

Citizens Rights, Responsibilities & Opportunities - Protecting Democracy & Improving Communities

This mini-unit focuses on the role and responsibility citizens have to our communities and each other. By building around a project-based experience, students will apply what they learn to identify behaviors of ideal citizens. This curriculum utilizes material from - and is inspired by - the Miller Center Democracy Biennial.

Essential Understanding(s) -

- 1. Democracy is a people-powered form of government, and participation of citizens is necessary. Engagement impacts the health of our communities.**
 - Democracy needs citizens to perform civic responsibilities such as voting, volunteering, participating in politics, communicating with the government and staying informed
 - A democracy also needs a citizenry that is media literate and open-minded.
- 2. Democratic governments must help citizens learn, grow, and participate.**
 - Communities need economic opportunities, education, and free and fair elections to succeed.
 - This education must include information on being media literate.
- 3. Civic participation is a fundamental feature of democracy that needs to be protected and exercised.**

Essential Questions

- 1. What are the behaviors of citizens - required, voluntary and ideal?**
- 2. How do citizens stay informed responsibly?**
- 3. How do communities mobilize to make change?**
- 4. What are the opportunities and challenges of civic action?**
- 5. What does a democracy need from citizens, for the future?**

Project Based Learning/Assessment

Students will complete a project-based assessment on the question, **What actions exemplify an ideal citizen?** Students will do this by creating civics/citizenship related awards and giving them to people in their schools, lives and communities.**

Part 1 - Civic Responsibilities

Part 2 - Rights of Citizens

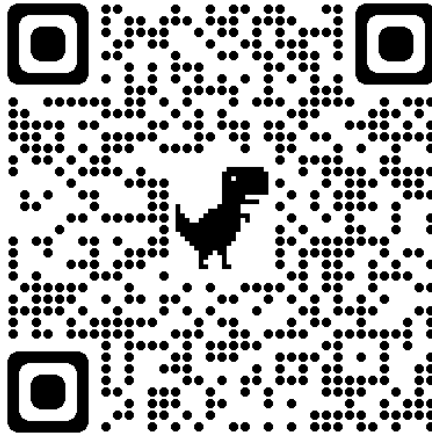
Part 3 - Opportunities

VA SOL Standards: STANDARD CE.3b

The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by

- b) describing the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, and the rights guaranteed by due process and equal protection of the laws;
- c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court;
- d) examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;
- e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.

Lesson 1 - Behaviors of an ideal citizen	Lesson 2 - Value of civic action and identification of opportunities	Lesson 3 - Responsibilities of citizens to stay informed, and responsibilities of government/media.	Lesson 4 - First Amendment, civic action & the five freedoms	Lesson 5 - Freedom of Association	Lesson 6 - Float (for students to finish PBL)
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**** Possible elementary school options for the unit:** Consider converting materials to use the school community as an example of a civic community. So the PBA could be an award for a student that exemplifies citizenship at school, for example, instead of a community award.

Class Period 1 - What are the behaviors of citizens: required, voluntary and ideal?

Objectives - Students will... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify and explain the duties & responsibilities of citizenship.2. Evaluate examples for ways in which behavior addresses community needs and serves the public good.	Standards <p>CE.3.b. The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by</p> <p>c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court;</p> <p>d) examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;</p> <p>e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.</p>
Supplies Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copy of "What can a citizen do?" by Dave Eggers.• Computers with LMS or hard copy files of learning activities.• Youtube Access for Biennial Videos.	Learning Materials Files/Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Think, Pair, Share organizer with reading.2. Slideshow with bios of biennial scholars and clips.3. Discussion format<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Parlayb. Google Slides Template

Engage - 10 Minutes

Read-aloud "What Can a Citizen Do?" by Dave Eggers. After reading, ask students to complete a turn & talk to answer the question, "What are some behaviors of good citizens as detailed in the book?" This can also be done as a brainstorm, or by using a wordcloud website such as [Answer Garden](#).

Explain - 15 Minutes

Teachers can pursue two options for introducing citizenship - reading, or inquiry based.

Option 1: Give students a reading and think-pair-share graphic organizer. Several readings are available below that are specific to civic duties & responsibilities and are aligned with the standards. Teachers can read-aloud the first part of the reading and model for students how to complete the organizer. May sub these readings with district-chosen textbook or prior readings.

1. [USCIS Website - Why citizenship?](#)

2. [Civic Duties & Responsibilities Intro](#)

Option 2: Present students with the definition of citizenship from [Merriam Webster](#). Give them the Think-Pair-Share document and ask students to brainstorm “the qualities and behaviors that a person is expected to have as a responsible member of a community?”

In either case, share out as a group and capture answers on the board. Teacher leads a discussion of duties vs. responsibilities.

EXPLORE

Students will next look through the [choice board](#) and select 1-2 speakers to read about and watch their Miller Center clips. Teachers may want to explain the democracy biennial and how speakers were selected for these panels (for their expertise in civic engagement and action). Students may record notes on their “Think, Pair, Share” document to refer to later. They should be looking for evidence related to civic behaviors.

ELABORATE

After students complete the choice board review, they should participate in a group discussion to answer the question, **“What are the behaviors of citizens: required, voluntary and ideal? Which behaviors are the most important in your opinion?”** They can do this on the website [Parlay](#), or via [google slides template](#).

EVALUATE

Students participate in an encapsulation exercise - either using Padlet, Jamboard, or plain sticky notes.

1. Analogy: Being a citizen of a community is like being a... because...
2. Exit Ticket: Write down one thing you learned about civic behavior and post it on a sticky note.

Class Period 2 - What are the behaviors of citizens: required, voluntary and ideal?

Objectives - Students will... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Annotate a text for information2. Connect the behaviors of the Miller Center speakers to civic engagement.3. Begin on a PBL to engage students in exploration of opportunities for civic action in their own communities.	Standards <p>CE.3.b. The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by</p> <p>c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court;</p> <p>d) examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;</p> <p>e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.</p>
Supplies Needed	Learning Materials Files/Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engage "Warm-up" document2. Web Scavenger Hunt3. Identity Map Worksheet4. PBL Documents - Student Facing Instructions.

ENGAGE - 10 Minutes

Warm-up: The American dream is a, "dream of a better, richer and happier life for all our citizens of every rank."

- Use the "[See, think, me, we](#)" routine from HGSE PZ to consider the quotation. [A template is here.](#) [There is also a video option instead.](#)
- In debriefing, revisit the definition of a citizen - a member of a community. What is our role in helping each other live a better, richer and happier life, as citizens of a community? Come back to the essential question here too.

EXPLAIN - 20 Minutes

Give students article on civic engagement index ([Executive Summary here](#)). Put them in groups of three. Give them the article and have each person read one column of the Executive Summary, then summarize it for the other members of the group. Students can use "Sentence, word, phrase," to help identify salient points.

Have students share-out what they wrote in small groups. Then watch video:

<https://youtu.be/o6lrVf8WQ3g?t=3771> (1:02:52 - 1:03:42)

What is the connection between civic behavior and civic health? What do citizens need from their government to be effective participants, according to Spellings?

EXPLORE & ELABORATE - 30 to 40 minutes

Civic action in our community. Students will look for evidence of civic action in our community by completing an [online scavenger hunt](#).

EVALUATE - 5 minutes

Exit ticket - Students complete an exit ticket with the name of one person they think exemplifies citizenship, famous, historical or average person.

EXTENSION - 10 minutes

Depending on how long the scavenger hunt takes, teachers will either introduce the project, or wait for another day.

To introduce the project, students will complete an identity map to identify what their priorities are as a citizen in their communities. You might also consider opening with Larry Sabato's closing statements: <https://youtu.be/ob0mkXmDKP0>

Then, share the project instructions with students.

Civics Awards Project

You've learned about the opportunities created by active citizens. Now it is time to recognize someone who in your mind stands out as a Super Citizen! With this project, you will use the PACED decision-making model to evaluate the attributes of a good citizen and then choose a person (in your life, or famous - your choice!) who exemplifies good citizenship. You may choose to create a specific award that focuses on a specific aspect of good citizenship (Victorious Voter, Smartly Informed Superhero, etc) or an award that celebrates someone as a civic exemplar.

Questions to consider

- What are the behaviors of an ideal citizen?
- How does civic action create opportunity?

Final Product

- PACED Decision Making Model, completed with a final choice for your award.
- Visual representation of your award with paragraph description.
- Brief award presentation via flipgrid.

Rubric

8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
A. Work demonstrates accurate and detailed knowledge of citizenship unit content. B. Work evaluates the opportunities created by civic action with detail and accuracy.	A. Work demonstrates accurate knowledge of citizenship unit content. B. Work explains the opportunities created by civic action with accuracy.	A. Work demonstrates some knowledge of citizenship unit content. B. Work partially explains the opportunities created by civic action.	A. Work demonstrates limited knowledge of citizenship unit content. B. Work is incomplete in efforts to explain civic action and opportunity.

PACED Decision Making Model - [Read here for additional info.](#)

PACED stands for problem, alternatives, criteria, evaluate, decide. A problem is a question or situation that needs to be solved. Alternatives are choices you can use to solve your problem. Criteria are reasons used to judge your alternatives. Evaluate is judging your alternatives to reach a decision.

Problem - What makes a [Type the name of your award here] ?

Alternatives - Who are you considering for your award?	Criteria - What are the reasons someone should get your award?				
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.



Civics Award Project

““When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news,” Rogers said to his television neighbors, “my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

- Fred “Mister” Rogers

Overview

As a result of the pandemic many people - especially helpers - are feeling burnt out or underappreciated. [Poll workers](#) and [local school board members](#) have been subject to threats. [Journalists](#) continue to put their lives in danger to bring us information from around the globe.

Your job is to create an award to celebrate the helpers. You may choose to focus your award on a specific feature of good citizenship (duties, responsibilities, First Amendment, democracy) or create an award for a good citizen that includes various attributes of your choosing.

Our guiding questions are

- Who embodies the qualities of an ideal citizen?
- What are the most important qualities in an ideal active citizen?
- How do citizens make change in their communities?

Required aspects of the project include

1. A description of the award and eligibility criteria (ex. if youth award, residency, etc)
2. A rubric that could be used to evaluate candidates
3. A blank nomination form
4. A press release announcing at least one nominee for the award

Grading

You will be graded on your use of civics vocabulary (duties, responsibilities & rights) and effective evaluation of potential nominees. A rubric is located here: [Rubric](#)

Class Period 3 - How do citizens stay informed responsibly?

Objectives - Students will... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify strategies for evaluating mass media2. Evaluate news articles for solutions to misinformation and disinformation online	Standards <p>CE.3.b. The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by</p> <p>c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court;</p> <p>d) examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;</p> <p>e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.</p>
Supplies Needed	Learning Materials Files/Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pew Center "Fact or Opinion" Quiz2. Quizlet - Related Vocabulary3. Vocabulary Organizer4. Cyber Sandwich Activity

ENGAGE - 10 Minutes

Have students complete the Pew "fact or opinion" quiz. Then ask students, "Why is it important to be able to differentiate fact from opinion? Which is more powerful in influencing decisions and actions, and which should be more powerful? Make connections back to a citizen's responsibility of staying informed. But what does "informed" really look like, and what is our role? What is the government's role?"

EXPLAIN - 20 Minutes

Show students the TED video on "[How to Choose Your News.](#)" Explain to students that as consumers of information, they have to implement certain strategies to make sure they get the facts. Have students complete the vocabulary using the Quizlet. This uses a strategy from Cris Tovani. Students do a "pre-think" to see if they understand any of the words before they get started. Then they ask questions. Finally they use the quizlet to complete their vocabulary.

EXPLORE & ELABORATE - 45 minutes

Have students complete a cyber sandwich on the role of misinformation in our society. The cyber-sandwich should center on the question, “How do we make it easier to stay informed?” [An explanation of how to use the Cyber Sandwich routine is available here](#). The articles are available via free sign-up from Newsela.

EVALUATE - 10 minutes

Students should identify one step they can take to be better informed, and why this will affect or improve their communities. This can be an exit ticket on a sticky note or submitted via padlet.

Class Period 5 - How do citizens use their first amendment freedoms to improve their communities?

Objectives - Students will... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify and explain freedoms guaranteed in the first amendment.2. Connect civic action to first amendment freedoms.	Standards <p>CE 3c. The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by</p> <p>b) describing the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.</p>
Supplies Needed <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chart paper and post-it notes	Learning Materials Files/Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engage Document - See, Wonder, Connect x 22. Five-Box Figuring - First Amendment3. Generate, Sort, Connect, Elaborate - Changemakers4. Share a Slide Extension

ENGAGE - 15 Minutes

This is an extended warm-up. Students watch the “Call and Response” video from the Miller Center Biennial and complete a “[See, Wonder, Connect x 2](#)” thinking routine ([instructions are here](#)). Teachers should debrief and make a connection between voice and democracy to segue into freedom of speech.

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE - 30 Minutes

Students again use the five box figuring strategy to complete a more detailed KWL around the first amendment freedoms. They can use a preferred district assigned text, a Newsela article, this [scholastic article](#), etc. This will help them build a concept of the freedoms in the first amendment.

ELABORATE & EVALUATE - 30 minutes

The warm-up video makes a connection between having a voice and making a change. Students will complete a “[Generate, Sort, Connect, Elaborate](#),” activity around the concept of changemakers. The directions will change a little with each step in the routine. First, students will generate as many ideas as they can around the word “changemaker.” They can be specific people, or different roles, etc. Then, the students can sort them into categories. Students should then make connections between the categories based on the first amendment freedoms that these people/roles exercise as changemakers. In the elaborate step, students explain the connections between the people they brainstormed and first amendment freedoms. Students can use sticky notes, or a jamboard.

EXTENSION

Students will create a slide on one of the first amendment freedoms, in a whole class slideshow. Students will then take time to review each other's work and leave comments.

Class Period 5 - How do citizens use their first amendment freedoms to improve their communities?

Objectives - Students will... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain “freedom of association” and look at famous cases of assembly from the Supreme Court.2. Evaluate the decline in group membership and what it means for civic action and government action, as well as for our communities.	Standards <p>CE 3c. The student will apply social science skills to understand citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">b) describing the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.
Supplies Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See files, might need post-its for exit ticket	Learning Materials Files/Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Warm-up - Belonging Quotation2. Civic Health Index Selected Reading (will need to be printed and annotated for group reading.3. 1 Routine Instruction (will need to create template)4. Slideshow - Freedom of Association

ENGAGE - 15 Minutes

Give students the [warm-up handout](#) to reflect on a quotation about belonging and country. There are two ways to do this - give students a front and back handout, and have them complete side 1 first. Then have them complete side 2 and debrief. Or give students different versions of the quotations and see how the interpretations differed.

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE - 40 Minutes

Teachers will ask students to revisit the definition of community. Students will identify communities they are a part of by choice and by birth. Teachers may keep a list on the board of benefits and disadvantages of group membership, or have students do a think/pair/share on the topic (document not provided). Pose the questions, “is group membership good? Is it bad?”

Teachers will also revisit the definition of freedom of assembly, to include a [definition of association](#):

“The Supreme Court has long held that the First Amendment's protection of free speech, assembly, and petition logically extends to include a “freedom of association.” Generally, this means we have the freedom to associate with others who have similar political, religious, or cultural beliefs.”

Students will then read the section of the Civic Health Index that relates to group membership ([Pages 14 - 17 here](#)). They will do this in groups of four, and teachers will need to segment the reading into four parts. Each student will read their section and summarize it for the group.

Students will then complete a “[+1 Routine](#).” This interactive routine for capturing salient points will allow students to distill information from the reading.

ELABORATE & EVALUATE - 20 minutes

Students will evaluate a freedom of assembly Supreme Court case to make a connection between rights, action and group association. [Students will use this slideshow](#) to select a case, and answer some questions to unpack the issues of group membership and assembly. They will then do a “true for who” routine to evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of group membership.

EVALUATE PART 2

Students will answer the question, “how does freedom of association benefit communities?”