

Our Passages and the Suitability Rubric

How the Teach BIG reading passages support patriotism, free enterprise, good citizenship, and the civic values the State Board of Education asks for

Overview

Every reading passage in the Teach BIG program was chosen to do two jobs at once. It teaches a language arts skill, and it carries content worth a student's attention. A large share of that content was selected on purpose to reflect the civic values named in the Texas suitability rubric, the values that prepare students for self governance. This document states that purpose, explains the rationale behind the passage choices, and charts exactly where each value appears across our third, fourth, and fifth grade passages.

Purpose statement. The Teach BIG reading passages are designed to build established readers and writers on content that also cultivates informed, responsible citizens. Wherever it fits the grade and the skill, we anchor instruction in American patriotism, Texas history, the free enterprise system, good citizenship, democracy and self governance, respect for recognized authority, respect for individual rights, and the founding ideas of our state and nation, so that students grow in civic understanding while they learn to read and write.

The suitability values we address

The Texas suitability rubric asks that instructional materials help prepare students for self governance by promoting citizenship, patriotism, democracy, an understanding of the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system, respect for recognized authority, and respect for individual rights, along with American and Texas history and the founding documents of the United States. Our passages are mapped to these eight values.

1. **Patriotism** love of country and pride in national heritage.
2. **Free Enterprise** the essentials and benefits of the free market and individual initiative.
3. **Good Citizenship** contributing to and caring for a community.
4. **Democracy and Self Governance** how a free people make decisions and laws.
5. **Respect for Authority** the role of rules, laws, and legitimate leadership.
6. **Individual Rights** the freedoms and dignity of each person.
7. **Texas History** the story of our state.
8. **Founding Ideas and Documents** the principles and documents that established the nation.

Rationale

We did not add civic content as a layer on top of the reading. We chose passages whose real subject matter is civic, so the values are learned through genuine, grade appropriate texts rather than slogans. Biographies of builders and inventors carry the free enterprise system. Histories of the Pilgrims, the

Revolution, and early Texas carry patriotism, founding ideas, and state history. Texts on laws, rights, compromise, and community carry citizenship, democracy, respect for authority, and individual rights. Because the same content is threaded through the writing, vocabulary, and grammar work as well, students meet these values many times and in many forms across the year.

Where the values appear: Grade 3

Passage	Patriotism	Free Enterprise	Citizenship	Democracy	Authority	Indiv. Rights	TX History	Founding
The Pilgrims Chose Plymouth	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Laura Ingalls Wilder	✓	✓	✓					
Why We Need Laws			✓	✓	✓	✓		
The Invention of Electricity		✓						
Henry Ford: Visionary of Travel	✓	✓				✓		
MLK, A Dream Can Grow / What Will You Give?	✓		✓	✓		✓		
A Place to Grow (community set)		✓	✓	✓				

Where the values appear: Grades 4 and 5

Passage	Patriotism	Free Enterprise	Citizenship	Democracy	Authority	Indiv. Rights	TX History	Founding
The Cookie Commission (Prepare)		✓	✓	✓				
From Tension to Revolution	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Spanish Rule in Early Texas	✓				✓		✓	
Our Rights, Our Voices	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
A Difficult Compromise			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
A Voice in the Community			✓	✓		✓		
One Voice Can Start a Wave / Try, Learn, Change	✓		✓	✓		✓		
From Protest to Participation (change set)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

A check means the passage's own content gives students a genuine encounter with that value at their grade level. Most passages carry several values, and every value in the rubric is addressed more than once across the program.

How the values are covered

Patriotism and founding ideas. The Pilgrims, the road from tension to revolution, and Our Rights, Our Voices give students the story and the documents behind the nation, and let them feel pride in a hard won inheritance. **Free enterprise.** Laura Ingalls Wilder, the invention of electricity, and Henry Ford show initiative, invention, and the benefits of a free market through the lives of real builders. **Good citizenship and community.** The community sets in third grade and A Voice in the Community in the upper grades put students inside the daily work of caring for a shared place. **Democracy, authority, and individual rights.** Why We Need Laws, A Difficult Compromise, and the change set show how a free people make rules, respect legitimate authority, and protect the rights of each person. **Texas history.** Spanish Rule in Early Texas and the state's own story anchor students in where they live.

The bottom line

Across the program, our passages address every civic value the suitability rubric names, most of them many times over, and they do it through real, grade appropriate texts that also teach reading and writing. Students are not told to be good citizens, they read the stories of people who were, and they practice their language arts skills on that same worthy content. If you would like any passage mapped to additional values, or a passage added to strengthen a particular column, tell me and I will update the charts.

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