



Lesson 10: Inauguration Day

Standard

- Students will understand why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs, such as Inauguration Day, is a form of political participation (McREL Civics 28.6)

Vocabulary

- address
- ball
- Capitol
- inauguration
- oath

Materials

- *Inauguration Day Content-Area Vocabulary* (page 150)
- *Taking the Oath Background Information* (page 151)
- *Taking the Oath* (page 152)
- *A Day to Remember Primary Source Connection* (pages 153–154)
- *A Night at the Ball* (page 155)
- *Inauguration Day Comprehension Check* (page 156)
- Food and supplies for Inauguration Day (*optional*)



Introduce the Content

Teacher Preparation: Set a reasonable future date for the class to have its own Inauguration Day.

1. If you have not completed the previous lessons, review with students the steps that lead to a president getting inaugurated.
2. Display a picture of the Capitol building in Washington, DC. Ask students to predict the significance of this building as it relates to elections. Distribute the *Inauguration Day Content-Area Vocabulary* activity sheet (page 150) to students. Review the definitions as a class and allow students to complete this page independently or with a partner. You may also ask students to complete a Vocabulary Extension Activity.

Differentiation Idea

Work with **English language learners** in a small group to complete the vocabulary page. If possible, provide pictures of each term or talk about the terms and what examples might look like. Support their efforts to write one complete sentence for each term.



Lesson 10: Inauguration Day *(cont.)*

Vocabulary Extension Activities

- Ask students to use at least three of the vocabulary words to create their own inaugural address.
- Have students think about how the presidential candidates feel on Inauguration Day. Then, have them create diary entries that express these feelings. Students should use at least three of the vocabulary words in their diary entries.
- 3. Distribute copies of *Taking the Oath Background Information* (page 151) and *Taking the Oath* (page 152) activity sheets. Read the information to the class as they follow along. Then discuss with students what Inauguration Day entails. Write an outline on the board, based on the background information. Have students complete the activity sheet, comparing early and present-day inaugurations independently or with a partner.
- 4. Distribute *A Day to Remember Primary Source Connection* activity sheet (pages 153–154) to students. Have students work with a partner. They should take turns reading the speeches aloud to each other. Discuss as a class what information was included in the speeches. Finally, ask students to answer the questions with their partner. Students who do not finish this sheet may complete it as homework.



Begin the Activity

1. Again, display a picture of the Capitol building. Ask a volunteer to explain its significance with regard to elections. (This is where the newly elected president takes the Oath of Office and gives his or her inaugural address.)
2. Display the current Oath of Office and read it to the class. Discuss the Oath of Office as a class and summarize what the newly elected president promises to do. Divide students into small groups. Have them write an oath for the newly elected class president to take on Inauguration Day (Day Three of this lesson). Once all the groups have finished, have each group share their oaths aloud with the class. Compare ideas common to all the groups included. Then, write a class oath for Inauguration Day. Include the common ideas from all the groups in the class oath.

Article II of U.S. Constitution, Section 1

Before he enters on the execution of this office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”





Lesson 10: Inauguration Day *(cont.)*

Differentiation Idea

Allow **English language learners** to record their oaths using a tape recorder. This way, they can speak rather than write their ideas. Provide examples of oaths so that students can completely understand what oaths are.

3. Have students reflect on the excerpts of inaugural addresses from the Primary Source sheet from Day One (e.g., unity and hope). Discuss with students why presidents give speeches at their inaugurations. Then ask what they think the classroom president's inaugural speech should entail. Write their ideas on the board.
4. Explain that the class will have its own Inauguration Day on _____ (share date with the class). Divide the class into small groups. Then, distribute copies of *A Night at the Ball* activity sheet (page 155) to students. Challenge students to brainstorm in their groups possible events that could take place during the inauguration of the new class president. Encourage students to be creative as they plan events.
5. Give students time to plan the day's events. You may also wish to send notes home to parents about three to five days prior to the event to allow them time to prepare or purchase any food for the party, if necessary.
6. Allow students to share their ideas with the class as you write them on the board. Decide on one theme as a class. Then, create a class schedule for Inauguration Day events.
7. Assign different students different tasks related to the events on Inauguration Day, depending on the activities they included on the class schedule. The newly elected president and vice president should write inaugural speeches based on the class suggestions (see Step 3). Other students should be assigned activities, such as writing speeches, planning the ball, and writing poetry and music.

Differentiation Idea

Allow **English language learners** and **lower-level students** to choose the activities they wish to complete for the inauguration.



Lesson 10: Inauguration Day *(cont.)*



Conclude and Assess

1. Begin Inauguration Day by telling students that you will act as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. You will be giving the Oath of Office for the president and vice president.
2. Following the outline of events created by the class on Day Two, ask the president and vice president to come forward. Then have them take the oaths of office written by the class.
3. Follow the remaining timeline of events to complete the rest of the day's activities, including the Inaugural Ball.
4. Distribute the *Inauguration Day Comprehension Check* activity sheet (page 156) to assess students' understanding of the president's inauguration. Use the Comprehension Check Rubric (page 15) to evaluate students' work. See page 14 for ideas on how to use this activity sheet with your students.

Differentiation Idea

As an extension activity or as homework, ask students to pretend they are writers for TIME magazine. Have them create covers and articles to report and show the events that took place on class Inauguration Day.

Extension Ideas

Election Fun Fact Activity

Read the fun facts below. Then, have students complete the activity that follows.

Presidents spend varying amounts of money on their inaugurations.

- Jimmy Carter claimed to be a “people’s president.” Therefore, he spent only \$3.5 million on his inauguration, which was considered a small amount. He also set the limit for his inaugural ball tickets at \$25. After he was sworn in on Capitol Hill, he walked back to the White House rather than ride in a limousine.
- Ronald Reagan spent \$16 million on his inauguration. And, he charged up to \$1,000 for his inaugural ball tickets.
- George H. W. Bush attended 11 inaugural balls, a high for that time period. But the Clintons topped that by attending 14 balls when Bill Clinton was inaugurated in 1997.
- Thomas Jefferson held no party. He walked to the Capitol for his oath. Afterward, he went back to his house to rest.
- Though George Washington received a party after he was inaugurated, the tradition of inaugural balls did not begin until the election of James Madison in 1809. Tickets for this ball cost \$4.

Create a program to show what you would do at your ball and inauguration, the price you would charge, and what it would entail. Would it be fancy? Or, would you prefer something similar to that of Jimmy Carter or Thomas Jefferson? Explain the events in your evening’s (or afternoon’s) program.



Lesson 10: Inauguration Day *(cont.)*

Research Extension

Either assign each student a president or have each student choose a president. Ask students to research the inaugural address of the president they have chosen. Have each student choose one portion of the addresses to summarize. In their summaries, students should explain what the speeches stated and how it may have affected those listening. Ask students to include pictures of the inaugurations, if possible.

Connecting Elections

The Constitution only gives an oath of office to the president. Senators, representatives, and the vice president do not have set oaths. However, the following oath has been taken since 1884 by those holding these offices:

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.”

Share the above facts with the students. Then, ask each student to answer the following: Why do you suppose writers of the Constitution did not create an oath for other offices in the government? Pretend you are a writer of the Constitution. Explain your reasoning for only creating an oath for the president.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Inauguration Day Content-Area Vocabulary

Directions: Use the definitions below to illustrate each vocabulary word. Write a sentence with the term to explain your picture.

address—a speech given by an elected official at the inauguration
ball—a party given after the winning candidate is inaugurated into office
Capitol—the main building of the United States Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives)
inauguration—the act of starting or being inducted into a new position
oath—a formal or legal pledge or promise

Vocabulary Word	Illustration	Sentence
address		
ball		
Capitol		
inauguration		
oath		



Name: _____ Date: _____

Taking the Oath Background Information

Directions: Read the information below.

The final step of the election process is the **inauguration**. This is the start of the new president's term in office. It takes place on January 20, after the general election. The inauguration used to take place in March. Many years ago, it took more time to collect election results. Then, the winning candidate had to travel to Washington, DC. The 20th Amendment came into effect in 1930. It changed the inaugural date to January 20.

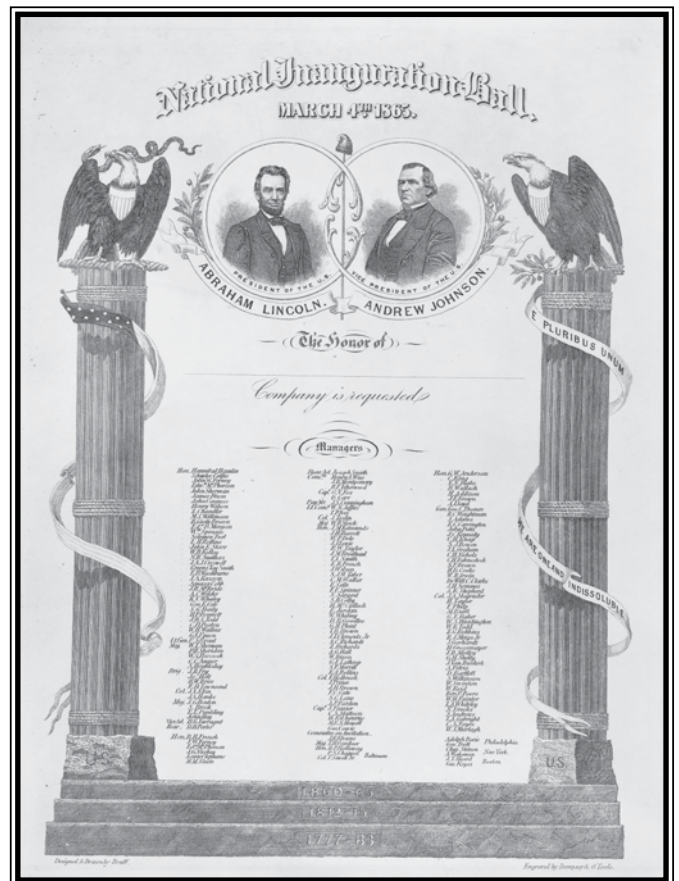
The first presidents were inaugurated in a few different cities. George Washington was inaugurated in both New York City and Philadelphia. John Adams was inaugurated in Philadelphia, too. Thomas Jefferson was the first to be inaugurated in Washington, DC. Today, the inauguration always occurs in Washington, DC. It takes place somewhere near the United States **Capitol** building.

The inauguration marks the end of one presidential term and the beginning of another. It makes the transition official. Inauguration Day involves the public. People gather to see this major event. Members of all political parties attend.

Inauguration Day is a time of celebration. First, the president and vice president take the **Oaths** of Office. The Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court leads the president in the Oath. The Oath is written in the Constitution. The new president then gives an inaugural **address**. This is a special speech. It often reminds supporters why the president was elected. The new president

also states promises for the next four years. Prayers are often said, and poetry is read. Music is played, and parades can be held. The day ends with many different inaugural **balls**. Anyone who has purchased tickets may attend.

This is an invitation to Abraham Lincoln's inaugural ball on March 4, 1865.





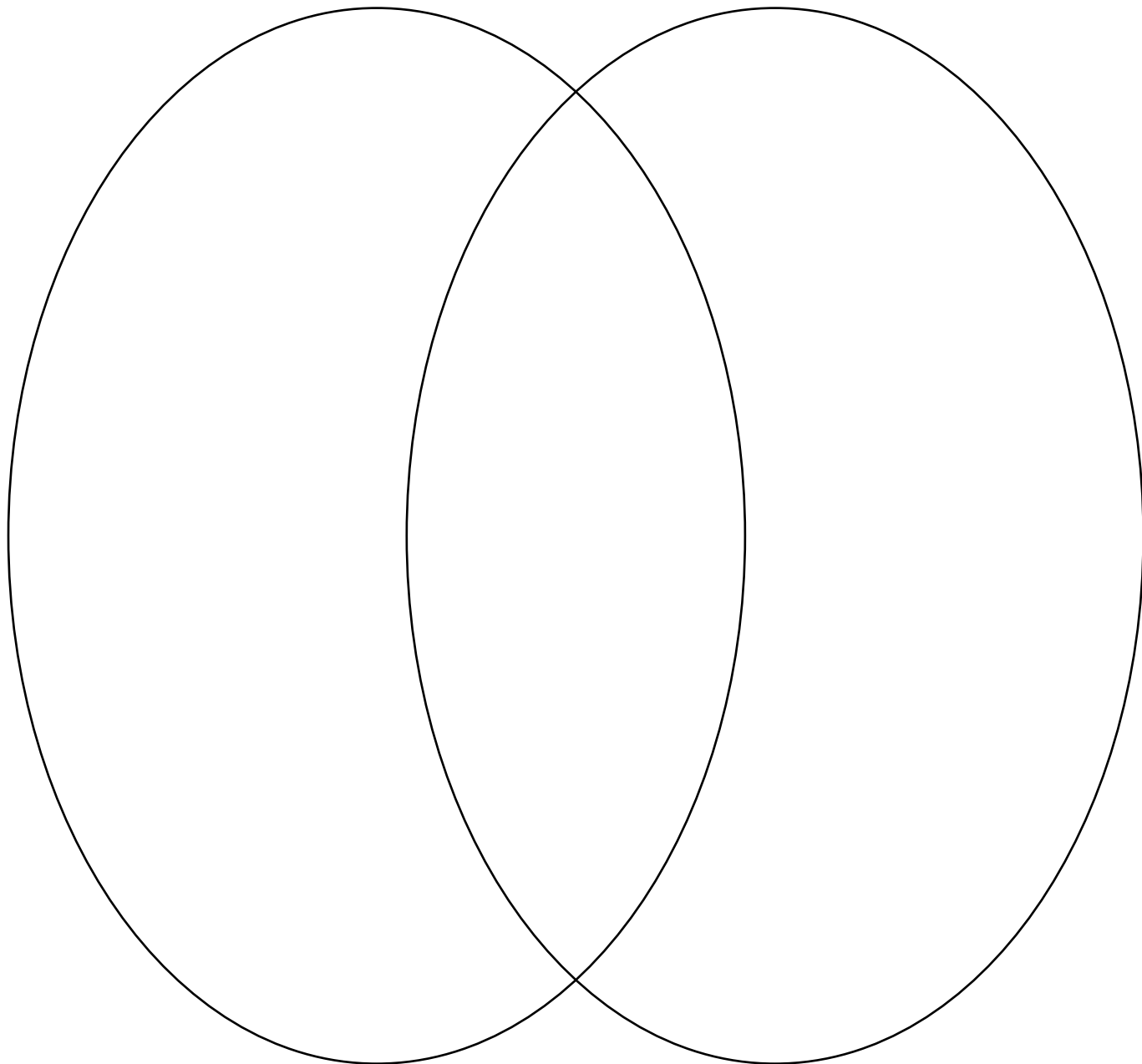
Name: _____ Date: _____

Taking the Oath

Directions: Use details from *Taking the Oath Background Information* activity sheet. Compare how early presidential inaugurations are different from present-day inaugurations.

Early Inaugurations

Present-Day Inaugurations



Name: _____ Date: _____

A Day to Remember Primary Source Connection

Directions: Read the information below.

Excerpts from Inauguration Speeches

“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”

—Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1865

“I am certain that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our Nation impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Saturday, March 4, 1933

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

—John F. Kennedy, Friday, January 20, 1961

Primary Source Background Information

The excerpts above are from inaugural addresses delivered by some of our most famous presidents: Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy.



A Day to Remember Primary Source Connection *(cont.)*

Primary Source Questions

1. Compare two of the speeches by stating at least three similarities.

2. What major event was happening in the United States during Roosevelt's election? What words does he use to give hope to the country during this crisis?

3. The three speeches give hope for the future. Choose quotations from two of the speeches that encourage the citizens to be hopeful. Explain how each quotation shows hope.

Primary Source Extension

If you were a speechwriter for the next president, what would you say about our nation? What hope would you give for the future? What would you discuss in the inauguration speech? On a separate sheet of paper, write an inaugural address for the next president based on the history of our nation today.



Name: _____ Date: _____

A Night at the Ball

Directions: Plan events for the inauguration ceremony and the inaugural ball of your newly elected class president.

Theme: _____

Music Suggestions

Food Suggestions

Drink Suggestions

Event Suggestions

Attire (Clothing) Suggestions





Name: _____ Date: _____

Inauguration Day Comprehension Check

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions below according to the directions from your teacher.

★ Remember

List the date present-day inaugurations take place. Explain why every inauguration now takes place on this date.

★ Understand

Explain how today's inaugurations compare to early inaugurations. Include two or more differences and two or more similarities.

★ Apply

Create an invitation that explains the events that take place during an inauguration.

★ Analyze

Presidential inaugurations tend to cost a lot of money—millions of dollars! Think about the events that take place during an inauguration. List the top three events you think cost the most and explain why they made the top of your list.

★ Evaluate

Is the presidential oath sufficient? Why or why not? Write a letter to Congress stating your opinion and ways in which you would change the oath or stating why you would not change it.

★ Create

Create a mural of “snapshots” showing inaugural events. Then create captions for the pictures in your mural. Your snapshots can be photographs, drawings, clip art, or pictures from magazines.

