



A Lesson on City Government by Tina Hoy

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours 30 minutes

Lesson Keywords: city, Chicago, vote, reading, vocabulary, critical thinking,

Lesson Description: This is a reading comprehension lesson that will broaden vocabulary and increase critical thinking skills. This lesson may be followed up with an activity in which students collaboratively create a city of their own.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.6: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4c: Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

City Government

by

Content: The city of Chicago has many parts. There are neighborhoods. Each one is different. In each neighborhood, citizens want to have a good place to live. Good neighbors help each other. They keep their block clean. They call the police if there is a problem.

Each neighborhood is a part of a ward. The city is divided into wards. There are 50 wards. Each ward has an alderman. That is someone voters choose. The alderman meets with people from the ward. The alderman's job is to help them.

A person may tell the alderman about a problem. For example, the person may talk about litter. If the streets are dirty, people can try to keep them clean. But it is easier to do this if people throw their trash away themselves.

Sometimes there is a problem with gangs. People complain to the alderman about it. They are afraid of the gangs. They want to stop the trouble. The alderman can work with the police to help. Sometimes the gang members just need help. They are afraid, too. They are afraid of the other gangs.

Aldermen try to improve things in their community. They may get a new library. They may get a new park. To get those, they have to ask the city government. They call the transportation department if there is a problem with buses. They call the street department if there is a problem with streets.

The aldermen meet together twice each month. The Mayor is in charge of the meeting. They talk about problems. They make plans. They vote on changes. Some of those changes will be laws. Then everyone in every ward will have to follow them.

Citizens choose the alderman. They elect this person. They choose the mayor, too. Some people do not vote. They think it is not important. But it is important. It is how to get things done.

Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: citizens **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The citizens of a Chicago neighborhood want to have a good place to live. What does the word "citizens" mean?

- A:** A room in a house or an apartment.
- B:** People who live in a town.
- C:** Something that causes damage.
- D:** A person who writes a story or a book.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "citizens" correctly?

- A:** The citizens of New York City came together for the Macy's Thansksiving Day Parade.
- B:** I wasn't feeling well, so I went to the citizen's office to see if I needed medicine.
- C:** The mayor elects the citizens.
- D:** It was cold outside, so i decided to put on my citizens.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: improve **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: Aldermen try to improve things in their community by getting a new library or a new park. What does the word "improve" mean?

- A:** To put an end to.
- B:** To make easier to understand.
- C:** To ruin something.
- D:** To make things better.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "improve" correctly?

- A:** The extra time I spent studying helped me to improve my Math grade.
- B:** I had to improve my mom at school today.
- C:** The criminal set fire to the building to improve the evidence.
- D:** My math score will improve if I never do homework again.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: alderman **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The city is divided into wards, and each ward has an alderman. The alderman is chosen by the people, and the alderman's job is to help them. What is an "alderman"?

- A:** A person who practices science, or uses scientific methods.
- B:** A member of a town or city government.
- C:** A person who steals.
- D:** Something that gives off heat.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "alderman" correctly?

- A:** Mrs. Smith went to the alderman's office to have a tooth pulled.
- B:** We went to our city alderman to inquire about a new skate park.
- C:** A tornado was coming, so Pete grabbed his alderman and headed for the door.
- D:** The alderman will be performing at the Superbowl halftime show tomorrow.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: vote **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The aldermen meet with the mayor to vote on changes. "Some of those changes will be laws." What does the word vote mean?

- A:** To work out by using arithmetic or math.
- B:** To persuade or urge in a gentle way.
- C:** To show or express your choice about something.
- D:** Having the shape of a circle.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "vote" correctly.

- A:** I want a new mayor, therefore I must vote at the next election.
- B:** Let's vote the car for a drive.
- C:** My sister left her vote at home today.
- D:** Boy, do I have a vote for you!

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - How can neighbors help?

The author writes, Good neighbors help eachother.? List three ways neighbors can help eachother.

2 - What do you think?

What do you think the city would be like if the people did not have an alderman to help them?

3 - What is the difference?

What is the difference between an alderman and the mayor? Compare and contrast by providing at least two ways they are alike, and two ways they are different.

4 - What are the plans that the aldermen and the mayor make?

The author writes, The aldermen and the mayor meet together twice each month.? They talk about problems.? They make plans.? What kinds of plans do you think they make?? List 3 examples, please.

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post here an essay on specific things you would improve in your school, and how you would go about making those improvements.? Think of yourself as the alderman of your school, like the alderman of the community from the text.? Include at least 2 paragraphs:.? the first that lists at least 2 improvements, and in the second paragraph, describe how you would go about making those improvements.? Think about the resources you could use, whether people or things (the alderman doesn't do it all alone, remember).

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