



CIVICS IN LITERATURE

★★ *June Lesson Plan* ★★

GRADES
K-4

"RED, WHITE AND BLUE, HATS OFF TO YOU!
WHITE AND BLUE HATS OFF TO YOU. HONEST, YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG!
HONEST, YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG!"

— GEORGE M. COHAN



ABOUT THIS LESSON

This installment of the National Constitution Center’s Civics in Literature initiative features suggested books and activities for teaching students about the American flag and the Army—which happen to share the same birthday (celebrated on June 14)!

Civics in Literature is designed to meet the common core standards for students from kindergarten through fourth grade. These materials strengthen foundational skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Civics in Literature allows younger students to access complex topics and issues by meeting them at their level and guiding them to a higher level of understanding.

READING LIST

The American Flag by Elaine Landau
A Flag for Our Country by Eve Spencer
This is the Rope by Jacqueline Woodson*
The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss
The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Pinkwater



AUTHOR

Anne Spector

Anne Spector is an educator whose career has taken her into classrooms from first grade to 3rd year law students. She has taught in both the School District of Philadelphia and the School District of Cheltenham Township where she also served as a Central Office Administrator. Mrs. Spector holds an undergraduate degree in psychology, a teaching degree in Secondary English, a graduate degree in Reading, and Elementary and Secondary Principal Certification.

Throughout Mrs. Spector’s career she has dedicated much of her time to developing and implementing programs that promote student voice and citizenship education through a marriage of literacy and civic literacy. With a team of educators that includes her writing partner Elaine Scarpino, Anne is helping to create the **We the Civic Kids** program for elementary students, grades K to 5. Her work in this field began over twenty years ago when she collaborated with Temple University’s LEAP program (Law Education and Participation) to help in the development of law-related education material. She continued her work in elementary civic education by creating a K to 4 program known as **Let’s Take Two...Two Steps Back, Two Minutes to Think, Two People to Solve a Problem.**

After retiring from Cheltenham, Anne joined the staff at the National Constitution Center as the Director of PennCORD, First Lady Marjorie O. Rendell’s Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy. Through her work with PennCORD Mrs. Spector created S.T.A.R. Force (Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly), a K to 6 program that married literacy and civic literacy as a way to teach basic civic knowledge, promote public action between and among our youngest citizens, and provide practice in democratic deliberation.

Mrs. Spector embraces the notion that...**reading is our first freedom.** She is thrilled to be able to bring this philosophy to children and their teachers across the country through materials that highlight children’s literature with lessons that connect young minds to complex concepts and build student voice.

FEATURED BOOK AND ACTIVITIES

This is the Rope by Jacqueline Woodson

The American flag plays a central role in our country's history. In *This is the Rope*, a rope plays an important role in one family's story. The rope frames the story of a little girl's journey as her family joins millions of African American families traveling north to find better opportunities.

Activity #1: If you were preparing to move to a new home with your family, what object would you take from your home to help you remember past experiences and embrace future possibilities? Be prepared to share your answer and tell why you chose your object.

Activity #2: The family in the story used the grandmother's rope in many different ways. To jump, to tie things down on the roof of a car, to hang both flowers and diapers to dry, to pull a toy, to hold the car trunk down, to place around the family photos, to hold up a banner, and more. Pick an every day object your family uses and try to come up as many different uses as possible for that object.

This exercise is called brainstorming. In brainstorming, we try to be fluent and come up with lots of uses; as flexible and come up with different categories of uses; as creative and as original as we can. Come up with your object and brainstorm your ideas of how many different ways you can use that object. Then pick your most creative idea and be prepared to share it with your class.

Activity #3: There are many symbols that represent America. Among those symbols are the American Flag, the Bald Eagle, the Liberty Bell, the Statue of Liberty, and Uncle Sam. Design a symbol that represents who you are and what you stand for.

Activity #4: There are many interesting facts about the American flag. Some of them are well-known facts and others are lesser known. Let's see how much you know about the flag:

True or False

1. If a flag is torn or faded, it should be burnt. T or F
2. A high school student designed the current U.S. flag. T or F
3. About 1 million flags are sold each year. T or F
4. Displaying a flag upside down means you are in danger. T or F
5. The largest American flag ever made weighed 100 pounds. T or F
6. A flag was planted on the moon by American astronauts. T or F
7. The design of the American flag has never been changed. T or F
8. Like a person, the flag has nicknames including Old Glory, the Star Spangled Banner, and the Stars and Stripes. T or F

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Answer Key:

1. True;
2. True (a 17-year-old named Robert Heft designed our current flag for a class project in 1958);
3. False (about 20 million American flags are sold each year);
4. True;
5. False (the largest flag ever made weighed 3,000 pounds and was a part of the Memorial Day celebration in River Forest, Illinois in 2006. This flag was not flown. The largest American flag ever flown weighed 180 pounds)
6. True (a flag was planted in 1969. Since there is no wind on the moon, the flag had wires in it to make it look like it was waving)
7. False (the design of the flag has been changed 26 times)
8. True

Whether planning a field trip, looking for innovative ways to enhance classroom instruction or seeking a deeper understanding of American history and active citizenship, the National Constitution Center is an educator's ultimate civic learning resource.

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