



## Barnyard Protest: Cows & Chickens & Fundamental Freedoms

Using the children's book *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin (2000, Little Simon)

Subjects: Language Arts; Humanities/Social Studies; Citizenship

Ages: 5-12

### Specific Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will develop a basic understanding of human rights and principles that inform the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- Students will be introduced to and demonstrate an understanding of their "Fundamental Freedoms" and how they can be used to call for peaceful change and protection of rights;
- Students will be asked to think about their own rights and those of others;
- Students will better understand the importance of individuals' voices in our democratic society.

### Enduring Understanding(s)/Big Idea/Essential Questions:

What does it mean to have a right or a freedom?

How can I peacefully and lawfully call for change when I see a situation that I think is unfair?

### Context:

- This lesson could serve as the beginning of a unit on citizenship and "fairness," and/or rights and responsibilities.
- It could also be taught as a follow up lesson AFTER an initial CCLET workshop. Visit [www.cclet.org](http://www.cclet.org) to learn how to request a free civil liberties workshop for your class.

### PREAMBLE:

In order for this lesson – or, really, *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 citizenship issues/concerns – the rights, rules, and responsibilities – that students confront every day. In particular, this lesson raises questions, in a light-hearted way, about working conditions and standing up for one's rights and the rights of others



## PART 1: Minds On: Activating Prior Knowledge

[10 min]

**Goal:** Briefly introduce the concepts of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (level of specificity depending on age of students) and highlight the (Section 2) “fundamental freedoms” our Charter affords us (freedom of expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom of association; freedom of conscience and religion). If children are young, simply discuss rights and freedoms more generally.

### Poll students:

- Discussion on what it means to have a right or freedom: What are some basic things that we should all have or be able to do as human beings in order to live and feel free and happy? What should others NOT be allowed to do to us? Generate a list of these “rights and freedoms” on a chalkboard or flipchart.
- Ask students if we should have to do anything in order to enjoy these rights and freedoms? i.e. Should we have to take a test or prove that we earned them in some way, or should we all have rights and freedoms just because we are human?
- Explain to students that **rights and freedoms do not need to be earned, or given to us by someone. They are something we possess as soon as we are born, because we are human.**
- Point out items on the list that are more of a privilege than a basic right – e.g. video games, ice cream etc. and ask students if they didn’t have these things, could they still live and function as a human being. Lead students to draw a distinction between a privilege and a right (or a want and a need), and ask students to go through the list again and categorize each item accordingly with some justification. This will undoubtedly generate some debate about how we define rights versus privileges.
- Discussion on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: In Canada we have a number of documents that outline and protect our rights and freedoms (The Charter, Canadian Human Rights Act, provincial human rights codes, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child etc.). The Charter of Rights and Freedoms defines the basic rights and freedoms that every person in Canada should have. It provides protection against the government taking those rights and freedoms away from us. For example, because of the Charter, the Parliament cannot automatically make a law that says no child should ever be permitted to speak.
- Discussion on using your Fundamental Freedoms to advocate for your rights: What could you do if someone were denying you your rights? What could you do if you felt you were being treated unfairly? If you think something is unfair, what can you do to change it? (Talk to people; write a letter; peacefully protest; form a club or a group to discuss; make signs; start a petition; call a government official etc.). The Charter also protects our freedom to stand up for our rights when we are being treated unfairly.
- Briefly describe the fundamental freedoms outlined in *Charter* section 2 (older children may be given a copy of s. 2 to read: (freedom of expression, freedom of the press and other media, opinion, religion, thought, belief, conscience, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association). Ask students to provide an example of how they might use each freedom to stand up for their rights (e.g. freedom of expression: write a letter to your local MP etc.)

### Materials (Teacher/ Student)

- (optional) an overview of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, found here: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1355760105725/1355760725223>
- Flipchart, chalkboard or Smart Board (for student-generated list)
- (optional) copy or the “kid-friendly” version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child available at this link: <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>



[www.cclnet.org](http://www.cclnet.org)

<p><b>PART 2: Action</b> [20 min]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now we're going to read a story about a farm in which the animals have a unique way of standing up for their rights.</li> <li>Read <i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type</i> to the students.</li> <li>After the story, lead a discussion. Discussion questions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the cows asking for?</li> <li>Do you think the animals have a right to have a warm shelter? Should people?</li> <li>What freedoms are they using in order to convince the farmer to give them electric blankets? – expression, peaceful assembly, association</li> <li>Are they successful right away? How many times did they have to write to the farmer? What did they do when the farmer first refused to give them blankets? Why do you think they didn't give up right away when the farmer first said no? What does this tell us about standing up for your rights? Is it easy?</li> <li>What did the cows do in order to finally convince the farmer to give them the blankets? Do you think they should have had to trade in their typewriter? Could they have done something else instead?</li> <li>The cows asked for blankets for themselves and for the hens that were also feeling cold at night. Why do you think they did that? Was it helpful to include the hens in their request for blankets? (Talk about the idea of freedom of association and strength in numbers). Should we also look out for the rights of other people/animals and not just ourselves? Why or why not? Can you think of a time when you stood up for someone else when they were being treated unfairly?</li> <li>What were the ducks asking for? Do you think we should all have a right to a diving board? Should the farmer give in to all the demands of the farm animals? Why or why not?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of the children's book <i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type</i> by Doreen Cronin (2000, Little Simon)</li> <li>Optional: There is also an animated version of <i>Click, Clack, Moo</i> available on YouTube at the following link: <a href="#">Click, Clack, Moo YouTube Video</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>PART 3: Consolidation and Debrief</b> [15 min]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there an issue or concern that any of you have (around the school; in the community) that you think you would like to raise awareness about? Do you see something unfair in your everyday life? Make a list.</li> <li>Revisit how – using which freedoms – students could effectively advocate for change on these issues. Are there any issues the class might like to take on/tackle together?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flipchart, chalkboard or Smart Board (for student-generated list)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps – Suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If students developed a strong list of injustices around them, could choose one or two and have students work together to develop and carry out advocacy plans. If you do advocate for change, please be sure to keep in touch with us (<a href="http://www.ccllet.org">www.ccllet.org</a>) – we'd love to offer support and/or post your results on our website!</li> <li>Consider offering more rights/liberties-based scenarios to continue reinforcement of students' critical thinking, debate and citizenship skills (see more lesson plans, suggested children's books (to serve as starting points) and scenarios at <a href="http://www.ccllet.org">www.ccllet.org</a> .</li> </ul>	

