



Lesson Plan

TITLE: Green's Greens For Greens

Subject(s): Language Arts; Social Studies/Humanities

Grade Level: 3-6

Specific Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn the importance of equality rights and freedom from discrimination.
- Students will explore equality rights in the context of school groups and hiring practices.
- Students will learn to evaluate good and bad reasons for distinguishing between people.
- Students will use the Acorn Test to assess reasonableness/fairness.

Enduring Understanding/Big Idea/Essential Questions:

- 1) Equality rights allow us to be who we are and pursue our dreams.
- 2) Discrimination based on such characteristics as race, age, ethnicity, and religion (among others) creates unfair barriers in peoples' lives.
- 3) Sometimes we might need to differentiate between people (e.g. by grades, education, sports ability)

Essential Questions

- Is there a difference between treating people equally and treating them the same?
- Could treating everyone the same ever be unfair?
- Could treating some people differently ever be fair?

Context: This lesson would be most effective if students have already been introduced to the "Acorn test" that will be reinforced in this lesson plan. If students are not familiar with the Acorn test, an interactive presentation explaining this three-question critical-thinking test is accessible via this link: www.ccla.org/acornstest. This lesson is supported by web resources.

PREAMBLE:

In order for this lesson – or any critical-thinking lesson – to be effective, students must be given clear permission to disagree. Divergent points of view must be encouraged throughout the lesson, so that the issues raised can be fully and meaningfully explored. There are no right answers to these questions, and part of the lesson is to help students understand how challenging and interesting issues of fairness, citizenship and justice can be. Quite aside from adding to the debate, encouraging diversity of opinion and point of view is vital to fostering democratic habits and active citizenship.

Is there a Connection for Students? The content of the lesson is linked to democratic, citizenship issues/concerns – rights, rules – that students confront every day. In particular, this lesson grapples with the issue of discrimination and equality rights. Although students may have already experienced discrimination in schools or society, this lesson will assist them in deciding when treating people differently is fair or unfair.

Part 1: Minds On: Activating Prior Knowledge [10 min]

Discussion on the meaning of equality: Should we always treat everyone the same?

- 1) What do you think equality means? [students will likely conclude that it means we treat everyone the same]
- 2) What are some examples of times when everyone should be treated the same? [Some examples may include the following:]
 - Everyone should be allowed to play in a park
 - Everyone should be allowed to go to school
 - Everyone should be allowed to ride the bus
- 3) Is it always fair to treat everyone the same?
- 4) What are some examples where it would be unfair to treat everyone the same? [guiding questions to assist students in thinking of some examples]:
 - If your school has an elevator, should everyone be allowed to use it? Who should and who should not be allowed? Why or why not?
 - Should everyone be allowed to use the same washroom? Why or why not?
 - If you are not allowed to bring your pet dog into a restaurant, should someone who needs a guide dog be allowed to do so? Why or why not?

Discussion on the difference between differentiation vs. discrimination

Example 1: Age limits for driving

- 1) Please raise your hand if you have a driver's license. If you don't have one, why not?
- 2) Is it fair that you are not allowed to drive because you are not old enough? Why or why not? [students will likely conclude that there are very good reasons to not allow a child to drive a car]

Example 2: Age limits for selecting ice cream flavours

- 3) If we say you can't drive because you are not old enough, should we also say that you are too young to choose your own flavour of ice cream? Why or why not?
- 4) What is the difference between driving and choosing ice cream flavours?
- 5) Why might it be fair to use age to decide who drives but not who gets to choose ice cream?

Now that students have had an opportunity to identify situations in which it might be fair/unfair to treat people differently based on certain characteristics, summarize the discussion by introducing the word wall word:

Discrimination: Treating people differently because of such things as their colour, gender, age, height etc. in situations where these things are irrelevant or not important.

Optional Alternative or extension exercise: Read *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems to the class. Following the reading, ask the students the following questions:

- 1) Is it fair that the pigeon is not allowed to drive the bus? Why or why not?
- 2) What if instead the bus driver had a rule about who could *ride* the bus: All animals are allowed to ride the bus, EXCEPT for the pigeon. Would that be fair? Why or why not?
- 3) What is the difference between making rules about who gets to drive the bus and who gets to ride the bus? Why might one rule be more fair than the other?

Materials

- Green's Greens Word-Wall Words:
<http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/TNF-Word-Wall-Greens-Greens.pdf>

- Optional: Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. 2003 Hyperion Press.

PART 3: Consolidation and Debrief [10 min]

Tie in Parts 1 and 2

Ask students to define *discrimination*: *Treating people differently because of such things as their colour, gender, age, height etc. in situations where these things are irrelevant or not important.*

- 1) Make it real for students – ask them to identify other forms of discrimination that they have seen, at school or elsewhere.
- 2) Can laws fix this? Ask students if we can rely on laws alone to prevent discrimination – what else could help us prevent discrimination?

Next Steps – Suggestion

- Visit <http://thatsnotfair.ca/greens-greens-for-greens-game/> to play the Green’s Greens for Greens video game.
- Continue exploring issues of fairness in your classroom using the rest of the videos, teacher resources and games
- Next time you hear students say, “That’s not fair,” see if they can apply the Acorn Test to help resolve conflicting viewpoints.