



Good Citizens Know....What Makes a Good Citizen?

Grades 1 and 2

Objective: Students will be introduced to good citizenship through the story *I Am Abraham Lincoln* by Brad Meltzer.

Time: 1 hour

Tennessee Social Studies Standards 2019-2020: *1st grade: Government and Civics, 1.15, 1.17, 1.18; History, 1.26; 2nd grade: Government and Civics, 2.28; History, 2.29*

Materials for activities:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Worksheet
- *I Am Abraham Lincoln*, written by Brad Meltzer and illustrated by Christopher Eliopoulos

Vocabulary: laws, citizens, government, vote

Anticipatory Set: Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. That means that he had a big job making certain that **laws** in our country were followed. Laws are made by our **government**, the people who **citizens** choose to create the type of country we want to live in. Laws say what citizens (the people who live in our country and **vote**) may and may not do. Breaking the law can come with much more serious consequences than breaking rules. Rules may come to mind for your students when you discuss laws. Ultimately, rules and laws should keep a group safe. However, there are differences in who makes a law/rule and severity of the consequences for breaking the law/rule. Student's parents may have rules for them: they may have chores that they have to do each day, or they might have a bedtime. Your classroom likely has rules, too: students are likely expected to help around the classroom and to listen when the teacher is talking. Families and classrooms have rules; governments have laws. Students cannot always choose who makes the rules in their family or class, but when they grow up, they will have a say in their government and its laws. If they do not like a law when they grow up, they can work to change it, just like Abraham Lincoln.

Pass out the "What Makes a Good Citizen?" worksheet. Look over the worksheet together before you read I Am Abraham Lincoln. Ask your students to pay attention to the five words/phrases in the worksheet box.

Discussion:

- 1.) Do you have any rules in your family? Can you name three? Why do you think that you have rules?
- 2.) What are our classroom rules? Why do you think that we have these rules?
- 3.) Are there any rules that you wish you did not have to follow? Why?
- 4.) Why do you think that it is important to treat others in your family, class, or community fairly?

**Activities:**

To be completed in the classroom

- 1.) Have the students complete the “Good Citizens Know...What Makes a Good Citizen” worksheet. After reading the story and completing the worksheet, have a group discussion on each characteristic of a good citizen. As a class, have them reflect on how they can be a good citizen.
- 2.) Bringing the class together, ask them to create a list of classroom rules. Each student may list several rules on a sheet of paper. Have them discuss with one another why they think those rules should exist. As a class, have them vote on a few rules to help govern the classroom. Consider making the top choices a part of your classroom rules.
- 3.) The characteristics that made Abraham Lincoln a good citizen also made him a good President. In fact, we celebrate President’s Day in the United States on the third Monday in February each year because Abraham Lincoln and George Washington’s birthdays fall close to this date (February 9, 1809, and February 22, 1732). Americans wanted to remember the hard work that these two presidents and other presidents put into making our country a better place to live. Based on the story that they read, ask students to identify what a President does. How do they think that each of Lincoln’s characteristics as a citizen made him a good president?