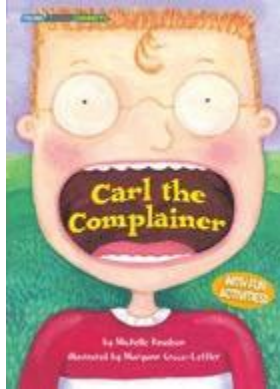


Carl the Complainer



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Topics: Student voice, What it means to be a citizen, Rights and responsibilities, Community building

Genres: Community stories, Picture book, Civics focused fiction

It is very easy to complain about things that aren't perfect or things that we can't control. However, complaining does not change the situation. Dive into *Carl the Complainer* to see how some of these conflicts can be resolved.

Before the Read Aloud:

What might be another way to deal with annoying and stressful situations besides complaining? Be honest, what do you complain about? What might be a better way to address these problems, besides just complaining?

Carl the Complainer

During the Read Aloud:

1. Focus on Carl and some of the steps he tried to change the issues he did not like. Which of these change agents, the individual making their changes, worked best? Why?
2. 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 did not agree with, would you sign the petition anyway? Why or why not?
3. 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.

Pros

- Petitions give many people one collective voice.
- Petitions are quick and easy to make.
- Petitions help you spread the word on the issue and help you to educate while getting signatures.
- Petitions show how many people are affected by the issue.
- Petitions give the people who sign a feeling of accomplishment.

Cons

- People often petition to inflate an issue.
- Other tools are effective and have more meaning.
- Petitions do not ask signers to think critically because you only show one side of the issue.
- Often people will sign even if they do not care about the issue.
- Petitioning is mostly about talking and not taking action.

4. Was Carl's idea to petition an effective way to deal with his complaints? Explain using the pros and cons on the chart.

Carl the Complainer

Take Action Project:

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. Here is your chance to be a real change agent. Make a list of activities you could take to address a problem in your neighborhood. Choose the ones you like the best. Then make a schedule and choose a time for your favorites. Draw the steps needed to be a change agent.



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