

This packet contains

# Free 5th Grade Lesson Plans

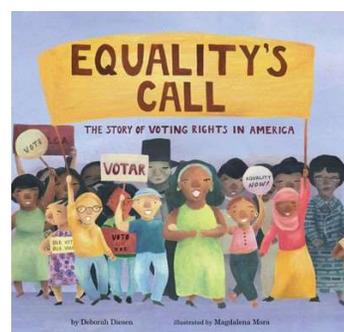
on the topics of

- Importance of Elections • Planning an Election •
- Election Day Media Coverage • MLK Jr. Day •

This packet contains four free 5th 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 four plans in this packet center around the theme of elections.



Topics covered are:

1. The importance of elections
2. Planning for an election
3. Election Day media coverage
4. 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.

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!**

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 1: The Importance of Elections

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2](#)  
Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7](#)  
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.8](#)  
Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work and provide a list of sources.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
Students will learn about why voting and elections are important and how they can be engaged citizens even if they can't vote
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 ask students what they know about voting rights and elections. Teacher should ask why it is important to be involved in elections and why? Is it important for students to be involved if they can't vote until they're 18?

## Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will explain that students will be running a mock-election in the school. To do so they will need to educate other students about the election and why it's important to vote.

Teacher will make a KWL (see note for template) and start filling in what students know based off of what they said they know in the introductory activity. Teacher will then start moving on to the Wonder section and may model "I wonder what I

*can* do in an election if I can't vote?" or "Who was the oldest/youngest president?" "How does voting work?" Teacher should elicit from class other questions they may have about voting and elections. Teacher should save the chart so class can refer to it later. Teacher should ask students how they can find out answers to their questions (e.g. library books, classroom books, online research, watch movies/tv shows/listen to podcasts/TED talks etc.) Teacher should then divide up students into small groups and have each group work at a different station (computer research, classroom book research, articles or whatever other materials teacher may have already prepared to aid students). Teacher should prepare students to take notes on sticky notes as they research.

### Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Students will take turns going to each of the different stations to conduct research on different aspects of the KWL chart of their choosing. Students will take notes. After all students have had a chance to cycle through different stations, they will put their sticky notes up on the L section of the KWL chart.

### Share

Teacher will ask students to share something that they were surprised to find out or learned something that led them to have more questions. Teacher will ask students if after having done the research, they feel confident to lead an election in the school or if there's more they still want to learn.

Teacher will explain to students that their homework assignment is to find a way to get involved and educate themselves about the upcoming elections (this is for non-presidential election years as well). Teacher may want to suggest options like watching debates, reading the newspaper/online articles, registering others to vote, volunteering for a campaign e.g. cold calling, mailing/handing out pamphlets etc. This assignment will be ongoing assignment. Teacher should ask students to find a creative way to share what they've learned from their homework. Teacher should later on find a way to have students share their homework learnings with each other.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher should follow same lesson plan as above and can create KWL chart as either a shared document or write it on chart paper as students give their ideas. Instead of research stations and class books, teacher may want to prepare a list of online resources (see notes) ahead of time for students to research online. Students should then use the shared document to type in what they learned or can use Flipgrid to record themselves explaining what they've learned. Homework should be assigned same as above.

### Teacher Note

This lesson plan may be divided among several days. If easier teacher may choose to use computer lab time to have whole class do online research. For added engagement, teacher may want to ask parents to volunteer to come in so students can interview them about elections and voting.

KWL template

<https://www.polk.k12.ga.us/userfiles/788/Classes/30568/kwl-template-copy1.jpg>

For Virtual learning, here are some online resources to get started:

Kids Explain Voting on Election Day

<https://youtu.be/HmK5jO7yigk>

Voting Fun Facts for Students

<https://youtu.be/RM1TQCsWjaQ>

Does Your Vote Count? The Electoral College Explained

<https://youtu.be/W9H3gvnN468>

Voting explained to kids

[https://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_government\\_voting.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_government_voting.php)

Election Central (2020 Presidential debates, candidates etc.)

<https://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com/>

Electoral College Votes by State

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Electoral-College-Votes-by-State-1787124>

Get out the Vote

<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/nonprofitvotescount/gotv-toolkit/>

Article:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/voting-united-states/>

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 2: Planning for an Election

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade-Literacy

2. Common Core Standards  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4](#)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.5](#)

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

(Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 5 [here](#).)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.6](#)

With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to plan out a mock election for the entire school

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)

These are a series of lessons that may take place over many days in the classroom. Teacher will explain that leading up to election day, students will need to get the entire school involved in a mock election. In presidential years, teacher may want to run a storypath mock election (see note). In non-presidential years, teacher may want to have students run mock election around two candidates running for a local position (e.g. state assembly) or have students create their own fictitious candidates for student body president (if teacher thinks students are mature enough to handle it, teacher could have students not do a mock election, but an actual whole school election for student body president).

Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will bring out KWL chart from LP1 and point out key learnings students have filled in. Teacher will then explain that one big problem with elections (especially local elections, in non-presidential years) is low voter turnout. Another big problem is lack of knowledge about the issues. Teacher will ask students to brainstorm ideas of how to get every grade (PK-4<sup>th</sup>) to vote and learn about the candidates. Teacher may model thinking process “for PK they can’t read, so how can they vote? What can we do? Maybe we could put pictures on the ballots of the candidates. But how will they know who the candidates are? Maybe we could go into the class and introduce them. Where will they vote? Maybe we can set up voting in the cafeteria/give their teacher a ballot box/have them vote in our classroom etc.” What other things could we do? Teacher will take notes. Teacher will then break up the class into 6 groups (PK-4<sup>th</sup> Grade), each group will get one grade to brainstorm on how to solve problems of voter turnout and education about the issues.

### Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Small groups will make their own lists of work that needs to be done for each grade to educate them on the issues and increase voter turnout. Students will also assign roles within the group to take care of the tasks they created (e.g. Student X makes posters while Student Y will go to classrooms to discuss with students). Teachers may want to encourage students to make up websites for their mock candidates and Teacher may want to circulate to help students think about other possibilities and make sure everyone knows what their roles are.

### Share

Students will share their lists of tasks for each grade and the rest of the students in the class will give feedback. Teacher should ask students how it feels to be the ones going out to educate others. Teacher may want to probe, what will students learn from this? Why is it important if it’s not a real election? Teacher may want to elicit, that the earlier we start getting involved, the more likely we are to be involved when we’re older and are actually able to vote. Additionally, once you can teach others, you truly master something. During additional class periods, teacher should allow students plenty of time to do the tasks on their lists e.g. create and hang up posters around the school, organize class visits, create commercials etc.

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher should bring up Learning section from shared KWL document from LP1 and same as above, explain the problems with voter turnout for elections. Teacher should model how to think about getting whole school to vote, breaking it down by grade same as above. Teacher may want to encourage students to think about making websites for their mock candidates. Teacher should then offer break-out rooms or create a shared document for each grade (PK-4<sup>th</sup>) and send shared document to students within the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class to work on together, so that the whole class is divided into 6 small groups. For share section, each group can create a Flipgrid video or teacher can share the small group’s working

document with the rest of the class for comments. Teacher should still ask what students will learn, and why is it important if it's not a real election?

Teacher should allow plenty of time in subsequent lessons for students to develop the materials they want to share with the rest of the grades and possibly coordinate students creating videos to share with other grades (in lieu of in-person visits).

#### Teacher Note

These lesson plans will take a lot of coordinating amongst all educators in the school. Teacher should make sure administration is supportive of task and may want to talk to grade-level teachers individually or set-up times for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to come in.

In years of Presidential Elections, teachers may want to use storypath technique for mock elections outlined here in Scholastic:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/more-mock-elections/>

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 3: Election Day Media Coverage

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.a](#)  
Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2](#)  
Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3](#)  
Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to be investigative reporters and call the election and understand the power of the media during Election Day
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 every student in the class to write on a private ballot to vote on whether voting should be optional or mandatory. Teacher will gather the ballots. Teacher will then explain that students will have to try to figure out which position (optional voting or mandatory voting) won the election before the teacher tabulates the votes.

## Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will explain that class will break up class into two news outlets. Teacher will ask students to come up with the name of their news channel (teacher may want to model that it's usually a three letters like FOX, ABC etc.) Teacher will then tell students they will need to figure out who will be reporting (and indicate their roles by making a name tag for themselves with their role on it), and who will be researching (reporters will be interviewed by opposite news outlet while

researchers will be conducting interviews). Teacher can elicit people who the students can go to interview to find out information about the in-class election and take notes (e.g. students can try to interview each other or the teacher). Students will have 2 minutes to try to get their “sources” to talk. Students will then have to work in teams and make a video of which position they think won the election and why (teacher may want to show some reporter coverage from previous years-see note). Criteria for the report:

- 1) Must state which position won (mandatory voting or optional voting)
- 2) Must state why they can say that with confidence
- 3) Extra points if they can get a direct quotation or someone, they interviewed willing to go on the report with them

### Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Teacher will give students time to figure out who will do which roles (researchers, reporters). Students will work in their teams to find gather information on the outcome of the election, and make up their news stories. Teacher should impress that timing is quick, they will need to make constant updates. Once the roles have been decided, teacher will set timer for 2 minutes to start interviews. When timer goes off, teacher will share breaking news with the class “there are reports that a few of the ballots were illegible and will be discarded.” Teacher should remove a few ballots at random of the box. Students will then have 2 more minutes to gain information. After the timer for the next 2 minutes is up, students will have to share their findings with the reporters to share their research findings and conclusions.

### Share

The reporters for each news team will do live reports on what they think the results are in front of the rest of the class and explain what they think happened. After the reports the teacher can count out the ballots in front of the class. The teacher may also want to show what the votes that were discarded said.

Teacher should then ask class how it felt to be under pressure to create a story with very little time and facts. Teacher can ask students if they learned anything from it, and if they view the news any differently from this experience. Teacher should ask students to think about what role the news plays in elections and what impact there might be of calling an election early based on “likely” results might have. Teacher can give example of how in 2000 the news networks called the wrong winner for President twice in the same night! (see note).

### Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher will create a poll (or use Google Forms) where only teacher can see results (or can e-mail out election question if voting should be mandatory or optional to students and ask for students to email teacher back). The rest of the plan should be the same as above, but students will have to interview each other in chat (teacher may want to assign partners

ahead of time). Every student will be both researcher and reporter. Teacher will break news that a few of the votes were illegible and are therefore going to be discarded from the tally (teacher will pick at random 2 students' votes to remove from final poll results). Teacher will give students 2 more minutes (if this is too short of a time to do this activity virtually, teacher may want to extend it) to conduct research/interviews and then ask students to either film themselves or write a quick paragraph "article" about which position won the election. Students' videos and articles should be shared with each other and at the end teacher can reveal the results of the vote both with and without the discarded votes. Teacher should lead same "share" conversation as above (again, due to difficulties with online learning, teacher may want to spread out timing on this to next lesson).

### Teacher Note

Teacher should guide students who are reporters and are getting interviewed to stick only to their own experiences during the vote but can embellish on what they saw or (over)heard during the vote.

News coverage from 2016 start from 17 minutes to 19 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TTiDlK4vS8>

Here's an article about calling the election wrong in 2000 (either to be read by the class or just as background knowledge for the teacher).

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20001108/aponline183922\\_000.htm](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20001108/aponline183922_000.htm)

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan 4: MLK Jr. Day

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade-Literacy
2. Common Core Standards  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4](#)  
Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
3. Learning Objective (s)  
For students to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement of 1960s
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)  
It is anticipated that the class will have spent time prior to this day reading about Dr. MLK Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. Teacher should start the lesson by asking students if they've ever heard of the Civil Rights Movement and what they know about it. Teacher may also ask what they think about when they hear the words "Civil Rights Movement" and "Dr. MLK Jr." Teacher should write down names of any people students mention.

## Teaching Point and Modeling

If students haven't mentioned any names of important people in the movement teacher may want to prompt "have you ever heard the name Rosa Parks (or Ruby Bridges, Little Rock 9/ Ernest Green) Teacher should ask students to look at list of names on board and ask what if anything they have in common. Teacher should elicit, that many of them were students or just regular people, they weren't famous until history made them famous. Teacher should ask students: Is it important to get involved? What if it doesn't affect you directly e.g. I'm not Black so it's not my place to fight for Black Lives Matter? or, If I don't get involved then things will never change or who will support me if the tables ever turn?

## Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Teacher will break up class into small groups of 4 or 5 and give them each an envelope with a selection of “issue” cards (see notes). One student will choose an issue card and decide ahead of time if he/she/they would get involved or not but won’t tell the rest of the group the decision. The rest of the group will put down either a “yes” or a “no” card. The student who placed the issue card will then ask one or two people to explain their thinking. If the group has a majority of yes then the group needs to write down one thing they can do today to get involved. If the group decides no then that turn is over and it’s the next person’s turn to pick out an issue card. If there is a tie of yeses and nos, then the person who placed down the issue card says what they decided.

### Share

Teacher can ask groups to share what issues they decided to get involved in and which, ones they decided weren’t for them and why. Teacher should share Dr. MLK Jr.’s quotation “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” and ask students what they think he meant. Teacher should encourage students to realize that they can make big changes even though their young.

### Teacher Note

Issue cards:

- Climate change (idea that temperatures are rising and will cause more natural disasters)
- Black Lives Matter (movement to create better lives for all people by focusing on injustices done to the Black communities-such as bias leading to more arrests of and more violence used against Black men)
- Banning assault weapons (making it illegal for average citizens to own and use semi-automatic firearms aka guns that automatically load so that it can shoot quickly without having to reload every time)
- Immigrant and refugee rights
- Combatting cyberbullying (cyberbullying is when technology is used as a means of bullying other students and people)
- Homelessness
- Mental health awareness and services
- LGBTQ rights (people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transsexual or Queer)