



# Lesson Plan

## Mayor Moe's Mess

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

Grade Level: 3–6

### Specific Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will explore the concept of freedom of religion and belief.
- 2) Students will gain an understanding of religious accommodation: that sometimes we must treat certain people differently in order to be fair.
- 3) Students will apply the Acorn test to determine whether or not a rule that limits religious freedom is fair.

### Enduring Understanding(s)/Big Ideas:

- 1) Everyone in Canada, and generally in democracies, is guaranteed freedom of religion and belief
- 2) Freedom of religion and belief is a guarantee or promise made by democracies that people can believe, and express what they believe, in the way they choose to do so. It is also a guarantee or promise that people cannot be forced by governments to practice any particular system of belief.
- 1) Sometimes rules and laws may conflict with a belief or religious practice. When this happens we must ask questions to help us decide whether it would be more fair to enforce the rule or to change it to accommodate the belief or practice.

### Essential Questions:

- What is freedom of religion and belief? Why is it important?
- When could it be fair to limit someone's religious freedoms/beliefs?
- When could it be unfair to limit someone's religious freedoms/beliefs?

**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](http://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 engagement, citizenship issues and concerns, rights, and rules that students confront every day. In particular, this lesson grapples with the topic of freedom of religion and belief. Students may be aware of this freedom because some children may take days off for religious holidays, may wear religious symbols, and may eat or avoid specific foods for religious reasons. Depending on students' prior knowledge, you may want to have an introductory discussion about diversity and religious practices.

<p><b>PART 1: Minds On: Activating Prior Knowledge</b> [10 min]</p> <p><b>Understanding religion, traditions and beliefs:</b> Divide the class into two groups. Hand out the following descriptions to each group:</p> <p>Group 1: You are member of the Oakster group. Oaksters have a great respect for nature and build their own homes entirely out of natural, renewable materials. They believe all creatures are sacred and are very strict vegetarians.</p> <p>Group 2: You are a member of the Songster group. Songsters are well known for their love of music and the arts. October 13 is a very special Songster holiday on which they are required to stay at home and spend time with family and friends, celebrating and singing traditional Songster songs.</p> <p>Optional (time permitting): Ask each group to make a symbol that represents their group’s traditions and beliefs. Each group will present their symbol to the class, describing how it represents their group’s culture/belief/traditions.</p> <p><b>Class discussion:</b> <b>Understanding Freedom of Religion and Belief</b> Ask the class the following discussion questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do you think it would be fair for Oaksters to force Songsters to be vegetarian? Do you think it would be fair for Songsters to force Oaksters to learn and sing traditional Songster songs? Why or why not?</li> <li>2) As an Oakster or a Songster, what do you think it means to have freedom of religion or freedom of belief? (Freedom of religion and belief allows everyone to decide for themselves what they believe, and whether or not they want to follow a religion.)</li> <li>3) Why is freedom of religion and belief important?</li> </ol> <p><b>What is a fair limit to freedom of religion and belief?</b> Present the students with the attached announcement of TNF City School’s Annual Festival. Pose the following questions to the class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Will you be attending the festival? Why or why not?</li> <li>5) Is it fair to require all students to attend the festival? Why or why not?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Materials</b> (Teacher/ Student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group descriptions</li> <li>• TNF City School Festival Announcement (attached below)</li> </ul> <p>For optional symbol activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chart paper</li> <li>• markers</li> </ul>
<p><b>PART 2: Action</b> [30 min]</p> <p><b>Introduce and watch <i>Mayor Moe’s Mess</i>:</b> <i>In this video, the TNF City Council makes a rule about dress code for all the city councilors. While watching the video, try to identify how different characters are affected by the rule in different ways.</i></p>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AV equipment</li> <li>• Mayor Moe’s Mess video: <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/mayor-moes-mess/">http://thatsnotfair.ca/mayor-moes-mess/</a></li> </ul>

<p><b>PART 2: Action Continued...</b></p> <p><b>Class discussion:</b> Introduce the Acorn Test (refer to the Acorn Test anchor chart). The Acorn test is a way to help us decide whether or not a rule that limits our rights or freedoms is fair. Ask the students the 1<sup>st</sup> question of the Acorn test: 1) Why did city council create the dress code rule? What was the purpose of the rule? (some councilors looked “messy and untidy”, some councilors believed that if everyone dressed the same and looked like “gentle creatures”, they would be better behaved and not fight as much)</p> <p><b>Class Activity: Using a Character Hot Seat Activity, answer the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> questions of the acorn test by identifying how different characters were affected by the dress code rule</b></p> <p>Post the 5 character ID pictures on the blackboard (see attached).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask student volunteers to come up to the front of the class and select a character from the board. These students are “in the hot seat” and will assume the role of their selected character</li> <li>The class will ask the students in the hot seat questions 2 and 3 of the acorn test:</li> </ul> <p>2) Did the rule work? Did the dress code achieve its intended purpose? 3) What else did the rule do? How did the rule affect you? Did the rule have a positive or negative effect on you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat hot-seat procedure for each of the 5 characters.</li> </ul> <p><b>City Council Vote</b> After considering all the Acorn Test questions, students will vote on whether to withdraw the bylaw. Students may use their Fair/Not Fair voting paddles (see Materials) if they wish.</p>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acorn Test anchor chart <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Acorn_Test_Anchor_Chart.pdf">http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Acorn_Test_Anchor_Chart.pdf</a></li> <li>Mayor Moe’s Mess Word-Wall Words: <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/TNF-Word-Wall-Mayor-Moes-Mess.pdf">http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/TNF-Word-Wall-Mayor-Moes-Mess.pdf</a></li> <li>Character ID pictures (attached)</li> <li>Blackboard, whiteboard or flipchart</li> <li>Optional: Fair/Not Fair voting paddles printouts (one for each student). Download paddle template here: <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/TNF_voting_paddle.pdf">http://thatsnotfair.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/TNF_voting_paddle.pdf</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>PART 3: Consolidation and Debrief</b> [10 min]</p> <p>Concluding statement: Sometimes rules and laws can conflict with people’s beliefs or religious rules. When this happens we must ask questions to help us decide whether it would be more fair to enforce the rule or to change it to allow people to have their freedom of religion or beliefs.</p> <p>Oaksters and Songsters, if you had an opportunity to speak to the organizers of Mayor Moe’s School Festival, what would you suggest to make the event more fair and enjoyable for everyone? Make a new and improved invitation that accommodates Oaksters and Songsters so that they can attend the festival too.</p>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual journals</li> <li>pencils/coloured pencils (optional)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps – Suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit <a href="http://thatsnotfair.ca/mayor-moes-mess-game/">http://thatsnotfair.ca/mayor-moes-mess-game/</a> to play the Mayor Moe’s Mess video game.</li> <li>Continue exploring issues of fairness in your classroom using the rest of the videos, teacher resources and games</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>	

Come Join Mayor Moe for the



# 1st Annual TNF City School Festival

Come share your school spirit at TNF City School's 1st Annual School Festival. There will be games, music, and all the hot dogs you can eat!

**Attendance is mandatory for all students.**

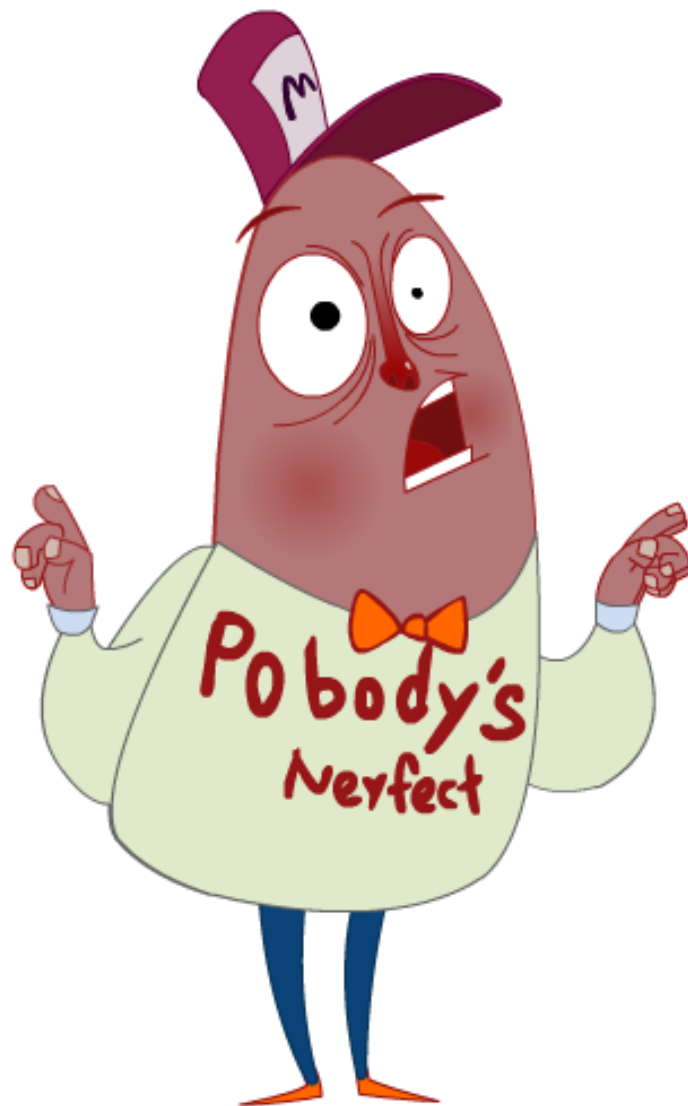
When: Oct. 13, 12:00pm

Where: TNF City School

**HELLO**

my name is

Councilor Pobody



**HELLO**

my name is

Councilor Deano



**HELLO**

my name is

Councilor Gill





**HELLO**

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Councilor Feather





**HELLO**

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Councilor Raddy

