

# The Charter for Children: The Little Courthouse on the Prairie

## The Right to Liberty

Lesson Plan for Language, Social Studies, The Arts (Music), Social Justice/Character Education: GRADE 5

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### FOCUS: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

What issues are being addressed in this book?  
*THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY*

- Freedom (liberty) to enjoy and participate in activities that are open to all Canadians and to be protected from unfair confinement or imprisonment
- Levels of government responsible for regulating the law and rights and freedoms of citizens
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice." (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 7, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11)



### Curriculum Objective: Grade 5

*Social Studies: B2 Inquiry: Differing Perspectives on Social Issues:*

- B2.2 Students will gather and organize a variety of information and data that present various perspectives about Canadian social and/or environmental issues,...

*Social Studies: B3 Understanding Context: Roles and Responsibilities of Government and Citizens:*

- B3.6 Students will explain why different groups may have different perspectives on specific social... issues
- B3.7 Students will describe some different ways in which citizens can take action to address social... issues

*(from The Ontario Curriculum 2013 Revised: Social Studies Grades 1 to 6, Ministry of Education for Ontario, pages 113-115)*

*The Arts, Dance: A3 Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts:*

- A3.1 Students will describe, with teacher guidance, dance

forms and styles that reflect the beliefs and traditions of diverse communities, times and places (e.g., ...group and partner dances – such as the swing and the salsa – reflect various types of social interaction...)

*The Arts, Music: C2 Reflecting, Responding and Analysing:*

- C2.1 Students will express detailed personal responses to musical performances in a variety of ways...

*(from The Ontario Curriculum, 2009 Revised, The Arts Grades 1-8, Ministry of Education for Ontario, pages 111 and 115)*

*Language: Reading:*

- **1.8 Responding to and Evaluating Texts:** Students will make judgements and draw conclusions about the ideas and information in texts and cite stated or implied evidence from the text to support their views.
- **3.1 Reading Familiar Words:** Students will automatically read and understand most words in common use (e.g., words from grade-level texts, subject-specific terminology used regularly...)

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- **3.2 Reading Unfamiliar Words:** Students will predict the meaning of and rapidly solve unfamiliar words using different types of cues, including: semantic (meaning) cues (e.g. prefixes, suffixes, base words...); syntactic (language structure) cues (e.g. familiar words within larger words, syllables...)

*(from The Ontario Curriculum 2006 Revised, Language Grades 1-6, Ministry of Education for Ontario, page 98)*

### *Physical Education and Health: Personal Safety:*

- C2.2 demonstrate the ability to deal with threatening situations by applying appropriate living skills (e.g., personal skills, including self-monitoring and anger management; interpersonal skills, including conflict resolution skills; communication skills, including assertiveness and refusal skills)

*(from The Ontario Curriculum 2010, Physical Education and Health Grades 1-8., Ministry of Education for Ontario, page 145)*

### **Activation of Learning**

- Read the story to the class. Use Shared Reading and Think Aloud methods to encourage student connections with the story. Record any questions, thoughts on anchor charts to be used later for Writing, Social Studies or Music assignments.
- Discuss the vocabulary in the text: on an anchor chart list special words used in the story such as: prairie, bison, popular, lacrosse, hoofball (soccer), sheriff, solution, fiercest, superior, challenge, forbidden, chanted, faint glow, defend, declared, oppose, stuttered, and silo. Discuss with the class how they could figure out the meanings of some of the words using the context of the sentence, prefixes or suffixes, the base word, or other cues. Record the meanings of



each of the words for student reference. This will especially important for English Language Learners or students with Individual Education Plans. Re-read the story to the class emphasizing the meanings of the words as you come to them in the story. During discussions of the story and during everyday dialogue, use these words in context (where possible) and refer to the recorded meanings as you use them. Encourage student use as well, both in their writing and in everyday dialogue.

- Talk about the rules and laws that we live with every day, especially ones that could affect the students in the class. How did Emma change the rule made by Sheriff Buffy? Who helped her in this (e.g., other bison who went to the courthouse, bison who were in the Bison Pen, Judge Bufferley McLachlin, and finally Bison Cummings, who stood up and supported her views when others were too afraid to speak out against Sheriff Buffy).
- Discuss how students can deal with discrimination when it is directed at them (see examples from **C2.2 Physical Education and Health: Personal Safety** listed above). Be sure to emphasize with the students that these ideas should be general and not include names or incidents that others will recognize. Record these on a permanent poster to be used for resolving possible future conflicts.
- Discuss different genres of music and ask students if they know of Canadian artists in the field of folk, rock or pop music. This may be difficult for them, so your research on the internet will be important. Be careful showing music videos as these can display graphic, violent or sexual content. Record these artists in a list under the various genres, making sure to include Burton Cummings (Bison Cummings in the book). Play some of the most known music of these artists so the students can listen while they enter or leave the classroom, clearly outlining who the artist is and the type of music (e.g., Ann Murray, Celine Dion, Burton Cummings, Jann Arden, Bruce Cockburn, Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young, Robbie Robertson, Leonard Cohen, Shania Twain, K. D. Lang, Rush, The Guess Who and Bryan Adams). This will involve previewing some of their songs for content and language. For Burton Cummings, songs such as "Break It to Them Gently", "It All Comes Together", "Share the Land" and "Free" can be used as examples of some of his work. Other artists also wrote interesting songs: Bruce Cockburn wrote the theme song for the children's television "Franklin"; Celine Dion performed the song "My Heart Will Go On" from the movie Titanic, Neil Young's "Heart of Gold", Gordon Lightfoot's "Beautiful", Bryan Adams' original "(All I Do) I Do It for You". Because there are many other examples from these artists (and other Canadian musicians), this is an informative activation that could continue throughout the year.
- Discuss with the class, using visual clips from the internet, various types of dances that may have been used for different types of music, such as salsa, the jitterbug, the waltz, and swing, as they relate to different music genre. Have the students look at these various styles and comment on what they



liked or didn't like about the dances. Have the class vote on one or two types of dancing that they would like to work on during physical education classes, and choose only 2-3 specific steps or moves that the students can perform for each style of dance. These could be performed at an assembly for the junior division, or as a demonstration for parents.

**Assignments:**

- **Reading Response:** Have the students write about their feelings towards Emma being silent when she did not agree with Sherriff Buffy, including in their response if they themselves have ever been quiet when they saw someone being treated unfairly, being teased or being bullied. Discuss some of these situations (anonymously) with the class and ask for their input in the types of things they could do in those situations. Record these on chart paper, using a web planner or tree graph. Reference previous discussions the class has had with respect to dealing with discrimination, unfairness and bullying.
- **Writing Response:** Brainstorm using Guided Writing methods (pose questions to generate ideas, provide prompts to extend thinking) why it was important that Emma and Bison Cummings stand up for the bison wanting to play other sports. Using a key visual plus anchor charts from class discussions, have students write about why they feel it is important to stand up for one's right to freedom, and to stand up to defend this right for others.
- **Writing:** Discuss the situation in New France between First Nations and the Europeans. Have students compare (think-pair-share) the similarities between Sherriff Buffy wanting to take the land to play only football and the Europeans in New France wanting to take land from the First Nations for their own use. Record these on a T-chart and have students write a paragraph about each of the perspectives using an opening sentence, three points and a closing statement.
- **Writing Response:** Discuss how Emma chose to effect some change in the way Sherriff Buffy was making rules and taking over the fields. Discuss how the students themselves can work on change when they see something that is, in their opinion, an unfair rule. How do citizens of Canada help to change laws to address issues within society or their communities? Record these on chart paper. Have students write a paragraph citing a rule or law that they would like to change and record three ways, in sentence form, they will go about effecting this change. This can be a larger assignment if the students must also include why they think others may have a different perspective on changing this rule or law.

**Projects:**

- **Social Studies:** Student will select one of their ideas from the Writing Response assignment to work on as a way of effecting change. This could take the form of a petition, a letter to an official (e.g., teacher, principal, member of

Parliament), a speech to the class) that would outline clearly what change they want to make and why this would be a good idea.

- **Physical Education and Health: Personal Safety:** Using the ideas generated during earlier discussions, have students make index cards with their ideas for making the school a safer place for students who are in threatening situations. These cards could involve actual things to say and do in these situations or include ideas for controlling their own anger or frustration. Post these in prominent places around the school or create a special bulletin board highlighting the students' work.



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