



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume IV: American Political Thought

Democracy in Action

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.04.01
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Each week students will be introduced to a new American political thinker. A diverse and equitable view of our population is necessary to achieve realistic values in political thought. In order to encourage these values I will use the visions and action plans of Cesar Chavez, Jane Addams, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Beecher Stowe, through story tellings. These stories will present a diverse cross section of political thinkers. The abolishment of slavery, suffrage movement, social reform of nineteenth century, and organization of migrant workers have each greatly affected political thought in North America. Students will be able to solve problems at class meetings and engage in dramatics as their favorite political thinker. The voices honed here will reemerge during future play productions. Once all four political thinkers have been introduced, the class will draft a vision statement that contains a problem they would like to solve either in school or the larger community. After the vision statement is drawn up they will create an action plan to accomplish their goal.

The students will be introduced to the art of murals and marionettes. In their own right each of these art forms have communicated and continue to communicate political unrest, reform and change throughout diverse cultures. Through each of these mediums they will express their vision. The planning of the murals and construction of the marionettes will integrate our math and science curriculum. The writing of the plays and mural narratives will incorporate the writing process. Connections to our school and community's political system will be established through trips to our principle, School Planning and Management Team (SPAT), the mayors office and the board of education. They will present their vision and ask for comments and or suggestions from each organization. Investigating and working with each of these groups will empower the students and contribute to their value systems. They will know how to effect change.

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