

Wallace Women Discovery Kit

Class Congress

Best for Grades 8-12

Goal: to help students understand the democratic process and practice speaking and listening skills

Zerelda Wallace was a strong woman who spoke publicly about how people shouldn't drink alcohol and women should have the right to vote. Making speeches was the best way to convince large groups of people to agree with you. Zerelda spoke to Congress several times trying to convince them to pass laws against drinking and for women's voting rights.

Needed supplies: chalkboard to list ideas, room to divide into groups, 50 minutes

- 1) Teacher introduces an issue to debate. This could be a way to remedy a problem that has occurred in the classroom, such as cleaning, routines, ways to treat each other, consequences for staying on task, etc. (2 minutes)
- 2) Divide students into 4-5 groups. Instruct them to select as a group which side of the issue they want to present. (3 minutes)
- 3) Each group should work together to compose a short (2-3 minute) speech to persuade the rest of the class to their point of view. Then they should select a speaker to represent the group. If time allows, have them practice their speech to the rest of their group. (10 minutes)
- 4) Representatives make presentations to the class. (20 minutes)
- 5) When all presentations are made, vote as a class on the issue (a secret ballot is most effective). (2 minutes)
- 6) Discuss the process and outcome. Which side was more persuasive? Did the vote turn out the way they expected? Was it a question of doing the right thing, as Zerelda believed about temperance and women's suffrage? (10 minutes)

Adaptations and Extensions

- Select issues and make presentations individually.
- Instead of presenting orally, write out a persuasive speech.
- Students write a short essay analyzing the effect the decision will have.

English/Language Arts Standards

- **4. Writing Process**
- **5. Writing Applications**
- **7. Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications**

Social Studies Standards

- **2. Civics and Government**
- **5. Individuals, Society and Culture**