

Equality - A Democratic Value We Share

Lesson Plan

One of the most fundamental human rights is equality. Thomas Jefferson put it before Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness in the American Declaration of Independence. The Founders of the US Constitution understood that people will always differ in native physical and intellectual abilities. Their goal of equality was keep the pathways to education and economic success open for everyone, and to prevent the wealthy from grabbing political and economic power as they had in Europe. A society governed by equality should guarantee that rewards would be earned on the basis of achievement and merit, and providing democratic public education allows all children an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

Key Concepts: Today, the ideal of equality is elusive and varies from country to country, and people to people. At the elementary level, students simply need to understand the difference between mathematical equality, (two things that are the same or identical) and political equality (all people are guaranteed the same rights and responsibilities) as described by their constitutions.

Materials: One printout of the Equality coloring sheet for each student, and crayons or markers.

Procedure:

1. Write each vocabulary word on the board. Ask students to help define each word and write a simple definition after each word. Ask students to copy each word onto a sheet of paper and then copy the definitions. This list will be added to in future lessons.

Vocabulary

Citizen - someone who is a legal member of a group or country

Constitution - a written list of the rules people agree to live by and the rights of the people

Constitutional Law - freedoms, rights and rules described by a constitution

Equality - having the same choices and opportunities as others

Europe - is the second smallest continent

Freedom - to be able to choose to do some things without anyone stopping you

Germany - is a country in Europe

Government - people with the power to make rules and force others to obey those rules

Judge - a person who is given the right to decide legal matters

Liberty - freedom to act and think without anyone stopping you

Public - something provided the people's through tax dollars, or a place that is open to everyone in the community

Public Education - schools paid for by taxes and open to everyone in a community

Right - freedom or privilege to do something

Rule - tells us how to act and what to do

United States - is a country in North America

2. Project the first animated cartoon called Equality. Discuss each frame after it has played. Ask students to react to the cartoon when completed. The judge said that just like other citizens, the Skinks have the same rights and freedoms as everyone else. Ask students to describe ways that they are treated with equality at home or school.

3. Pass out the Equality coloring sheet and ask students to draw a picture of how they are treated with equality of the lives.

Assessment:

A review of each student's drawing will help you assess whether each student has grasped the concept of Equality. Because this is the most fundamental and essential democratic value, consider reviewing the animation with students who did not depict an appropriate image on their coloring sheet.

