



# Lesson Plan

## Mayor Moe and the Nasty News

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

**Grade Level:** 2 - 6

### Specific Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn that Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press are guaranteed in democracies
- Students will identify when it might be fair or unfair to limit freedom of expression
- Students will learn about city council and participate in a mock city council debate and vote.
- Students will practice considering multiple points-of-view.

### Enduring Understandings + Big Ideas

- Everyone in Canada has freedom of expression, including freedom of the press.
- Freedom of expression allows everyone in Canada to share their opinions and ideas in different ways (through talking, writing, art, clothing etc...). It also allows everyone to be exposed to the opinions and ideas of others.
- Sometimes, we may need to protect a person's freedom of expression even if they are saying something unpleasant. Complaining sometimes hurts peoples' feelings, but it can also be an important way to make things better for everyone.
- Sometimes, we may need to limit a person's freedom of expression when it is being used to hate or hurt other people.

### Essential Questions

- Why is freedom of expression and freedom of the press important?
- Should we (or the press) be allowed to say anything we want, whenever we want? When could it be fair to limit freedom of expression?
- What could happen if we never allow anyone to say unpleasant things? When is it unfair to limit freedom of expression?

**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: [CCLA Acorn Test](http://www.thatsnotfair.ca/acorn-test). 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.

**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 concepts of freedom of the press & freedom of expression vs. censorship. Students will have the opportunity to think critically about the familiar notion, "if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

<p><b>PART 1: Minds On: Activating Prior Knowledge</b> [20-30 min]</p> <p><b>Freedom of expression; points of view</b> Assessing prior knowledge questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What do you think freedom of expression/freedom of the press means? (Everyone is free to create and share their ideas with others. Ideas and opinions can be communicated widely to other people in a newspaper, TV, magazines, internet etc).</li> <li>2) What are different ways you can express yourself? (Talking, singing, dancing, visual arts, clothing, writing, sign language, body language, etc.)</li> <li>3) Why do you think freedom of expression/freedom of the press is important? (You can express how you feel and who you are, and you can learn about what others have to say, including those who have a different opinion or perspective than you do).</li> <li>4) If freedom of expression is so important, should we be free to express anything we want, whenever we want to? Can you think of some types of speech that should not be allowed in certain situations? (Students will likely give examples that limit speech when it hurts others or when it is expressing something hateful, unkind, nasty, or unpleasant)</li> </ol> <p><b>Preparation for watching the video:</b></p> <p>Introduction to video: “We’re going to watch a video to see what happens when a city makes a Be Nice Law to prevent anyone from saying nasty or unpleasant things. While you’re watching, keep in mind the questions from our Acorn test to help you decide whether or not you think the law is fair.”</p> <p>Review the Acorn Test (see materials for printable anchor chart)</p> <p>Review Word Wall words and definitions (see materials)</p> <p><b>PART 2: Action</b> [20 min] <b>Video</b> <a href="#">Watch video “Mayor Moe and the Nasty News”</a></p> <p><b>City Councilor’s debate and vote on the “Be Nice” bylaw:</b> After watching the video, students will be assigned the role of city councilors who must make a decision about the “Be Nice” bylaw. Preparation for activity: Remind students that they have the right to disagree. It is important and helpful to think about different people who care about the issue and try to take on their point of view. Provide learners with a framework to speak respectfully and cooperatively: “I think..., because...” and “I disagree with... because...”</p> <p><i>Start whole-class councilors’ debate using the 3 questions from the Acorn Test. Point to the anchor chart as you go:</i></p> <p><b>Question 1:</b> Why did the city want to ban unpleasant remarks? What was the purpose of the Be Nice bylaw?</p> <p><b>Question 2:</b> Did the bylaw work to prevent people from saying nasty things?</p>	<p><b>Materials</b> Blackboard / Whiteboard / Chart Paper</p> <p>Nasty News Word-Wall Words</p> <p>Acorn Test anchor chart</p> <p>AV Equipment Video: “Mayor Moe and the Nasty News” <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/episodes/mayor-moe-and-the-nasty-news/">http://thatsnotfair.ca/episodes/mayor-moe-and-the-nasty-news/</a></p>
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<p><i>Small group committees debate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide the class into 3 – 5 committees, each of which represents one of the characters affected by the bylaw (be sure to select characters that are affected in different ways, i.e. some who like the bylaw, some who don't):</li> </ul> <p>Possible characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caramela (Mayor Moe's wife)</li> <li>- Cucaracha Festoon (Traffic reporter)</li> <li>- Councillor Bug</li> <li>- Mayor Moe</li> <li>- Newscaster Barry Bullmastif</li> <li>- Officer Bluestein</li> <li>- Councillor Feather</li> <li>- Councillor Fuzz</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In their small groups, each committee will answer the third question of the Acorn test from the point of view of their assigned character:</li> </ul> <p><b>Question 3:</b> "What else did the bylaw do? How were you affected by the bylaw?"</p> <p>Student discuss with their committee members for ~5 minutes.</p> <p><i>City Council Meeting and Vote</i></p> <p>Each group can elect a spokesperson to share their committee's ideas. After all groups have shared their ideas, the entire class will act as councillors and vote on whether to strike down the bylaw. Students may use their Fair/Not Fair voting paddles (see Materials) if they wish. Ask students to explain why they voted for or against the bylaw.</p>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <p>Optional: Fair/Not Fair voting paddles printouts (one for each student). Download paddle</p>
<p><b>PART 3: Consolidation and Debrief</b> [10 min]</p> <p>Consolidation questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What could happen if we never allowed anyone to complain or say unpleasant things? When could saying something unpleasant actually <i>help</i> people?</li> <li>2) Pick an unpleasant issue or problem in your community that you think needs to be addressed. Create a front-page news headline complete with an illustration to report on your chosen issue. (See sample TNF City Newspaper headline attached)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <p>Blackboard / whiteboard / chart paper</p> <p>Paper, markers/crayons</p> <p>TNF City Newspaper Sample Headline (see below)</p>
<p><b>Next Steps – Suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue exploring issues of fairness in your classroom using the rest of the videos and teacher resources.</li> <li>• Next time you hear students say, "That's not fair," see if they can apply the Acorn Test to help resolve conflicting viewpoints.</li> </ul>	

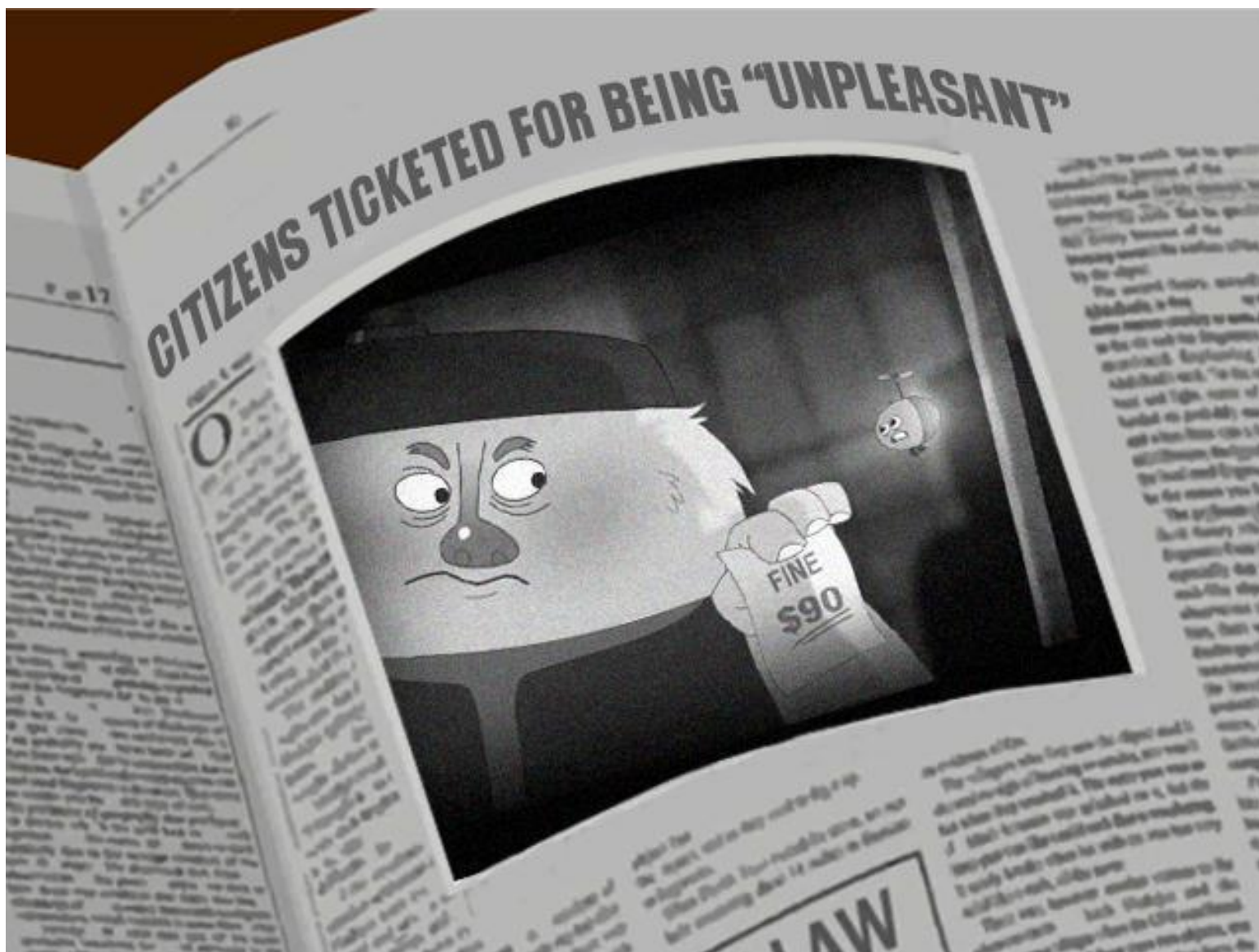
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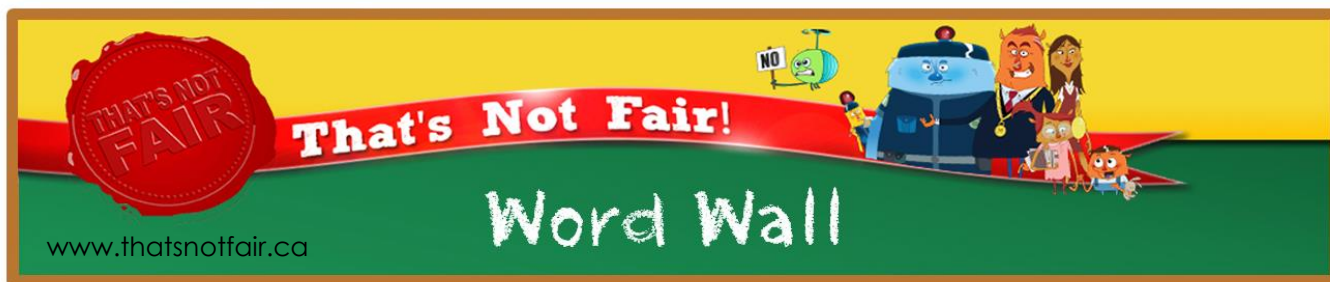
## Sample News Headline from TNF City Newspaper



CANADIAN  
CIVIL LIBERTIES  
ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION  
CANADIENNE DES  
LIBERTES CIVILES



Here are a few key words and definitions from **Mayor Sees Stars and Mayor Moe and the Nasty News**. As you watch the videos, feel free to add new words and definitions of your own. Send your suggested words to us at [info@thatsnotfair.ca](mailto:info@thatsnotfair.ca) and we may even use your definitions on our website!

Word:	Definition:
By-law	A rule or law voted on by a majority of law-makers, that tells people what they may or may not do.
Democracy	Government by the people with protection for rights and freedoms.
Regulation	A rule, order, or law
Safety	Safety Knowing or feeling that no harm will come to anyone
Withdraw a by-law	To cancel a rule. To reverse an earlier decision to make a rule or law.
Freedom of expression	The ability in democracies to share opinions and ideas in different ways (through talking, writing, art, clothing etc.). Freedom of expression also allows everyone to hear or see the opinions and ideas of others.
Freedom of the press, media and other forms of communication	Everyone is free to create and share their ideas with others. Ideas and opinions can be communicated widely to other people in a newspaper, TV, magazines, internet etc.

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To help you decide if a limit to a right or freedom is fair, use:

## The Acorn Test

- 1.** Why? What is the *purpose* of the limit?
- 2.** Will the limit work? Does the limit achieve its purpose?
- 3.** What else will it do? How are others affected by the limit? Does the limit go too far?

If you decide the limit is unfair, what could be done to make the limit more fair?

For more teaching resources  
and videos visit  
[www.thatsnotfair.ca](http://www.thatsnotfair.ca)



**Make your own voting paddle to use when you decide something is fair or unfair in each of the *That's Not Fair* videos! Here's how:**

1. Cut out both Councillor Bug images on the dotted line.
2. Using a pencil, trace around one of your Councillor Bug cut-outs onto a piece of construction paper. Cut out the traced shape.
3. Tape one end of a tongue depressor to the back of the construction paper (this is the handle of your voting paddle)
4. Paste each Councillor bug image on one side of the construction paper cut out (it should look like a sandwich with the construction paper in the middle)
5. Watch the *That's Not Fair* series at [www.thatsnotfair.ca](http://www.thatsnotfair.ca) and vote whenever you see something fair or unfair happening in each story! Happy voting! ☺



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and videos visit  
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