

Strategies and Resources for Teaching Civics Skills

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Chapter 1. Major Approaches to Teach Civics Skills

1) Field Trips

Depending on school location and the demographics, classes will be able to take field trips that require long distance driving. These field trips will allow students to see patriotism, important civic documents, and monuments.

2) Community Field Trips

Voting Locations: Students could go to their designated voting location during election time to see how to vote.

Police Station: Students could go talk to an officer about civic duties.

3) Guest Speakers

Guest speakers such as legal immigrants, police officers, and the mayor can come to speak with students about what it means to be a citizen and what duties are expected of them.

4) Research projects

Students can complete a research project about genealogy. Students will have to use research materials such as book, the internet, and interviewing family members to complete a family tree for a few generations.

5) Technology Project

Students can create a videotape stating their promise to be a good citizen, what they will do to be a good citizen, and why it is important. The teacher can then help the students put everything together to create one “citizen” video as a class.



Chapter 2: Strategies to Integrate Technology in Instruction and Class Activities

There are many resources for teachers to integrate technology in the classroom, especially when teaching civics. A lesson on the Pledge of Allegiance and Patriotism is useful to provide examples of technology integration throughout a civics lesson.

Using **videos** is a great way to integrate technology while teaching civics. Teachers can use videos to introduce a topic. For example, the class might watch this video to introduce the Pledge of Allegiance to a class that is learning it for the first time:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXYUnqOEFJI&feature=related>.

Another effective strategy for integrating technology in civics instruction is using **music players** to help students practice and review concepts. Using this kind of technology, such as a CD player or mp3 player is useful for teaching songs. For example, in a lesson about The Pledge of Allegiance and Patriotism, the teacher could use a CD player to play *The Star Spangled Banner*. Since it is our national anthem, it is important for students to learn, and using a recording of the song is a great way for students to be exposed to it and eventually be able to sing it on their own.



A final strategy for integrating teachers may not think of is the classroom. Using digital cameras is a great way



particular device. For example, in a lesson on The Pledge of Allegiance and Patriotism, students could use microphones or video cameras to record each other singing *The Star Spangled Banner*. Also, the students could use digital cameras to take pictures of each other representing themselves individually as a person. Allowing students to get practice using this kind of technology is a great idea! These tools for sharing information are used around the world, and it is very important that students are knowledgeable and able to use these tools in order to be equipped with the skills necessary to be successful.

technology in teaching civics that incorporating recording devices in microphones, video cameras, or for students to learn how to use a

Chapter 3. Strategies to Embed Civics Skills in Daily or Weekly Routines

1) “Civics Word of the Day”

Students will be able to have civics incorporated in their daily schedule by the teaching planning a “Civics word of the day.” The teacher will post a new vocabulary word related to civics daily on an easel. During morning meeting, the teacher will introduce the word. Students will give their thoughts about the word and what it means to them throughout the day by writing below the word. At the end of the day, the group could come together again and discuss the word and what the students wrote about it.

2) “Good Citizen of the Week”

To include civics on a weekly basis, students will be involved in a “Good Citizen of the Week.” Students would be able to nominate each other as the “Good Citizen of the Week.”

Students will place ballots into a hopper Monday morning. Along with a student’s a legitimate reason must be given as to why they are nominating a certain student to be a good citizen.



Discussion about the newly elected good citizen will happen at the beginning of each week. Why the student was elected and what qualities are found in them are two things that can be discussed.

3) “Newspaper, READ ALL ABOUT IT!”

Civics can be included into a classroom by having students create a newspaper. Because this takes much time and



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thought, teachers can have students create one paper a month. Every student can have their own section of the paper and discuss their opinions, values and beliefs about current issues. The teacher can pick the topic that is discussed or students can have free choice. When all the students are finished writing their section, the teacher will compile all students writing, make corrections, and publish the paper. Students can give a newspaper to other classes, other staff member, and take it home for their household to read. This is a fun way for students to practice writing and persuasion and well as have civics in their classroom.

Chapter 4. Projects

Writing to Government Representatives Project



As citizens of the United States, it is our civic duty to know what issues affect us individually and collectively and then act on those issues. In this project, students would help compile a list of political issues that affect them personally or the school as a whole. Students would then be required to research the issue that they choose and write a brief summary of what they found. Then, students would compose a letter to a representative about that issue. This would give students a chance to think critically about events or issues in the world that affect them, as well as allow them to voice their opinion and practice formal letter writing. The project would be graded by the following checklist.

Checklist:

(5 points each)

Student contributed to class discussion and helped to compile list of issues ____.

Student researched issue and wrote complete and correct summary ____.

Student properly wrote letter to representative addressing the issue chosen ____.

Personal Flag and Pledge Project

In a lesson on *The Pledge of Allegiance* and the American Flag, students would create their own flag and pledge to represent what is important to them as individuals. After participating in an in class discussion about both the pledge and the flag, students would be required to find materials that represent them as



a person (e.g., their culture, traditions, religion, hobbies, family) and bring them to class. Students would create a flag that represents them as well as write a pledge that explains what is important to them as an individual. The project would be graded using the guidelines of this checklist.

Checklist:

(15 Points)

Student participated in in-class discussion on pledge and flag (3 points) _____.

Student brought in (or chose) materials to create flag in class (2 points) _____.

Student created flag that correctly described them as a person (5 points) _____.

Student created pledge that explains what is important to them (5 points) _____.

Chapter 5. Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson Topic: Patriotism

Subject Area: Civics

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Time Frame: 2 (20 minute lessons)

PA Standards:

5.1.D. Describe the purpose of the United States Flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem.

NCSS Standards:

- Civic Ideals and Practices
- Power, Authority and Governance

Rationale:

The study of individual development and identity will help students to describe factors important to the development of personal identity. They will explore the influence of peoples, places, and environments on personal development. Students will hone personal skills such as demonstrating self-direction when working towards and accomplishing personal goals, and making an effort to understand others and their beliefs, feelings, and convictions.

In the early grades, young learners develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities. Central to this development are the exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways.



Learning Objectives:

After this unit students will understand the pledge of allegiance, what it represents, and what it means to them personally as citizens. Students will create a flag and pledge representing their lives individually.

Day 1:

Materials:

- Pledge of Allegiance book
- CD player to play national anthem

Instruction Activity:

A. Traditional Procedures and Activities

- Go outside (if weather permits) to read the book Pledge of Allegiance as a class
- Then say the pledge all together
- <http://blog.richmond.edu/openwidelookinside/archives/391>
- Have a class discussion about the flag, what it represents, and important terms
- Students will bring in objects that are symbols representing their lives, families, or traditions to create a flag the next day

B. Technology Integration

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- Students will listen to national anthem and star spangle banner from cd player.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed informally through the discussion about the book Pledge of Allegiance.

Day 2:

Materials:

- Pledge of Allegiance book
- Materials to make flags (art boxes)
- Paper
- Pencil

Instruction Activity:

A. Traditional Procedures and Activities

- Students will then design their own flag and write a paragraph about what it represents
- Idea from website

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/stars-and-stripes-forever-flag-facts-flagday#sect-extending>

“Have students design a flag to represent themselves and their own identity. Ask students to name words they would use to describe themselves, and then ask them to name objects that might represent these qualities. Student flags could include photos or drawings of themselves, family members, friends or pets; items signifying favorite sports or activities; favorite colors, etc. Display students' flags for the class to see and ask each student to explain the

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symbols that are represented on his/her flag.”

- Students will then create a pledge to go along with their flag

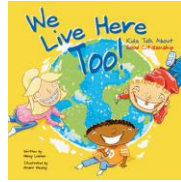
B. Technology Integration

- students will take pictures with a digital camera of each other with their flags, print the pictures, and hang them around the room to represent their individuality

Assessment:

Students will be assessed based on the objects they brought in, completion of their flag, and completion of their pledge.

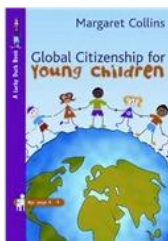
Chapter 6. Books and Materials



We Live Here Too: Kids Talk About Good Citizenship by Nancy Loewen

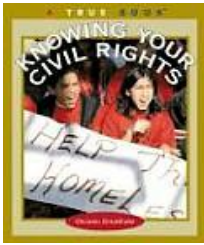


Vote for Me: All About Civics (Beastieville) by Kirsten Hall

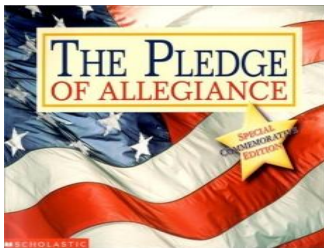


Global Citizenship for Young Children by Margaret Collins

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Becoming a Citizen (True Books: Civics) by Sarah De Capua



Pledge of Allegiance by Scholastic

Chapter 7. Free Online Resources

Five Websites

1. <http://www.icivics.org/>
2. <http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/index.html>
3. <http://new.civiced.org/resources/multimedia/60-second-civics>
4. <http://www.elcivics.com/>
5. <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/citizenship/index.html>

Five Worksheets

1. http://members.tripod.com/~tutor_me/companion/civic.html
2. <http://www.tlsbooks.com/billofrightswordsearch.pdf>
3. <http://www.getworksheets.com/samples/worksheets/social/immigration.html>
4. http://www.abcteach.com/free/u/unscramble_elections.pdf
5. <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/election08/pdfs/CounttheVotes.pdf>

Five Games

1. <http://www.icivics.org/games/activate>
2. <http://www.icivics.org/games/cast-your-vote>
3. <http://www.icivics.org/games/immigration-nation>
4. <http://www.icivics.org/games/responsibility-launcher>
5. <http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/whoswho/ww1.html>

Five Videos

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1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_dIvtxvSsY&playnext=1&list=PL97B17EFCF2E29D85
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXyUnqOEFJI&feature=related>
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wakJdXzu3Y>
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux1wYP0HNdc>
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OyU4O80i4>

Five Sets of Online Quiz

1. <http://www.history.com/interactives/citizenship-quiz>
2. <http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/gamespace.html>
3. http://members.tripod.com/~tutor_me/companion/qcivic.html
4. <http://www.texaslre.org/BOR/billofrights.html>

-there is no final score but students need to keep track of what questions they initially answer correctly

5. <http://jimmydoane.com/quiz.htm>