Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the points of view of the various characters/people in Danticat’s *Brother I’m Dying*. The students should have read the memoir or be close to finishing prior to completing this assignment. Additionally, the students will learn to distinguish between close-ended and open-ended questions and to write open-ended questions in which to interview a family member.

Essential Questions:

1. Why is it important to ask open-ended questions when conducting an interview?
2. How does an interviewee’s point of view affect the interview?

Objectives:

The learner will—

1. Examine and infer the subjective points of view for characters/people in Danticat’s memoir.
2. Identify close-ended and open-ended questions.
3. Compose open-ended questions for interview of a family member.

North Carolina Standard Course of Study:

**Goal 1:** The learner will express reflections and reactions to print and non-print text and personal experiences.

**Goal 2:** The learner will explain meaning, describe processes, and answer research questions to inform an audience.

**Goal 3:** The learner will examine argumentation and develop informed opinions.
Goal 5: The learner will demonstrate understanding of various literary genres, concepts, elements, and terms.

Goal 6: The learner will apply conventions of grammar and language use.

Materials:

- Edwidge Danticat’s Brother I’m Dying
- Interview of Brother I’m Dying Characters assignment (attachment)
- Graphic organizer for developing interview questions (attachment)

Time Required:

90 minutes (1 class period on block schedule)

Pre-Activity:

Review subjective voice and point of view with students. Students should recall how the points of view in their paragraphs from Activity 1 differed from each other. If the class was not assigned Activity 1, ask students to think of a situation in which two people may have different points of view about the same thing (i.e. a principal’s and a student’s view on dress code).

Procedure:

1. Handout Interview of Brother I’m Dying Characters assignment.
2. Students will answer each of the questions as if they are Edwidge, Mira, or Joseph. Students can choose at what point in the memoir these questions are taking place. For instance, if students choose to answer as Joseph, they can decide whether he is answering the questions before he leaves for the U.S. or after he arrives. They will need to infer those answers based on what they have read and what they understand about each of the characters. Each answer should include specific detail that exercises both the student’s understanding of the memoir and the characters.
3. After students complete their initial answers, pair them with another student who chose the same character. Have the students compare, contrast, and defend the answers that they developed.
4. Ask student-pairs to choose one of the answers from the questions to share with the rest of the class. They need to explain why they believe that their character would have answered in this way.
5. Discuss the difference between close-ended questions and open-ended questions. Ask students to identify the questions on their handout as either close-ended or open-ended. Have students determine why you might want open-ended questions in an interview.

6. Explain that each student will choose an adult in his or her family to interview (a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle) using the same questions from the handout. However, they will also develop three open-ended questions of their own to add to the interview.

7. Students will use a graphic organizer to develop questions for their interview. Content of the questions should be relevant to the topic of “home” and can include inquiries about ancestry, prominent family members, times of hardship or celebration, or future expectations.

**Assignment:**

Students will conduct their interviews for homework. Time allotted for this assignment should be designated by the teacher.

**Assessment:**

Student answers to the handout should include specific details from the book that relate their knowledge of the memoir and the characters.

The student should submit their interview questions and answers in a presentable format (typed at teacher’s request).

**Follow up:**

Discuss with students what specific instances Danticat relates about her family that seem to have influenced her voice, identity, etc.
Instructions: Answer the following questions as if you are Edwidge, her father Mira, or her Uncle Joseph. In each answer, give specific details from the memoir relevant to each character’s experience.

1. What is your name and where do you currently live?

2. How did you come to live there?

3. What is your personal definition of “home”?
4. Who would you say has influenced this definition the most and how?

5. Why do you think it is important to have a sense of “home”?
Develop three additional open-ended questions for your interview. You can fill in the answers while your interviewee is responding, or you may tape-record the responses and fill them in later.

Question 1:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Answer 1:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Questions 2:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Answer 2:
Question 3:

Answer 3: