



So You Want to Be President?

LEVEL

Grade Four

OBJECTIVES

Students will

- determine the meaning of words as they are used in text.
- evaluate the “best word for the job.”

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- *So You Want to Be President?* By Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small
- Choral Reading Script
- Paper for each group for brainstorming and listing
- Reference materials (hard copies and/or digital) dictionary and thesaurus for each group
- Sentence strips with “meaningful word chunks” written on them

ABOUT THE LESSON

This lesson guides students to use resources in order to determine the meaning of words in text and to analyze an author’s word choice.

Through the use of choral reading and drama, students will develop fluency while paraphrasing and summarizing informational text. Choral reading builds fluency, self-confidence, and vocabulary. It also builds “community” in the classroom and motivates all readers through vocabulary building and risk taking.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

Passages for National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) English lessons are selected to challenge students, while lessons and activities make texts accessible. These activities have a readability measure on level for grade four and should be accessible to students with guidance from the teacher. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.



COGNITIVE RIGOR

ELA lessons for NMSI are designed to guide students through a continuum of increasingly complex thinking skills, including those outlined in taxonomies such as the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Levels. The activities in this lesson begin with students using resources to find word meaning (DOK 1). They will also recognize that authors choose words on purpose for effect (DOK 2). They will analyze the use of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings (DOK 3) and then create a choral reading that applies their “research” of words (DOK 4). The designed activities require students to engage in all levels of thinking identified in the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy.

PRIOR LEARNING

Students will need to have read, *So You Want to Be President* (Discovery Education online has a video with “talking characters”). Students will also need to have had some practice using dictionaries and thesauruses and some practice using synonyms.

CONNECTION TO GRADE-LEVEL COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**EXPLICITLY ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON**

- L4.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L4.5c Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms)
- 4.L4c Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases (consistent with punctuation).
- L4a Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in texts) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L4.3a Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

RI4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

Ask and find answers to questions about power, authority, and governance in the school community and state (Processes)

- Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area
RI4.4 (Understand/Analyze)

ACCOMMODATIONS/SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTIONS

- Gifted and Talented (GT) – Have GT students make a “playlist” of song titles that could accompany the Choral Reading or put the Choral Reading to background music. They can also design the CD jacket.
- English Language Learners (ELL) – Have ELL students create a Power Point slide (one slide) with pictures of their group’s word.
- Special Education (Sp. Ed.) – Have Sp. Ed. students work with a “peer” in their assigned group to make up hand signals/symbols (choreography) to add to the Choral Reading.

ASSESSMENTS

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- Graphic organizers

The following kinds of summative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- Choral Reading Activity

RESOURCES

- www.discoveryeducation.com (video “So You Want to Be President”)
- Word Central (www.wordcentral.com) for finding synonyms

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Students often think a word can be pulled from the dictionary or thesaurus and used without understanding its precise use. They must read many texts and analyze the precise word choice in order to become skilled at choosing the “best word for the job.”

TECHNOLOGY SUGGESTIONS

Students can make personal “thesauruses” for “Other Words” for difficult vocabulary by creating PowerPoint® vocabulary slides or by using Word Art to “design” word definitions.

Lesson 4th Grade with Teaching Suggestions

1. Using sentence strips, break the excerpt into the following meaningful chunks:

...has taken this oath...

I do solemnly swear

I will faithfully execute

....preserve, protect,.....

....and defend.....

....the Constitution of the United States.”

2. Display (document camera, board, overhead) the first paragraph of the excerpt.
Every single President has taken this oath: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”
3. Point out that following the word “swear” there is a synonym given (affirm).
4. Ask students why they think the word affirm was provided to the reader.
5. Demonstrate looking at the definition of the word “swear” in a dictionary (A “kid-friendly” digital dictionary is www.wordcentral.com).
6. Demonstrate looking up the word in a thesaurus (digital or hard copy). List the synonyms and discuss which ones would be appropriate for use in the context.

7. Assign groups to use the dictionary and thesaurus to record synonyms for their assigned words (oath, solemnly, execute, preserve, defend, constitution). Place paper at each group for recording. Hang these papers around the room so that students can evaluate word choices. SAMPLE:

Oath	Solemnly	Execute	Regulate	Preserve	Defend	Constitution
Promise	Earnestly	Administer	Allocate	Conserve	Cherish	Composition
Pledge	Seriously	Deliver	Coordinate	Guard	Fortify	Form
Profession	Soberly	Authorize	Direct	Retain	Insure	Structure
Affirmation	Impressively	Apply	Govern	Maintain	Save	Frame
Contract	Honestly		Guide	Safeguard	Sustain	Design
				Continue	Uphold	

8. Have students choose the synonyms they want to use and apply the words in the Choral Reading (see attached).
9. Demonstrate how to read the choral reading. Explain that a choral reading is a reading in unison (“reading” like a choir).
10. Have students read chorally (plug in the synonyms that students chose). They can bring/use props to add to their presentation (Abraham Lincoln hats, flags, etc.).



So You Want To Be President?

Look at the following paragraph:

Every single President has taken this oath: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Notice the highlighted words. A synonym is a word that means almost the same as another word. The word “swear” has a synonym following it (affirm). The word *swear* means almost the same as the word *affirm*.

Why do you think the author gave a synonym for the word swear? _____

Write the dictionary definition for the word swear: _____

What “other words” can you find that mean almost the same as the word swear (Hint: Use a thesaurus):

Circle the words in your list above that would keep the meaning the same in the text.

Your teacher will assign your group a word. With your group, use the dictionary and thesaurus to record synonyms for your assigned word. Record your synonyms on the paper provided.

A choral reading is a passage that has assigned “parts” like a play. When it says, “All,” that means that everyone reads that part chorally, in unison, like a choir.

Listen and follow along as your teacher reads through the Choral Reading. Find your assigned word in the Choral Reading. Evaluate the synonyms you found for your assigned word. Decide, with your group, which synonym you would like to use in place of your assigned word.



Choral Reading: So You Want to Be President

All: Every single President has taken this oath:

One Student: PROMISE (or another synonym for oath)!

Girls: “I do solemnly,

Boys: or (SYNONYM for solemnly),

Girls: swear,

Boys: or affirm,

All: that I will faithfully execute

One Student: (SYNONYM for execute)

All: the office of the President

One Student: of the United States,

One Student: and will to the best of my ability to

One Student: PRESERVE

All: (SYNONYM for preserve)

One Student: PROTECT

One Student: and DEFEND

All: (SYNONYM for defend)

One Student: the Constitution

All: (SYNONYM for Constitution)

One Student: of the United States.”

One Student: Only thirty-five words!

Boys: But it’s a big order

Girls: if you’re President of this country.

One Student: Abraham Lincoln was tops at filling that order!

One Student (dressed as Abraham Lincoln): “I know very well that many others might in this matter or as in others, do better than I can,”

All: HE SAID!

Student as Abraham Lincoln: “But...I am here. I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.”

Boys: That’s the bottom line.

One Student: TALL

One Student: SHORT

One Student: FAT

One Student: THIN

One Student: TALKATIVE

One Student: QUIET

One Student: VAIN

One Student: HUMBLE

One Student: LAWYER

One Student: TEACHER

One Student: OR SOLDIER

Girls: this is what most of our Presidents have tried to do

Boys: each in his own way.

Girls: Some succeeded.

Boys: Some failed.

All: If you want to be President,

One Student: a good President,

Girls: pattern yourself

Boys: after the best.

One Student: Our best

One Student: have asked

One Student: more of themselves

One Student: than they thought they could give.

Boys: They had the courage,

Girls: spirit,

All: and will

Boys: to do what they knew was right.

Girls: Most of all,

All: their first priority

One Student: has always been

Girls: the people

Boys: and the country

All: they served.