

*The Kid who Became President: A 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy Focus Unit*  
Created by  
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### **Featured Selection**

*The Kid Who Became President* by Dan Gutman. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999.

Written for a fourth or fifth grade level, this exciting fiction novel is set in modern day times and takes readers on an exciting, roller coaster adventure. Judson Moon used to be an ordinary kid, until he ran for President of the United States. Now, not only does he have to effectively do all of his homework with the White House tutor, but he also has to make good decisions for the entire United States. The whole book builds to a climax when Judson is betrayed by the president of Cantania and he is faced with the possibility of nuclear war. Hopefully, Judson can prevent World War III and prove to everyone that a kid really can be president.

### **Related Materials**

*Vote!* by Eileen Christelow. New York: Clarion Books, 2003.  
4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level

By using a fictional election, *Vote!* takes students through the election process. This includes everything from the first campaign day, researching and listening to all candidates, and the importance and responsibility of voting.

*American Votes: How our President is Elected* by Linda Granfield. New York: Kids Can Press, 2003.  
4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level

This informative book takes students chapter by chapter through the election process. Topics include voting eligibility, presidential eligibility, slogan developing, and explains the difference in parties.

*Take the Lead, George Washington* by Judith St. George. New York: Philomel Books, 2005.  
4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level

The text is in chapter book form and takes students through George Washington's life. It demonstrates a different time period and a different way of life but still holds to the same upstanding principles of modern days.

*John Quincy Adams* by Zachary Kent. Chicago: Children's Press, 1987.  
5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level

This informative text helps students to identify the responsibilities of presidency. It also highlights his life before and after presidency.

*Where Lincoln Walked* by Raymond Bial. Ontario: Walker Publishing, 1997.  
3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level

This text helps the students to see that even though Lincoln was against the odds, he still persisted and became president. Additionally, it includes many photographs that will be helpful in allowing the students to envision Abe's life.

*The Boy Who Loved Books* by Kay Winters and Mary Carpenter. New York: Simon And Schuster, 2003.

This non-fiction book shows students how Abe Lincoln used books to improve his conditions. Even though he had no teacher and his mother died, he studied on his own to become a lawyer and eventually our 16<sup>th</sup> president.

Besides *Vote!* And *America Votes* which are incorporated into the unit, the texts will be on a shelf for the students to read in their free time.

### **Goals**

1. The students will read *The Kid Who Became President* to gain a better understanding of what the president does.
2. Students will have a better understanding of the type of person who usually becomes president.
3. The students will be able to explain the process of becoming president.
4. The students will have a better understanding of why responsible voting is important.
5. The students will have a better understanding of how to express their opinion.
6. The students will practice their writing and speaking skills through a variety of activities.
7. The students will have a better understanding of different states and presidents.

### **Academic Standards**

#### Math

5.6.2 Find the mean\*, median\*, mode\*, and range\* of a set of data and describe what each does and does not tell about the data set.

#### Science

5.5.9 Show how spreading data out on a number line helps to see what the extremes are, where they pile up, and where the gaps are.

#### English/Language Arts

5.3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.

5.5.4 Write persuasive letters or compositions that:

- state a clear position in support of a proposal.
- support a position with relevant evidence and effective emotional appeals.

- follow a simple organizational pattern, with the most appealing statements first and the least powerful ones last.

- address reader concerns.

5.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate narrative text (stories) and expository text (information)

fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.

### Social Studies

5.2.9 Examine ways by which citizens may effectively voice opinions, monitor government, and bring about change in government including voting and participation in the election process.

5.2.6 Describe primary and general election process for local, state and national offices, including those used to select congressional and presidential office holders.

### Physical Education/Movement

5.1.2 Demonstrate the ability to manipulate (throw, catch, strike, swing, push, pull) objects with the skills necessary to participate in games and lead-up (preparing for sports) activities.

### Music

5.9.1 Investigate and perform music associated with historical periods, individuals, events, and movements in the United States such as songs of the railroad, American heroes, the American Revolution, or a specific decade.

### Art

5.1.3 Identify themes and symbols used in works of art and artifacts throughout history that portray universal ideas and beliefs.

## **Unit Plan**

### Pre-reading

Activity: The teacher will read *Vote!* by Eileen Christelow to the class. Afterwards, the teacher will guide the students in a grand discussion about voting. The teacher should steer the discussion towards voting for presidents. Asking questions like, “How does our country decide on the next president?” and “Who gets to vote in elections?”

### Student Reading

Grouping: Everyone, Monitoring: student participation in discussion

Activity: Pass out a copy of *America Votes: How our President is Elected* by Linda Granfield and read it aloud to the students while they follow along. After reading and modeling the text for the students, use the text as a conference piece with the students. When conferencing that week, ask the student to read a portion of the text while paying attention to their sound, expression, and change in voice.

### Oral Language/Student Reading

Grouping: Individuals, Monitoring: conferencing

### Reading:

The students will use a variety of reading types to complete the book. For some chapters they will be reading individually, buddy reading, and aloud group reading.

Student Reading

Grouping: Various grouping types, Monitoring: Observation

### Responding:

Activity: The students will write in their journals three times a week while working through the text. In every entry, the student will have the same two topics to address. The first topic will be “what is the problem?” When they are writing here, the students will be discussing the conflict and any details that add to the conflict. If the conflict is not yet developed, the students will predict what the main problem will be. The second topic will be “how is the problem being fixed?” In this section, students will write about how the problem is being fixed and if that point of the text has not yet been reached, they are to predict how the problem will be solved.

Written Language

Grouping: Individual, Monitoring: Assess journals

Activity: The students are going to be writing letters to the student president in the novel. First, the teacher will model the correct business format for the class in an example letter on big paper. Then, the students will be able to use this example as a reference while writing their own letters. The students have the option of giving the young president advice or giving him their opinion, or a combination of both. Finally, the students will peer edit their work and if the teacher feels necessary, they can have conferences.

Written Language

Grouping: Individual, Monitoring: assess letters

### Exploring:

Activity: The students will be writing letters to the actual President of the United States. They will begin by choosing a topic that they would like to write on. For example, if the students don't want the United States representatives to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympics or if they would like to congratulate the President on a recent victory in Congress they could write about those topics. The students should be reminded to use the proper letter format and have a chance to peer review before their final copy. Also, the students can work with buddies if desired and the letters will be sent to the President as a class.

Written Language

Grouping: Individual, Monitoring: assess letters

Activity: The students will be given a data set (8-10 numbers) containing the ages of past presidents during the year they were elected. After listening to the math lesson pertaining to mean, median, range, and mode, the students will use the ages of the past presidents and their knowledge of the math terms to determine the answer of each. In the beginning, the students can ask people around them for help if necessary. They can also find the mean, median, range, and mode of the amount of people that voted each election year, the ages that each president died, and the amount of United States citizens during the time of each election. Since there have been over 40 presidents, if the number sets are too big, the teacher could shrink them by only giving the students the number sets through 1900 or 1950. To check for understanding, give the students one final set of numbers and ask them to find the mean, median, mode, and range of the set. Then ask them to write what each term means on the same paper.

Math

Grouping: Individual or Buddy, Monitoring: Observe, turn in answers

Activity: The students will create a separate number line with the same sets of numbers they used in their math activity. The students will then work with a partner to identify the extremes and gaps on the line. Since the students will have worked with the numbers previously, the activity should be slightly easier. Like in the math activity, the teacher should reserve one number set to have the students do individually and have the students identify the extreme low, extreme high, and any major gaps.

Science

Grouping: Partner, Monitoring: Turn in answers, observe

Activity: The students will be assigned a group and a president. Then the students will research the music of that time period and do a short presentation with their time period's music. The teacher can then team up with the music teacher to do a few of the pieces or a medley of the pieces during their next musical performance.

Music

Grouping: Group work, Monitoring: Observe, presentation, musical performance

Activity: The teacher will inform the students of different symbols used throughout government. For example, there are many different symbols on paper and metal money and on state seals. Each student will be assigned a different state. Each student will be responsible for two things. First, they will need to have a picture of their state's seal and decode the symbols. Second, they will recreate a seal for the state using possible historical symbols that could represent that state. For example, the student who has the state of Ohio could recreate Ohio's state seal by incorporating Annie Oakley and Tecumseh.

Art

Grouping: Individual, Monitoring: final seal project

Activity: The teacher should gather a set of bouncy balls and set up several four square units around the gym. Allow the students to play four square but with one simple twist. If the students allow the ball to bounce more than once in their square, instead of getting out, the person in the fourth square will ask the person a question pertaining to the current

unit. The teacher will have already prepared the list of questions. Then, if the student answers the question correctly, they do not have to go back the first square. If the student in the fourth square allows the ball to bounce twice in their square, then the player in the first square will ask them the question.

Physical Education

Grouping: groups of 4 or 5, Monitoring: Observe students

Responding:

Activity: The students will go through the process of an election by posing a mock election. There will be two to three students who will be campaigning to be elected. Then the class will be divided between each candidate to form advertisement and speech committees. Before the final election, each candidate will have a opportunity to give a speech to the class about why he/she should be elected and what that candidate will be able to do for the school if he/she is elected. The students will also have an opportunity to ask the candidates questions. The speech committee can help the candidate with this aspect of the project. Then on the big election day, the students will actually pretend they are going to the polls and punch ballots. The teacher can announce the winner at the end of the day. The students will be able to refer to *Vote!* and *American Votes* for assistance in the project.

Culminating Activity

Grouping: group and individual work, Monitoring: observe students while working in groups

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week One	<i>Vote!</i> and <i>America Votes</i> Grand conversation conferences	Read 1-2 Journal Draft letters to student president, journal	Read 3 Peer edit letters to student president	Read 4-5 Type final copies of letters, journal	Read 6-7 Draft letters to President of the United States, journal
Week Two	Read 8 Peer edit and type final copy of letter to President, Journal	Read 9-10 Mean, median, mode, and range w/ ages	Read 11-12 Final math number set, journal	Read 13 Complete number lines w/ ages	Read 14 Research music time period, play four square, journal
Week Three	Read 15-16 Introduce symbols, assign states for seals, journal	Read 17-18 Create seals	19-20 Assign mock election groups, journal	21-22 Work in groups on stance on important issues	22-24 Work on party's advertising in groups, journal
Week Four	Read 25-27 Work on Speeches in groups, journal	Work on speeches in groups	Mock election day, candidate speeches, questioning time, voting		

Assignment Checklist:

- \_\_\_ Journal Entries during unit
- \_\_\_ letter to student president
- \_\_\_ letter to President of the United States
- \_\_\_ Math number sets
- \_\_\_ Number lines
- \_\_\_ State seal creations
- \_\_\_ Mock election participation