

The components of *Picture Books for Big Kids* lessons are:

WARM-UP

These lively activities, **Musical Moment**, **Poetic Pause**, **Image Imagination**, **History Mystery** and **Dance and Drama** use the power of music, poetry, mystery, art and drama to engage students and set the stage for learning.

READ ALOUD

The picture books selected for these lessons represent a wide array of some of the best literature written for children. The content and illustrations will engage students of all ages in thinking about complex issues. A read aloud is only as engaging as the reader, so practice your dramatic style and have fun! Even with my eighth grade students I sit in my rocking chair and invite students to gather closely in chairs or beanbags. And, amazingly, they do! But if reading aloud isn't your thing, invite your students to present a choral reading* or jigsaw reading** of the book. Or employ a little technology: take digital photos of all or parts of the book and pop the images into a PowerPoint slide show.

EXPLORE DEMOCRATIC VALUES

This portion of the lesson introduces and gets students thinking and talking about the fundamental values of a democratic society. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of fundamental rights and responsibilities in a democracy and appreciate the effect democratic rights and responsibilities have on their daily lives. In most lessons an actual example from history is used to underscore the effects of Democratic Values on real lives. For instance, in the lesson on Equality, students will examine documents related to the women's suffrage movement from Woodrow Wilson's Presidency. In the lesson on Popular Sovereignty, students will discuss the impact of the press on voters, and in the lesson on Patriotism, students will learn about the controversial memorial to the Vietnam War, *The Wall* by Maya Lin.

THINK PIECE

These essays place the content of each picture book in a greater historical and social context. As they read these essays, students will question their assumptions about the basic civil rights

they may take for granted. These essays can be used in a variety of ways to stimulate powerful classroom discussion.

PENCIL POWER!

This list of authentic writing tasks is used to encourage students to select a meaningful venue for communicating their thoughts and ideas about democracy in America. Used as independent practice, Pencil Power essays and projects will serve as an authentic means for both student and teacher assessment of learning.

ASSESSMENT GUIDE

This guide, or rubric, will help you and your students evaluate their progress as they continue to explore the Core Democratic Values.

Time Frame

These lessons have been designed to fit into a typical fifty-minute class period. Most lessons will take two days to complete; however, you may easily adapt these lessons to fit your unique teaching situation. The following schedule is how I use them in my classroom:

Day 1

Warm-up, 10-15 minutes
Read Aloud, 20 minutes
Explore Democratic Values, 20 minutes

Day 2

Think Piece, 20 minutes
Pencil Power, 30 minutes

ARTS CONNECTION

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then what better way to enrich the learning experience for your students than to provide them with an arts experience? The values and principles of a society are often reflected in the arts. The activities suggested here will help you extend the lesson concepts to explore the beautiful art of the picture books and the culture featured in the story.



***Choral Reading:** Create a script, like a musical score, from the text of the story and assign small groups of students to read their parts out loud together. This works well with stories with repetitive patterns such as *The House That Jack Built* where specific groups can be assigned to read particular sections of the story so that their voices form a choral effect.

****Jig-saw Reading:** Break the story up into parts, typically a single paragraph or page, which you assign individual students to read out loud to a small group or the whole class. Provide each student with a photocopy of just the section they are to read. Seating the class in a large circle can facilitate the sense of community during this method of read aloud.