

LETTERS TO MAY 4

CRAFTED BY CARRIE GEORGE



ARMED WITH OUR VOICES

LESSON PLANS

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING KENT STATE

10 minutes

- What year did you arrive at Kent State? What was going on in the world?
- What issues mattered to you and other students when you were attending Kent State?
- Were there organizations or outlets for you to express your ideologies? Were there opportunities for you to organize with like-minded peers?
- How did the university itself handle or discuss May 4?

TRANSITION: LOOKING FORWARD

5 minutes

- What did May 4 mean to you and your peers?
- What do you think May 4 means to students now?
- Is there anything you want current Kent students to know about May 4?

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**POEM: “MAY 4TH
MEMORIAL POEM” BY
CLARA MACPHERSON**

10 minutes

- Introduce the poem, but don’t reveal any identifying information of the poet.
- What do you notice about the poem? What questions do you have? What kind of person do you think wrote this poem? What do you think their relationship to May 4 is?
- Explain that the poem was written by a high school student after touring the May 4 Visitors Center.

CHARGE THE AIR:

10 minutes

- What do you wish you could say to current and future KSU students about May 4?
- Possible prompt: “I hope you’ll remember...”
- Possible prompt: “Dear future student...”
- Possible prompt: “When I think of May 4, I remember...”
- MacPherson used images like the flag, the hills, and the bell. What other images come to mind when you remember your May 4 experience?
- What questions do you have for current and future students?
- What kinds of things did you see/hear/smell/feel when you were a student on campus?

WRITE

15 minutes

- Write your own poem in response to MacPherson.
- Consider the prompts discussed above.

SHARE

10 minutes

- Have students share the poems they wrote

EXAMPLE POEM

MAY 4TH MEMORIAL POEM

BY CLARA
MACPHERSON

Freedom ringing in protest,
I fight for what I believe in—
the song of liberty, a sweet tune dances
over the blanketed hills.

The hills are buried in the strong-willed souls
and protestors trying to be heard.

The gears spinning, deep in thought, but nearby
death beckons for volunteers, unknowing of the
violence ahead.

Advancing, they are, marching over a safe place,
a place of peace. Black flags flying as the
mob approaches. The totem on the hill swarming
with the wasps of humanity, boom, then silence,
followed with screams as the dead are slumped,
a short life, all in a fight that never meant
to be fought. A war on the children of peace.

Clara MacPherson is a high school student who wrote this poem as a part of the Wick Juniors Summer Writing Camp after touring the May 4 Visitors Center.