

**HEALTHY CHOICES, HEALTHY CHILDREN:
CIVICS & LEADERSHIP EDITION**

LESSON 2 ACTIVITY: GETTING TO KNOW CIVIC LEADERS

Ta’Kaiya Blaney (2001 –) is a Native North American living in Canada. Inspired by an oil spill hurting marine life, she decided to help the environment and draw attention to ways that people could help keep the earth clean.

When she was 10 years old, she wrote a song about the impact that a proposed oil pipeline could have on her community and the environment. She has written songs, created videos and spoken at United Nations conferences about the issues that are important to her. Ta’Kaiya has participated in rallies with others, written letters and spoken to companies about the potential for oil spills—even when people did not want her speaking out.

Because of her work with hundreds of others—participating in rallies, speaking at schools and conferences, sharing songs and stories—many more people are aware of the issue, discussing the pros and cons of the pipeline, and considering the impact of human actions on the environment.

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Mary McLeod Bethune (1875 – 1955) was one of 17 children born to her parents who were both former slaves. She was the only one to attend school and saw an education as key to advancement. Becoming a teacher to instill that knowledge in others, she was disheartened to see no schools for African American women. Bethune worried that they would be overlooked, since they often went straight into the workforce instead of school. She was also concerned about broader issues that impacted their education, including health, housing, and job prospects.

At the age of 29, with only a dollar and fifty cents, Bethune started a boarding school for African American girls in Daytona, Florida. She gave speeches and held fundraisers so that the school was able to keep going even during the Great Depression. She did not want to see democracy divided and always made tourists welcome at her school, where there was never segregated seating. She was tireless in promoting the cause of education and was both a friend and advisor to Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, helping them better understand the issues that were important to education as a whole and to the African American community. Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover also called on her to serve the government.

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Cathy (Kuhlmeier) Cowan (living) was a student journalist who was upset that a teacher in charge of the high school newspaper edited out two stories, one on the effects of divorce on teenagers and another on teen pregnancy. With the help of a former advisor to the school newspaper and two other student journalists, Kuhlmeier began the process of fighting the censorship in 1983. Together, all three students filed suit with the Hazelwood School District for violation of their First Amendment rights. (The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights protects the freedom of speech and of the press.)

The case was heard in 1985 and the school won. Kuhlmeier appealed the case at the district level, and in 1986 the court ruled that the school’s newspaper should be a conduit for student voice. In 1988, however, the school won an appeal at the Supreme Court. While Kuhlmeier didn’t get the outcome she sought, the case drew public attention to the issue of freedom of speech for student journalists. She still shares her experience with audiences today.

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Thurgood Marshall (1908 – 1993) became interested in the Civil Rights movement after being rejected from admission to a university because of his skin color. He was admitted to Howard University, where he completed his law degree. Working to extend equal Constitutional rights to every American, Marshall argued 32 cases in the US Supreme Court as the lead attorney, tirelessly planning each argument. Over a lifetime, he won many cases that changed the way the country thought about race.

In 1948, he won the case *Shelley vs. Kramer*, in which the Supreme Court struck down laws that prevented people from owning property based on their race. In 1950, Marshall won two cases in the Supreme Court related to integration in graduate schools. At the time, rather than integrate the classrooms, universities created separate schools for African American students.

Marshall also argued *Brown vs. Board of Education* before the Supreme Court. His arguments lead to the 1954 ruling that separate segregated facilities in schools were inherently unequal. This ruling changed the lives of millions of Americans. Marshall later became the first African American Supreme Court justice.

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Jeannette Rankin (1880 – 1973) grew up in a time period when women did not have the right to vote. Although the first women's rights convention proposed voting rights in 1848, legislation wasn't even introduced in Congress until 1878. It was eventually defeated in the Senate in 1886. Rankin decided to work with others to get laws passed state by state to allow women to vote. She was a leader in getting women the right to vote in Washington in 1910 and Montana and 1914.

Seeking a larger platform for equality, she ran for Congress. In 1916, she narrowly won a seat in the US House of Representatives. Rankin was the first woman to serve in the US Congress—no small accomplishment since women still did not have the right to vote nationwide.

During her first two years in Congress, she worked with other members of Congress to secure the right to vote for all women and to help improve working conditions for women helping with the war effort during World War I. She stated, "I may be the first woman in Congress but I won't be the last." Through the efforts of Rankin and many others, women gained the right to vote in 1920 with the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

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Clara Barton (1821 – 1912) was working in Washington, DC, when the Civil War broke out. She had no medical training, but jumped in to help care for wounded soldiers. In 1861, she took on the task of coordinating supply chains to help maintain care as the war continued. In 1862 she was given permission to travel to battlefields with supplies and she continued to do so until the end of the war in 1865. Barton traveled to Switzerland where she learned about the Red Cross that began there in 1864. She had seen, in times of war or great natural tragedy, that there was no organization equipped to aid large numbers of people and lessen human suffering and loss of life.

Barton decided to start a chapter of the Red Cross in the United States. The task was not simple. She lectured the public about the organization to build support, wrote pamphlets to help people understand what the organization would do and even met with President Hayes to advocate for the organization. In 1881, the American Association of the Red Cross was formed. Since then, the Red Cross in America has served millions of people in need, organizing to get help and supplies to disaster sites quickly.

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Anna Dickinson (1842 – 1932) grew up during the Civil War. When she was 19 years old, she began writing articles about the wrongs of slavery and gave speeches in the north to audiences so large that tickets were necessary to attend them. She was hired to give speeches to audiences who were less than supportive to the cause, which sometimes put her in harm's way as people tried to dissuade her from speaking.

When Dickinson was 21, she was invited to speak before Congress and President Abraham Lincoln. At the time, public speaking was not considered something that women were allowed to do, making this a remarkable achievement. She was the first woman to have this honor and the chamber was packed with government officials and military leaders the day she spoke.

Dickinson was credited with converting many of these people to the abolitionist cause—those working together to abolish, or end, slavery.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968) was a Baptist minister who helped lead the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a group of black churches who wanted to achieve equality through civil disobedience (refusing to obey laws with the goal of getting the government to change them).

King used peaceful acts, like sit-ins, to protest laws and rules denying equal rights based on race. For example, people disobeyed rules saying that African Americans could not sit in certain areas, such as in a restaurant or on a bus. These acts raised public awareness and support to end segregation. He achieved national attention for his role in the 382-day long Montgomery Bus Boycott, which ended when the Supreme Court ruled that busing segregation was unconstitutional.

King persevered even when his home was bombed and he was arrested. A powerful communicator, he spoke over 2,500 times to various groups and used speeches as well as papers he wrote to get support. In his most famous speech, he stated: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

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Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865) was a known opponent of slavery when he was elected President. The country had split between the North and South. In some cases, families were fighting against each other if they lived in different regions. Shortly after he took office in 1861, differences over slavery that began at the founding of our country led the South to break away from the North. Lincoln felt this action on the part of the South (known as the Confederacy) was illegal. He called for volunteers to form the Union Army and fight on behalf of the Union—the entire United States of America, including the states that wanted to break away.

The American Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865. Lincoln rallied the Republican Party and the northern Democrats for support during the war. In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, seeking to give freedom to slaves within the Confederacy. Over 600,000 lives were lost during the Civil War and Lincoln had to work with many different military leaders to bring the war to an end. Once the war ended, there was still work to be done and Lincoln made plans to reunite the country and rebuild the south. Lincoln is credited with saving the Union.

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PART 1 - QUESTIONS FOR LEADERS

- Introduce yourself.
- Describe what problem you saw.
- What did you do?
- What were some of the challenges you faced?
- How did you work with other people or with the government to get things done?
- What is different because you took action?

PART 2 - QUESTIONS FOR REPORTERS

- Introduce yourself.
- What qualities or skills made the people you met uncommon leaders?
- How did they use these qualities or skills to achieve their goals?
- Did they accomplish their goal, or is what they worked on still a work in progress?
- What did you admire about the leaders you met?

Getting the facts

finding and evaluating
information

Communicating

sharing our ideas, even
when they are not popular

Cooperation

teamwork

Making informed judgments

getting all sides of the issue
so we can make thoughtful
decisions

Taking a stand

deciding to do what is best
for you and your country

Making your voice heard

promoting our ideas and
opinions to make a difference

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LEADERSHIP & CITIZENSHIP SKILLS INVENTORY

LEADER'S NAME: _____ LESSON 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 (circle)

		Is this a strength?	I practiced this skill by:
L E A D E R S H I P	Envisioning (<i>shaping visions and goals</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Consensus seeking (<i>helping groups make decisions</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Negotiation (<i>resolving conflicts</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Creating an image (<i>to help people understand what you stand for</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Gaining legitimacy (<i>building a foundation for your group's power</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Coalition building (<i>getting support from other groups</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Advocacy (<i>persuading others to support you</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Motivating members (<i>encouraging your teammates</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
E V E R Y L E S S O N	Getting the facts (<i>finding and evaluating information</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Communicating (<i>sharing our ideas</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Cooperation (<i>teamwork</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Making informed judgments (<i>getting all sides of the issue before making decisions</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Taking a stand (<i>to do what is best for you and your country</i>)	Yes / Not yet	
	Making your voice heard (<i>promoting our ideas and opinions for public good</i>)	Yes / Not yet	

My goal after this lesson is:

Steps I will take to achieve this goal: