



## A Lesson on My New President by Julia Helfrich

**Grade Level:** Grade 8

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** Presidential Election, Critical thinking, Vocabulary

**Lesson Description:** This lesson is used to help students identify new vocabulary words and their meanings, through the use of context clues presented in the passage. This lesson also presents critical thinking questions for students to complete.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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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.

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## 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:** comprehend **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in the story says "I liked the pictures, but the rest of it was uninteresting, I did not comprehend the reason to read about the past." What does the word "comprehend" mean in the sentence?

- A: Understand
- B: Imagine
- C: Believe
- D: Deny

**Question:** Which sentence below uses the word " comprehend" correctly?

- A: Luke was comprehending his birthday in a few days.
  - B: Susan was comprehending the bus today.
  - C: Aly was struggling to comprehend the math lesson.
  - D: Lucy was comprehending at Alex to
- =====

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

**Question:** "There never was an African-American President in the more than 2 centuries of American history?I knew that much history. It was unprecedented." What does the word " unprecedented" mean in this passage?

- A: Often
- B: Never done
- C: Normal
- D: Regularly done

**Question:** Which sentence below correctly uses the word "unprecedented" ?

- A: A Freshman joining the Varsity team at our high school unprecedented before Tyler.
  - B: The sunny weather outside was unprecedented.
  - C: It is unprecedented for students to attend college after high school.
  - D: It is unprecedented for students to attend high school after middle school.
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**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** Campaigning **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** I was proud that an individual who was like me was campaigning for the Presidency." What does the word "Campaigning" mean in this sentence?

- A: Working toward a particular goal
- B: Watching
- C: Providing advice
- D: Listening

**Question:** Which sentences uses the word "campaigning" correctly?

- A: The students were campaigning the movie in class.
  - B: Campaigning for a candidate in an election is a way to show support.
  - C: The teacher began campaigning the lesson in class to the students.
  - D: The movie is Campaigning in the theater.
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**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Election **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** the election of a President is the most important choice any citizen can make. What does the word "election" mean in this passage?

- A: The process of choosing someone for office.
- B: The process of moving.
- C: Graduating college.
- D: The action of delivering bad news.

**Question:** Which one of the following choices uses the word " election" correctly?

- A: The movie election is in September.
  - B: Election is taught in class today.
  - C: The two candidates both fought to win the election.
  - D: Jane was feeling election in school today.
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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 - According to the this passage what is the purpose of the Executive Branch?

The Executive Branch holds the power to make decisions?in our government, this includes military decisions.

2 - What can students do to become more involved in elections?

Through volunterring students are able to participate in the election process. Students are able to provide support for candidates by?volunteering at campaign offices. Volunteering can include creating mailing lists and making phone calls to potential voters.

3 - How does the author of this passage feel about the outcome of the election?

The author of this passage is happy about the election of President Barack Obama.She is happy that the candidate she believes in won and she supported him through volunteering.?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** You are to write and post here 500 words essay on .... Make sure to provide specific examples.

by utilizing technology, Provide two examples of other ways you believe the author could have provided support for President Barack Obama during the election??

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