

Thankful for American Citizenship

by Meghan Sullivan

French and World History teacher grades 9-12, ISSN teacher instructional coach, World Language Department Chair
Oak Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio



Interesting topics
make great Classbooks.
Visit studenttreasures.com

Grade Level/Subject: K-5 (adapt to your needs)

Analyze . . .

Students will analyze what being a citizen means and then analyze what being an American citizen means. Students will create a class book showing the rights they are thankful to have as Americans and what would happen without them.

1. The teacher will provide the students with a basic definition of a "citizen." The teacher will divide the students into groups of four. Tell each student group to spend 3 minutes brainstorming (using either a verbal brainstorm, sticky notes, a scrap piece of paper, or any other brainstorming format you have in your classroom) what this definition really means. They can give examples; they can reword it, etc.

2. Each group will share one thing with the entire class. The teacher should make sure that the students

Engage . . .

Describe how the teacher will capture students' interest. What kind of questions should the students ask themselves after engagement?

understand the meaning of a "right" and a "responsibility." The teacher can ask questions about what "rights" and "responsibilities" the students have in their own classroom or in their own school.

3. Using the School House Rock song titled The Preamble; students will be introduced to the idea of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. While they are listening/watching the clip, the teacher will direct students to collect responsibilities or rights they hear explained in the song. This is the YouTube clip for School House Rock: <http://goo.gl/H1MifG>

4. The teacher will ask questions regarding the importance of citizenship. For example, the teacher might ask: "Why do people come to the United States in order to become American citizens?" or "Why are people proud to be American citizens?" or "Why do we have laws?" Feel free to add some of your own questions to pull out why people want to be an American citizen.

Explore . . .

Describe what hands-on, minds-on activities students will be doing. List "big idea" conceptual questions the teacher will use to encourage and/or focus students' exploration. This will also include the pre-write.

This section of the lesson plan helps address Common Core standards ELA-Literacy.W.1.6 and ELA-Literacy.W.2.7. This standard asks the students to look at more than one resource to come to a conclusion on a topic. Using the YouTube video, a classroom discussion and excerpts from the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, the students will be headed down the path to mastering their Common Core standard.

5. Students will be given examples from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Materials:

Basic definition of "citizen"

The School House Rock:
The Preamble song
<http://goo.gl/H1MifG>

Pre-writing and drafting
worksheets included

Free Classbook Publishing
Kit from Studenttreasures
Publishing – Order your kit
here: studenttreasures.com/classbook

Excerpts from the
Constitution and the
Declaration of
Independence

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9 Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.5 (Extension for older grades)
Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

(The teacher should determine the degree of difficulty. The teacher can rewrite some of the amendments to make them simpler, but should make sure to include as many “responsibilities” or “rights” of a citizens as possible. i.e. life, liberty, happiness, voting, right to bear arms, right to freedom of speech, etc.)

6. Within their groups of 4, the students should determine roles. The teacher will provide the title of the role, along with a brief description of their “rights” and “responsibilities” for the activity. This will help reinforce the vocabulary words, but also make it clear what each student should be doing with their time. The “rights” and “responsibility” part will be unique to each teacher’s classroom settings/rules.

Roles:

- Paper Writer
- Board Writer
- Speaker
- Organizer

7. The paper writer will make a list of rights and responsibilities of an American citizen for the group based on the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Schoolhouse Rock video that the students have been presented with. (The teacher can also encourage students to use their creativity and own thinking.) Give them about 10 minutes to complete this.

The “organizer’s” job is to keep everyone on task. Since this activity can be done on multiple educational levels, it is important to make this compatible with your students’ abilities. For example, younger grades may want to simply make a list as they are watching the School House Rock video and examining the documents. However, the older grades might want to break the documents and video into stations for the collection of the “rights” and “responsibilities.” Whichever best fits your classroom and students for fact collecting will work with this section.

8. Each group will then send their “board writer” up to make a master list for the class on the front board. Repeats will be crossed out by the teacher. The speaker for each group will present their rights and responsibilities to the entire class.

9. Once the class has a master list, individual students will be asked to pick the right or responsibility they are most thankful for and turn it in on the scrap piece of paper. The teacher can pose a few questions on the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: How long do you think it took Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence? How many drafts of the Constitution do you think they wrote before finalizing it? (This can be used as a formative assessment for the teacher. Solid writing skills can still be used.)

10. Using the drafting worksheets provided, the students will begin describing the right or responsibility and why they think it is important for Americans. They will answer the first two sets of questions and stop.

11. Using their group of four, all the students will discuss the opposite side of American citizenship. What would happen if they did not have this right or responsibility; how would their lives be different? (This portion of the assignment can hit some of the older grades Common Core Standard.RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure e.x., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts. This activity helps students see the cause and effect and the problem/solution side of the citizenship.)

12. After the group discussion, they will return to the third and fourth blanks on

Explain . . .

Students’ explanations should precede introduction of terms or explanation by the teacher. What questions or techniques will the teacher use to help students connect their exploration to the concept under examination/evaluation? List higher order thinking questions which teachers will use to help solicit student explanations and help them to justify their explanations. This will take the students through the drafting process.

the drafting paper worksheet and will also write about what would happen to them if they did NOT have this right or responsibility. Sentence starters have been provided for all blanks in order to give structure to the activity.

13. Using their student peer review partner (or something similar if you have them already set up), they will peer review before turning the draft into the teacher. This can be used as a formative assessment as well.

14. If a student is struggling with the sentence starters, a teacher could differentiate by shortening the length of the answers. (This section also helps you address the Common Core standard ELA-Literacy.W.1.1. This activity asks them to take a topic, use a resource to help form an opinion and then write about it. Literally, this CCSS is hit from every angle!)

Elaborate . . .

Describe how students will develop a more sophisticated understanding of the concept. What vocabulary will be introduced and how will it connect to the students' observations? How is this knowledge applied in their daily lives? This will include the process of revising.

15. Using a full classroom discussion, the teacher will pose questions to help students connect this activity to their real life. Students will be introduced to certain common rights within the United States that other countries do not afford to their citizens. For example, Singapore does not allow its citizens to chew gum. In France, you cannot legally drive a car until you are 18. Ask students questions after sharing this information: Why did these rights get taken away from their citizens? Why are certain rights taken away from you? Example: You can't knowingly write a lie about somebody in a newspaper, you can't vote more than one time in an election? Is there a right that you'd like to take away from American citizens?

16. After the peer review and the teacher review, the student will receive back the constructive criticism about their first-draft. They will be given time to revise their work and improve upon their mistakes on the Second Draft worksheet. The second draft will

also include an image of the right or responsibility drawn by the student on the back/top of the paper and an image of what life would be like without the right or responsibility on the back/bottom of the worksheet.

17. The teacher will collect the revised copy of the writing and the picture as a formative assessment.

18. Once the student has a final draft of the writing and an outline/rough draft of their picture, we are ready to start using the Studenttreasures Publishing Kits. (The kits should be ordered before you get to this point in the lesson, of course, just not introduced to the students until now.) This comes with 33 pages for text and 33 pages for drawings. Each student will receive 2 pages of their own for their text and image. Following the instructions provided in the publishing kits, each student will complete their piece of the book and the teacher return the kit to Studenttreasures for publishing.

19. After the published book arrives back, read the book as a class and discuss and compare the varying rights that the students are thankful for.

Ask the students questions:

How are the rights and responsibilities we are thankful for similar?

How are they different?

Do you think that your rights will change as you get older?

Do you think you should have more or less rights?

More or less responsibilities as a citizen? (This portion will help the teacher address Common Core standard Literacy-ELA.RL.2.9.)

20. As an extension, the teacher can have each student write a letter to their congressmen requesting an additional citizen responsibility, asking for a clearer definition of a specific right or asking for a limitation of an existing right.

Evaluate . . .

How will students demonstrate that they have achieved the lesson objective? This should be embedded throughout the lesson as well as at the end. This includes the publishing piece.

“Thankful for American Citizenship” 1st Draft



Name: _____

I am an American citizen and have many rights and responsibilities.

I am most thankful for the right/responsibility to

because

Without this right/responsibility, I would not be able to

To me, being an American citizen means that

"Thankful for American Citizenship" 2nd Draft



Name: _____

I am an American citizen and have many rights and responsibilities.

I am most thankful for the right/responsibility to

because

Without this right/responsibility, I would not be able to

To me, being an American citizen means that

Draw two pictures on the back, one that shows the right you are most thankful for and one that shows the country without this right.