

# Introduce your students to new voices from around the world

## *The Common* in the Classroom

We make it easy:

### 1. Pick two issues of *The Common*.

Use our most-recent issues or select from our archives. Our staff can help you choose the best issues for your curriculum. Single-issue and digital options are also available.

### 2. Schedule your classroom visit.

Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Acker answers students' questions and provides a rare window into the publishing process.

### 3. Use our supportive resources.

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### 4. Rinse and repeat.

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“Teaching *The Common* shows my students that literature and its production and distribution are living processes, part of a living world that they can access as artists and future professionals. The video chat with Jennifer Acker was priceless in bringing this within their reach.”

—Amy E. Weldon, Professor of English, Luther College

“*The Common's* exemplary resources for teachers and its devotion to elevating new writers will help bring into being a new generation of readers and thinkers.”

—Judges' citation for the 2019 Whiting Literary Magazine Prizes.



## Teach *The Common* in your classroom

### A Modern Sense of Place: Stories, Essays, Poems, Images

Ideal for courses in:

- Contemporary Literature
- Creative Writing
- Editing and Publishing
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- Place-Focused Seminars
- First-Year Seminars
- Rhetoric and Composition
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Translation Programs
- Arabic Literature in Translation
- Latinx Literature
- Middle Eastern Studies



*The Common* features place-focused portfolios and works in translation, with a focus on contemporary Arabic fiction.

Discounted student prices, plus a free desk copy, lessons plans, and a Skype visit from the Editor in Chief.

Connect your students to award-winning, global literature in three easy steps. (See [Reverse](#))

A MODERN SENSE of PLACE

THE  
COMMON  
IN THE CLASSROOM

STORIES, POEMS, ESSAYS & IMAGES

## Sample Lesson Plan

**Group Assignment & Student-led Exercise:** Divide students into small groups (trios work well) and give them a week to:

1. Meet together outside of class with their copies of *The Common* in hand;
2. Select, as a group, a poem they particularly like,
3. Prepare to read that poem aloud to the class, and
4. Design and lead an in-class writing exercise for their classmates and teacher that is inspired by a technique or aspect of that poem.

*Adapted from Amy Weldon, Professor of English, Luther College*

### Example:

One group chose Fatimah Asghar’s poem “Kul” from Issue 14, read the poem aloud, and noted that it was based on one word that could mean several, potentially opposite things—a contronym. The students had generated a list of contronyms in advance and projected them on the board (e.g., “sanction,” “oversight,” and “left”). They then invited their classmates to write at least a few lines of a poem that would, in their words, embrace these opposite meanings.

*“I like this exercise not only because it gets students engaging with the fresh texts in detailed ways (at the same time we are all receiving and getting into our new issues) and working together, but also because it gives them a sense of what it is like to be in front of a class, teaching (potentially useful information for those who may be considering that path.)” —Amy Weldon*

For more information, contact Elizabeth Witte at [liz@thecommononline.org](mailto:liz@thecommononline.org) or visit [thecommononline.org/teach/](http://thecommononline.org/teach/) and request a free sample issue.

## Sample Lesson Plan for Literature in Translation

In this exercise you will explore the multidimensionality of a poem, essay, or story by “living with” the author and translator: reading and thinking about their work every day for a week. This is a multi-step assignment, so read carefully and make sure you plan in advance.

**Step 1:** Read “How to Read a Translation” by Lawrence Venuti ([wordswithoutborders.org/article/how-to-read-a-translation](http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/how-to-read-a-translation)). From your issue of *The Common*, choose one work in translation that you like enough (or perhaps that is difficult or strange or intriguing enough) to spend a week with.

**Step 2:** Keep a written journal about your experience, using the following assignments:

**Day 1:** Read your piece twice. Write at least two paragraphs (200 words) detailing your initial reactions, explaining why you chose it.

**Day 2:** Read the piece out loud. Then circle the words, phrases, sections that jump out at you (because they surprise you, annoy you, because you like the sound of them or don’t like the sound of them, etc). Look up any word you don’t know and then write at least a paragraph (100 words) about why you think the author used those particular words (please include a list of the words you circled).

**Day 3:** Read your piece. Paraphrase in a paragraph (at least 100 words) what is happening in your own words. You can use phrases like, “And then the author says that..” and “Next the author describes...” (remember to identify the piece by title).

**Day 4:** Read the piece again. Then research information about the author and about the translator. Write a paragraph (at least 100 words) about what you learned and how this influences your understanding of the piece.

**Day 5:** Read your selected piece out loud to someone else (friend, parent, girlfriend, boyfriend, uncle, stranger) and write one paragraph (100 words) about this person’s reactions and your feelings/thoughts while reading it aloud.

**Day 6:** Reread Venuti’s “How to Read a Translation” and consider how you have been reading your piece. Write two paragraphs (200 words) about what you learned from this.

**Day 7:** Read your piece one last time really, really slowly, line-by-line. Then reread your first journal entry from Day 1. Write two paragraphs (200 words) about how your initial reactions to this piece has changed. Include a description of your favorite and your least favorite parts as well as any images or sounds or interpretations that stand out to you after this week of living with this piece.

**Step 3:** During class discussion, you should be prepared to discuss why you chose your piece, what you learned about the author and translator, and the experience of living with this author and translator for a week.

*Adapted from Curtis Bauer, The Common’s Translation Editor, and Director of Creative Writing Program and teacher of Comparative Literature at Texas Tech University.*