

Name _____

Date _____

Student Reading 3.1: An Exciting Day

Kaia woke up before Mom called her. She was so excited for this day!

Today her class was going on a field trip to Cincinnati City Hall. Kaia had been looking forward to this trip for quite a while. Her teacher, Mr. Black, had told them they would be able to tour the building, learn about the people who run the city, and even pretend to be members of City Council! Kaia could hardly wait to get started!

At school, all the students in third grade climbed onto big busses for the trip. They drove to a beautiful building at the corner of 8th and Plum Street – it looked like a castle! It was built of massive reddish stones, and had big, rounded archways. It even had a tower with a clock in it! Kaia had never seen a more beautiful building. She hurried off the bus and lined up with her class. Mr. Black introduced them to Ms. Stevens, who was going to be their tour guide today. Ms. Stevens led the students up the amazing stone steps into the building. She explained that the red stones were granite, as she started the tour.



Name _____

Date _____

She explained that the building they were in was first opened in 1893. It has been added to and changed over the years. The first City Hall for Cincinnati was built on this same piece of land in 1852, but it was replaced as the city grew. A lot of the buildings that surround City Hall today were already there when City Hall was built. St. Peter in Chains Cathedral, Plum Street Temple, Covenant-Frist Presbyterian Church and the building that was Shillito's Department Store were all built when this City Hall opened.

The first thing Kaia noticed when she entered the building was the beautiful, colorful, stained glass window ahead of her. Ms. Stevens pointed out that this window showed Cincinnati as 'The Queen City'. Kaia knew that the city had first been called this in a poem called "Catawba Wine" by a poet named Longfellow, and the nickname had stuck.

This greeting of mine,
the winds and the birds shall deliver
To the Queen of the West,



Name _____

Date _____

in her garlands dressed,

On the banks of the Beautiful River.

As they continued their tour throughout the building, Kaia saw many more of the beautiful stained glass windows. Some of the windows told stories – there were scenes from the early days of Cincinnati, of settlers traveling and building their houses. Other windows showed the government seals, or symbols, of the Northwest Territory, the State of Ohio and the City of Cincinnati. One window showed the man named Cincinnatus, for whom they named the city of Cincinnati! Kaia loved looking at them all.

In some rooms the ceilings were painted with pictures. In the stairways (which Ms. Stevens said were made from Italian marble) and the hallways there were beautiful works carved of stone and iron. Kaia thought it was the most amazing building she had ever seen.

Finally they walked into a large room with chairs in rows, and the biggest desk Kaia had ever seen! There was room for many, many people to share the



Name _____

Date _____

desk. Ms. Stevens explained that this room is the City Council Chambers. The chairs are for any citizens who would like to come to City Council meetings. And the desks are where the members of City Council and the Mayor sit to have the Council meetings. Kaia and her classmates got to pretend to be the Mayor and members of the Council, and they held a pretend City Council meeting! Ms. Stevens helped them follow the rules that are set up for these meetings. Kaia was excited because she got to be one of the members of Council! She sat at the huge desk and got to speak into a microphone so the whole room could hear what she had to say. Her classmates who were playing the role of citizens also had a microphone to speak into. They were allowed to talk to the Mayor and City Council and ask questions or talk about things that concerned them. Kaia left the room understanding a lot more about how Cincinnati's city government works.

All too soon, Ms. Stevens said they had reached the end of the tour. Mr. Black lined the class up and led them back onto the busses for the return trip to school. Kaia and her classmates all thanked Ms. Stevens for the tour. It had been



Name _____

Date _____

a wonderful morning! Kaia couldn't wait to get home and tell Mom all the things she had learned!

Sources: [http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/council/welcome-to-city-hall/city-hall-](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/council/welcome-to-city-hall/city-hall-history)

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