

This packet contains

# Free 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plans

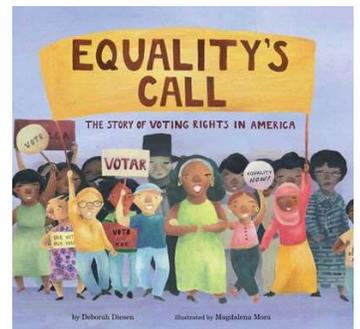
on the topics of

- **Class Constitution** • **Rule-Maker Interview** •
- **Decision-Making** • **Election Day** • **MLK Jr. Day** •

This packet contains five free 1<sup>st</sup> Grade lesson plans to support active student learning about fairness, democracy, and voting.

Created by early childhood educator Karen Keesling, the lesson plans use *Equality's Call* and other picture books to help students explore important civics concepts as well as SEL competencies.

The lesson plans can be used individually or as a series. The five plans center around the themes of decision-making and leadership.



Topics covered are:

1. Class Constitution
2. Rule-Maker Interview
3. Decision-Making
4. Election Day
5. MLK Jr. Day

Each plan includes virtual learning adaptations.

You may make modifications to the lesson plans to tailor the plans to your students' needs. If you would prefer a Word document (rather than this PDF), please just email to request that.

We welcome your feedback on these lesson plans. We'd love to hear about your students' responses to the activities, as well as your comments and suggestions. Please send your feedback and input to [deborah@deborahdiesen.com](mailto:deborah@deborahdiesen.com)

**Thank you!**

# 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 1: Class Constitution

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1.a  
Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to understand why we need rules and create a class constitution.
4. Assessment (s)  
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.). Teacher will then confer with or offer support to 1-2 students and take anecdotal notes with regards to the lesson objective and students' individual goals.
5. Description of Learning Activities:  
Introductory Activity (Connection)  
Teacher will explain that today is a No Rules Day (so no raising hands, talk at the same time etc.) and give a question as a prompt to get students talking e.g. do we need rules in school? Why/why not?

## Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will ask students how it felt to have no rules and what they think the purpose of them is. Teacher will then explain that the class will create their own system of rules that they will call the Class Constitution. Teacher should suggest some silly rules (e.g. you must sing whenever you want to speak, you start doing push-ups instead of raising your hand etc.) and see if class thinks they should be included. Teacher should then suggest a rule that is useful (e.g. raising your hand to speak) and ask what children think about it. Teacher can then explain that we can't just have any rules, we need rules to be fair and that help us work.

## Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

In pairs, students will write/draw on big sticky notes or sentence strips their own rules for the class constitution. (Teacher should check in with each group to make sure writing/pictures are understandable).

### Share

Pairs will split up into A's and B's. A's will do a gallery walk, looking at the rules their classmates wrote and put a colored regular size sticky note on ones they think should be in their class constitution. B's will be there to explain the rule if the A's don't understand. Then B's will go and do gallery walk while A's explain the rules they wrote. If time allows, teacher will then call class together and have them vote on all the rules with sticky notes on them. If class agrees, Class Constitution should hang up in the classroom all year round (subjected to changes as needed) and signed by each student. This can be carried over to day two if there is not enough time for this segment.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

For online learning, begin the lesson the same way, by saying that teacher will unmute all the microphones and ask students a question to get them talking. Teacher can then take control of microphones again and ask what rules should we have for online learning? Is it fair that the teacher has the control all the time? What if teacher decides to play a game on the computer in the middle of the lesson? Why do we need fair rules? Teacher can then ask each child to independently come up with two rules that they think should be in the class constitution. After students have had thinking/writing time, each student will share their ideas and class can then vote using the raise hand emoji if there are any rules that they think should be in the constitution. Once a list of rules has been agreed upon class will vote and teacher will then put into a shared document online that students can edit in real time. All students will sign the document.

### Teacher Note

Class constitutions are a great way to get buy-in from the students but should be revisited frequently throughout the year (not just created once and forgotten about). Constitutions are a great way to check in with your students and get them thinking about how they have a role to play in creating the classroom environment they want to learn in.

The lessons for 1<sup>st</sup> grade focus on systems of decision making. If you'd like to stretch this lesson out into multiple lessons you can hold off on creating the Class Constitution and have the class decide how they will decide what makes it into the constitution (consensus, majority rules, arbitrary ruler decides, have a class president/representative who will discuss with the teacher and decide, try out one rule each day and vote at the end of the day to keep it or not etc.). You could even take it further and have judge as a class job. The judge that week/month would be in charge of interpreting the rules of the class constitution as conflicts come up.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 2: Rule-Maker Interview

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8  
With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.3  
Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
Students will interview a rule-maker in their lives and learn other perspectives on how to make rules.
4. Assessment (s)  
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.).
5. Description of Learning Activities:  
Introductory Activity (Connection)  
Teacher will read *Equality's Call* and point the emotions expressed through the illustrations. Teacher will ask students what they think "a right isn't right 'til it's granted to all" means? Teacher will ask students to think about some of their rights in school-do they think they should be granted to all? Class should brainstorm a list of people who get to make decisions in the school and questions they might ask those people (e.g. the principal-Why does 5<sup>th</sup> grade get to walk by themselves in the hallway but we don't?).

## Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will then explain that they will get the chance to ask/interview the adults (teacher might want to establish ahead of time who can actually come in for interview, so may ask students to pick between two people or limit them to one) who have made the rules so far questions about how they made them. Teacher will (either interview assistant or ask a student to volunteer) and give a model of interviewing and asking more questions (Principal X, thank you. I wanted to ask when you decided that only 5<sup>th</sup> grade could walk to classes them by themselves, how did you decide that? So you're saying because they have more experience they can

have more responsibility, is that right? And model taking notes on chart paper or have student volunteer to take notes as you speak).

### Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Students will individually make up a list of questions they want to ask the Principal/teacher or other person in the school who makes decisions for them in their lives. Students will then practice asking their questions to their partners.

### Share

Students who picked the same people to interview (e.g. the principal) will interview their person in a small group, creating a list of questions and notes. Students will decide in their groups how to present to the rest of the class what they learned from their interviews.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher can have students interview parents or teacher if it is too hard to schedule online learning time with a principal or other head of school.

### Teacher Note

It will take some planning to plan with the principal ahead of time to be ready for a small group interview.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 3: Decision-Making

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.7  
Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).  
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.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to experience making decisions for large groups of people and the difficulties that go with it.
4. Assessment (s)  
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g., guided practice, oral responding, independent/group project work).
5. Description of Learning Activities:  
Introductory Activity (Connection)  
Teacher will explain that today is Flip-Flop Day (or next few days depending on time constraints). Teacher will explain that throughout the rest of the day (or during select parts of the day that students already are familiar with the routine of it such as morning meeting, snack, end of day wrap up etc.) each student (or pairs of students) will get a chance to be the teacher/decision maker for 10 minutes. That student is responsible for making the decisions about what the class will do and how they will do it. The teacher will be one of the students. (If the time constraints of this are too challenging, teacher can also try to coordinate with specialty teachers on Flip-Flop Day to see if they will be willing to do it as well).

## Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will write list on board of each of the students' names for the order that they will get to be teacher and will be responsible setting timer so each student knows when their time is up and the next student is to begin. Teacher will let them know ahead of time that their homework assignment is to present in any way they choose (video, written, poem, discussion etc.) what it felt like and was (both challenges and achievements) of being teacher and why.

### Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Teacher will let each student fully take control of the class and not help with classroom management or anything else until it is time for teacher to go back to teaching.

Students who have already gone through the experience of being decision maker will draw a picture of their experience/feelings (or teacher can make up a reflection sheet if they want a formative assessment tool) and start thinking of how they will choose to present their findings. If teacher has time, teacher should confer with students on their experience.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

For online learning, teacher can let students have control of the screen and nominate that child to be host, and then switch. Due to the constraints of online learning, teacher may opt to have student teach for shorter time e.g. five minutes. Teacher may want to record students being in charge and send it to them to help them reflect on the experience.

### Teacher Note

This day will be a challenge and for sure, none of the necessary curriculum will be fully taught so it may be best to try this on a half day or during days in between curriculum units. If possible, also free up time for students to share how they chose to present their reflections.

Other options for Flip-Flop Day:

- If your school does an assembly, where classes or grades take turns leading parts of it, you can let your students be in charge then
- Coordinate with other 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers so all students will be at the same place in the curriculum
- Dedicate every day's last period/wrap-up (or a time that works best for you) to the students being the teacher and have "decision maker" as a job that every student gets to do try it throughout the year.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 4: Election Day

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. 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.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to write an opinion about why they would/wouldn't want to be president
4. Assessment (s)  
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.)
5. Description of Learning Activities:  
Introductory Activity (Connection)  
Teacher will ask students what they know about Election Day and refer students to some of the books from the resources list (*Equality's Call, If I Had Your Vote, The Next President* etc.). Teacher will explain how every four years (and this year) we will be electing a new president.

## Teaching Point and Modeling

If teacher has done any of the prior lesson plans, now is a good time to refer back to them. Teacher will ask students what they think is important to be a good president/decision maker. Teacher may model first, "I think it's important for a president to be honest/care about safety/be fair/patient/good at speaking in public" etc.) and will take notes on chart paper as students brainstorm different traits. Teacher will then write as model, "I would want to be president because I'm honest. People need to trust a president. So please vote for me" or "I wouldn't want to be president because I'm not patient. I like to do things too fast. So, I would not want to be President now but maybe in the future" and highlight the opinion sentence, the supporting sentence and the closure sentence.

## Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Students will then write their own opinions about whether they would or wouldn't want to be president (teacher may have template sheet set up for students with the

following sentence starter: I would/wouldn't want to be president because\_\_\_\_\_. So \_\_\_\_\_).

### Share

Students will then read their opinion pieces to each other in small groups and each small group will give feedback to each person in the group about their opinion pieces. Teacher will go around and check in with each group.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher can lead a read-aloud of one of the books mentioned above and then model the opinion piece about whether they would want to be president or not. Instead of small group work, students can read aloud their work after they write it and students can type in comments in chat box or students can submit their written opinion pieces as homework.

### Teacher Note

Teacher can also circulate everyone's written opinion pieces but erase the names of the students and have class try to figure out who wrote each opinion piece and see if they matched it correctly.

For added engagement you can have students present in different ways instead of reading what they wrote (e.g. make a poster or come up with a slogan of why to elect them as president).

# 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 5: MLK Jr. Day

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.5.d  
Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., *look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl*) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., *large, gigantic*) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to learn about segregation during the civil rights era
4. Assessment (s)  
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.).
5. Description of Learning Activities:  
Introductory Activity (Connection)  
Teacher will explain that sometimes it is easy to make categories and sometimes it is hard

## Teaching Point and Modeling

It is suggested that ahead of time, teacher will have read *Equality's Call* and books about Martin Luther King Jr. and the segregation of the 1950s and '60s. Teacher will show photos to class from that time (e.g. protestors "looking" at Ruby Bridges as she walked to school) and explain difference between look and scowl and ask students to show the difference on their faces. Teacher will then assign students in small groups a different photos (or photocopies of illustrations from books) from the civil rights era and students will make a list of different words to describe the action/emotion/intensity and do live sculptures (tableaux to life) or act out the words of intensity that they chose to describe the photo.

## Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Students will first generate a small list of words of intensity to describe the action or feeling in the photo. Then they will practice how they will do their live sculpture or acting out of the scene in the photo.

## Share

Each small group will present to the entire class and see if the class can come up with the words they chose to portray.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher will send out photos ahead of time to students and students will work individually instead of in group to portray the words they came up with for the photo.

### Teacher Note

If possible, take photos of students as they act out their words and then keep a list or a class book in the classroom with the word and the photo of them acting it out.

Photos can be easily obtained from a simple google search, or this website:

<https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Historical-photos-show-segregated-life-in-Houston-11150648.php>