Remember, urban legends have neat and tidy endings that seem a little too perfect.)

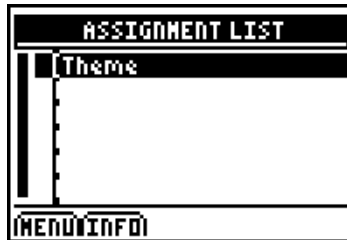
Accessing the LearningCheck™ Application on a TI-83 Plus Device

The following procedure enables you to access the LearningCheck™ Application. It assumes that the software is already installed on the device.

1. Turn on the device and press the **Apps** key to display this screen. Select the **LearnChk** Application by highlighting the selection number using \uparrow \downarrow . Press ENTER .



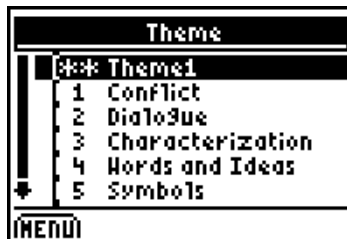
2. Press ENTER to move past the title screen. The **Assignment List** is displayed. Use \uparrow \downarrow to highlight the desired assignment (**Theme** in this example), and then press ENTER .



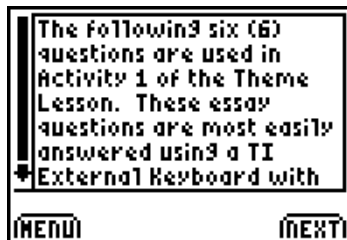
3. Enter your ID to sign in, and then press ENTER to open the file.



4. The first entry gives instructions for the assignment. Highlight this option, and then press ENTER to open it.

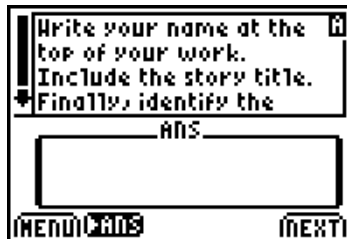


Read the section instructions. Use \downarrow to scroll down the page. (The long bar and down arrow on the left side indicates there is more text to view that is not displayed on the screen.)



5. To continue to the assessment questions, press **NEXT** (using the GRAPH key.) Press **ANS** to move the cursor into the answer box.

Note: If you are not using a TI Keyboard, remember to press the ALPHA key to type letters.



6. Press **NEXT** to continue to the next question.

When all questions in the file are answered, the LearningCheck™ Application redisplay the list of questions in the file.

