



Civic Art Project Series

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

**"IF THEY DON'T GIVE YOU
A SEAT AT THE TABLE,
BRING A FOLDING CHAIR."
—SHIRLEY CHISHOLM**

EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE

FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE

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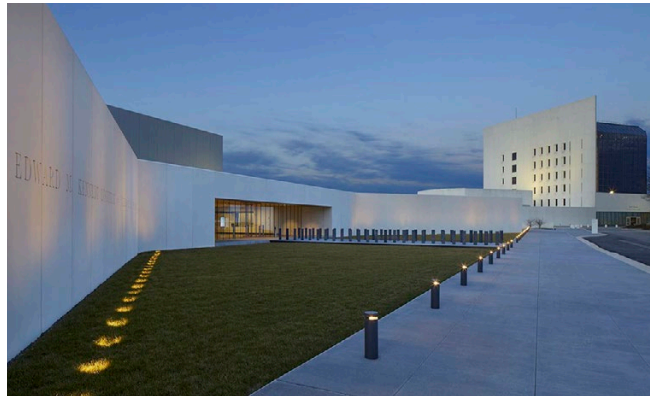
ABOUT THE EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate aims to teach students about the role of the Senate in our representative democracy, introducing important elements of the legislative process to young audiences and encouraging participation in civic life. Our programs serve the general public, students of all ages, teachers, scholars, senators, senate staff, international visitors, and others in public service.

This collaborative art project was inspired by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm's story and considers the importance of diverse representation in public discourse. This lesson plan is designed to help you facilitate the design and creation of your class's chairs—your “seats at the table” of representative democracy.

To find out more about the Seat at the Table Project visit <https://bringyourownchair.org/>

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate is dedicated to educating the public about the important role of the Senate in our government, encouraging participatory democracy, invigorating civil discourse, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.



DAY 1

TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes

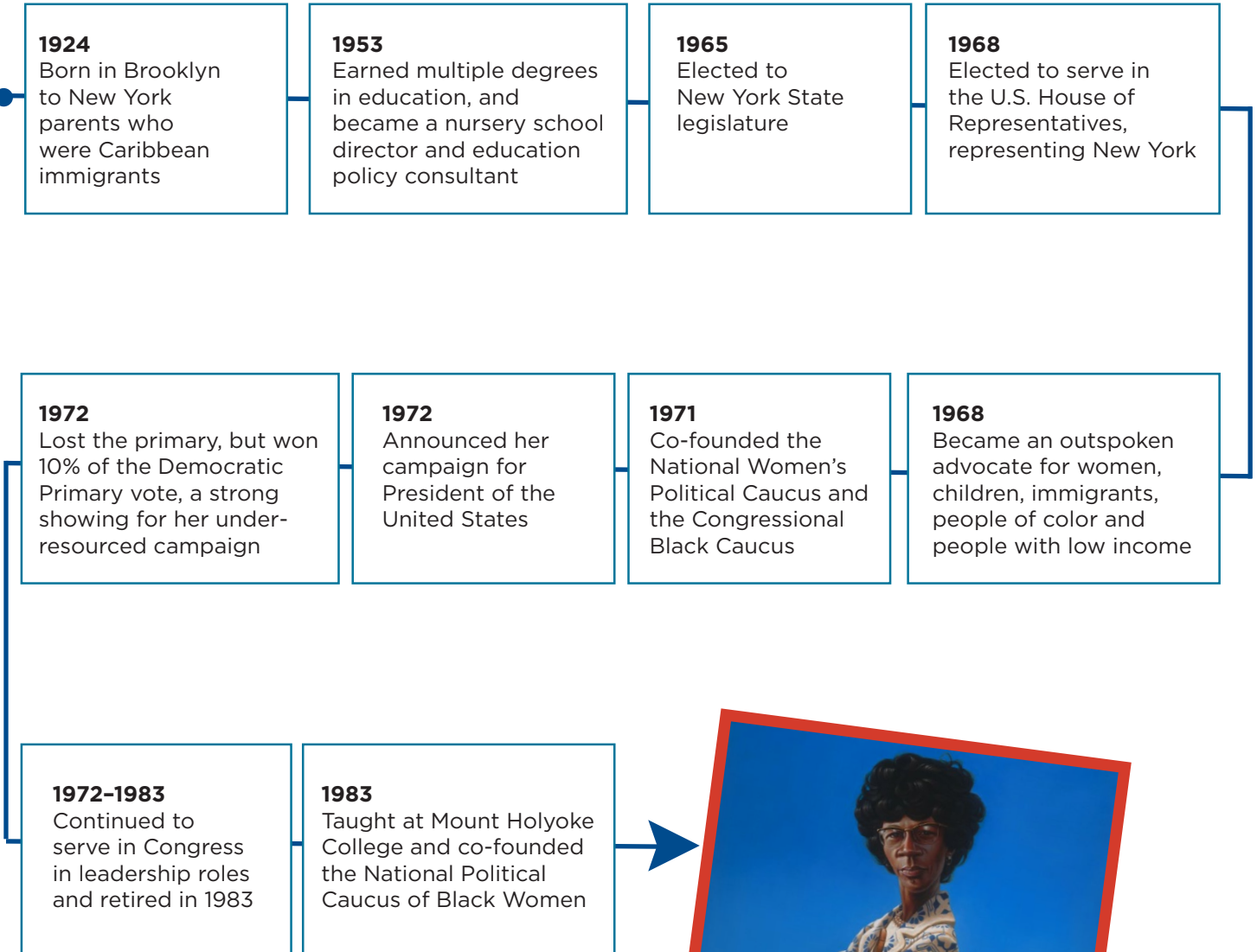
TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
15 minutes	Warm-up: Who Was Shirley Chisholm?	<p>Write the quote, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair," on the whiteboard.</p> <p>Engage students in a discussion of the quote and the metaphor. What do the table and chairs represent? Who do they imagine said this quote, and when? What does the quote make them think of today?</p> <p>Use the Resources pages about Shirley Chisholm to tell her story (pp. 6–7). She was a person of many firsts: the first Black Congresswoman, the first Black person to run for president, and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. When Shirley Chisholm was asked how she'd like to be remembered, she said, "I'd like them to say that Shirley Chisholm had guts." Let the students know that during this lesson and project, we'll start to understand a little more about Shirley Chisholm's courage, her willingness to take a stand, and the example she set for future generations.</p> <p>Introduce students to the "A Seat at the Table Project" and explain the final goal: the design and creation of a seat or some object that represents their identities, challenges to the status quo, and hopes for the future.</p>
	EXTENSION <p>Share with students the video of Chisholm's declaration of a presidential bid on January 25, 1972.</p> <p>https://cnu.libguides.com/notableamericanwomen/chisholmshirley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were Chisholm's main campaign messages? • What quotes from her speech stand out to you? • What did Chisholm's campaign symbolize? 	
25 minutes	Read and annotate: Learn about Shirley Chisholm	<p>On the board, write three words: <i>Identity</i>, <i>Challenge</i>, and <i>Vision</i>. Explain the meaning of each of the three words and distribute the Shirley Chisholm worksheet.</p> <p>Pass out the BBC News Magazine article, "Before Hillary Clinton, there was Shirley Chisholm." Direct students to read the article and underline examples of each of the three concepts on the board. Alternative articles at varied reading levels can be found in the appendix. Once students finish reading, lead a class discussion. Encourage students to take notes of examples of the three concepts on the first page of the Shirley's Chair worksheet.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experiences and values make up Shirley Chisholm's identity? • How did she challenge the status quo, and what challenges did she experience as she took her seat at the table? • What was her vision for the future, and what did she work on to make that vision a reality?
	MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BBC News Magazine article: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35057641 or other article found in the Resources section - Shirley's Chair worksheet (pp. 8–9) 	

DAY 1 (CONTINUED)

TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
20 minutes	Sketch Shirley's Chair	In partners or in small groups, direct students to page 2 of the Shirley's Chair worksheet (p. 9). Encourage them to sketch visual representations of what they've learned in class today about Shirley Chisholm. After a few minutes of thinking and sketching, have each group share their ideas with the class.
10 minutes	Preview	Let the students know that in the next two class periods, they'll be thinking about their own identities and creating visual representations of their own seats at the table. They may want to consider objects or supplies that they could bring from home to add to their seats.

Who Was Shirley Chisholm?



Famous Firsts

- First Black woman to serve in Congress
- First Black major-party candidate
- First woman ever to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

What Is Shirley Chisholm's Legacy?

Though notable for her famous firsts, Shirley Chisholm's greatest contribution was the work she did on behalf of others. During the course of her 14 years in Congress, Chisholm was a force for change and a champion of legislation that would improve the quality of life for women, children, people of color, and the poor. She fought for the people around her and the issues that mattered to them—for domestic workers like her mother, and for immigrants like her parents who had come to New York from the Caribbean, for children like those she had worked with as a childcare provider. Having her voice in Congress—at the table where important debates happen and policy is decided—meant that more and different people were represented. She stepped up, claimed her seat at the table of public discourse, and made a difference.



Shirley's Chair

Use this page to take notes on Shirley Chisholm's qualities as you complete assigned readings and participate in class discussions.

IDENTITY

"I am not the candidate of black America, though I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women's movement of this country, although I am a woman and equally proud of that. I am the candidate of the people of America."



CHALLENGE

"I ran for President, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo."

VISION

"You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas."

Shirley's Chair

.....

Create a visual representation of Shirley Chisholm's seat at the table. Use the guiding questions to consider elements that you'd like to add to her chair.

What messages should Shirley's chair represent?

What words or phrases could be added?

What surrounds Shirley's chair?

Who else might be represented as part of Shirley's story?



What colors will the chair be?

What objects or photos could be attached?

Write a few sentences about the choices you made as you planned Shirley's chair.

DAY 2

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
15 minutes	Warm-up: Identity	<p>As students arrive in class, distribute sticky notes and ask students to think about and write down words that describe their identity. They may wish to add their identity sticky notes to the board or keep them private. Have some examples on the board already: "son," "Beyoncé fan," "trombone player," "math geek," "Korean-American," "immigrant," "reader," "artist," etc. Encourage students to consider not only their outward-facing identities or labels that society gives them, but also their inner identities, born of their experiences, hopes, and accomplishments.</p> <p>After a few minutes, begin a short discussion. Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What objects, pictures, or colors may be used to represent these identities? Give some examples from the board and ask students to share their ideas.
20 minutes	Discussion	<p>Facilitate a large or small group discussion to kick off the seat-creation process. You may have students discuss in small groups and report their thinking or discuss as a large group. It may be helpful to track the discussion on the whiteboard under major themes, such as "Power," "Identity," "Representation," and "Our Seats."</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Shirley Chisholm refers to "the table" in her quote, she's talking about places where important conversations are being held by people in positions of power. What "tables," or places where decisions are made, can you think of? Which do you want to be part of? • Who currently has the power in these spaces? Do they represent the communities they serve? • Who had an original seat at the table when our country was founded? How is the table changing? What are some modern-day examples of citizens bringing folding chairs to the table? • Think about your own identity. What experiences have influenced your perspective? What does the subject stand for? What changes does the subject want to see in the world? • Is your seat indeed a folding chair—light, portable, and an addition to the original design? Does it take another form?

MATERIALS

Sticky notes

EXTENSION

Assign each group a historical or contemporary figure to represent in a seat.

DAY 2 (CONTINUED)

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
15 minutes	Plan Your Chair	<p>Divide students into smaller groups to begin to design and plan their seats. It may be helpful to let students choose their groups, because their seats will represent the groups' identity. Some students may wish to design their own seats. Or, the class may come up with a class concept for a seat. Give students an idea of how they might interpret their stories, and how they might select imagery by using an example of a public figure, or a fictional character, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Figure—Ruby Bridges was a courageous young student in New Orleans who figured prominently in the desegregation of schools, even in the face of angry protest. Her seat might look like one you'd find in a classroom. It might include images of her parents and teachers who supported her. It might have something around it that represents the angry protests at her school. It might be covered with messages about education and inclusion, work Bridges still focuses on today. • Fictional Character—Katniss Everdeen from "The Hunger Games" might have a seat made of coal, to represent her home in District 12, the coal-mining district. Maybe her seat would have a bow and arrow to represent her skill at hunting and archery, a lock of her sister's hair, or some paper flames to represent "The Girl on Fire." <p>Distribute the My Seat at the Table planning worksheet (p. 12) and instruct students to record their ideas for their own seats. Once they finish the worksheet, check in with groups and individual students to provide ideas and guidance. Encourage students to make a list of supplies that they might bring from home to create their chairs. Here is a sample supply list:</p>
MATERIALS My Seat at the Table worksheet (p. 12)		
ALTERNATIVE PROJECTS Use the My Seat at the Table: Poster Template or an 11×17 piece of paper and have each student create a 2D drawing, painting, or collage to convey their vision of their seat at the table. Use the My Seat at the Table: Chair Template to design and fold 3-D paper seats at the table for a miniature version of the project.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magazines • Ribbon • Stickers • Fabric • Stencils • Photographs • Duct tape 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardboard • Chenille sticks • Craft sticks • Small boxes • Quotes from stories, poems, songs, or speeches

My Seat at the Table

Your **Seat** Is Your Identity and What You Care About.
The **Table** Is Where Decisions Are Made.
Bring Your Seat to the Table.

Questions to Think About

- How can you represent your identity using your seat?
- What colors will the seat be?
- What message should your seat represent?
- Should the seat be comfortable or uncomfortable?
- What objects, photos, or other supplies could be attached to your seat?
- What words (if any) should be represented on the seat?
- Why is it important for your seat to be at the table?

Supply List

What objects or supplies do you need to create your seat?

What can you bring from home?

My Seat at the Table

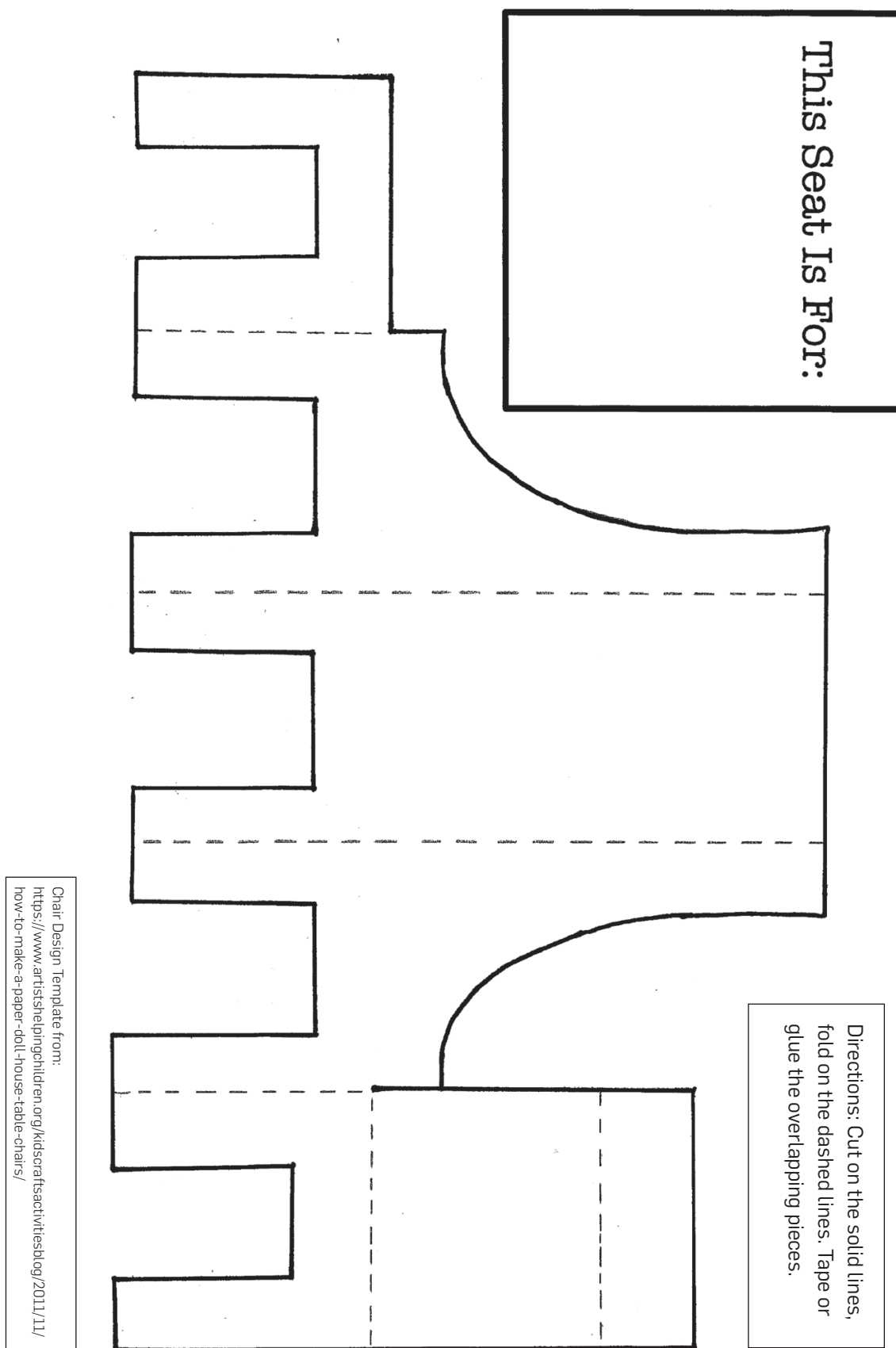
.....

Design a seat that represents you at the table.



_____’s Seat at the Table

My Seat at the Table



DAY 3

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
50 minutes	Chair Creation	<p>Give students the opportunity to review their worksheets from yesterday and remember their plans for their seat. In small groups or individually, students will begin the creation process.</p> <p>Some examples of Shirley Chisholm media to play in the background as students are working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shirley Chisholm's Presidential Campaign Announcement• NPR's The First Black Woman to Run For President• Shirley Chisholm: The Politics of Principle• The Visionary Project's Shirley Chisholm Interviews <p>If students finish early, distribute the Artist's Statement worksheet (p. 16) for them to capture the thought process behind their chairs.</p>

MATERIALS

- Supplies from home
- Artist's Statement worksheet (p. 16)

Artist's Statement

Name

School

Grade

Describe your chair in the space below. What does it say about your identity? What do you want people to understand about your vision for the future? Why is it important that you bring your seat to the table?



WHAT'S NEXT?

EXPLORE OTHER SEATS

See how other groups and artists interpreted this project by learning more about the Seat at the Table exhibit at the Kennedy Institute. The exhibit opened at the Kennedy Institute in Fall 2018 and shared stories of people from diverse communities who exemplify Shirley's leadership, courage and work on behalf of others. Learn more at <https://bringyourownchair.org/>

CREATE YOUR OWN EXHIBIT

Student-created seats make a powerful statement together. Find a public space to mount and display your own community Seat at the Table exhibit, such as a space in your school, a public library or a museum. Engage with your surrounding community to continue the conversation about representation and inclusion. Reach out to seatatthetable@emkinstitute.org for more information and resources.

PLAN A VISIT TO THE EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE

The Kennedy Institute welcomes school groups of all ages to learn about democracy through a range of interactive educational programs. To learn more and plan a field trip for your school, visit <https://www.emkinstitute.org/explore-the-institute/dynamic-educational-experiences>.

APPENDIX

Vaidyanathan, R. (2016, January). Before Hillary Clinton, there was Shirley Chisholm. BBC News Magazine. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35057641>

Kazmi, L and Hegg, S. (2016, September). What former presidential candidate ShirleyChisholm said about facing gender discrimination. PBS News Hour, KCTS 9 Member Station. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/what-former-presidential-candidate-shirley-chisholm-said-about-facing-gender-discrimination>

Jones, L.B. (2005, February). Unbought & Unbossed: Lesson Plan: Shirley Chisholm for President. PBS. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/chisholm/lesson-plan/>

(2005). Shirley Chisholm: Unbought, Unbossed, and Unforgotten. Anti-Defamation League, A World of Difference Institute. <https://www.adl.org/media/6661/download>

Shirley Chisholm Speech at Howard University. American Public Media. <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/schisholm-2.html>

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

GRADES 3–5 CONTENT AND LITERACY STANDARDS

Grade 3 Standards for Reading Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

RI.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Craft and Structure

RI.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information about a given topic efficiently.

RI.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of an author of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.7: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words, numbers, and symbols in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Sciences

RI.9: Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity [W]

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, mathematical, and technical texts, exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 3.

Grade 3 Writing Standards [W]

Text Types and Purposes

W.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting an opinion with reasons.

W.1.a: Introduce a topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

W.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion.

Grade 3 Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts* building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS

Grade 3, Topic 1: Massachusetts cities and towns today and in history

HSS.3.T1.3: Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in Massachusetts, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities.

HSS.3.T1.3.d: People can participate in and influence their local government by reading and responding to news about local issues, voting, running for office, serving on boards or committees, attending hearings, or committee meetings).

Grade 8: United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life

Topic 3: The institutions of United States government [8.T3]

HSS.8.T3.4. Explain the process of elections in the legislative and executive branches and the process of nomination/confirmation of individuals in the judicial and executive branches.

- Elections: running for legislative office (U.S. Representative—unlimited two-year terms, U.S. Senator—unlimited six-year terms), or executive office (President—two four-year terms and Vice President—unlimited four-year terms) and the function of the Electoral College in Presidential elections

Topic 4. Rights and responsibilities of citizens [8.T4]

HSS.8.T3.4.2. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens (e.g., voting, serving as a juror, paying taxes, serving in the military, running for and holding elected office) as compared to non-citizens.

HSS.8.T3.4.2.5. Describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.

HSS.8.T3.4.2.6. Evaluate information related to elections (e.g., policy positions and debates among candidates, campaign financing, campaign advertising, influence of news media and social media, and data relating to voter turnout in elections).

HSS.8.T3.4.2.11. Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals of the Constitution.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT (CONTINUED)

21ST CENTURY LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR K–12

CIVIC LITERACY

- Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
- Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
- Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

Creativity and Innovation

THINK CREATIVELY

- Use a wide range of idea-creation techniques (such as brainstorming).
- Create new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts).
- Elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts.

WORK CREATIVELY WITH OTHERS

- Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
- Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
- Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real-world limits to adopting new ideas.

IMPLEMENT INNOVATIONS

- Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

REASON EFFECTIVELY

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation.
- Make judgments and decisions.
- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs.
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view.
- Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments.
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis.
- Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes.

Communication and Collaboration

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts.
- Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions.
- Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g., to inform, instruct, motivate, and persuade).
- Communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multi-lingual).
- Collaborate with others.
- Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.

Information Literacy

ACCESS AND EVALUATE INFORMATION

- Access information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources).
- Evaluate information critically and competently.

USE AND MANAGE INFORMATION

- Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

Media Literacy

ANALYZE MEDIA

- Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors.

CREATE MEDIA PRODUCTS

- Understand and utilize the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics, and conventions
- Understand and effectively utilize the most appropriate expressions and interpretations in diverse, multi-cultural environments.

Flexibility and Adaptability

BE FLEXIBLE

- Incorporate feedback effectively.
- Deal positively with praise, setbacks, and criticism.
- Understand, negotiate, and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments.

Initiative and Self-Direction

WORK INDEPENDENTLY

- Monitor, define, prioritize, and complete tasks without direct oversight.

Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

INTERACT EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS

- Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak.
- Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner.

WORK EFFECTIVELY IN DIVERSE TEAMS

- Respect cultural differences and work effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Respond open-mindedly to different ideas and values.
- Leverage social and cultural differences to create new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work.

Productivity and Accountability

MANAGE PROJECTS

- Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressures.
- Prioritize, plan, and manage work to achieve the intended result.