

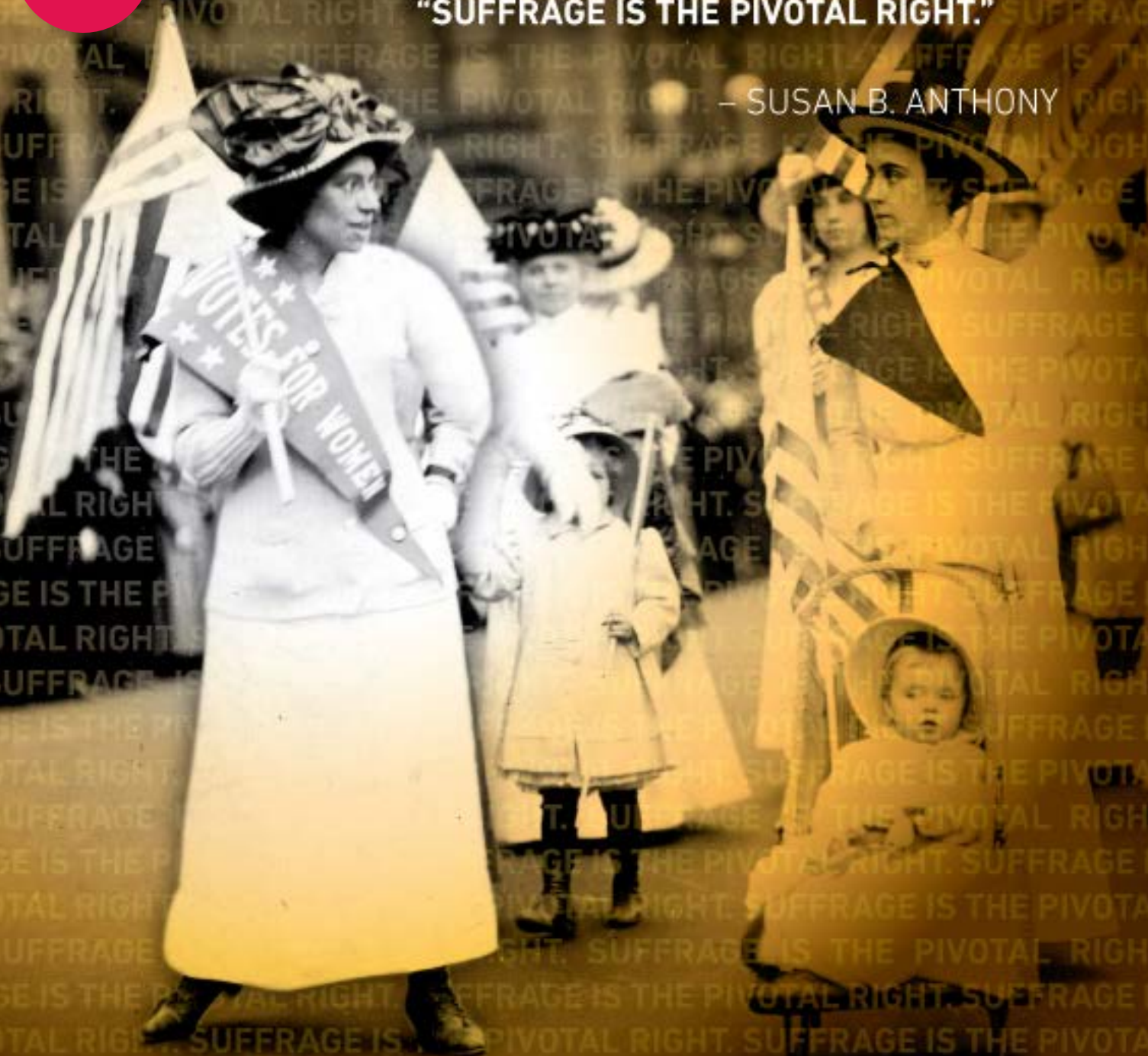
CIVICS IN LITERATURE

GRADES
K-4

★★ *August Lesson Plan* ★★

"SUFFRAGE IS THE PIVOTAL RIGHT."

– SUSAN B. ANTHONY



ABOUT THIS LESSON

Next August, a landmark piece of legislation turns 50. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, prohibits racial discrimination in voting. This month's installment of the National Constitution Center's Civics in Literature initiative features suggested readings and activities designed to teach students about the struggles faced by African Americans and women in particular to earn the right to become active participants in American democracy.

Civics in Literature is designed to meet the common core standards for students from kindergarten through fourth grade. These materials strengthen foundational skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Civics in Literature allows younger students to access complex topics and issues by meeting them at their level and guiding them to a higher level of understanding.

READING LIST

Granddaddy's Gift

by Margaree King Mitchell

The Ballot Box Battle

by Emily Arnold McCully



AUTHOR

Anne Spector

Anne Spector is an educator whose career has taken her into classrooms from first grade to 3rd year law students. She has taught in both the School District of Philadelphia and the School District of Cheltenham Township where she also served as a Central Office Administrator. Mrs. Spector holds an undergraduate degree in psychology, a teaching degree in Secondary English, a graduate degree in Reading, and Elementary and Secondary Principal Certification.

Throughout Mrs. Spector's career she has dedicated much of her time to developing and implementing programs that promote student voice and citizenship education through a marriage of literacy and civic literacy. With a team of educators that includes her writing partner Elaine Scarpino, Anne is helping to create the **We the Civic Kids** program for elementary students, grades K to 5. Her work in this field began over twenty years ago when she collaborated with Temple University's LEAP program (Law Education and Participation) to help in the development of law-related education material. She continued her work in elementary civic education by creating a K to 4 program known as **Let's Take Two...Two Steps Back, Two Minutes to Think, Two People to Solve a Problem**.

After retiring from Cheltenham, Anne joined the staff at the National Constitution Center as the Director of PennCORD, First Lady Marjorie O. Rendell's Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy. Through her work with PennCORD Mrs. Spector created S.T.A.R. Force (Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly), a K to 6 program that married literacy and civic literacy as a way to teach basic civic knowledge, promote public action between and among our youngest citizens, and provide practice in democratic deliberation.

Mrs. Spector embraces the notion that...**reading is our first freedom**. She is thrilled to be able to bring this philosophy to children and their teachers across the country through materials that highlight children's literature with lessons that connect young minds to complex concepts and build student voice.

CIVICS IN LITERATURE

FEATURED BOOK AND ACTIVITIES

Granddaddy's Gift by Margaree King Mitchell

In this book, students will learn about Little Joe and her granddaddy, who lived in a small town in Mississippi during segregation. Granddaddy, through his courage and pride, became the first black man to register to vote in his town. Through his actions, he taught his granddaughter about the importance of education, determination, and self-respect.

Activity #1: Little Joe asked her granddaddy why she had to go to school. Granddaddy responded, “I want you to learn as much as you can so when you grow up you can choose what you want to do.” If you had to choose today what career to pursue when you grow up, what would you choose to do? Why was education so important to Little Joe’s granddaddy?

Activity #2: In 1890, Mississippi wrote a new state constitution. In it they added two requirements that men had to achieve in order to be able to register to vote—to pay a poll tax a full two years before an election and to pass a literacy test. The requirements were designed to try to prevent black men from being able to vote.

At a town meeting in his small town in Mississippi, granddaddy volunteered to be the first black man to try to register to vote. Why do you think people did not want their children to play with Little Joe after they found out her granddaddy was going to take the test? If you were Little Joe, what would you say to your classmates to help them understand what your granddaddy was doing and why?

Activity #3: Only 17% of registered Pennsylvania voters actually voted in this year’s primary election in May. What ideas do you have to encourage more people to vote?

Activity #4: The 26th Amendment gave citizens who are 18 years of age or older the right to vote. Do you think the age to vote should remain as it is? Should it be lowered? Or should it be raised? Be prepared to support your answer.

Whether planning a field trip, looking for innovative ways to enhance classroom instruction or seeking a deeper understanding of American history and active citizenship, the National Constitution Center is an educator's ultimate civic learning resource.

Learn more at
CONSTITUTIONCENTER.ORG/EDUCATION



THE MUSEUM OF *We the People*

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