

# SCIENCE EDUCATION IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION: ENGAGING AIDS

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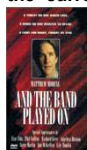
## ABSTRACT

Prompting students to understand the "problems" of our society is a necessary approach to civic engagement. This poster outlines a problem-based learning strategy that facilitates an awareness of HIV and AIDS from a legal, ethical, cultural, and psychological perspective. Students examine issues such as: an individual's right to privacy versus the public's right to disclosure; the use of experimental drugs without consent; and engaging in at-risk behavior despite potentially severe consequences. The impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals, families, and communities is analyzed through the lens of popular media—cinematic adaptations and a dramatic series—to engage composition students in both verbal and written critical dialogue.

## REFERENCES

- "A Growing Group of Scientists Think the AIDS Virus Is Harmless and AIDS Is Not Contagious."  
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- "A Promise of Legal Relief For AIDS Victims."  
<http://www.nytimes.com>
- "Drug-Resistant HIV Strain Alarms Officials."  
<http://edition.cnn.com>
- "Drug Trials on Children Broke Rules, Officials Say."  
<http://www.nytimes.com>
- "Law & Order: SVU Perpetuates Myth of HIV Super-virus."  
[http://www.gmhc.org/index/svu\\_myth.html](http://www.gmhc.org/index/svu_myth.html)
- "Public Health Cited in Breaching HIV Confidentiality."  
<http://www.nytimes.com/>
- "Physician-Assisted Suicide and Patients with Human Immunodeficiency Virus Disease."  
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/abstract>
- "The 'Down Low': More Answers than Questions."  
<http://www.pacha.gov/meetings/presentations/>

**AND THE BAND PLAYED ON:** Chronicling the 'discovery' of HIV and AIDS, this movie implies that various bureaucratic factors—lack of funding from the current Presidential administration, bickering between American and French scientists for recognition, lack of cooperation from the most impacted community—impeded the identification of HIV and AIDS and as a result, hindered subsequent preventative measures.



**THINK TANK:** Could the devastation of HIV/AIDS have been prevented?

**Law & Order: Special Victims Unit: "Retro"**

Profiles homeopathic alternatives to HIV-related illnesses and the growing group of scientists who argue that HIV does not cause AIDS; the AIDS virus is harmless; and AIDS is not contagious.

**THINK TANK:** Who will you believe?



**LAW and ORDER: SVU "Strain":** The discovery of a new strain of AIDS that can kill its victims in less than a year. This episode ...[drew] protests over leading information; deemed "problematic and rooted in a false reality."

**THINK TANK:** Should scientists and researchers "prepare" for a "super strain" of HIV/AIDS?

**LAW & ORDER: "Positive":** A doctor uses experimental AIDS drugs not approved for usage on humans to find a cure for his own full-blown AIDS.

**THINK TANK:** Is it beneficial or a mistake to test/use experimental drugs on terminally ill children without consent? What are some of the benefits or disadvantages of testing/using experimental drugs on the terminally ill?

**PHILADELPHIA:** A lawyer sues his conservative law firm when he is fired because the partners learn that he has AIDS.

**THINK TANK:** Why do people stigmatize or discriminate against those who have been infected with HIV/AIDS?

Several **LAW & ORDER** or **LAW & ORDER: SVU** episodes explore HIV/AIDS patients' guaranteed "right-to-privacy."



"Carrier" - An HIV-positive male who is seeking to infect as many young women as possible.

"Lust" - A public-health doctor whose work involved contacting sexual partners of HIV patients.

"Rooftop" - two detectives who face criminal charges after they reveal to a young woman that her boyfriend has AIDS.

"Lowdown" - an Assistant District Attorney faces sanctions after she reveals to the wife of a law enforcement agent that he engaged in sexual activity with a man who was HIV+.

**THINK TANK:** Should health officials have permission to publicly release the names of HIV+ individuals to help prevent the spread of

the disease?

**LAW & ORDER: "The Reaper's Helper":** A man is tried for murder after he assists AIDS victims with committing suicide.

**THINK TANK:** Does/Should the legal system have a voice in our health, medical care, and/or our right to die? If "we" assist a person with her/his suicide, are we liable for that person's death?

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**LAW & ORDER: SVU "Low Down":** An investigation of the death of an HIV+ Assistant District Attorney, a man on the "down

'straight' men who have sex with other men.

**LAW & ORDER: SVU: "Hooked":** A teen becomes involved in pornography and contracts AIDS.

**KIDS** Chronicles the 'risky' behavior of society's youths.

**THINK TANK:** HIV/AIDS can be seen as a behaviorally transmitted disease because it is through certain risky behaviors that one

contract HIV/AIDS. Why do people engage in "risky behavior" despite the possible repercussions/consequences?

**LAW and ORDER: "Carrier":** A case involving an HIV-positive male who is seeking to infect as many young women as possible.

**THINK TANK:** Why would people (attempt to) intentionally infect others with HIV/AIDS?

**LIFE SUPPORT:** Examines the impact of HIV/AIDS on families and friends.

**THINK TANK:** How does HIV/AIDS affect the relationships between spouses/ partners, parents, children, siblings, and friends?

