

MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOLUTIONS

CIVICS

GOVERNMENT

WRITING

PUBLIC SPEAKING

AT A GLANCE

GRADES	6-8 (also useful for high school Resource Team members who will mentor middle schoolers)
TIME	Three sessions, each 30 minutes long.
HANDOUTS	1. Resolution Template; 2. Story Problem Cards; 3. Chamber Script for Resource Team Chairs

THE STORY PROBLEM

The Storybook County Middle School Assembly meets to decide what the county should do about the troubles in its stories. Each pair of delegates brings one resolution.

► THE PROCESS PRACTICED

Resolutions. In the YMCA Youth and Government middle school program, delegates write and present a resolution with a partner rather than a full bill, learn parliamentary procedure on day one, and debate in chambers run by high school Resource Team members on day two. A resolution states a problem, gives reasons, and resolves that something should be done, without rewriting an existing law. Students learn the format and the presentation in a simplified debate.

► LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to write a resolution with Whereas clauses (reasons) and a Resolved clause (the action).
- Students will be able to present a resolution with a partner in two minutes.
- Students will be able to ask a question, speak for or against, and vote, using the basic recognition formula.
- Students will be able to tell a resolution from a bill.

► MATERIALS:

- Handout: "Resolution Template" (Supporting Document 1)
- Handout: "Story Problem Cards" (Supporting Document 2)
- Handout: "Chamber Script for Resource Team Chairs" (Supporting Document 3)
- Placards, gavel, timer

► PRE-PLANNING:

- Students work in pairs. Each pair draws a Story Problem Card or proposes its own public domain story.
- One student (or a visiting high school mentor) serves as Chair; another as Clerk. Rotate if possible.

SESSION 1 WHEREAS AND RESOLVED

30 MINUTES

- 5** **Hook.** Read Humpty Dumpty. Ask: what should the county do? Collect three answers. Explain that a resolution is the Assembly saying, in writing, "Here is the problem, here are our reasons, and here is what should happen."
- 10** **The Format.** Show the template. "Whereas" lines are reasons, one fact each, taken from the story. "Resolved" is the action, one sentence, something the county could actually do. Model one together on the board for Humpty Dumpty.
- 10** **Draft.** Pairs draw a card and write three Whereas clauses and one Resolved clause.
- 5** **Share.** Three pairs read theirs. The class checks: are the Whereas lines facts from the story? Is the Resolved something the county could do?

SESSION 2 PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE, THE SHORT VERSION

30 MINUTES

- 10** **Four Things to Know.** Raise your placard and wait to be recognized. When recognized say "Thank you, Chair. [Name], [School or District]." You may ask a question, speak for, or speak against. Vote by placard when the Chair asks. Practice each once with a silly resolution ("Resolved, that the county build a second beanstalk").
- 5** **Presentation Practice.** Pairs decide who reads the Whereas clauses and who reads the Resolved and gives one sentence of why. Two minutes total.
- 15** **Mini Chamber.** Hear three resolutions using the Chair Script: present (2 minutes), two questions, one speaker for and one against (30 seconds each), vote. Two gavel taps after each.

SESSION 3 THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

30 MINUTES

- 25** **Hear the Rest.** Continue through all remaining resolutions with the same format. Rotate the Chair halfway if a second student is ready. The Clerk records each result.
- 5** **Wrap-Up.** The Clerk reads the list of resolutions adopted. Ask: which Resolved clause would be the hardest to actually carry out? Explain that in high school these become bills that change the actual words of a law (see the Writing a Bill lesson).

► ASSESSMENT

Resolution Three Whereas clauses that are facts from the story; one Resolved clause the county could carry out; correct format.	40
Presentation Both partners spoke; within two minutes; clear.	25
Participation Used the recognition formula; asked a question or spoke for or against at least once; voted every time.	25
Decorum Waited for recognition; no clapping for a defeated resolution.	10

► DIFFERENTIATION

Support

Provide Whereas sentence starters ("Whereas, in the story, _____ happened"). Allow one Whereas clause.

Challenge

Require a Resolved clause with two parts (an action and who carries it out), or allow a friendly amendment from the floor.

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE

Storybook County Middle School Assembly. Resolution number _____. Sponsors: _____ and _____.
District: _____.

A Resolution concerning _____.

Whereas, _____;

Whereas, _____;

Whereas, _____;

Therefore, be it Resolved by the Storybook County Middle School Assembly that
_____.

STORY PROBLEM CARDS

Humpty Dumpty

He fell. The horses and men could not fix him. The wall had no rail.

The Three Little Pigs

Two houses blew down. The wolf is still in the woods.

Jack and the Beanstalk

A beanstalk grew over the village. A giant fell on the Hollow.

Goldilocks

A stranger entered a home, ate the food and broke a chair.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Nobody came when the wolf was real.

Little Bo Peep

The sheep are lost and no one is looking.

Hansel and Gretel

A house made of candy stands in the woods and children keep wandering to it.

The Tortoise and the Hare

The race had no rules about naps.

The Pied Piper

The town did not pay the piper and lost its children.

Old Mother Hubbard

The cupboard was bare and the dog went hungry.

The Emperor's New Clothes

Nobody told the emperor the truth until a child did.

Rip Van Winkle

A man slept twenty years and no one checked on him.

CHAMBER SCRIPT FOR RESOURCE TEAM CHAIRS

"The Middle School Assembly will come to order." (one tap)

"Will the sponsors of Resolution _____ please come forward? Will the Clerk please read the title?"

"Sponsors, you have two minutes."

"Are there questions for the sponsors? Raise your placard. [Name], you are recognized." (Take two.)

"Is there a speaker against? ... Is there a speaker for?" (Thirty seconds each.)

"Sponsors, do you have a final sentence?"

"All in favor, raise your placards. All opposed. The resolution is adopted / not adopted." (two taps)

"Thank you, sponsors. Will the sponsors of the next resolution please come forward?"

ABOUT THIS SERIES

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.