

Jim Cotter: An Appalachian Renaissance

Grade Levels

7-12

Description

This lesson draws on essential questions pertinent to a language arts or social studies classroom, including those related to civic responsibility, personal engagement, and individual development. These activities may be adapted to include elements of texts otherwise being addressed in class. Each portion of this lesson may be altered to suit the particular needs, academic language considerations, and reading level of the classroom.

Standards Met

Ohio Common Core State Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.10/8.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.10
- By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literacy nonfiction in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.10
- By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

ODE Grade 8 Social Studies Standards:

Government Strand

18. Participation in social and civic groups can lead to the attainment of individual and public goals.

ODE HS Social Studies Standards:

Civic Participation and Skills

6. Effective civic participation involves identifying problems or dilemmas, proposing appropriate solutions, formulating action plans, and assessing the positive and negative results of actions taken.

7. Individuals can participate through non-governmental organizations to help address humanitarian needs.

Concept Addressed

Civic involvement, the interactions between individuals and their environment, an individual's sense of purpose, and the impact of an individual on society.

Learning Objectives

The students will become familiar with an Ohio Trustee and his civic participation. They will be able to generate and problem-solve ideas for coping with issues within their neighborhoods, and identify ways in which individuals can make changes on their own.

Learning Strategies

Students will use Writer's Notebooks or individual writings to begin synthesizing their ideas surrounding the topic. Once students have accumulated their ideas as a group, students will divide into structured groups of 4, plan their neighborhood interventions, and share their ideas using a Numbered Heads Together discussion strategy, which fosters whole-group participation in the planning process. This process is described at <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/group-work/cooperative-learning/48538.html>

Materials Needed

- Writer's Notebooks, or sheets of paper for each student if notebooks are not utilized in the classroom
- White board or similar place to record student ideas.
- Computer with internet access, Smart Board/Projector, and/or other means of displaying internet video to the whole class.
- Worksheets

Considerations

Place students in assigned groups of four prior to the start of class, so that when students take their seats they are in their groups, with each group member having a 1, 2, 3, or 4 on his/her desk. Teachers can establish groups based on their particular classroom needs.

Assessments of Learning

- Student responses to writing prompts and brainstorming.
- Completion of worksheet.

Instructional Outline

- Students will have the following prompt displayed in the classroom upon entry: “One thing I would change about my neighborhood is...” Students will freewrite in their notebooks and generate ideas. (5 minutes).
- As a class, pool ideas for what students wish to change about their neighborhoods on the board. When appropriate encourage students to expand on their statements and explain why they wish to make these changes. (5 minutes).
- Ask students how one person might be able to work toward making some of the described changes. Feel free to integrate classroom texts and themes into your introduction (2 minutes).
- As a class, view the Ohio American Trustee video of Jim Cotter:
<http://www.artsci.uc.edu/departments/communication/research-and-scholarship/ohio-american-trustees-project-/jimcotter.html>
- Explain to groups that it’s their turn to figure out ways to improve their environments. Give each group time to discuss and select a neighborhood issue from the list on the board. Each group must select a different issue. If you wish you may randomize the choices or assign them to groups according to your classroom structure and management style (5 minutes).
- Hand out the worksheet included here. Explain that groups will have the opportunity to discuss and come up with their plan of action to tackle the problem they selected. As the worksheet indicates, the group’s strategy must be the type of work that the individuals in the group are capable of doing, rather than a hypothetical situation or call for someone else to accomplish, and it must not rely on an existing structure (for example, joining a soup kitchen to deal with homelessness in the neighborhood-- that relies on the existence of that structure and participation in a larger group). The challenge here lies in uncovering individual solutions to larger or more systemic issues. (25 minutes).
- Students will share their ideas using the Numbered Heads Together method. Ask the following questions of the groups, giving the groups 30 seconds to confer and then asking (for each answer) for the Number 1s, 2s, 3s, or 4s to raise their hands, and then calling on one of those depending on the group you wish to have speak. (10 minutes).

Some questions may include:

- What was hard about coming up with something you could do on your own to fix the problem?
- How did your group decide to address the problem?
- Do you think others would join you? Why or why not?

Student Action Plan

Group members:

Type of problem:

Neighborhood the problem affects:

Action plan:

Remember, this is something you need to be able to do yourselves, without relying on another organization to take care of it. Recall how Jim Cotter simply got out his own paintbrush and paint rather than seeking help from the city or a company. Include how long something like this might take you to do, and when you would be able to do it as busy students!