



CLAUDE PEPPER LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

LESSON PLAN - CITIZENSHIP (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Purpose/Rationale:

This lesson is designed to help students begin thinking about what it means to be a citizen. Depending on what your students have learned and where they come from, certain modifications might need to be included. The lesson will begin by inviting students to brainstorm ideas about what it means to be a citizen and what sorts of qualities good citizens possess. Ideally, this lesson will help to illuminate the importance of active citizenship.

This lesson should be structured as a longer unit that does not need to run day-to-day. One suggestion would be to spend a full week at the beginning of the project explaining all of the assignments and letting the groups get to know one another and know about their topic. After that first week, students will be responsible for weekly assignments and one group meeting per week. Other class days could then be focused on other lessons and units.

Day I:

Activity One: Whole Group Discussion

As a group, brainstorm as a whole class what sort of social problems exist in their communities. Some suggestions of common problems:

- gang violence
- teen pregnancy
- poverty
- homelessness
- ethnic rivalries
- escalating prices of real estate/rent
- domestic violence (relationship violence)
- child abuse
- high school drop-outs
- dangerous areas of town
- prostitution
- immigrant communities lacking resources
- inequality of resources/resource shortages

Activity Two: Small Group Discussion

- divide students into small groups of mixed ability levels
- ask students to decide as a group which problem they want to focus on
- explain to students that this project will last for several weeks and encompass many different assignments

Day One Homework:

Ask students to write a 1-2 page journal about their topics. Each student should address how he/she feels about the topic personally and where he/she thinks these feelings have come from.

Day II:

Activity One:

Ask group members to get together and begin to brainstorm about their topic. One group member should be assigned the role of recorder. By the end of the period, the group should prepare a group report that explains the following:

- What do we already know about our topic in general?
- What do we know about our topic locally?
- What assumptions/stereotypes do we have about the people involved in this social problem?
- Who do we know in this school/community who might know something about our topic?
- What sort of community member *might* know something about our topic?

Day Two Homework:

Ask students to write a 1-2 page journal about the group meetings they just participated in. These journals will become routine by the end of this project. They should be written in first person and should address how the individual student is feeling/thinking about the group's topic. This is also a vehicle for teacher moderating; students should feel comfortable reporting any uncomfortable group dynamics in their journals.

Day III:

Preparation for this activity might involve the classroom teacher meeting with the media specialist and compiling a list of available sources for students. Also, if students are well-versed in the school media center's resources, the first part of this say's activities may be skipped.

Activity:

Invite the school media specialist to do a presentation on available research options either in the classroom, computer lab, or media center. It is important that students realize and understand the differences between different types of print and internet media. This presentation could be anywhere from 10 minutes to a full period in length.

A quick activity in which students find the definitions for the terms listed below might be useful.

Some Important Terms:

- periodical
- peer-reviewed publication
- primary source
- secondary source
- encyclopedia
- essay

- article
- works cited vs. works consulted
- plagiarism

Invite students to visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> to read more about plagiarism.

Day IV:

This day should be devoted to in-class research. Students should sit with their groups in the media center or computer lab and look for information on their topics. After this week of research, students will be meeting with their groups once a week for the duration of the project. Each week, students should bring a resource to their group meeting (one resource per student per group meeting). Remind students that they each need at least one article by the end of the period for tomorrow's group meeting. For each article a student brings to class, he/she needs to complete an outline of that article. See attachments.

Day V:

The first group meeting (post research) happens today. Students should meet with their groups and assign a recorder and document holder.

- the recorder will fill out the weekly group report (see attachment)
- the document holder (holder of the folder, whatever) will be the one to collect everyone's articles at the end of the period and keep them all in a folder for further study

Day Five Homework:

Ask students to write a 1-2 page journal. This journal should touch on what happened in the group meeting and what the individual student has learned about the topic. Questions and concerns about the topic and group dynamics are welcome.

The Rest of the Project:

As previously stated, the rest of this project should be designed and extended as needed by the individual instructor. This unit could last from several weeks to an entire semester or school year, depending on how it is implemented.

In general, I suggest having groups meet once a week for several weeks and asking them to complete a group project at the end of the unit.

Some Things to Consider:

- The number and type of resources that the instructor requires from the students should be somewhat dependent on how long the project lasts. A sample list of required sources might look like this:
 - o 2-5 articles or essays from online databases
 - o No more than one encyclopedia (only used for defining topic)

- 1-3 interviews (conducted by student): these interviews should focus on community members of different age and backgrounds who have some personal or professional experience with the group's topic.
 - 1-3 on-site observations (conducted by student); these might include pictures or notes taken while visiting community locations, maps and reports, etc.
- Are the students studying this social problem to debate the issue, solve the issue, contribute to the community, educate the community, or all of these? In order to focus the students on the citizenship/civic responsibility angle, minilesson on citizenship might be in order (see attachment)
- What will the groups' final products look like? If this project lasts for a considerable period of time, several larger assignments might be in order.
 - Have the students stage a debate on their topics
 - Invite members of the community into the classroom to discuss topic
 - Have groups design presentations to teach a) their own class, b) other classes, c) their parents, or d) community members about their topic
 - Ask the groups to imagine that they are city/community planners asked to tackle their group topic. What does the group suggest that the community should do about this issue?