



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

**DIGGING INTO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL ISSUES
WITH *THE CITY OF EMBER***

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Teacher's Guide

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Lesson and Book Overview

The City of Ember is a story about an underground city created to ensure that earth's citizens would survive after an apocalyptic crisis. The citizens of Ember live underground where they face daily blackouts, food shortages, and corrupt politicians. As the story unfolds, Ember is filled with social, economic, and political problems. The two main characters in the story, young Lina Mayfleet and Doon Harrow, find and decode clues in a secret message that had been left for them by their ancestors in order to reveal both the history of their city and a way to save the population before the city's light source was gone. *The City of Ember* presents an adventure that the main characters experience as they work to find their way to the surface (lighted world) and find that there are people living on the surface. The story continues with the *People of Sparks* sequel.

Below, you will find several activities that can be used while reading *The City of Ember*. More activities, assessments, online quizzes, and discussion questions can be found at http://www.mce.k12tn.net/reading52/city_of_ember.htm.

Suggested Grade Level

Grades 6–8

Also high school economics, government, history, or literature classes

Estimated Time to Complete

Varied depending on how book is divided for reading, activities, and vocabulary development

Lesson Objectives

Students will

- develop comprehension, vocabulary, oral reading, listening, writing, and presentation skills as they participate in activities and interact with the story's content;
- deepen their understanding of social, economic, and political issues found within a society;
- acquire knowledge of laws and duties of citizen as it relates to the success of a society;
- compare and contrast the book to the movie "City of Ember" using graphic organizers and thinking maps.

Materials Needed

- Classroom set of *The City of Ember* books (copy for each student)
- Assignment Day bag and Classroom Assignment Jobs list (some jobs should be more appealing than others)
- Chart paper/markers
- Writing paper/pencil/pens
- Copy of map instructions and City of Ember map/local city map for extending the learning
- “City of Ember” movie
- Computer with Internet access

Introducing the Novel

To introduce *The City of Ember*, conduct an Assignment Day Ceremony. In the story, Assignment Day was a big deal for the youth of the City of Ember. On this day, the youth received the job that they would be doing to help the City of Ember succeed (messenger, pipeworks, engineer, storekeeper, trash collector, street sweeper, etc).

Begin this activity by giving a speech on how important it is for everyone to do the job they are given as it relates to the success of the classroom. Allow students to draw a job from the bag (Before the activity, create a variety of jobs that students can do within the classroom environment. Some jobs should be more appealing than others). As students draw and read their jobs, record their names in the Class Book of Jobs that will be displayed during the time *The City of Ember* is read. End this activity by congratulating each student for the work they will be doing and explain the importance of their job as it relates to the success of the classroom.

Next, divide students into small groups (make sure you have a good reader in each group who will be responsible for reading Chapter 1 to the group). After reading Chapter 1, small groups should discuss the following question: What are your thoughts about living in a society where you are not allowed to choose the kind of work you want to do in life? Each small group should create a T-chart of the pros and cons for being told the kind of work they will be doing. Come back together as a whole class and allow small groups to present their pros and cons chart.

Types of Government Activity

1. Introduce three types of governments—democracy, dictatorship, and monarchy. Students work in groups to research a type of government and its characteristics. Have each group create an illustration of how their type of government works, or simply make a list of characteristics to share with the class. Another option is to have students research and work independently to create a flip chart book on the different types of government with definitions and illustrations.
2. Have students compare and contrast what they have learned about governments with the kind of government in *City of Ember*.
3. Offer a writing prompt. Ask, “What makes democracy different from other types of government?” Have students include examples to justify their responses. A Venn Diagram can be used for pre-writing.

Map Activity

Develop vocabulary

- Students will create a vocabulary postcard to show understanding. An example is below.
- Give each student a copy of the map of the City of Ember and instructions that follow (see below). Students must follow directions on the instruction sheet to find different places on the map. Resources can be found below.

Writing Prompt

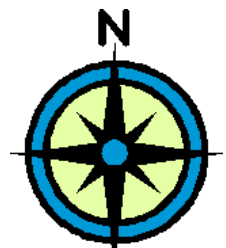
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a map to find your destination?
- What knowledge and skills do you need to be successful?

<p><u>Compass</u> <u>Rose</u></p>	<p>Illustration of the word</p>
<p>Definition:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Compass Directions

Using the map of Ember find the following locations:

- river
- greenhouses
- school



The information from page 43 will help you. "Doon knew he was standing beneath the north edge of Ember. In school, you were taught to remember the directions this way:

Map Activity



Using the map of Ember follow the directions in Chapter 5 to track Lina's Path.

Begin by finding Lina's home. Look at the legend and find the symbol that represents Lina's apartment. Circle Lina's home.

- So that afternoon she set out for Night Street. (Which direction is Lina going to go from her apartment if she is heading for Night Street?)
- On Budloe Street, people were standing in long line with their bundles of laundry at the washing station. (Trace Lina's path from her home to Budloe Street.)
- Lina turned up Hafter Street, where the four streetlamps were still out... ((Lina turned up Hafter Street, so she must be going north.)

Social Issues Activity

1. Have a class discussion concerning the social issues found in *The City of Ember*.
 - Energy, food supply, health care, elderly care, child labor, etc.
 - Make a list of all issues identified (discuss).
 - How were these issues being addressed by the leadership?
 - What was the people's response to the issues?
2. Have a class discussion concerning social issues that people face in today's society.
 - Make a list of all issues identified (discuss).
 - Compare issues from *The City of Ember* to those from today's society.

If you wish to extend the social issues activity, have your students do one or more of the following:

- Write a report.
Divide the issues between students and instruct students to write a report on their given issue. The report should contain at least five sources of which only three can be Internet sites. The length of the reports will vary according to what is appropriate for each grade level. Reports should contain a bibliography of sources used.
- Current events activity
Students will bring in a current event news article concerning a relevant social issue found in the world today and share the information with their class for discussion.
- Writing prompt
Today you have been chosen to be a leader of your city. Your duties are to address social issues facing the people you represent. What issue do you feel needs the greatest attention from you as a leader? Explain why you chose the issue and give examples of how you would address the issue.

Film Activity

After reading the book *The City of Ember*, students will watch the movie. Students will complete a graphic organizer to compare the movie to the book. Students will then write a paragraph to share their ideas on the comparison.

Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts Standards, History/Social Studies, Grades 6–8

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
5. Determine how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, and causally).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Reading: Literature, Grade 6

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
3. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

Speaking & Listening, Grade 6
Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
 - Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
 - Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

Correlations to SVPDP Curricula

SVPDP Curricula	Location	Lesson-Related Content
<i>We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution</i>	Middle school text Unit 1, Unit 3, Unit 6	Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary
<i>We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution</i>	High school text Unit 1, Unit 3, Unit 6	Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary
<i>We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution</i>	Upper elementary text Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 5	Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary
<i>We the People: Project Citizen</i>	Level 1 Step 3	Reading, Research, Writing, Communication, Negotiations
<i>Foundations of Democracy</i>	Authority, Responsibility, and Justice lessons	Reading, Research, Writing, Communication, Vocabulary, Speaking, Presentation