

Literacy and the Law Project-Based Unit Plan



Unit Title: No David! Introduction to the Rule of Law

Grade Level: 4th, 5th Grade (could be adapted to appropriate standards for all grade levels)

Context for the Unit: This unit focuses on the rule of law and the impartiality of the courts, requiring students to act as a jury, using arguments in their writing and speaking. A young man who is known for getting into trouble, (picture book, No, David!) has been accused of theft. The class engages in a mock trial, character analysis, argument writing, and serves as a jury for this case.

California History Social Science Content Standards

4.5.3 Describe the similarities (e.g., written documents, **rule of law**, consent of the governed, three separate branches) and differences....among federal state, and local governments.

5.7.5 Discuss the meaning of the American creed that calls on citizens to safeguard the liberty of individual Americans within a unified nation, to respect the **rule of law**, and to preserve the Constitution.

Suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness

Dimension 2, Civic and Political Institutions.

By the end of Grade 5:

D2.Civ.1.3-5. Distinguish the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government and in different times and places.

D2.Civ.2.3-5 Explain how a democracy relies on people's responsible participation, and draw implications for how individuals should participate.

D.2 Civ.3.3-5: Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws and key U. S. constitutional provisions

California English Language Arts Content Standards

(2.0 Writing Applications)

(Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.4 Write persuasive letters or compositions:

- a. State a clear position in support of a proposal.
- b. Support a position with relevant evidence.
- c. Follow a simple organizational pattern.
- d. Address reader concerns.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

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California Visual and Performing Arts Standards

Theatre, Creative Expression

Creative Expression

Development of Theatrical Skills

- 2.1 Participate in improvisational activities to explore complex ideas and universal themes in literature and life.
- 2.2 Demonstrate the use of blocking (stage areas, levels, and actor’s position, such as full front, quarter, profile, and full back) in dramatizations.

Creation/Invention in Theatre

- 2.3 Collaborate as an actor, director, scriptwriter, or technical artist in creating formal or informal theatrical performances.

Communication and Expression Through Original Works of Art

Creative Expression:

- 2.7 Communicate values, opinions, or personal insights through an original work of art.

Enduring Understanding(s) Big Idea

Democracy Calls for Equal Justice Under the Law

Essential Questions

- Are characters predictable?
- What is justice?
- In what ways does the Rule of Law apply to impartiality of the courts?
- In what ways are arguments productive?
- Are the processes in place in democracy designed to “level” individual bias in the court system effective? Why or why not?
- Should one’s “character” influence judicial decisions? Why or why not?

Quality Criteria	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
<p>Written: Written argument supports point of view with reasons and information.</p> <p>Clear intro, statement of argument</p> <p>Logically ordered reasons supported by facts and details</p> <p>Use of words, phrases and clauses</p> <p>Provides conclusion related to argument presented.</p>	<p>Meets or exceeds all criteria using an extremely thorough, thoughtful and organized approach.</p>	<p>Meets criteria with an organized approach.</p>	<p>Meets some of the criteria.</p>	<p>Significant criteria not addressed.</p>
<p>Speaking and Listening Collaborative discussions with clear expressions of ideas</p> <p>Builds on other’s ideas, responds to others’ questions</p>	<p>Meets or exceeds all criteria; impressive</p>	<p>Meets criteria</p>	<p>Meets some of the criteria</p>	<p>Significant criteria missing</p>

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Prepared, follows roles assigned Reviews key ideas from discussion and draw conclusions, shares at a reasonable pace using logical reasoning.	use of skills to the enhancement of the group discussion			
Theatre Active participation in improvisation, exploring emotions, physical characteristics, developing character Effective use of blocking for the “set” of the courtroom. Strong collaboration in jury deliberation “in role”	Extremely active and creatively participates, very effective collaboration skills and use of space during simulations in jury room.	Meets the criteria	Meets some of the criteria	Very little criteria met.

Stage 2: End of Unit Authentic Assessment (GRASPS and Rubrics)

GRASPS	
Goal	To use facts in this case and apply them to the school law/rules effectively to determine whether David is guilty or not guilty.
Role	Jury members summoned to the Classroom Superior Court as jury members
Audience	The public, press, interested family members
Situation	David, as the defendant, has been accused of theft, a violation of the school rules. The prosecutor must prove that David took property owned by someone else with the intent to prove the owner of it permanently.
Performance	Jurors will listen to the testimony during the trial and consider the evidence presented. Following jury instructions given by the judge, they will determine the guilt or innocence of David, in writing, and orally through jury deliberations.
Standards for Success	Following jury instructions, jurors must provide arguments backed up with evidence of David’s guilt or innocence. In addition, jurors must include one counter claim and allow for argument of the same in jury deliberation.

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Facts, Knowledge, Concepts and Skills Listed Within Planned Lessons for the Unit

Lesson 1: We're all Characters: *Character development, character analysis, use of dialogue and movement, (No David!, David Goes to School, David Gets in Trouble, David Shannon)*

Lesson 2: "No David" on Trial: *Reader's theatre mock trial, applying and synthesizing the character development with analysis, creating effective characters, performing, beginning vocabulary development*

Lesson 3: The Rule of Law and Impartiality of the Courts: *Focus on the impartiality of the courts, judicial system as one of three branches (review and/or introduction to this area)*

Lesson 4: Actively Understanding Key Academic Terms: *rule of law, impartiality, burden of proof, due process, attorney, lawyer/counselor, plaintiff, defendant, prosecutor, defense, objection, sustained, overruled, witness, bailiff, judge, jury.*

Lesson 5: So you think you can Argue: *Power Point on persuasive writing, leading your class through the elements of argument writing. Examples given and lesson involves students. Students write their own argument following Common Core State Standards. (Will need to lead students through the writing process: editing, refinement, and extra assistance beyond this lesson for proper argumentative writing.)*

Lesson 6: Jury in action: *Argument writing, speaking and listening (using rubric and standards to be sure each area is addressed, this lesson is the authentic performance assessment). "Jury" meets, argues the case based on their written "brief", and declares a final verdict to give to the judge.*

Lesson 7: David Says Yes to the Rule of Law! *This is an art lesson that helps conclude and further assess understanding – a class book with a message on each page from David about the Rule of Law.*