

RULES OF CIVILITY: “THE LITTLE SPARK OF CELESTIAL FIRE”

LEVEL:

Upper Elementary, Middle School

TIMEFRAME:

Two class session

OBJECTIVES:

Students will analyze several rules from the Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior to establish a context for behavior and social expectations in George Washington’s time

Student will examine Rule 110 to understand its context within the larger primary source and its implications for behavior in present day classrooms and communities

STANDARDS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| · Reading and Writing | · Civic values and Social Norms |
| · Literacy in History/Social Studies | · Speaking and Listening |
| · Principles of Democracy | · Colonial America |
-

PRE-LESSON TEACHER REFLECTION:

1. How do I share ownership of authority in the structures and procedures of my classroom?
2. How do I support students in using their individual voices in class?
3. How do I structure the classroom community to allow for students to discuss difficult historical and contemporary issues safely and productively?

PROCEDURE:

1. Ask students: what are some rules you need to follow at home? Why do your guardians have you follow those rules?
 - a. Explain to students that when George Washington was a teenager, there were many rules to follow. He was expected to record (write) them and know them. Today, we will examine a few of them.
2. Distribute the *Worksheet- Rules Analysis* (included in PDF). Students will move through the columns from left to right. For Upper Elementary students, we suggest reading aloud the rules and deciphering vocabulary for understanding. Allowing students to work in pairs or partnerships to translate the rule into present-day would

also be helpful. For Middle School students, allow students to work in partnerships throughout the analysis.

3. After the *Worksheet- Rules Analysis* is complete, invite students to share their conclusions from the final column regarding if the rules are easier or more difficult to follow.
4. Distribute *Worksheet- Rule 110* (included in PDF). Read the rule aloud and ask students: How does this rule sound different than the others we just looked at? Students will closely analyze this rule to answer the questions that accompany it. For Upper Elementary students, we suggest completing this analysis together as a class. For Middle and High School students, consider the value of modeling the deep thinking these questions require. Then, allow students to work in partnerships through the remainder of the questions.
5. Distribute *Worksheet- Laboring Brainstorm* (included in PDF). Review with students that “to labor” means to actively work and that a “conscience” is what guides us to make ethical decisions. Model for the class thinking aloud through actions they can take as individuals and communities to behave more ethically. Each column has a suggested ethical action to generate further ideas.
6. Share with the students: laboring to think, speak, and act ethically is not always easy. Ask students: what do you need from your classmates to feel comfortable and safe laboring to think, speak and act more ethically? Give students the opportunity to independently write down their needs before sharing them with the class.
7. Guide students in selecting between 4-5 needs that were reoccurring and shared by nearly all. Students will now turn these needs into actively worded* norms to lead to class to thinking, speaking, and acting more ethically. Students will draft in partnerships actively worded norms to share with the class to see which are universally adopted by the rest of the class. Ask them to record their rules on their *Worksheet- Class Rules* (included in PDF).
8. Compile these 4-5 active norms on a publically displayed poster or chart to refer to throughout the year, especially when the students struggle to hold themselves accountable for modeling ethical behavior.

Washington's Rule	Today, that means...	What topics do the rules seem to focus on? Do these rules seem easy or more difficult to follow?
<i>RULE NO. 5 If You Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put Your handkerchief or Hand before your face and turn aside.</i>		
<i>RULE NO. 50 Be not hasty to beleive flying Reports to the Disparag[e]ment of any.</i>		
<i>RULE NO. 53 Run not in the Streets, neither go t[oo s]lowly nor wit[h] Mouth open go not Shaking yr Arms [kick not the earth with yr feet, go] not upon the Toes, nor in a Dancing [fashion].</i>		
<i>RULE NO. 74 When Another Speaks be attentive your Self and disturb not the Audience if any hesitate in his Words help him not nor Prompt him without desired, Interrupt him not, nor Answer him till his Speec[h] be ended.</i>		

RULE NO. 110

Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience

What does "celestial" mean? HINT! It is derived from the Latin word "*caelum*," meaning "*heaven*"

What is "conscience"? How does someone "labor to keep alive" his/her conscience? Is that work easy or difficult?

If you were to speak and act according to your conscience, what kinds of things would you do?

How does this rule sound different than those we already examined from the text?

Why would Washington consider conscience a "celestial fire"?

NAME _____

DATE _____

How can we “labor to keep alive” our conscience as:

<p>A Student? <i>Example: I could stand up for classmates when they are bullied</i></p>	<p>A Class? <i>Example: We could make sure when we speak to each other, we are kind and honest</i></p>	<p>A School? <i>Example: We can volunteer to clean up the local cemetery on Veterans' Day</i></p>
<p>What do I need from my classmates to feel safe and comfortable talking about topics that light my conscience? <i>Example: I need my classmates to listen when I talk and not interrupt</i></p>		

Our Class Rules for Civility and Laboring for Conscience

With your partnership, look at what needs you share. Choose the five that you feel are the most important. Now turn each need into a norm, or guideline for the class

Example: I need people not to interrupt when I talk = We respect each others' voice by listening from head to toe

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____
