

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Our Classroom Declaration

objective

To engage second grade students in understanding the principles of self-governance and democracy through the creation of a classroom Declaration of Independence.

materials

1. large poster paper or whiteboard
2. markers, crayons, or colored pencils

introduction

- Begin the lesson by explaining to students the concept of self-governance and democracy. Use relatable examples such as voting for classroom activities or rules.
- Introduce the idea of a Declaration of Independence by reviewing its purpose in history. You can mention the American Revolution and how the colonists declared independence from British rule.
- Discuss the importance of having rules and guidelines to ensure fairness and harmony within a community.

brainstorming session

- Facilitate a brainstorming session where students suggest ideas for rules or principles they believe are important for a fair and respectful classroom environment.
- Encourage students to think about what rights they would like to have as members of the classroom community and what responsibilities they should uphold.
- Write down all the ideas on the large poster paper or whiteboard.

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drafting the declaration

- Based on the brainstorming session, guide students in crafting a Classroom Declaration of Independence.
- Begin with a statement asserting their right to self-governance and fair treatment.
- Break down the Declaration into sections such as:
 “Our Rights,” “Our Responsibilities,” and “Our Commitment to Each Other.”
- Help students articulate each section using simple language that reflects their ideas and values.

review and revisions

- Review the drafted Declaration as a class, discussing each section to ensure clarity and understanding.
- Encourage students to suggest any revisions or additions they feel are necessary to make the Declaration more inclusive and representative of the class.

signing ceremony

- Once the Declaration is finalized, organize a signing ceremony where each student can sign their name or make a thumbprint as a symbolic commitment to upholding the principles outlined in the document.
- Display the signed Declaration prominently in the classroom as a reminder of the class’s shared values and commitments.

reflection

- Conclude the activity with a brief reflection where students share their thoughts on the process of creating the Classroom Declaration of Independence.
- Encourage students to consider how the Declaration can help promote a positive and self-governing classroom community.

extension activity

For an extension activity, invite students to create individual or group posters illustrating key principles or rights outlined in the Classroom Declaration. Display these posters around the classroom as visual reminders of the class’s values.