



# CIVICS IN LITERATURE

★★ *March Lesson Plan* ★★

GRADES  
K-4



“EDUCATION IS TRANSFORMATIONAL.  
IT CHANGES LIVES. THAT IS WHY  
PEOPLE WORK SO HARD TO BECOME EDUCATED  
AND WHY EDUCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN  
THE KEY TO THE AMERICAN DREAM...”

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

This installment of the National Constitution Center's *Civics in Literature* initiative features suggested readings and activities for teaching Women's History Month in your classroom. *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 higher level of understanding.



## 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.

## READING LIST

*I Could Do That*

by Linda Arms White

*Rosie Revere, Engineer*

by Andrea Beaty

*Rabble Rousers*

by Cheryl Harness

*Paper Bag Princess*

by Robert Munsch

*Ruby's Wish*

by Shirin Yim Bridges

## FEATURED BOOKS AND ACTIVITIES

*Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty

Read *Rosie Revere, Engineer* to your class as a group and try the following activities.

**Activity #1:** Rosie's aunt tells her, "The only true failure can come if you quit."

Do you think a leader is someone who never quits until he/she is successful, or is someone who knows when to quit and try something else?

**Activity #2:** Choose from the list below and do research about one of the inventors and her famous invention.

- Mary Anderson, windshield wiper
- Marion Donovan, disposable diaper
- Ruth Handler, Barbie Doll
- Lynda Newman, hair brush
- Ruth Wakefield, chocolate chip cookie

**Activity #3:** At the time when the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution, women could not vote in a national election; today, 226 years later, women serve as governors, senators, Supreme Court justices, Secretaries of State, and presidential nominees. But a woman has never been president.

Do you think a woman would make a good president? Why or why not?

## *Ruby's Wish* by Shirin Yim Bridges

Read *Ruby's Wish* to your class as a group and try the following activities.

**Activity #1:** According to the book *Ruby's Wish*, “When the boys had finished their studies for the day, they were free to play. But the girls had to learn about cooking and cleaning house.” Do you think both boys and girls in today’s world should learn to cook and clean?

**Activity #2:** We read a lot about the people who are the first to accomplish something. Do you believe the second or third person to do something is important too? Why or why not?

**Activity #3:** Even today there are times when girls are in situations where they want to do something and someone tries to stop them just because they are girls. The following is a *Sticky Situation* that has been adapted from the National Constitution Center’s elementary program for civic engagement called *We the Civics Kids*. (Find the entire curriculum on the National Constitution Center’s website.)

### **What would you do in this Sticky Situation and why?**

It is recess and you and your friends head out to play kickball with your friends from another class. A group of boys who don’t usually join you have decided they want to play too. Teams need to be chosen for your game. One of the boys who you normally don’t play with is chosen as captain. This boy declares that no girls can play on his team!

*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.*

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