



We the People Programs
Lesson Plan
My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C.
By Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Illustrated by David Small
Elementary Level

The following lesson plan includes many activities that connect with different curricular areas. Teachers have the option of completing all or only selected activities.

Lesson Purpose: The lesson is designed to integrate the concepts of civic education across curriculum using Senator Edward M. Kennedy's book *My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C.*

Expectations / Goals

- Students will understand the function of the legislative branch of the US Government.
- Student will describe how the U.S. Congress is organized.
- Students will describe how a bill becomes a law.
- Students will understand what it means to debate an idea.

Book Summary: Senator Edward M. Kennedy's dog, Champion Amigo's Seventh Wave, or Splash, introduces readers to Washington, D.C., as he follows the Senator around for a day.

Essential Questions

- What are the responsibilities of a United States Senator and Representative?
- What steps are required for a bill to become a law?

Teachers Note: Before the lesson the teacher should read *My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C.* several times to:

- Become familiar with the text,
- Choose vocabulary words to be examined,
- Identify where you will stop and ask for predictions,
- Determine background knowledge required to fully understand the story,
- Develop questions for the read aloud, and
- Anticipate student responses.

(Suggested vocabulary: Senate, House of Representatives, Capitol, Elect, Bill, Congress, Debate, Rotunda)

Reading:

- Conduct a picture walk through *My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C.* before the read aloud. Have students explore their prior knowledge by using a "STW: What do I See? What do I Think? What do I Wonder?" Like a KWL, this technique "encourages a more full visual experience which promotes critical thinking, encourages thoughtful prediction, and stimulates curiosity." (Thibault, Melissa. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/669>) The picture walk can also help determine if some of the students are familiar with Washington, D.C. and how it relates to the story. (See attached STW chart at the end of the lesson plan)
- Conduct an interactive read-aloud of *My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C.* stopping frequently to clarify what is happening in the story and asking students to make predictions, discuss new vocabulary, and make personal connections. Monitor reading comprehension by asking clarifying questions, restating facts and details in the text, and identifying cause and effect relationships. Questions might include:
 - Who is the narrator of the story?
 - What kind of dog is Splash?
 - What did Senator Kennedy like about Splash?
 - What do you think Senator Kennedy meant when he said, "He runs like a champ and never gives up"?

- On the trip to take Splash home Senator Kennedy pointed out some important places in Washington, D.C. What were these places?
- How does a person get to be a United States Senator?
- Who attends the Conference Committee meeting and why are they debating?
- What must happen before a bill can become a real law?

Social Studies

- Working as a whole class, conduct a lesson on Unit 3 Lesson 13 of *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution* Level 1. The lesson examines the legislative branch of the United States government.
- Introduce the “Terms to know” and ask students to make connections to the read aloud. For example Senator Kennedy has written a **bill** that would make schools safer, allow schools to hire more teacher, and enable schools to buy more computers.
- Have students read the section on “What is Congress”. Ask students to make connections to the read aloud. For example Senator Kennedy is a member of Congress.
- Have students read “What power does Congress have” and make a list of the powers discussed in this section. Ask students if they see these powers reflected in the read aloud.
- Have students read the section “How does Congress make a law?” Discuss the different between a bill and a law. Using the chart attached to this lesson plan have students examine the steps outlined in the textbook and compare them to what they read in *My Senator and Me: A Dog’s-Eye View of Washington, D.C.* Make an overhead of the chart and complete the activity along with the students.
- Continue the lesson by reading the sections “How does the Constitution limit the powers of Congress?” and “What are the responsibilities of senators and representatives?” Once again make connections to the read aloud regarding the responsibilities of Senator Kennedy as he proceeds through his day with Splash.

Writing

- Proceed to the “Participating in a class activity” part of Lesson 13. The class will read the sections “How should Representative Smith vote?”, “Getting ready for the Public Hearing,” and “Representative Smith makes a decision”. Discuss the questions at the end of this section. Divide the class into groups representing Representative Smith and her staff, the Tobacco Growers and Processors, Citizens for Freedom, Citizens for a Smoke-Free Environment, and, Citizens for Better Health. Students in each group should discuss what they would say at the public hearing. Have each student write at least one paragraph indicating what he or she would say at the public hearing. Students in each group will exchange their writing and peer review and edit another student’s work.

Research

- Students can do research on the pros and cons of smoking in public places to prepare for the class activity. Students should work with their school or public librarian to access information on the topic. Information about the topic can be found in books, periodicals, encyclopedias or Internet websites. Ask the librarian to teach a collaborative lesson on how to evaluate websites to insure that information is accurate. Students should create a bibliography of sources used to obtain their information.

Evaluation

- Sample Writing Rubric: http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson261/sample.pdf
- Teacher observation of student responses during read aloud.
- Teacher observation of student participation in classroom activity.

Materials Needed

- Copy of *My Senator and Me: A Dog’s-Eye View of Washington, D.C* by Senator Edward M. Kennedy.
- Class set of *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution* Level 1
- Class set of the STW activity worksheet.
- Class set of “How Congress makes a law” chart.
- Paper and pencils

Additional resources to support lesson plan:

- Congress: Government of the People. Cobblestone Magazine, Volume 27, Number 1, January 2006.
- How America Works. Kids Discover. 2004
- Kids in the House, How Laws are Made: <http://kids.clerk.house.gov/grade-school/lesson.html?intID=17>

- Social Studies for Kids:
<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/government/howabillbecomesalaw.htm>
- Ben's Guide to U. S. Government for Kids: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/lawmaking/example.html>

Standards

Rhode Island GSEs for Civics & Government and History

C&G 1: People create and change structures of power, authority, and governance in order to accomplish common goals.

C&G 1 (5-6) -1: Students demonstrate an understanding of origins, forms, and purposes of government by...

- identifying the basic functions of government

C&G 2: The *Constitution* of the United States establishes a government of limited powers that are shared among different levels and branches

C&G 2 (5-6) -1: Students demonstrate an understanding of United States government (local, state, national) by...

- identifying and describing the function of the three branches (i.e., checks and balances, separation of powers)
- identifying how power is divided and shared among the levels of the United States government
- explaining how a bill becomes a law

C&G 3: In a democratic society all people have certain rights and responsibilities.

C&G 3 (5-6) -1: Students demonstrate an understanding of citizens' rights and responsibilities by...

- defining the concepts: "civic" (*adj.*), "civics" (*n*), "civil," and "citizen"
- identifying citizen's rights in a democratic society (personal, economic, legal, and civic)
- identifying a citizen's responsibilities in a democratic society (personal, economic, legal, and civic)
- identifying conflicts between individual rights and the common good (e.g., Eminent domain, airport expansion, Scituate Reservoir, Coastal Access)

C&G 4: People engage in political processes in a variety of ways.

C&G 4 (5-6) -1: Students demonstrate an understanding of political systems and political processes by...

- explaining how leaders are selected or elected (e.g., election process, appointment process, political parties, campaigns)
- listing the "labels" that individuals may give themselves within a political process (e.g., radical, liberal, conservative, environmentalist, Democrat, Republican)

C&G 4 (5-6) -2: Students demonstrate their participation in political processes by...

- using a variety of sources to form, substantiate, and communicate an opinion and presenting their opinion to an audience beyond the classroom (e.g., letter to the editor, student exhibition, persuasive essay, article in school newspaper)
- describing the voting process for a local, state, or national election

C&G 4 (5-6) -3: Students participate in a civil society by...

- demonstrating respect for the opinions of others (e.g., listening to and asking relevant questions, taking turns, considering alternative perspectives)
- demonstrating the ability to compromise (e.g., offering solutions, persisting to resolve issues)
- identifying and accessing reliable sources to answer questions about current important issues (e.g., news media, children's news magazines)

Common Core State Standards Initiative

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 5

- **Key Ideas and Details**
 - RL.5.1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
 - RL.5.2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

- RL.5.3. Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
- **Craft and Structure**
 - RL.5.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.
 - RL.5.5. Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.
 - RL.5.6. Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Informational Text » Grade 5

- **Key Ideas and Details**
 - RI.5.1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
 - RI.5.2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
 - RI.5.3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- **Craft and Structure**
 - RI.5.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 5 topic or subject area*.
 - RI.5.5. Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.
 - RI.5.6. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**
 - RI.5.7. Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
 - RI.5.8. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).
 - RI.5.9. Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 5

- **Text Types and Purposes**
 - W.5.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
 - Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
 - Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently, specifically*).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
 - W.5.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
 - Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
 - Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast, especially*).
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
 - W.5.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
 - Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
 - Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
 - Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

- Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **Production and Distribution of Writing**
 - 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.)
 - 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.
 - 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.
- **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**
 - W.5.7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
 - 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.
 - W.5.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - Apply *grade 5 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or a drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., how characters interact]”).
 - Apply *grade 5 Reading standards* to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point[s]”).

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening » Grade 5

- **Comprehension and Collaboration**
 - SL.5.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - 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.
 - Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
 - Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
 - Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.
 - SL.5.2. Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
 - SL.5.3. Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**
 - 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.
 - SL.5.5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.
 - SL.5.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

Lesson Plan developed by:
Barbara Ashby, MLS
We the People Programs Rhode Island
Michael Trofi, State Coordinator
www.civiced-ri.org

STW Chart

What Do I See?	What Do I Think?	What Do I Wonder?

How Congress Makes a Law

List the steps required for a bill to become a law as found in *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution, Level 1* in the spaces on the left and provide an example of this step found in *My Senator and Me: A Dog's Eye View of Washington, D.C*

<i>We the People</i>	<i>My Senator and Me</i>

Teacher Notes