

STORYBOOK COUNTY

Classroom Lessons Built on YMCA Youth and Government

14 LESSONS

30-MINUTE SESSIONS

GRADES 9 TO 12

PUBLIC DOMAIN STORIES

AT A GLANCE

SUBJECT	Civics, Government, Law, Literature, Public Speaking, Media, Service Learning
GRADE LEVEL	9-12 (adaptable for middle school)
FORMAT	Each lesson is a stand-alone plan of three or four 30-minute sessions, written in the same structure as the Literary Character Mock Trial and Literary Character Trial Proposals lessons. Lessons can be taught alone, in any order, or in sequence as a full model-government unit that ends with a classroom "State Conference."

► THE DEVICE

Every lesson borrows the same trick as the two original lessons: real YMCA Youth and Government processes are practiced on fictional, public domain characters and places. Students argue about Humpty Dumpty's wall, Jack's beanstalk and the Three Little Pigs' building code instead of real legislation, which keeps the focus on the process, the procedure and the skill rather than on real-world politics. Every character used in this series is in the public domain (fairy tales, folklore, nursery rhymes, Aesop, Irving, Dickens, Carroll, Baum, Twain, Grahame, Barrie and similar). Teachers may substitute any other public domain character.

► THE SETTING: STORYBOOK COUNTY

All lessons take place in Storybook County, a fictional state-level jurisdiction with the same three branches students see at a Youth and Government conference.

- **The Legislature:** two chambers, the Assembly and the Senate, with Committees, a Speaker, a Senate President, Committee Chairs and Clerks.
- **The Executive:** a Governor, a Lieutenant Governor, a Secretary of State who runs elections, a Comptroller, an Attorney General and a Cabinet of Commissioners.
- **The Judiciary:** a Trial Court (the original Mock Trial lesson) and the Court of Appeals (the Appellate Court lesson), with a Chief Justice, Justices, an Attorney General and a Public Defender.
- **The Fourth Estate:** the Storybook Gazette, the county's Press Corps.
- **Civil Society:** Lobbyists and Youth Advocates representing groups such as the Woodland Residents Association, the Three Pigs Homebuilders Guild and the Porridge Producers Cooperative.

Recurring districts, which can double as student groups: Nursery Rhyme Village (Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill, Old Mother Hubbard, Little Bo Peep), the Deep Woods (the Big Bad Wolf, the Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel), Beanstalk Hollow (Jack, the Giant's household, the cow dealer), Dickens Row (Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Jacob Marley),

Sleepy Hollow (Rip Van Winkle, Ichabod Crane), Wonderland (the Queen of Hearts, the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit), and the Riverbank (Mr. Toad, Ratty, Mole, Badger).

► THE LESSONS AND THE YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT PROCESS EACH TEACHES

01

Writing a Bill: An Act to Amend the Storybook County Building Code.

The bill format (purpose, definitions, provisions, justification, fiscal and environmental implications, effective date), the original-law rule, underlining and strikeouts, and the Seal of State Approval checklist.

02

Committee Hearing and Bill Ranking.

The hearing sequence (author's opening, technical questions, con and pro debate, summation), the Committee Chair's script, Clerk duties, the ranking rubric, and which bills advance to the chamber.

03

Floor Debate and Parliamentary Procedure: The Humpty Dumpty Wall Safety Act.

Recognition and decorum, the motions allowed in chamber, amendments, previous question, division, and the vote.

04

Presiding Officer Training: Running the Chamber.

Gavel signals, the chair's script, ruling on points of order, keeping time, and the Clerk and Sergeant at Arms roles. Every student presides.

05

The Governor's Cabinet: Bill Review, Signing and Veto Override.

Cabinet subgroups writing pro statements, con statements and questions, the Comptroller's fiscal review, the Governor's Office signing meeting, veto messages and the two-thirds override.

06

The Governor's Voice: Conference Theme and State of the State.

Choosing a theme, drafting the Opening, State of the State and Closing speeches, endorsing bills, and the Lieutenant Governor's service focus.

07

Running for Office: Candidate Speeches and the General Election.

Candidate forms, the three-minute speech tied to a core value, gavel time signals, press conference questions, voting, and why second place becomes Deputy.

08

Lobbyists and Youth Advocates: The Leave Behind.

Representing an interest group, interviewing a sponsor, writing a one-page leave behind, presenting pro and con positions, and advocacy ethics.

09

The Storybook Gazette: Press Corps.

News writing, the interview, photo shot lists, the nightly broadcast, social posts, and media literacy.

10

Court of Appeals: Wolf v. Storybook County.

The appellate brief (questions presented, statement of facts, summary of argument, argument, conclusion), oral argument before a five-justice panel, and the written opinion.

11

Middle School Resolutions.

Writing and presenting a resolution with a partner in a simplified debate format. Designed for grades 6-8 and for Resource Team mentors.

12

Core Value Speeches.

Short speeches on caring, honesty, respect and responsibility delivered as a character, with peer feedback.

13

The Lieutenant Governor's Service Focus: Service Learning in Storybook County.

Learning objectives, action, reflection and evaluation applied to a community need from a story.

14

Proposals and Roundtables: Preparing for the Conference on National Affairs.

Writing a proposal on a national-scale problem, presenting it in the proposal format, and closing with a roundtable reflection.

► SUGGESTED SEQUENCES

LEGISLATIVE UNIT (ABOUT 5 WEEKS OF 30-MINUTE SESSIONS)

Lessons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Students write bills, hear them in committee, debate them on the floor with student presiding officers, and send them to a student Governor and Cabinet.

FULL MODEL-GOVERNMENT UNIT (ABOUT 10 WEEKS)

Lessons 1 through 9 followed by a one-day classroom State Conference: Opening Session with the Governor's speech, committee hearings, chamber debate, press coverage, signing ceremony, elections.

JUDICIAL UNIT

The original Literary Character Trial Proposals lesson, the original Literary Character Mock Trial lesson, then Lesson 10 (Court of Appeals), so students see a case travel from charge to trial to appeal.

LEADERSHIP AND VALUES UNIT

Lessons 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14.

► SHARED MATERIALS

Each lesson lists its own handouts, and most reuse these shared pieces, which are included inside the lesson where they first appear:

- Storybook County Bill Template (Lesson 1)
- Seal of State Approval checklist (Lesson 1)
- Committee Chair script and Bill Ranking Rubric (Lesson 2)
- Parliamentary Procedure Cheat Sheet and Amendment Form (Lesson 3)
- Gavel signals and the Presiding Officer script (Lesson 4)
- Cabinet Review Form and Veto Override procedure (Lesson 5)

- Candidate Form and Election Speech rubric (Lesson 7)
- Leave Behind template (Lesson 8)
- Appellate Brief outline and Justice Bench Card (Lesson 10)

► A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Throughout the series the program is called YMCA Youth and Government. "Core values" always refers to the YMCA's four values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Y-Corps, the YMCA's summer service program, is a separate program and is named only where it is meant.

WHERE TO FIND EVERYTHING

Storybook County Lesson Plans use public domain stories to practice real YMCA Youth and Government processes: bills, committees, debate, courts, elections, service, and proposals. Every lesson is three or four 30-minute sessions, and all of them live in one folder:

drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MieLDxVzKNq7QTwjw2EPFDqgMOaaJ2US. Part of the YMCA Youth and Government Educator Toolkit at nysyag.org. Questions: Drew Caldwell, dcaldwell@ymcanys.org.