

PROPOSALS AND ROUNDTABLES

Preparing for the Conference on National Affairs

CIVICS

GOVERNMENT

RESEARCH

PERSUASIVE WRITING

PUBLIC SPEAKING

AT A GLANCE

GRADES	10-12 (adaptable)
TIME	Four sessions, each 30 minutes long.
HANDOUTS	1. Proposal Template; 2. National Problem Cards; 3. Committee Format and Committee Chair Script; 4. Roundtable Guide

THE STORY PROBLEM

Wolves do not respect county borders. Neither do giants, pipers or long naps. The Storybook Nation's delegates must propose national solutions and defend them in committee.

► THE PROCESS PRACTICED

The proposal. Each summer every state's YMCA Youth and Government program sends a small delegation to the Conference on National Affairs (CONA), where delegates present proposals on national-scale problems rather than bills amending state law. A proposal is judged on the problem it identifies, the evidence, the solution and the delegate's ability to defend it under questioning; it moves through committee and may reach the full conference. Days end with roundtables. In this lesson students write and defend a proposal for the Conference on Storybook National Affairs, where the problems cross county lines.

► LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to distinguish a proposal (a national-scale problem and a recommended solution) from a bill (a change to the words of a state law).
- Students will be able to write a proposal with the standard parts: title, the problem, the evidence, the proposed solution, who would carry it out, and the expected benefits and costs.
- Students will be able to present a proposal in the conference format: presentation, questions, con and pro debate, summation, vote.
- Students will be able to lead or take part in a roundtable reflection.

► MATERIALS:

- Handout: "Proposal Template" (Supporting Document 1)
- Handout: "National Problem Cards" (Supporting Document 2)
- Handout: "Committee Format and Committee Chair Script" (Supporting Document 3)
- Handout: "Roundtable Guide" (Supporting Document 4)
- Timer, placards, gavel

► PRE-PLANNING:

- **Assign Roles:**
 - **Delegates** (everyone): each writes a proposal, alone or in pairs.
 - **Committee Chairs** (2-3 students): run the committees in Session 3.
 - **Roundtable Leaders** (2-3 students): lead the Session 4 roundtables.
 - **Delegation Leader** (1 student): keeps the schedule and makes sure every delegate is heard.
- Divide the class into two or three committees of six to eight proposals each.

SESSION 1 FROM COUNTY TO NATION

30 MINUTES

- 5** **Hook.** "Storybook County passed a wolf law. The wolf moved to the next county." Ask what a single county cannot fix alone. Draw out the idea of national-scale problems.
- 10** **Proposal vs. Bill.** Compare side by side. A bill rewrites a specific law and must show the original text. A proposal names a problem, proves it with evidence, and recommends a solution and who should carry it out; it does not have to quote a statute. The test of a proposal is whether the delegate can defend it when questioned.
- 10** **Choose a Problem.** Delegates draw a National Problem Card or propose their own from any public domain story. They write the problem in two sentences and list the stories that prove it exists in more than one place.
- 5** **Check.** Delegation Leader confirms each delegate has a problem and at least two stories as evidence.

SESSION 2 WRITING THE PROPOSAL

30 MINUTES

- 5** **Template.** Walk through the Proposal Template with an example (National Wolf Registry: the problem, three stories as evidence, a registry run by a national Forest Service, benefits and costs).
- 20** **Draft.** Delegates write. The solution must name who carries it out and what it costs, even roughly.
- 5** **Pair Challenge.** Partners ask each other the two hardest questions they can think of. Delegates write the questions down; they will be asked again in committee.

SESSION 3 COMMITTEE

30 MINUTES

- 3** **Format.** Teach the committee sequence from the script: presentation (2 minutes), questions (2 minutes), con and pro debate alternating (3 minutes), summation (30 seconds), vote. Proposals that pass committee are "advanced to General Assembly"; in class, the top two per committee present again in Session 4.
- 25** **Hear Proposals.** Committees run in parallel in different corners of the room, each with a Chair. Six proposals at about four minutes each.
- 2** **Report.** Chairs announce which proposals advanced.

15

General Assembly. The advanced proposals are presented to the whole class in the same format, compressed. The class votes on each.

12

Roundtable. Roundtable Leaders take groups of eight: rose and bud; two prompt questions ("What proposal changed your mind and why?" "What did you learn about defending an idea under questions?"); shout-outs; next steps.

3

Wrap-Up. The Delegation Leader reads the list of proposals adopted by the General Assembly. Ask who would want to take a real proposal to the real conference.

► ASSESSMENT

Proposal All template parts; problem is national in scale; evidence from at least two stories; solution names who carries it out and what it costs.	35
Presentation Within time; organized; clear ask.	20
Defense Under Questioning Answered directly; conceded what should be conceded; did not abandon the proposal.	25
Committee Participation Asked at least one question or gave one debate speech with the recognition formula.	10
Roundtable Spoke at least once; listened; specific shout-out.	10

► DIFFERENTIATION**Support**

Provide a completed sample proposal (National Wolf Registry). Allow pairs. Shorten questioning to one minute.

Challenge

Require a proposal that solves two of the Problem Cards at once, or require the delegate to present a one-sentence amendment to someone else's proposal during debate.

PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Title: A Proposal to _____

Delegate(s): _____ **State or County:** _____

The Problem (two or three sentences): What is wrong, where, and who is harmed.

The Evidence (at least two stories): Specific events that show the problem happens in more than one place.

The Proposed Solution (three to five sentences): What should be done.

Who Carries It Out: The national body or office responsible.

Benefits: Who is helped and how.

Costs and Risks: What it costs, who pays, what could go wrong.

Conclusion: One sentence restating the ask.

NATIONAL PROBLEM CARDS

Wolves across borders

Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Peter and the Wolf: the same hazard in every county.

Giants and airspace

Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack the Giant Killer, Gulliver's Travels: oversized visitors and no national rule.

Unpaid contractors

The Pied Piper of Hamelin, Rumpelstiltskin: towns that do not pay what they promised, and what follows.

Long absences

Rip Van Winkle, Sleeping Beauty, Odysseus: people who vanish for years and the families and villages left behind.

Unsafe housing

The Three Little Pigs, Hansel and Gretel, The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe: materials, occupancy, candy.

Truth in public life

The Emperor's New Clothes, Pinocchio, The Boy Who Cried Wolf: a nation that cannot tell when it is being lied to.

Reckless driving

The Wind in the Willows, the Hare: speed, vehicles, naps at the wheel.

Lost livestock

Little Bo Peep, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, the Little Red Hen's uncooperative neighbors: agriculture without a safety net.

Trespass and hospitality

Goldilocks, Snow White at the dwarfs' cottage, Alice at the tea party: when is a guest a trespasser?

Orphans and guardians

Oliver Twist, Anne of Green Gables, Peter Pan's Lost Boys: who is responsible for children without homes?

COMMITTEE FORMAT AND COMMITTEE CHAIR SCRIPT

"This committee of the Conference on Storybook National Affairs will come to order. Will the delegate presenting Proposal _____ please come forward? Delegate, you have two minutes."

"We are now in questions. Delegates, raise your placards. Thank the Chair and state your name and state when recognized."

"We will now move to debate, alternating con and pro, beginning with a con speaker. Is there a con speaker?"

"Delegate, you have thirty seconds for summation."

"All those in favor of advancing Proposal _____, raise your placards. All opposed. The proposal is advanced / not advanced." (two taps)

Sequence: presentation 2 minutes; questions 2 minutes; debate 3 minutes alternating con and pro; summation 30 seconds; vote.

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ROUNDTABLE GUIDE

Circle. Leader speaks last. Rose and bud from everyone. Two prompt questions. Shout-outs to specific people for specific things. Next steps and who is responsible. One closing sentence from the leader.

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.