



Becoming a Change Agent

Read Aloud and Lesson based on the book *Carl the Complainer* by Michelle Knudsen

We are all staying home at this time and being part of the solution for controlling the virus that has spread around the world. However, it is very challenging to have to stay home. We all miss our friends, our family who do not live with us, our school, our activities. It is very easy to complain right now about our current situation. However, complaining does not change the situation. Listen to or read (check YouTube for a read aloud of Carl the Complainer) the book and then think of all the ways you can help yourself and others to find enjoyable things to do.

*First, think about Carl and some of the steps he tried. Then think about what it means to become a **change agent** for your home, school, or community. Consider the questions below and consider what you can actually do to improve the situation we are all facing today.*

1. Dale and Carl decide that Carl should write a **petition** to keep the park open later. A **petition** is a written request that asks for something and is signed by many people. If your best friend asked you to sign his/her petition for something you do not agree about, would you sign the petition anyway? Why or why not?

2. Below is a table that shows the pros and cons of using a petition as a method for protesting. Study and discuss each pro and con. Then decide if and when you think a petition would be a good tool for protesting an issue. Do you think Carl the Complainer used his petition appropriately? Be prepared to support your answer.

Pros	Cons
Petitions give many people one collective voice.	People often use petitions to inflate an issue.
Petitions are quick and easy to make.	Other tools are effective and have more meaning.
Petitions help you spread the word on the issue and help you to educate while getting signatures.	Petitions do not ask signers to think critically because you only show one side of the issue.

Petitions show how many people are affected by the issue.

Often people will sign even if they do not care about the issue.

Petitions give the people who sign a feeling of accomplishment.

Petitioning is mostly about talking and not taking action.

4. Carl stopped complaining and came up with a plan of action. He went to speak at a meeting before local officials who could do something about his concern. At this time because of the *Stay at Home Guidelines*, we cannot simply go to an official and have them change what is happening. Here is your chance to be a real **change agent**. Think about activities you can still do while you are following the guidelines to stay in your house. Make a list of those activities. Choose the ones you like the best. Then make a schedule and include time for your favorites.

5. Don't stop there. Share your ideas with friends and family. Have them add to your list.

6. Now is also a good time to think about some of the things in your world that you would like to make better through your ideas for change. Do you have any ideas for making people more conscious of keeping the environment cleaner? Do you have ideas for encouraging more people to use their right to vote during elections? Do you have ideas for improving the food served in your lunchroom, or the games played in your schoolyard? We can all be change agents. Today is a good time to start...