

Virtual Capitol Lessons

Civic Participation: How to Become Good Citizens

Authors	Cherie Scholten and Sally Ganem
Editor	Karen Graff, Ed.D.
Grade Level	Fourth
Class Period(s)	4

This lesson is designed to precede or follow a field trip to Lincoln or a virtual field trip (<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org>) to the Nebraska Capitol.

Nebraska Social Studies Standards

SS 4.1.1 Students will identify and explain the foundation, structure, and function of Nebraska's government.

SS 4.1.1.d Identify and explain a variety of roles leaders, citizens, and others play in the Nebraska government.

SS 4.1.2 Students will investigate how different perspectives impact government decisions at the state level.

SS 4.1.2.a Identify rights and responsibilities of citizens at the state level.

SS 4.1.2.c Identify ways students can be engaged to have an impact in their state.

Nebraska Language Arts Standards

LA 4.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build and use conversational, academic, and content-specific grade level vocabulary.

LA 4.1.5.c Acquire new academic and content-specific grade-level vocabulary, relate to prior knowledge, and apply in new situations.

LA 4.2.1 Writing Process: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other conventions of standard English appropriate for grade-level.

LA 4.2.2 Writing Modes: Students will write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.

LA 4.2.2.a Communicate information and ideas effectively in analytic, descriptive, informative, narrative, poetic, persuasive, and reflective modes to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.

Nebraska Math Standards

MA 4.4.1 Representations: Students will create displays that represent data.

MA 4.1.1.a Represent data using line plots where the horizontal scale is marked off in appropriate units (e.g., whole numbers, halves, quarters, or eighths).

Nebraska Fine and Performing Arts Standards

FA 5.2.3 Students will use the critical process to examine works of art, learning about themselves and cultures.

FA 5.2.3.d Compare personal interpretation of a work of art with the interpretations of others.

FA 5.2.4 Students will examine contemporary, historical, and cultural context in art and life.

FA 5.2.4.a Identify ways that artists influence lives and communities.

FA 5.2.4.d Explore how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.



Virtual Capitol Lessons

Overview

Participation in government and community impacts policies and laws and the quality of life in the community. It is a responsibility of community members to participate.

Key Vocabulary

Citizen- a member of a community, state, or country who promises loyalty to the government and is protected and served by it; generally, a member of a community

Volunteers-people who help others and expect nothing in return

Materials

- Sheets of paper for voting
- Graph paper
- Writing paper

Procedures

SESSION ONE

1. Discuss volunteerism as a method of participation in communities. Ask students if they have volunteered before, what they did, who they helped, and how they felt. Record their experiences on a display for all to see. Help them understand that others may have benefitted from their volunteering besides the obvious individuals. For example, walking dogs at a animal shelter clearly helps the dogs exercise and socialize, but it also helps maintain good health for the animals so shelter costs are lower, it frees up shelter employees to do other tasks, and makes the dog more appealing to potential adopters. Also, help students understand how volunteering benefits the volunteer and the community overall.
2. Introduce the opportunity for students to participate in a service project. Ask for suggestions about the type of project that interests them, is feasible, and is needed. Record suggestions and allow students to discuss the choices in small groups. Suggestions include volunteering at a nursing home, reading to students in a lower grade level, picking up trash around their school, conducting food/supply drives, etc.
3. Give students pieces of paper to serve as ballots so they can vote for their favorite service project. They should vote for only one. Tally the votes and display the results as a line plot, if appropriate. If the vote is nearly unanimous, a display may not be helpful.

SESSION TWO

1. Implement the project as soon as possible. If it is on-going throughout the school year, have students maintain a timeline or journal of their experiences.

Assessment

Assign one of the following:

a- a narrative essay telling about their experience

b-an expository essay describing the project (how it was chosen, why, procedures followed during participation, etc.)



Virtual Capitol Lessons

c- a persuasive essay to convince other students to take part in a service project such as theirs

Extensions

Explore the programs offered through ServeNebraska and make students aware of the history and purpose of the group.

http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/about/about_mission.htm

<https://www.nebraskaimpact.com/about>

"This website was formed through a partnership with the Nebraska 150 Celebration and ServeNebraska with the goal of increasing volunteer engagement in the state." Volunteers are encouraged to log hours to demonstrate the spirit of volunteerism.

Use this lesson with the "Memorial Chamber/Public Service" lesson that studies the art panels in the Memorial Chamber. Another option is to allow students to view the panels at

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/building/rooms/memorial-chamber>

and determine how they could promote the "heroic enterprises associated with Nebraska history" depicted in the murals. How could they contribute at their community level to support these important endeavors?

Sources/Resources

Grade 4 Narrative Writing Rubric

<http://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/pdfs/FINAL%20analytic%20rubric.narrative.pdf>

Virtual Capitol Tour Website

<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/>

http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/about/about_mission.htm

Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/building/rooms/memorial-chamber>

Memorial Chamber art

<http://www.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen>

Project Citizen encourages participation in all levels of government. It is primarily designed for students in grades 5 and above, but the resources may be helpful to teachers.



Nebraska Department of Education Scoring Guide for Narrative Writing – Analytic – Grade 4

	1	2	3	4
IDEAS / CONTENT 35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer creates little understanding of events of the story. Content has many digressions from the topic. Supporting details are lacking. Storyline is often repetitious, disconnected, or random. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer creates a limited understanding of events of the story. Content has some digressions from the topic. Limited or unrelated details are included. Storyline is occasionally vague. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer creates a general understanding of events of the story. Content is generally focused on the topic. Adequate, related details are included. Storyline is generally logical and easy to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer creates a clear understanding of events of the story. Content is well-focused on the topic. Numerous, relevant details are included. Storyline is logical and easy to follow throughout.
ORGANIZATION 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural development of a beginning, middle, or end is lacking. Pacing is awkward. Transitions are missing or connections are unclear. Paragraphing is ineffective or missing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural development of a beginning, middle, or end is limited. Pacing is somewhat inconsistent. Transitions are repetitious or weak. Paragraphing is irregular. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural development of a beginning, middle, and end is functional. Pacing is generally controlled. Transitions are functional. Paragraphing is generally successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural development of a beginning, middle, and end is effective. Pacing is well-controlled. Transitions effectively show how ideas connect. Paragraphing is sound.
VOICE / WORD CHOICE 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording is lifeless and mechanical, conveying little sense of the writer. Voice is inappropriate for the purpose and audience. Language is neither specific, precise, nor varied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording is occasionally expressive, conveying a limited sense of the writer. Voice is sometimes inappropriate for the purpose and audience. Language is occasionally specific, precise, and varied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording is generally expressive, conveying a sense of the writer. Voice is generally appropriate for the purpose and audience. Language is generally specific, precise, and varied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wording is expressive and engaging, conveying a strong sense of the writer. Voice is well-suited for the purpose and audience. Language is specific, precise, and varied throughout.
SENTENCE FLUENCY / CONVENTIONS 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences seldom vary in length or structure. Phrasing sounds awkward and unnatural. Fragments or run-ons confuse the reader. Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors throughout distract the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences occasionally vary in length or structure. Phrasing occasionally sounds unnatural. Fragments or run-ons sometimes confuse the reader. Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors may distract the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences generally vary in length or structure. Phrasing generally sounds natural. Fragments and run-ons, if present, do not confuse the reader. Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling are usually correct and errors do not distract the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences vary in length and structure throughout. Phrasing consistently sounds natural and conveys meaning. Fragments and run-ons, if present, are intended for stylistic effect. Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling are consistently correct and may be manipulated for stylistic effect.

