

# Literacy and the Law Project-Based Unit Plan



**Unit Title:** Beyond the Great Horn Spoon

This interdisciplinary and comprehensive unit begins following the reading of By the Great Horn Spoon, by Sid Fleishman. The characters from the book find themselves involved in the economic, social and political life of San Francisco at the time of the Gold Rush! They work to solve some of the challenges this colorful time in history presents, just as California becomes part of the United States. Students in the classroom “become” these characters and work to apply the principles of the state and federal Constitutions to protect freedoms. The unit concludes with a mock trial in which students help to provide arguments for one of the problems they face ~ illuminating the role of the judiciary. *Note:* Several lessons are preceded by podcasts to assist in the advancement of the authentic scenario students are challenged to solve.

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

### California History Social Science Content Standards

**4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood. Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled (e.g., James Beckwourth, John Bidwell, John C. Fremont, Pio Pico).**

1. Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment (e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louisa Clapp).
2. Study the lives of women who helped build early California (e.g., Biddy Mason).
3. Discuss how California became a state and how its new government differed from those during the Spanish and Mexican periods.

**4.5 Students understand the structures, functions, and powers of the local, state, and federal governments as described in the U.S. Constitution.**

1. Discuss what the U.S. Constitution is and why it is important (i.e., a written document that defines the structure and purpose of the U.S. government and describes the shared powers of federal, state, and local governments).
2. Understand the purpose of the California Constitution, its key principles, and its relationship to the U.S. Constitution.
3. Describe the similarities (e.g., written documents, rule of law, consent of the governed, three separate branches) and differences (e.g., scope of jurisdiction, limits on government powers, use of the military) among federal, state, and local governments.
4. Explain the structures and functions of state governments, including the roles and responsibilities of their elected officials.

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5. Describe the components of California's governance structure (e.g., cities and towns, Indian rancherias and reservations, counties, school districts).

### **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
- **D2.Civ.4.3-5.** Explain how groups of people make rules to create responsibilities and protect freedoms.
- **D2.Civ.5.3-5.** Explain the origins, functions, and structure of different systems of government, including those created by the U.S. and state constitutions.
- **D2.Civ.6.3-5.** Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, work- places, voluntary organizations, and families.

#### **Dimension 2, Participation and Deliberation**

- **D2.Civ.8.3-5.** Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities.
- **D2.Civ.9.3-5.** Use deliberative processes when making decisions or reaching judgments as a group.
- **D2.Civ.10.3-5.** Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

#### **Dimension 2, Processes, Rules, and Laws**

- **D2.Civ.10.3-5.** Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

### **CA HSS Analysis Skills (K-5): Historical Interpretation California English Language Development Standards:**

#### **Part 1: Interacting in Meaningful Ways**

##### **A. Collaborative**

**P1.4.1** Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics

##### **11. Supporting opinions**

- a. Support opinions by expressing appropriate/accurate reasons using textual evidence (e.g., referring to text) or relevant background knowledge about content, with substantial support.

##### **12. Selecting language resources**

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- a. Use a select number of general academic and domain-specific words to create precision while speaking and writing.

### **Common Core State Standards for Writing**

#### **Text Types and Purposes**

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

1. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
2. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
3. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).
4. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

#### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing (including multiple-paragraph texts) 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.) CA
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)
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 one page in a single sitting.
7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes, paraphrase, and categorize information, and provide a list of sources. CA

#### **Speaking and Listening Standards**

##### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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- 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.
  - b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
  - c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
  - d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
2. Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
- a. Plan and deliver a narrative presentation that: relates ideas, observations, or recollections; provides a clear context; and includes clear insight into why the event or experience is memorable.
5. Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.
6. Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 4 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

### **Reading Standards**

#### **Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*. (See grade 4 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.) CA

## **English-Language Arts Standards for California Public Schools**

### **Writing**

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## 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grade four outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

1. 2.3 Write information reports:
  1. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.
  2. Include facts and details for focus.
  3. Draw from more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, other media sources).

## California State Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts

### 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 Ideas

- The government is responsible to its people
- Citizenship calls for civic responsibility (the people *are* the government)
- Democracy Calls for Equal Justice Under the Law
- People Move to Improve Their Lives
- The rich cultural and racial diversity of California today has its origins in the Gold Rush.

### Essential Questions

- How have the natural resources of the area affected the growth, and landscape of the area?
- How has the growth of the area affected the economic, social and political life of the citizenry?
- Is the Rule of Law necessary for peaceful coexistence? Explain.
- Do rules protect freedoms? If so, in what ways?

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- Does a democracy require the participation of the people? Explain.
- Is civil disobedience ever justified? If so, give examples.
- In what ways are people challenged to work together and does the structure of the government help to solve issues?

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

#### GRASPS

**Goal:** To convince the populace that the rule of law and democratic values must be understood and applied in order for California to become a civilized state within the union.

**Role:** Activists and witnesses in the community, members of the court and jury.

**Audience:** Citizens of California in 1850.

**Situation:** People in California do not understand the new government structure; they have only witnessed and lived under “vigilante” justice. People are not treating ethnic minorities with respect and are not aware of the Compromise of 1850 or the rules guiding the Fugitive Slave Act.

**Problem:** Friends of Praiseworthy, Aunt Arabella and the children have been kidnapped. They have been told they cannot testify in court because they are African Americans. The family (even though in reality are “free”), will be taken away and sold off as slaves if Praiseworthy and the children do not do something to help them.

**Standards for Success:** With the help of Praiseworthy and Aunt Arabella, Thomas, Jack and his sisters are able to convince the public that the rule of law is crucial for the democracy. They write editorials to the local newspaper informing the town about the rights of citizens, the Fugitive Slave Act, and the Compromise of 1850. A trial is held, and some of the same arguments from their editorials are used by Praiseworthy as he defends the African American family in court. Citizens of San Francisco are “up in arms” and become better educated about the application of the rule of law and how they apply to their state of California.

#### RUBRIC

Quality Criteria	Absolutely!	Almost!	Not Yet!
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#### Written:

Written opinion supports point of view with reasons and information

Clear intro, statement of opinion

Logically ordered reasons supported by facts and details

Effective use of words, phrases and clauses

Provides conclusion related to opinion presented

## **Literacy and the Law Project-Based Unit Plan**

Analysis of the effects of the Gold Rush  
evident: social, economic and political

Understanding of the structures and powers of  
State and federal government as they relate to the  
challenges of the effects of the Gold Rush

### **Speaking and Listening:**

Collaborative discussions with clear  
expression of ideas

Builds on other's ideas, responds to  
others' questions

Prepared, follows roles assigned

Reviews key ideas from discussion and draws conclusions

Shares at a reasonable pace using logical reasoning

### **Theatre:**

Active participation in improvisation, exploring emotions,  
physical characteristics, developing character

Effective use of blocking for the "set" of the courtroom.

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

### **Lesson 1: We Can Be Real Characters!**

This first lesson involves students in developing the skill of portraying character roles, either during or following the reading of The Great Horn Spoon, by Sid Fleishman. Students need this skill before they address the problems to be solved in the unit through simulation and a mock trial.

**Lesson 2: Gold Fever: The Good and Bad News!** This second lesson includes a podcast (A) with script, to be played following the "hook". The students are called upon to research the social, economic and political problems during the Gold Rush. They will interview citizens involved in the controversies in an attempt to learn the details and facts of the issues, and the cause and effect of the actions of the citizenry. Note: This lesson will take two to three 50 minute periods to allow for research, group collaboration and presentation.

### **Lesson 3: Making Vocabulary Connections**

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This lesson can overlap as students are reading the book, participating in all lessons and beginning to play parts, if you are sure to limit the vocabulary to that which they have already encountered in the book or unit. The learning activity helps students to understand deeper meanings of words as they discover “links”. This can be repeated as a warm-up, or an activity at different times during the school day once students understand the process.

### **Lesson 4: Part of the Union...What does it mean? (Podcast (B) precedes this lesson)**

Introduce the structure and functions of the new government, as described in the Constitutions: federal and state. Students will understand rule of law, and the limits on government powers, and more! They help to educate the settlers in San Francisco with this same understanding by creating leaflets and/or posters in readiness for a Town Hall meeting *This lesson is preceded by a podcast (with accompanying script).*

### **Lesson 5: Understanding Tableau**

This theatre lesson helps students to understand how to create a “tableau”. They learn how creating physical “statues” can help to reinforce thought processes and increase understanding.

### **Lesson 6: Town Hall Meeting: Structures of our Government and Applying Principles**

**(Podcast (C) precedes this lesson)** Students help to educate the settlers in San Francisco with an understanding of the governance structure by presenting posters and tableaux performances at a town hall meeting. In addition, within each performance, they give an example of a social, economic or political problem during the Gold Rush and suggest how the structures within the government could help solve the problem.

### **Lesson 7: Civic Action! (Podcast (D) precedes this lesson)**

The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act are introduced. Students write opinion letters to the editor in an attempt to have their voices heard regarding issues involving the kidnapping of their friends.

### **Lesson 8: Cut Eye Higgins in Court: (Podcast E precedes this lesson)**

Students participate in a mock trial in which they help to provide arguments and practice applying the rule of law. They analyze the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act as they relate to a case involving the kidnapping of their African American friends.

**(Podcast F)** Brings closure to this lesson and has the students singing!