

GEORGE ORWELL'S DIGNITY STORY

Students/participants read George Orwell's *A Hanging* (1931) and engage in discussions about the dignity messages that are embedded within it. The learning experience culminates with students/participants considering the role of perspective in storytelling, specifically in the telling of a dignity story. In the process, they consider the role of perspective in daily events and the importance of treating others with dignity.

AGES 10+ | TIME 60 MIN

MATERIALS

TECHNOLOGY FREE OPTION: Text of George Orwell's short story *A Hanging*

TECHNOLOGY OPTION: [YouTube reading of A Hanging](#)

DIRECTIONS

CONSIDER: Students/participants reflect on the role that dignity plays in the legal system. In which ways is dignity honored? Violated? Locally? Globally?

EXPLORE: Students/participants read George Orwell's *A Hanging* (1931) and/or they listen to it read by the facilitator or the voice in the YouTube video. As they are reading/listening to the story, students/participants should note which passages, characters, images, sentences, and words remind them of dignity.

DISCUSS: Working in small groups, students/participants discuss the following questions.

- Why doesn't Orwell reveal the condemned man's crime?
- What does the dog symbolize?
- What role does dignity play in this story?
- Which character resonated the most with you? Why?
- Which character(s) best represent the ideals of dignity?
- Which sentence or phrase best captures the ideals of dignity?
- Which sentence or phrase best captures the danger of disregarding dignity?



- What point is Orwell making?
- What is your response to Orwell's dignity story?

CREATE: Using *A Hanging* as a model, students/participants will imagine that they are one of the characters involved in an event from one of the options listed below and write a story involving dignity from that character's perspective. Students/participants can base their story on:

- *A Hanging*
- a local or global news story (Newseum is a good resource)
- one of their own learning experiences, or the learning experience of a friend or family member.
- one of the personal dignity stories written by a classmate
- a historic or modern figure's experience

SHARE AND REFLECT: Students/participants share their essays, offer feedback to each other, and reflect on how the essays represent dignity.

EXTENSIONS OR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

- Students/participants expand their stories to include more than one person's perspective
- Partner this experience with [Chimamanda Adichie's Dignity Story](#) and/or [Dignity in the News](#) experience.
- Students/participants can use the [Dignity Every Day worksheet](#) as a lens through which to evaluate the way dignity is, or isn't, represented.

Connect with our Global Dignity community and explore our Teaching Dignity resources and curriculum at [GLOBALDIGNITY.ORG](https://www.globaldignity.org).