

Taking a Stand



Orange County, Fla.: Immigrants become citizens in a naturalization ceremony.

Overview

Students will understand that citizens take stands on issues and explore ways to advocate for those issues.

Background

- Participation in our country’s political life includes not only traditional tasks of citizenship, such as voting and serving on juries, but also being informed, formulating positions, and advocating those positions.
- While issues analysis and advocacy may seem difficult tasks for primary-level students, students at this level can begin to understand the importance of being informed and taking a stand.

Resources

- *Pearl Moscowitz’s Last Stand*, by Arthur A. Levine, illustrated by Robert Roth (New York: Tambourine Books, 1993).

Procedure

1. Help students understand that the term “last stand” means sticking up for or fighting for something. Make sure they understand that “a last stand” usually comes after a long fight or struggle.
2. Show students the cover illustration. Ask the following questions.
 - Which person shown on the cover is Pearl Moscowitz?
 - What does Pearl seem to be fighting for?
3. Read the book to the students, pausing at appropriate points, to discuss questions such as:
 - How did Bella Moscowitz, Pearl’s mother, get trees planted on their street?
 - Is this a good way to get action? Why or why not?
 - What would you do if you were Pearl? If you were the young man? If you were the city government?
 - What was Pearl Moscowitz’s last stand?
 - How was the conflict resolved? Was this a good way to resolve the conflict? Why or why not?

principal could address the issue. If the problem is school lunches, the cafeteria staff or the principal might address the issue.

5. Have students form small groups according to the issue in which they are most interested. Each group is to (1) identify their position on the issue; (2) list at least two arguments for their position; (3) use those arguments to develop a skit demonstrating how they might “take a stand” on the issue.

6. Have students present their skits. After each, have the students discuss whether the presentation was persuasive. If possible, invite the principal to view the skits and respond to students’ positions.

Enrichment

Invite senior citizens who live in the school neighborhood to visit the class and talk about changes they have observed in the neighborhood. Have they opposed any change? Why or why not?

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