

Lesson Plan

Title

Who's Who in the House?

Audience

Grade 5

Overview

Mock Parliament Unit

1. Getting in role
 - a. Hook – Read aloud
 - b. Who am I?
 - c. Introductions in the House
2. What is my constituency?
3. Thinking through local issues using Plus Minus Interesting (PMI)
4. What is our party's position on this issue?
5. Mock Parliament

Objectives

To research the responsibilities of the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier, the Speaker, MLAs, Clerks and others working at the Legislature.

To role-play the passing of a Bill through the House.
(See C2 of Social Studies curriculum Grade 5)

Essential Questions

How can I make my voice heard when I think a change should happen in my community?

What do MLAs do?

How do government decisions affect my life?

Learning Activities

LESSON 1 – GETTING IN ROLE (3 PART LESSON)

Part 1 – Hook

Read one of the following stories aloud as a hook:

Maggie and the Chocolate War by Michelle Mulder ISBN: 978-1-897187-27-2

1. This is the true story of children on Vancouver Island who protested the rise in the price of chocolate bars from 5 cents to 7 cents. Follow up question: If you disagree with something that is happening in society, what might you do to effect change? Record ideas in a list or web.

... *continued*

Learning Activities

LESSON 1 – GETTING IN ROLE (3 PART LESSON) CONTINUED

Or

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss ISBN: 978-0-394-80078-3

2. This story highlights the importance of voice, listening, being heard social action and justice. An elephant named Horton learns that no matter how small the group, every voice counts! It is about a small community who cannot be heard over the louder and bigger voices around them. It is only when they all get together and make enough noise to be heard that their community is saved.
Follow up question: If you have an issue or problem that you feel should be addressed by the government, how can you make your voice heard? Record all ideas in a list or web.

Hopefully at least one child will have mentioned government. The teacher might say,

“While there may be many ways to make your voice heard and to effect change, we are going to study how government works and how all of our lives are affected by the decisions made by the people whom we elect and the people who help them.”

Part 2 – Who am I?

“To learn about how our parliamentary system works, we will create a Mock Parliament in class and each of us will take on a different role in our parliamentary system. Our final goal is to learn how each of us can make our voice heard when there is a real life issue that concerns us.”

Draw a role card to find out what your role will be in the Mock Parliament.

Roles on role cards:

Lieutenant Governor

Speaker

Premier

Cabinet Minister (eg: Attorney General, Minister of Finance, Minister of Education)

Leader of the Opposition

Members of the Legislative Assembly

House Leader

Party Whip

Clerks

Pages

Sergeant-at-Arms (optional)

Press Gallery members (optional)

... continued

Learning Activities

LESSON 1 – GETTING IN ROLE (3 PART LESSON)

Part 2 – Who am I? (continued)

Using the resources, create a *Who I Am* booklet containing:

- name of person currently holding that role
- responsibilities
- traditions associated with the role including attire and expected behaviour
- where I sit in the House

The teacher might say,

“In order to find out more about who your character is, we will conduct some background research to learn about your job, your responsibilities, associated traditions, your expected attire and behaviour and where you sit in the House. In order to communicate what you have learned about your character to the class, you will be expected to record the information you find in a booklet that introduces yourself.”

Multiple intelligences variations: a teacher may wish to give a menu of choices or allow for student creativity provided that the students demonstrate their knowledge through the activity, for example:

- *Musical Intelligence:* write a song or rap about your character to perform for the class alone or with others
- *Linguistic Intelligence:* write a poem (eg. a poem for two voices) to be read by the whole class
- *Bodily Kinesthetic:* Mime the responsibilities, traditions and expected behaviour of your character allowing the class to guess the aforementioned and providing clarification as needed
- *Visual-Spatial Intelligence:* create a symbolic map of your character that includes all of the required information (eg. ears for listening to constituents)
- *Intrapersonal:* write an emotion-filled journal about how you would feel assuming your character’s responsibilities, behaviour and traditions

... continued

Learning Activities

LESSON 1 – GETTING IN ROLE (3 PART LESSON) CONTINUED

Part 3 – Introductions in the House

Arrange desks in rows two sword lengths apart facing each other. Government on right of the Speaker and Opposition on left. The Premier and Leader of the Opposition are the fifth seats from the Speaker. The Attorney General sits to the left of Premier. The Minister of Finance sits to right of Premier.

Each party decides on where remaining MLAs will sit as determined by the House Leader. Clerks are seated in front of Speaker at the Clerks' Table. The respective Party Whips are responsible for ensuring MLAs in their party attend in the House.

Each person introduces himself or herself (30-45 second intro).

LESSON 2 – WHAT IS MY CONSTITUENCY?

Goal: Research current events and issues in your constituency.

Use handout entitled *My Constituency – Appendix 1 attached.*

For this activity, Clerks, the Sergeant-at-Arms and pages should be paired up with MLAs so that everyone has an opportunity to research a constituency.

Use handout entitled *What If Students Work in Pairs? - Appendix 2 attached.*

*Note: The issue selected forms the basis of the Lesson 3.

LESSON 3 – THINKING THROUGH LOCAL ISSUES USING PLUS MINUS INTERESTING (PMI)

Class meets in respective parties as determined in Lesson 2.

Within each party, divide into groups of four.

Use handout entitled *PMI Handout – Appendix 3 attached.*

Space at top to state issue and suggested course of action. Three blank columns to fill in pros, cons and other points worthy of consideration.

Task in fours:

1. Pairs work together to write pros for two issues.
2. Switch papers.
3. Pairs work together to write cons.
4. Switch back the papers.
5. Pairs work together to add additional points in any PMI columns.

... continued

Learning Activities (continued)

LESSON 4 – WHAT IS YOUR PARTY’S POSITION ON THIS ISSUE?

1. Each child writes a piece of persuasive writing on his/her issue to be read in the Mock Parliament. Opposition party members’ must lead up to a question for the Government.
2. Each party meets to review PMIs.
3. Each MLA reads aloud persuasive writing. Then the party takes an issue on that issue.
4. Premier or Leader of Opposition should exercise leadership during this process. All can give input, but final decision is left with the Premier or Leader of the Opposition.
5. Rank issues within your party from most to least important with a view to which issue(s) will first be presented in the House.
6. Each party will present one proposed Bill to the House at next lesson.

LESSON 5 – MOCK PARLIAMENT

Seating: desks should be arranged in rows facing each other. The Speaker sits at the front and seated in front of him are three Clerks.

Factoid: Members of Parliament used to bring swords into the House. According to tradition, the two sides of the House sit two sword lengths apart so that no blood will be shed in the House.

1st Reading of Government bill – its Introduction with 2 minute explanation
Move to table bill.

1st Reading of Opposition bill – its Introduction with 2 minute explanation
Move to table bill.

Note: Bills are not debated in the House after the 1st Reading.

Each Caucus meets to strategize and prepare arguments, counter-arguments and to anticipate the other party’s questions. Each party decides if they will vote along party lines or if it will be an open vote. This preparation would be strengthened by using Academic Controversy to debate the issues.

2nd Reading of each bill in the House,
Debate each bill’s general principles and goals.

... *continued*

Learning Activities (continued)

LESSON 5 – MOCK PARLIAMENT

Committee of the Whole – this is the stage of the Bill where it is debated line by line.

3rd Reading – final reading of the Bill
Vote.

Royal Assent by Lieutenant Governor.

Repeat Lesson 5 as desired.

Suggested follow up:

As a group of educators, we feel that students will become engaged in the political process by having the opportunity to advocate for a cause and by having first-hand experience with the legislative process. Therefore, it would be useful to follow up the Mock Parliament with the identification of a real local issue and engaging the class in collective letter writing to local MLAs and/or Cabinet Ministers.

Writing About Issues:

- The PMI and Academic Controversy are excellent springboards for writing since children have had an opportunity to research, verbally rehearse their thoughts and listen to the ideas of others. Children can be asked to write a summary of all sides of the issue concluding with their opinion on action that should be taken.

Duration of Activity

This unit of study should take about two weeks to complete with one lesson occurring each day and a few days of research and preparation for the mock Parliament role plays.

Learning Outcomes

1. Defend a position on a regional issue in light of alternative perspectives.
2. Design, implement and assess strategies to address community problems or projects.
3. Summarize the purposes of municipal and provincial governments.

Materials & Resources

LESSON 1:

Part 1 – *Maggie and the Chocolate War* by Michelle Mulder
Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss

Part 2 - The following resources will help your learners discover the Legislature, learn important vocabulary and collect key information:

Discover Your Legislature DVD includes a Glossary (link on website)
www.leg.bc.ca

Lieutenant Governor's website www.ltgov.bc.ca

Parliamentary Alphabet, A-Z or
L'Alphabet Parlementaire ISBN 978-0-7726-5853-1

Free Fact Sheets and Brochures available through the Public Education & Outreach Office at the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia or e-mailing PEO@leg.bc.ca.

LESSON 2:

Suggested Resources

Free monthly newspaper particularly appropriate for ESL students: *The Westcoast Reader* possibly from the Pacific Edge Press.

Individual City websites. For example, a student may look up the *Fernie Free Press* online to find out what issues currently face the community.

L'Express du Pacifique disponible en ligne <http://www.lexpress.org/>

Assessment and Evaluation

Share the evaluation rubrics with your class prior to the assignment. Criteria is listed on the left. Basic information is either complete or incomplete and thus does not have a level 2 or 3. The rubric avoids asking for a given number of ideas and rather focuses on the quality of ideas.

Who I Am booklet or alternative activity evaluation:

Criteria	1 – not yet meeting expectations	2 – minimally meeting expectations	3 – fully meeting expectations	4 – exceeding expectations
Basic Information (required)	Incomplete	Level 2 does not apply	Level 3 does not apply to this category	Name of current person holding role Name of riding and place on map Where I sit in the House
Responsibilities	Does not include most main ideas or focuses on insignificant details	Names some duties; includes one or more major omissions	Names all major duties	Names all major duties and Explains importance of each responsibility Describes status relative to other positions
Parliamentary traditions associated with the position	No examples	Few examples simply explained	Special clothing Expected behaviour in the House	Explains the story or significance of traditions

Persuasive Writing rubrics:

Link to performance standards

[Rubistar](#)

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NOTE: The ideas and opinions expressed in this classroom activity belong to their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Public Education and Outreach office only edits for clarity.

Appendix 1

Name: _____

My Constituency

Factoid: Did you know that a constituency's boundaries used to be determined by how far one could ride in a day? Hence, a constituency is also known as a **riding**.

My Character's full name: _____

Name of my Constituency: _____

Major cities in my constituency: _____

Look up local community newspapers online. What issues currently face your constituency? Name several.

-
-
-
-

Choose the one issue that interests you the most and write down several background facts about the issue using key words only:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Who are the stakeholders or the people who are affected by this issue?

-
-
-
-
-
-

Bibliography:

Note: You should use multiple sources of information.

Appendix 2

What if students work in pairs?

When students work in pairs, it can be difficult to assess their individual knowledge. One way to overcome this problem is to interview children near the end of their learning activity. For the *My Constituency* assignment (see hand out which can also be a mini-project), it may be useful to ask some or all of the following questions as you circulate, so that students can demonstrate their knowledge.

1. What issues currently face your constituency?
2. How do people in the community feel about this?
3. Why is this an important issue for these people?
4. So what facts have you learned about _____ ?
5. Tell me more. (Use generous wait time as research shows it improves the quality of answers.) Use this prompt with eye contact to elicit more information.
6. Where did you find your information? Did you use another source of information? (And by the way, are these listed in the bibliography?)
7. What is the most surprising thing you have learned about your constituency?
8. If you lived in this riding, what kind of job might you have?

These questions may be somewhat repetitive, but as you circulate and children are working, it may give a more of a conversational feel to what is essentially an oral defense.

An informal way to get information about how teams are working together is to have them draw a participation pie (a circle or pie divided into pieces) that shows what portion of work each person did during that work period. This informal snapshot can give you insight into who to monitor and support more closely.

Appendix 3

Name: _____

Plus - Minus - Interesting

Clearly state your issue and a suggested course of action:

P - Plus
(advantages)

M - Minus
(disadvantages)

I - Interesting
(additional thoughts that are
neither advantages nor
disadvantages)