Overview

While walking down the street with his buddy, Paul the Robot, Francis the Platypus is caught littering, launching this exploration into the key role of citizens in a representative democracy.

Using primary source materials from the Library of Congress, the video guides students in a review of the purpose of electing representatives, the responsibilities of citizens in keeping informed about issues and telling their representatives what they want, and how good citizens participate in the workings of government at local, state, and federal levels.

This lesson plan provides teachers with viewing suggestions, discussion prompts, and classroom activities to both support and extend the learning of the content.

TPS Resource

Citizenship Video

- About 11 minutes
- Found at: http://www.tpscongress.org/citizenship-video/
- Playable on iPads

Target Audience

Grades 5–8

Instructional Time

1 class period

Big Ideas

- The American founders chose a representative democracy because the country comprised a large, diverse population spread over a geographical distance.
- The citizen’s role in a representative democracy is to stay informed and to make positive contributions to society.

Concepts & Key Terms

- Representative
- Citizenship
- Republic
- Social movements
- Opposing points of view
Citizens Unite! Cartoon

1. WATCH PART ONE—Overview of Representative Democracy
   - **Play the segment**, STOPPING at black screen (time code 4:52).
   - **Synopsis:** The narrator catches Francis littering, and decides that he and Paul need to learn a bit about the meaning of good citizenship. An overview of representative democracy confuses the youngsters, so she invites the ghost of James Madison to help explain how our government was formed.
   - **Debrief** the segment with the class, using these or similar discussion prompts:
     * What are some of the local, state, and federal issues for which our representatives act on our behalf?
     * Why did the Founding Fathers decide to create a representative democracy (also called a republic) instead of another type?
     * What citizen groups haven’t always had the same rights as others? How have each of those groups affected Congress and the U.S. government as they gained rights?

2. WATCH PART TWO—Being a Good Citizen
   - **Play the segment**, STOPPING at black screen (time code 7:32).
   - **Synopsis:** Paul and Francis want to know what role robots and kids can have in the government if they cannot vote. They learn that good citizenship is all about making positive contributions to society.
   - **Debrief** the segment with the class, using these or similar discussion prompts:
     * Other than voting, what are some things a good citizen can do?
     * Name some social movements and their accomplishments that were described in the video clip.
     * You saw some suggestions of what Paul and Francis could do in their local community. Can you think of some things that citizens need to do to make our community better?

3. WATCH PART THREE—Everyone Chips In
   - **Play the segment**, STOPPING as the credits begin (time code 10:47).
   - **Synopsis:** In the final segment, Paul and Francis learn that being a good citizen is more than what you do; it’s also about the kind of person that you are. They explore the importance of understanding multiple perspectives in a country as large and diverse as the U.S.
   - **Debrief** the segment with the class, asking students to explain each of the following five characteristics of a good citizen:
     * Understands how an issue affects everyone in the community;
     * Stays informed about local, state, national, and world events;
     * Develops and clearly states the reasons for a position on an issue;
     * Is willing to accommodate others’ viewpoints, sort out the facts from slogans and rhetoric, and compromise;
     * Is BOLD—Steps into the unknown and faces opposition when fighting for something he or she thinks is right.
Positive Contributions to Society

In the second part of the Citizens Unite! cartoon, Paul the Robot and Francis the Platypus learned that a good citizen makes positive contributions to society. Three contributions that were given as examples were the creation of child labor laws, the creation of national parks to preserve the nation’s resources, and the Victory Gardens that helped the war effort during WWII.

In this activity, students work together in the computer lab to investigate the efforts of the citizens who made a difference in one of these three examples.

1. Write the term Social Movements on the board and have students work together, based on the cartoon, to define it (such as: “a group of people with a common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals”).

2. Ask volunteers to name some of the social movements that were discussed in the video. They might mention gaining votes for African-Americans, women, and 18-year-olds, as well as the three described in the introduction above.

3. Project the images one at a time from page 5 and ask students to describe details of what they see in each:
   - Child Labor, Cotton Mill 2: This is a photograph of children working in a cotton mill. How old are the children? How would their daily life compare to yours?
   - WPA Poster–Yellowstone National Park: This is one of the posters made by the Works Progress Administration to promote a national park. What recreational activities are offered here? Where do you think people went for this type of vacation activity before these parks were formed?
   - WPA Poster - Victory Gardens: This is one of many posters made by the Works Progress Administration to encourage citizens to grow their own fruits and vegetables. During war labor and transportation are usually in short supply... Why is that? How does this relate to the U.S. government encouraging individuals to plant victory gardens?

4. Explain that students are going to be working in groups to explore each of these social movements further to share with classmates. Project all three images together.

5. Either divide students into groups or allow them to self-select one of these three topics:
   - Child Labor Laws
   - The Creation of a National Park Service
   - Victory Gardens

6. Distribute one Social Movement Research Card to each group (see page 4). The cards contain space to write answers to the following questions:
   - What events led to citizens feeling a need for this change?
   - Tell who was instrumental in leading this social movement.
   - How easy or difficult was it to bring about this change?
   - List some benefits from the change.
7. Give student groups 20 minutes to use the Internet to find answers to their questions.

8. Have representatives of each group share their findings with the class. (NOTE: You may prefer to skip this step now and use the Extension Idea below to allow groups to create a more formal and entertaining presentation of their findings.)

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**Social Movement Research Card**

Use the Internet to find answers to each of these questions about your social movement. Write your answers here or on separate paper.

- What events led to citizens feeling a need for this change?
  ___________________________________________________________

- List some examples of abuses or problems that occurred because of the need for this change:
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

- Name important citizen leaders of this social movement:
  ___________________________________________________________

- List some benefits from the change:
  ___________________________________________________________
  ___________________________________________________________

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**Extension Idea**

Ask groups to use the information they have gathered about their social movement and create an entertaining presentation to share with the class. Share the links to relevant Library of Congress assets listed at the end of this guide and leave the format of the presentation open to each group’s creativity. If necessary, you might list some suggestions. For example, groups might create:

- Skits or commercials
- PowerPoint presentations
- HTML-based websites
- Realistic fiction short stories
- Posters illustrating the “story” of the movement
- A board game

Set aside a class period to allow groups to present their productions.
Child Labor Cotton Mill 2

WPA Poster - Yellowstone National Park

WPA Poster - Victory Gardens

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Primary sources used in the video

NOTE: Teachers should preview all assets to ensure they are age-appropriate for their students. At the time of publication, all URLs were valid.

1. Founding Fathers

2. African Americans Voting

3. Woman Suffrage

4. Child Labor - Glass Works

5. Child Labor - Miners

6. Child Labor - Cotton Spinner

7. Child Labor Cotton Mill 2

NOTE: The final two assets on the list were used by permission but we do not have online sources for those assets.
8. **WPA Poster - Grand Canyon**

9. **WPA Poster - Lassen Volcanic National Park**
   http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wpapos/item/2007676132 (accessed December 1, 2011.)

10. **WPA Poster - Yellowstone National Park**

11. **WPA Poster - Fort Marion National Monument**
    http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007676130/ (accessed December 1, 2011.)

12. **WPA Poster - Zion National Park**
    http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wpapos/item/2007676134 (accessed December 1, 2011.)

13. **WPA Poster - Victory Gardens**
    http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3g04436 (accessed December 1, 2011.)

14. **WPA Poster - Conserve Water**

15. **WPA Poster - Scrap Metal**
    Penna Art WPA "Save scrap for victory! Save metals , save paper, save rubber, save rags". ca 1941 and 1943. Silkscreen, color poster. From the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.  
    http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98518704 (accessed December 1, 2011.)
WWII Female Factory Workers

16. WWII Female Workers - Riveter

17. WWII Female Workers - Insignia Painter

18. WWII Female Workers - Black out lamps

19. WWII Female Workers - Welder

Civil Rights Jobs and Freedom March on Washington 1963

20. Cleveland Robinson at National Headquarters of the March on Washington

21. Marchers

22. Martin Luther King. Jr. I Have a Dream Speech

23. March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom Aerial Shot

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