

Lesson Plan Project: What Does It Mean To Be Free?  
Submitted by Renee Heinrich, Franklin Elementary School, Wausau, WI

**Historical Topic/ Interest:**

Starting with a guided reading unit on Mildred D. Taylor books which is based on a black family in the Jim Crow South in the 1930's-1960's, I would like to create lessons for my students based on the question "What does it mean to be free?" This unit will be used right before the Constitution Unit that I do.

**WASAH Participants/Presenters:**

I will use the SIGHT method presented by Edward O' Donnell to create a UBD lesson as well as use the lesson plan method from the presenters "Teaching Like a Historian". I will use the presentations "Teaching Wisconsin's First Nations", "How to Use Images To Teach History", "Treaty Rights and Civil Rights...", "Liberating Women in Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century", "Young Workers and the Violence of Industrial Freedom", "Fighting for Freedom on the Job", "Civil Rights Protests..." as well as some concepts of "Sports, Leisure, Recreation..." to show and tell about groups in history that struggled to gain their freedom.

**In-service:**

Last year I presented to my co-workers during a staff development day what primary sources are and how to use them in their lessons. I now take primary sources I find that apply to their social studies concepts and place them in their mailbox or forward them through email. I also add Webquests that pertain to their lessons so that they can find easy access to lessons using primary sources. This is kept on a shared folder that was set up for them.

This year, my goal is to in-service the district on kits that I will hopefully be creating with the Marathon County Historical Society. The kits would be for K-5 teachers in the Wausau School District that is based on primary sources that are found from people living in Marathon County. I believe using primary sources in a way to develop critical thinking skills.

We will focus on the following grade level topics:

- Kindergarten=ourselves
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade= our family and home
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade= our neighborhood
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade= community
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade=Wisconsin history
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade- US history

**Lesson Plan:**

I will start with a homework question, "What rights do fifth graders have?" I want them to then share their list with their group, ultimately creating a group list that is prioritized. The next question will be "What rights do you think you should have that you don't have

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already?" which they will work on individually. After they have made a list we will gather that information and place it on the smart board. The 3<sup>rd</sup> question posed will be "what rights would you be willing to give up?" This will be a group discussion.

Now I will start my simulation. I will now share on the smartboard their new laws designed by the elite teachers in our building at the Franklin Constitutional Convention. These new laws will start at the beginning of the morning and go through recess unbeknown to them. We will line up by height and give them a number which will determine certain advantages as well as a crayon.

### The Convention Laws:

1. All students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will have bathroom breaks only if you are an even number.
2. All students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will not sharpen pencils unless you are the five tallest students in class.
3. All 5<sup>th</sup> graders will have peanut butter and jelly and white milk for lunch.
4. We the students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will only go to Phy. Ed. Today if we are an odd number.
5. We the students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will only go to music today if we are an even number.
6. All 5<sup>th</sup> graders will only swing at recess. If there is no swing available you will stand in line for one to clear. You will have one minute to swing and you will be timed.
7. All students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade due to a shortage of "appropriate" books will only be able to read out of the books we were able to secure.
8. All students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will say "mam" or "yes mam" after each finished sentence in conversation with me.
9. All students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be placed in neighborhoods according to their crayon color.
10. All laws have the ability to change if deemed unfair.

Let's call these the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Constitution. After recess, I will present the option to change laws that they see as unfair. We will allow students to elect representatives to discuss those changes and take them through the process of amendments, and elections, as well as how our early government was set up. I will follow this lesson up with the second day's activity. I will now present my students with their group lesson. They will be investigating a group of individuals that they will be representing at our Convention.

Each group will either Women, Native Americans, Children, African Americans, Workers. They will need to search for ways that their individuals have not truly been free in history. Along the way I will give them clue cards to help them find bigger issues such as equal rights, relocation acts, child labor issues, property rights, and Chinese and Irish railroad workers as clues. I will continue to add clues to their time in the computer lab. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day I will present them with a rubric and their project requirement. This will consist of a power point which must contain 5 examples of limited rights, and explanation paragraph, a timeline, a picture, and a then and now page.

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They will have 3 opportunities to add to their power point and 3 writing times to create the rough draft to use. We will present our finding to the Convention which we will create a sheet for the other fifth graders to have to collect notes on and report their findings on an evaluation. To wrap this unit up the students will take a test asking one question: "How have individual rights been limited throughout history?" They must create a paragraph sharing all five groups presented to earn the top grade. A rubric will be created and shared during the evaluation.

### **Grade level:**

Any class teaching Constitution, Freedom, or Rights. I have specifically created this for my fifth graders.

### **Academic Standards:**

Based on Standard B: History Performance Standards- Grade 8

B 8.1, B8.2, B8.4, B8.5, B8.6, B8.7, B8.10, B 8.11, and B8.12

### **Resources:** (I will get more specific as I go)

Mildred D. Taylor books

Picture books

Websites

Rubrics

The Constitution

Our Social Studies Book and supplemental Constitution packet

Powerpoint