

CivCity EXTRA!

A guide for tutors

How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to help you use the second issue of *CivCity Extra!* to create lesson plans and learning activities for your learner or learners. It is designed primarily with English language learners in mind, but can also be used with basic literacy learners.

Story Guides

Five story guides give you an “at-a-glance” summary of each story, then provide basic information to aid in lesson planning.

Story at a Glance. An “at-a-glance” summary at the top of each story guide helps you decide if the story is appropriate and relevant for your learner or learners. It provides the story’s

- Title
- Length
- Flesch-Kincaid reading ease score
- Average grade level
- Summary
- Civic purpose re: promoting civic literacy and engagement
- Language purpose re: promoting oracy and linguistic literacy
- Who will benefit re: learners’ skill levels

If you decide that the story is useful for your learner or learners, continue to the next section of the story guide to start thinking about lesson planning.

About the Flesch-Kincaid reading ease score	About average grade level
How easy the story is to read? This 100-point scale is based on word and sentence length. A standard auto insurance policy scores a 10. We aimed for scores above 70. Analysis tool: https://readability-score.com/ . See also: Flesch, R. “How to Write Plain English,” http://www.mang.canterbury.ac.nz/writing_guide/writing/flesch.shtml .	An average of several indices. We aimed for a 5th–9th grade reading level. Analysis tool: https://readability-score.com/

Lesson Planning Framework. Each story guide’s lesson planning framework begins by giving you space to write down ideas for how to use the story with your learner or learners.

Needs assessment

Think about your learners’ needs. What are their long-term and short-term goals?

Learning objective

What specific learning objective do you and your learners want to achieve?

Performance criteria

How will you and your learners know you have achieved the objective?

Lesson Planning Help from Washtenaw Literacy’s Power Tutoring, February 2016	
For help with writing learning objectives , see Appendix A, “The ABCD Model for Writing Objectives.”	For help with defining performance criteria , see Appendix A (especially the section on “Degree”) and Appendix B, “Backward Design Lesson Plan Template—Sample.”
<i>These materials and far more resources are available on the Washtenaw Literacy website under Tutor Resources.</i>	

As you think about needs, objectives, and criteria, glance through the guide’s next three columns for detailed lesson-planning ideas on how to:

Activate background knowledge

Ideas for warm-up activities and questions to help your adult learner or learners start thinking about the topic. What do they already know about the topic?

Focus on language

An outline of the types of vocabulary and grammar used in the story. What language features are you working on with your learners? Use the language terms in this section (e.g., “past perfect,” “adverbials of time”) to find more information on the internet.

Extend the lesson

The story is just a start. You can use the story as a tool for building language skills or tap into other resources to dig deeper or go further. How can learners use the story as a springboard into civic engagement and greater autonomy?

Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

Finally, you might hit some bumps in the road. This section tries to flag some possible areas where your connection with your learners might break down. As you plan, think about how to make these into opportunities for learning!

Appendices: Tools

Finally, see the appendices for tools that you can use to plan your lessons. Happy tutoring!

Sincerely,

David and Grace, Washtenaw Literacy tutors and M.A. TESOL students at EMU

The CivCity Story Guides

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May 3 Election: Special Education Millage

Story at a Glance

Length (main story): 254 words | **Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score:** 82.3 / 100 | **Average Grade Level:** 6.7

Summary: Provides basic information on the Special Education Millage proposal on the May 3 ballot, including what the money would be used for and how much it would cost. The article also explains key civic terms needed to engage with the story, such as “millage,” and “mil.” It also provides information, as well as a link to more information, on how to vote in the election.

Civic purpose: To provide information about a ballot proposal for the May 3 election. To provide background information on topic and describe the contextual situation. To promote discussion of special needs and special education. To provide information on how to vote.

Language purpose: To provide contextually relevant vocabulary. To promote the use of language for making and supporting choices. To promote an understanding of the construction of complex sentences that use modals and logical connectors. To promote a discussion on euphemisms (i.e., “special needs”) as well as a potential cultural comparison between how special needs and special needs children are viewed throughout the world.

Who will benefit: Homeowners, parents, voters, parents of children with special needs, those with special needs themselves, or anyone interested in engaging in a larger cultural discussion about special needs. Intermediate ESL learners learning to create complex sentences. Emergent readers developing reading skills.

Lesson Planning Framework

Needs assessment:

Learning objective:

Performance criteria:

Activate background knowledge

Focus on language

Extend the lesson

For this story, see Appendix C, “Expressing Opinion with Modals and Logical Connectors.”

When determining if your learner could benefit from this article, think about what you already know about your learner, or engage them in the following topics:

- Do they have any kids?
- Are they able to vote?
- Do they know what “special needs” refers to?
- How about “special education?”
- Do they have a child with special needs? (*See: Extension*)

Ask learners: Why would you vote for or against the ballot proposal?

Euphemisms

This article could serve as a discussion-starter on special needs and special education. It could be used as the basis of a cultural comparison of how learners’ home culture views these issues. It could also be used as a starting-point in a discussion or lesson on other common English euphemisms.

Modals

Expressing intention with modals. Ask learners to explain how they would vote (“I might/will/may vote...”). In teaching modals, show learners the systematic relationship between them:

- I would vote, but... (declining)
- I could/might vote... (possibly)
- I may vote... (perhaps)
- I will vote... (certainty)

Logical Connectors

Use the story for a lesson on logical connectors such as “but” or “because.” Ask your learner to use these to explain why they would or would not vote for this millage.

All ward and precinct locations in Washtenaw county, with links to Google Maps
http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/el_precincts.html

Interactive map of all precincts and political districts: U.S. Congress, State Senate, State House, County Board of Commissioner, and school districts.
http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/2013-redistricting-maps

A2 Resources for Special Needs Children, Volunteering Opportunities

These resources may be directly helpful for learners or their friends and families with special needs. Many also provide volunteer opportunities, if you or your learners are looking for other ways to help and/or learn:

- Autism Collaborative Center at Eastern Michigan University,
<http://www.emich.edu/acc/>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Just Us Club, http://www.justusclub.org/index.html ● Judson Center, http://www.judsoncenter.org/ ● Washtenaw Learning Disabilities Center, http://www.washtenawlda.org/ <p>For more resources, visit: http://www.washtenawisd.org/sites/default/files/WISD/SpecialEducation/PAC/supportgroups.pdf</p> <p>http://www.annarborfamily.com/November-2014/Special-Needs-Directory/</p>
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Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

- Concepts of mill and millage
- Potential cultural and emotional issues when discussing special needs.

Notes on Lesson Planning



Michigan Presidential Primary Results

Story at a Glance

Length (main story): 145 words | **Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score:** 67.1 / 100 | **Average Grade Level:** 7.6

Summary: Provides the overall results of Michigan’s presidential primary, including a brief overview of the election process, who the winning candidates were, what percentage of the vote they got, and how many delegates they received. Also provides the delegate count for the direct runner-ups. The vocabulary box provides more information on the presidential process.

Civic purpose: To relay the results of the primary. To inform learners about the American electoral system. To facilitate a larger political discussion about the American electoral system or about other electoral processes around the world. To promote discussion of candidates’ policies and their salience to the everyday lives of the learners. To engage learners in a conversation on national politics as a link to local civic engagement.

Language purpose: To introduce specialized vocabulary related to the electoral process. To promote the use of language for making choices and predictions. To promote an understanding of the construction of complex sentences that use modals and logical connectors. To model the use of past, present, and future verb tenses.

Who will benefit: Learners who have expressed interest in U.S. politics and/or its political processes as well as voters. Due to its challenging concepts and vocabulary, article is best suited for at least intermediate learners.

Lesson Planning Framework

Needs assessment:

Learning objective:

Performance criteria:

Activate background knowledge

Focus on language

Extend the lesson

For this story, see Appendix C, “Expressing Opinion with Modals and Logical Connectors.”

Ask citizens of other countries:

- What is the political process like in your country?
- Who is your home country’s leader?
- What do you know about the political process in America?

Logical Connectors

Ask learners to explain or justify their views about politics by using logical connectors.

- <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/transitions-esl/>

News Sources

Find out what news sources your learners use. They may find these resources useful as well:

- The Times in Plain English, <http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/>

<p>Regardless of background, if learners seem interested in the topic, ask them what they know about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a candidate? • What is a nominee? • What is the National Convention? • What is a delegate? • How does a candidate become President? 	<p>A cloze exercise in which connectors are removed from a politically focused text could be useful practice. Depending on your learners familiarity with logical connectors, you could choose to include a word bank. You can create your own cloze exercises at: http://zander.io/cloze-test/</p> <p>Verbs: Tense/Aspect Multiple tense and aspect combinations could be used in the context of a politically-based conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple future (I will vote for...) • Simple present (I am a Democrat) • Present perfect (I have been a Republican for 15 years) • Simple past (I was a Republican) <p>These tenses and aspects can be contrasted to illuminate their meaning. For tips on teaching tenses, see http://elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm.</p> <p>Modals A discussion or lesson centered around modals could be used for this article in a similar way to in the Special Education article, comparing the relative certainty/uncertainty of possible future scenarios.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy English News, https://www.elizabethclaire.com/products/easy-english-news • Breaking News English, http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/ <p>Volunteer Opportunities There are many politically minded groups that you could share with your learners if they are interested. If so, you could potentially work them into a lesson or field trip.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential candidate campaigns — see candidates' websites for volunteer opportunities • Other opportunities for political volunteering: http://annarborobserver.com/cg/t0390.html <p>Voting Location List Some learners may want to vote, but might not know where to go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/el_precincts.html • http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/2013-redistricting-maps
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Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

- Chance for breakdown at conceptual level when discussing delegate system.
- Potential breakdown due to passionate personal politics.

Notes on Lesson Planning

Learn About Your County Commissioners

Story at a Glance

Length (main story): 227 words | **Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score:** 78.9 / 100 | **Average Grade Level:** 6.2

Summary: Introduces Ann Arbor’s county commissioners, what they do, where they are located, how and why they can be contacted. Includes a map showing the areas which commissioner represents, as well as pictures of each commissioner.

Civic purpose: To explain the purpose of county commissioners and why it can be beneficial to contact them. To provide an easy way to get involved in local politics. To provide tools and resources to become more connected with the local political environment. To foster civic engagement for local voters and nonvoters alike.

Language purpose: To model the writing of formal emails. To promote discussion on idioms. To promote the use of language to describe locations and spatial relationships. To scaffold a path to learner autonomy by providing e-mail outlines that can be used to contact county commissioners.

Who will benefit: Residents of Washtenaw County, including but not limited to registered voters. Learners who have expressed interest in becoming more involved in the community, or those who are already involved. Low-intermediate learners who are working on describing spatial relationships in English. Conversation about idioms applicable to all learner levels.

Lesson Planning Framework

Needs assessment:

Learning objective:

Performance criteria:

Activate background knowledge	Focus on language	Extend the lesson
For this story, see Appendix D, “Write to Your County Commissioner: E-mail Templates”		
<p>Ask U.S. citizens and permanent/long-term residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the biggest problems facing our community? <p>Ask citizens of other countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who takes care of local services in your home country? • What are some common problems? • What kinds of problems does your community have now? 	<p>Idioms Use the line “do you want a say in how your taxes are used?” to begin a discussion of common English idiomatic phrases, perhaps particularly those centered on “having a voice.”</p> <p>Break idioms down to show what they mean. For example, ask learners to conceptualize what it means to “have a voice” literally, and then to guess the idiomatic meaning.</p> <p>E-mail Outlines See Appendix D for the full outlines. Use them to help learners articulate their ideas.</p> <p>Look at the structure and content of the email outlines. Brainstorm other contexts in which learners might need to send formal emails.</p> <p>Spatial Relationships With beginning learners, use the map of districts to work on describing spatial relationships in English. These relationships could be represented in a number of different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left, right, up, down • Above, below, next to • (over) there, here • North, South, East, West 	<p>County Commissioner Meetings If your learners get interested in local government and how it works, you could take them on a field trip to a county commissioners’ meeting. This could serve as the basis for future activities, including LEA-writing activities, which could then be used to highlight salient language forms and vocabulary.</p> <p><i>Location</i> Board Room of the Administration Building 220 N. Main Street Ann Arbor MI 48104</p> <p><i>Date/Time:</i> Regular meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:45 p.m.</p> <p>Board working sessions are held on the first and third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Phone number to confirm meetings:</i> (734) 222 - 6850</p> <p>For more information and full calendar, visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/boc/bc_boctimes.html <p>Send e-mails: Work with your learners to draft and send actual emails to their commissioners, using the outlines in Appendix D. Encourage them to share/discuss any follow-up responses they receive.</p>

Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

- Idiomatic expressions
- The concept of a county commissioner, the usefulness of contacting them
- Not knowing what district they live in/what commissioner to contact

Notes on Lesson Planning

The Flint Water Crisis: What Happened?

Story at a Glance

Length (main story): 674 words | **Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score:** 78.2 / 100 | **Average Grade Level:** 5.5

Summary: An overview of the Flint water crisis, beginning with Flint's financial decline and the decision to appoint an emergency manager (EM). Explains the city's switch to Flint River water, resulting problems (bacteria, lead), the switch back to Detroit water, and the declaration of a state of emergency for Genesee County in January 2016. Ends with the March 2016 U.S. congressional hearings.

Civic purpose: To provide a basic foundation for informed engagement with the Flint water issue. To clarify relationships between key apparatuses of state and local government. To provide an entry point into engaging issues of environmental justice. To provide an entry point into learning about the culture of volunteering and private donations in the U.S.

Language purpose: To engage learners in sustained reading of a longer text. To provide a prompt for oral discussion or written response. To introduce civic and technical vocabulary in context. To model specific grammatical patterns.

Who will benefit: Learners developing intermediate reading skills. Intermediate ESL learners developing the ability to use and differentiate simple past, past progressive, and simple present tenses in writing or speech. Advanced learners developing the ability to write complex sentences.

Lesson Planning Framework

Needs assessment:

Learning objective:

Performance criteria:

Activate background knowledge

Focus on language

Extend the lesson

For this story, see Appendix E, “Building Vocabulary: A Potential Lesson Plan”

Use the map in the story and/or Google Maps and photographs from news stories to introduce the topic:

- MLive slideshow:
<http://bit.ly/1Qtgn3A>

Ask learners what they already know about the story:

- Have you heard about Flint’s water problems? Were you surprised to hear about them? Why/why not?

If your learners have heard about the story, have them explain it to you:

- Let’s pretend that I’ve never heard about Flint’s water problems. How would you explain them to me?

Ask learners about water pollution in their home countries:

- Could this happen in your hometown? Why/why not?
- If it did, how would people react? What would happen? Why?

Vocabulary

Regional place names; technical terms; political/organizational terms related to local, state, and federal government.

Verb tenses

simple past, past progressive, simple present. For tips on teaching tenses, see

<http://elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm>.

Modals

- expressing past intentions or making guesses/predictions about the future in the past with “would” (e.g., “Detroit said it would stop selling water to Flint in April 2014.”)
- expressing ability or potential with “can” and “cannot” (e.g., “Some bacteria can make people sick.”)
- expressing opinions with “should” (e.g., “How do you think the problem should be fixed?”)

Adverbials of time

- locating events in time with

Use political cartoons or other images to introduce environmental justice issues into the discussion.

- <http://politi.co/1VqGf2O>
- Google image search

Use YouTube videos for speaking and listening practice for high-intermediate and advanced learners

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMfN5PkQ60Q>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnDQFivtCd0>

Discuss the U.S.’s culture of volunteering and private donation, using photographs of people donating bottled water to Flint residents as a springboard.

- Google image search

Ask more advanced learners to rewrite the story (or sections of the story) by creating more complex sentences.

Follow the developing story in the news over time.

- Use a readability tool to make

	<p>adverbial phrases (e.g., by the early 2000, in December 2011, until April 2015)</p> <p>Complex sentences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using “and, but, or, yet, so” to connect simple sentences in speech or writing ● using “that-clauses” to report speech (indirect quotations) (e.g., “It said that it did not have enough power to fix the problem.”) 	<p>complex texts more accessible. See https://readability-score.com/.</p>
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Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

- National differences in how governments are structured and the cultural implications of those differences.
- Potential confusion about the organizational structure of and relationship between Michigan’s state and local governments.

Notes on Lesson Planning

The Fight for Clean Water in Ann Arbor

Story at a Glance

Length (main story): 1,216 words | **Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score:** 86.7 / 100 | **Average Grade Level:** 4.6

Summary: High-level overview of the history and development of the 1,4-dioxane plume spreading under Scio Township and Ann Arbor. Begins by referencing the Flint water crisis story for context. Defines the basic problem and describes its origins: how and where it started, how it was discovered, the key issues of concern in the community, and the prolonged fight over the clean-up. Ends by discussing possible next steps and summarizing the history of civic engagement surrounding the issue.

Civic purpose: To introduce a local issue that has not been covered by popular national media. To provide a basic foundation for informed engagement with a locally relevant issue. To illustrate the purpose and impact of sustained civic engagement. To illustrate the impact of state-level policy decisions on local residents. To highlight entry points and resources for civic engagement and outline actions that individual residents can take.

Language purpose: To engage learners in sustained reading of a longer text. To introduce technical vocabulary in context. To introduce the names of local places and organizations. To model specific grammatical patterns.

Who will benefit: Learners developing intermediate reading skills. Intermediate ESL learners developing their abilities to use reported speech (indirect quotations) and to use and differentiate the past perfect, simple past, present perfect, simple present, present progressive, and simple future tenses in writing or speech. Advanced learners developing the ability to write complex sentences.

Lesson Planning Framework

Needs assessment:

Learning objective:

Performance criteria:

Activate background knowledge

Focus on language

Extend the lesson

For this story, see Appendix E, “Building Vocabulary: A Potential Lesson Plan”

Use the map of the dioxane plume and Google Maps to find out where learners live in relation to the plume.

Use pictures of landmarks to give learners points of reference for the plume in the visible world. The plume passes under Weber’s Inn, Plum Market on Maple Road, the Goodrich-Quality 16 theaters on Jackson Road, and Eberwhite Elementary School.

Use the Flint water crisis story to start a general conversation about water quality. (Many more learners

Vocabulary

Local place names; social/political roles; natural, organizational, and technical terms; large numbers

Verb tenses

simple present, present progressive, present perfect, simple past, past perfect, simple future. For tips on teaching tenses, see

<http://elihinkel.org/tips/tenses.htm>.

Modals

- expressing ability/potential with “can” and “cannot” (present) and “could” (past)
- expressing probability with

Put learners in the driver’s seat and take an international angle by asking learners to research and share stories about water pollution from their home countries. Use these stories to build topic-specific vocabulary and to work on verb tense, modals, and/or adverbials of time and place.

Follow the developing story in the news over time. Use a readability tool to assess the readability and grade-level of complex texts and make them more accessible.

- <http://search.mlive.com/dioxane/>
- <https://readability-score.com/>

<p>will have heard of the problems in Flint than about the dioxane plume.)</p> <p>Ask learners about water pollution in their home countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your home country, have there ever been any problems with the water? Has it ever gotten dirty (polluted)? ● When there is a problem with the water, who is supposed to solve the problem? ● If people found out that there was a problem with the water, what would they do? 	<p>“may” and “might”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● expressing obligation with “supposed to” and “should” ● expressing guesses or predictions about the future made in the past with “would” (e.g., Who would pay for the cleanup?) <p>Adverbials of place connecting actions and events to places with adverbial phrases (e.g., in Scio Township and Ann Arbor, under Scio Township and Ann Arbor, toward Barton Pond)</p> <p>Adverbials of time locating events in time with adverbial phrases (e.g., in the late 1950s, after a while, a year and a half later, for more than 30 years)</p> <p>Complex sentences Using “that-clauses” to report speech (indirect quotations) or make a clause into the object of a sentence.</p> <p>Using the pronoun “that” to make complex sentences with adjectival clauses (a.k.a. relative clauses)</p>	<p>Mine reports from Michigan Radio for more vocabulary words and formulaic expressions. Read report transcripts or share reports with learners for focused listening practice at home. Discuss what you learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● http://bit.ly/1VCkpKl ● http://bit.ly/1STWLCi <p>Dig into the science and statistical risks with advanced learners via this YouTube video. (Bonus listening practice with a British narrator.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUpcpWb0n7o <p>Ask more advanced learners to rewrite the story (or sections of the story) by creating more complex sentences.</p>
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Areas for Potential Breakdown / Opportunities for Learning

- Potential confusion over the organizational structure of and relationship between local governmental entities (e.g., city, township, and county) and state/federal entities.
- Potential confusion about water quality in the City of Ann Arbor. May need to clarify that the dioxane plume is a potential threat that has not entered the city’s water supply, the Huron River. Properties built above the plume or within the prohibition zone are not allowed to use groundwater (wells).
- Dioxane and dioxin are different chemicals.

Appendices / Tools

Appendix A: The ABCD Model for Writing Objectives

Appendix B: Backward Design Lesson Plan Template—Sample

These external appendices are available on the Washtenaw Literacy website under Tutor Resources.

Appendix C: Expressing Opinion with Modals and Logical Connectors - A Potential Lesson Plan

This plan could be used for “Special Education Millage” or “Michigan Primary Results.”

Learner Choice

Have the learners pick which story they would like to read.

Activate Background Knowledge

Begin by picking an idea for activating background knowledge from the list in the story guide’s “Lesson Planning Framework,” or make up your own activity. The goal is to have a group discussion to get learners talking.

Tutor Read-Aloud / Group Echo-Reading

Decide with your learners how much of the story you would like to read. For example, you could decide to read it serial-style over multiple sessions, or you could just pick one section.

Read the article with your learners. You could echo-read with them, or take turns in a round robin.

Group Discussion

Talk with your learners about how they feel about the issues discussed in the articles. You could specifically ask them, “How would you vote?” or “Who would you vote for?” If you have the space, write down learner responses.

Optional: When talking with learners, you could ask them why they would vote that way. If you have the room, you could write these answers down in a parallel column to their first responses.

Zoom-In on Language

Once your learners have expressed their opinion, focus specifically on the modals they could use to express their opinions.

If your learners didn’t answer with “I would...” ask clarifying questions of their opinions (“Are you 100% sure, or is this just something you’d maybe vote for?”)

Try switching out different modals and ask your learners to explain the differences in meaning, working with them to figure it out. Don’t give them the answer right away.

Optional: Connect two columns with appropriate linking word(s) (“because,” “since”) if learners have not done so already. Underline linking word and switch it with other logical connectors. Ask your learners to explain the difference to you. Work with them to establish meaning through asking follow-up questions, don’t give them the answer right away.

Homework

Have learners ask a family member or coworker their opinion on subject, documenting answer in form similar to that established in class. Have them share responses next time you meet, could serve as basis for further discussion.

Appendix D: Write to Your County Commissioner: E-mail Templates

If you want to e-mail your commissioner, but don't know what to write, use these templates.

Problem or Request

Dear Mr. LaBarre,

My name is _____ (your name), and I have been living in Ann Arbor for _____ (period of time). Recently, I have had problems with _____ (problem). This has been going on for _____ (length of time). I was hoping that you could help me.

Thank you for your time,

_____ (your name)

Request for Information

Dear Mr. Rabhi,

My name is _____ (your name), and I want to know about _____ (local topic you'd like to know more about). I was hoping that you could give me more information on this topic.

Regards,

_____ (your name)

Thanking a Commissioner

Dear Mr. Smith,

My name is _____ (your name), and I just wanted to thank you for _____ (thing in your district that you liked/was helpful). I really enjoyed/appreciated it because _____ (reason).

Thank you,

_____ (your name)

Appendix E: Building Vocabulary: A Potential Lesson Plan

Use “The Flint Water Crisis” or “The Fight for Clean Water in Ann Arbor” as tools for building English language learners’ vocabularies. (See the vocabulary list on the next page.)

Learner Choice

Have the learners pick which story they would like to read.

Activate Background Knowledge

Pick an idea for activating background knowledge from the list in the story guide’s “Lesson Planning Framework,” or make up your own activity. The goal is to have a group discussion to get learners talking.

Tutor Read-Aloud / Group Echo-Reading

Decide with your learners how much of the story you would like to read. For example, you could decide to read it serial-style over multiple sessions, or you could just pick one section.

Split the group in half and ask each half to take turns echo-reading with you. Ask the non-echoing learners to be responsible for circling words that they do not know. Each person should try to find, say, five words that they want to learn.

Read the story out loud to the learners, with each group taking turns echo-reading and finding new vocabulary words.

Have the group discuss everyone’s words. Learners with different vocabularies may be able to provide each other with definitions or sample sentences. If not, define the word and provide sample sentences. (Learners may want to swap/share words.) Google image search is a great tool for “defining” more concrete words. Ask the learners to try making sample sentences together.

Homework

Ask the learners to take their words home and write them in a vocabulary journal. Ask them to write down definitions and write some sample sentences at home. Make sure you keep a list as well. When you are at home, write the words on index cards.

Word Games

If enough of the same learners return for your next session, have them share their sample sentences. See where the conversation goes and use it to activate learners’ background knowledge.

Shuffle your deck of index cards with the learners’ vocabulary words on them. Use the cards to play, round-robin style, a sentence-making game or group storytelling game. For example, can they use the words to retell the story to an imaginary friend? Listen to the learners and periodically provide feedback on accuracy of usage, pronunciation, etc.

“The Flint Water Crisis” Vocabulary List

Regional place names: Flint, Detroit, Genesee County

Technical terms: bacteria, chemical, rust, filter

Political roles & organizations: governor, emergency manager, state treasurer, Congress, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Environmental Quality. (The last two are also relevant to the dioxane plume story.)

“The Fight for Clean Water in Ann Arbor” Vocabulary List

Local place names: Scio Township, Chelsea, Washtenaw County, Third Sister Lake, downtown Ann Arbor, Barton Pond, Eberwhite Elementary School. (Tip: Bring a paper map or use Google Maps.)

Technical terms: filter, solvent, dioxane, cancer, plume, groundwater, wells, remediation, standard, lawsuit

Organizational terms: agency, corporation, coalition, city, township, county, state, federal, government

Large numbers: Use “billion” to introduce other large numbers (e.g., thousand, million, trillion)

Environmental terms: environment, lake, river, stream, feather. Use these to introduce other terms for describing the natural world.

Social & political roles: resident, volunteer, coordinator, commissioner, representative, senator