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A Lesson on My New President by Taylor Singleton

Grade Level: Grade 8

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Barack Obama, Election, Volunteering, President, Executive Branch, Legislative Branch,

Lesson Description: You will read the following passages and answer the questions to the best of your ability.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3d: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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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.

My New President

by

Content: I never liked learning U.S. history because I thought it was boring--lots of facts, lots of dates, lots of names, lots of maps. I liked the pictures, but the rest of it was uninteresting, I did not comprehend the reason to read about the past. I admit I was fairly uninformed about government.

We had to take a Constitution test, which requires knowledge about the structure of American government, and I failed it. I didn't know the responsibilities of the branches of government. I mixed up the executive branch and the legislative branch, the executive branch is the part that makes decisions and at the state level it's the governor who is responsible, at the national level it's the President. I figured out a way to recall what the judicial branch did because the root word has judge in it, it's about the courts. It took me three times to pass that exam.

Then this year I paid attention because I was involved in the election. I was proud that an individual who was like me was campaigning for the Presidency. I didn't expect that he would be elected, though, because I couldn't imagine that I could be President. There never was an African-American President in the more than 200 centuries of American history. I knew that much history. It was unprecedented.

My mother said, Don't be too sure that it is impossible, it could happen. We once elected an African-American mayor of Chicago.

I thought about that, but I was not optimistic, I didn't expect Barack Obama would win, he had only recently gained national recognition when elected as a Senator. I did hope that he would overcome the obstacles and reach that office, the highest in the land. Suddenly the Constitution was more important to me.

My mother said, Nothing happens if you do nothing. Why don't you help with the election? I said, How can I help? I am only 13.

You can help get people registered to vote. You can help his campaign office. Go and ask.

So I did. I went to downtown Chicago that Saturday. The only other time I had been there was to go to museums on a field trip or to Niketown when we shopped for new shoes. This time I went to a building with many offices, and on the first floor there was the most exciting place I have been, even more exciting than Niketown. It was the campaign headquarters. There were many people working at desks, most of them were talking on the phone or inputting information into computers. I said, Can I help? I want to volunteer.

A young man at the front desk said, Definitely, we need volunteers, can you start immediately? I said, certainly, and right away I had an assignment, I would assist with the preparation of a mailing. I put letters into envelopes, and I must have stuffed at least one thousand envelopes by the end of that first volunteer day.

I traveled downtown every Saturday after that, and my tasks varied from contacting voters by phone to remind them to vote to using the Internet to log emails and create a database. The database I set up was a list of eligible voters and their responses to the phone calls.

I was so engaged in the election that instead of movies I watched the news and I actually read the newspaper to learn about the election. I read what Barack Obama said, and I made a speech about him to my class. My mother and I attended a speech he gave in Chicago, it was so inspiring. I figured out that the Executive Branch does a lot, they are in charge of the army and much more, the election of a President is the most important choice any citizen can make.

I gained hope as I talked with people on the phone and watched the news reports. I kept saying, Yes we can to myself. And we did. Now the head of the Executive Branch is my President. I am part of U.S. history.

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: Legislative **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in the story says \"I mixed up the executive branch and the legislative branch, the executive branch...\" What does the word \"legislative\" mean in this sentence?

- A: Having the power to make laws
- B: Listening to the citizens
- C: Being able to uphold the law
- D: Making decisions at state and national levels

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

- A: In London, the Queen has the right to say what happens at state and national levels; she has legislative power.
- B: The judge carries out the legislative branch.
- C: The city of St. Petersburg created new legislative towards the locking of children in hot cars as illegal.
- D: My mother said I couldn't have a cookie so I asked my father with legislative and he said yes.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Unprecedented **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: What does the word \"unprecedented\" mean?

- A: Something that has been done routinely.
- B: Something that has never been done before.
- C: Something that has been done many times.
- D: Something that everyone has done at one time.

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

- A: By her fourth child, my mother had reached an unprecedented goal by having a child.
- B: All of the children unprecedentedly got an A in class!
- C: Being the first Black president of the United States of America is an unprecedented accomplishment.
- D: Eating fish at the same restaurant for 30 years every Saturday is an unprecedented habit.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Varied **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the passage, the author says \"...my tasks \"varied\" from contacting voters by phone to remind them to vote to using the Internet to log emails and create a database.\" What does the word \"varied\" mean in this sentence?

- A: Having more than one
- B: Being the same
- C: Having less
- D: Being different

Question: Which one of these words uses the word \"varied\" correctly?

- A: I varied my rodent collection by buying more hamsters instead of buying hamsters and guinea pigs.
- B: Zebra's have varied stripes on their bodies which is why all zebras look the same.
- C: My younger sister varied the amount of toys she has by giving some away to charity.
- D: Peanut Butter can be varied, you can have chunky, smooth, or creamy.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Inputting **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the story, the author says \"There were many people working at desks, most of them were talking on the phone or \"inputting\" information into computers.\" What does the word \"input\" mean?

- A: To take something out on purpose
- B: To contribute something
- C: To leave something out on accident
- D: To ask for something

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

- A: My uncle inputted his opinion into the family discussion so that his voice could be heard.
- B: The baker inputted the eggs out of the brownies because I am allergic to eggs.
- C: Stephanie inputted her scissors at her home, so she had to borrow mine.
- D: I inputted my hand in class to see if I can use the restroom.

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 - Why would the teenager say "How can I help?..."

Why would the teenager say How can I help? I am only 13? When they asked their Mother what could they do to help? Explain why the age of student would be important in the helping of the election. What could the student be feeling??

2 - How would the student's previous experiences....

How would the student's previous experiences within the subject of history and government play a role in their attitude towards helping out with the election??

3 - What feelings would the student have...

What feelings would the student have towards volunteering in the future? Explain your answer.?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post here 500 words essay on a time or situation where you believed you were too young to help a big cause. Why were you so eager to help? What was your motivation to help? Do you believe that age can hinder or help a person when volunteering??Make sure to provide specific examples.

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