

# III. Keeping Current with Events in Our Town

## 3 Activity

### WHAT?

Students will read newspaper articles actively and critically to help themselves become more aware of municipal issues and more thoughtful as they consider events in the local news.

### WHY?

To stimulate curiosity about current issues

To analyze the economic impact of the free enterprise system in local, national, and international markets

To develop an orderly way of categorizing issues and seeing interrelationships among ideas

To develop critical-thinking skills and develop an awareness of their own thinking processes

To encourage divergent thinking about a common issue

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

#### *Economics:*

- Understand the interdependence of the Texas economy with the United States and the world

#### *Government:*

- Understand the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution

#### *Citizenship:*

- Understand the rights and responsibilities of Texas citizens
- Understand the importance of the expression of different points of view in a democratic society
- Understand the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society

#### *Social Studies Skills:*

- Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology

#### *Communicate in written, oral, and visual form*

- Uses problem-solving and decision making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings

### TAAS:

- Objective 1: Civic Values and Responsibilities
- Objective 2: Economic Influences on U. S. History
- Objective 3: Political Influences on U. S. History
- Objective 4: Geographic Influences on U. S. History
- Objective 5: Historical Influences on U. S. History
- Objective 6: Sociological and Cultural Influences on U. S. History
- Objective 7: Interpret Social Studies Data
- Objective 8: Critical-Thinking Skills



## How?

### Materials Needed:

- News issues to discuss: news articles brought in by students, teacher, a class set of newspapers, a taped television news story, or whatever else may be pertinent.
- One copy per student of the Municipal News Evaluation Sheet, or a copy of the form on an overhead transparency.

**Suggested Teaching Time:** 45-50 minutes, but will vary greatly, depending on the degree to which students are informed and have strong opinions about the news, and the number of different issues that are brought up for discussion at a particular time.

### Suggested Procedures:

1. Provide students with current events information, through reading (aloud or silently) a news article, or watching a taped news broadcast. News stories that would be especially conducive to this type of study would be those reporting statistics about local government, covering such topics as elections, town budget process, crime statistics or other articles about your town.
2. Have students complete the attached chart about the content of the article and their own thoughts about it. Discuss the issue and the process of thinking about it.
3. You may wish to group students in threes or fours to work cooperatively. Provide only one copy of the Municipal News Evaluation Sheet per group.
4. Have the students (in groups) read the same article or watch the same tape. Then have them discuss what they read using the Municipal News Evaluation Sheet with one student acting as the scribe.

**Follow-Up Possibilities:** The class could choose a local issue and follow its development over time. Some students may also find their views of the issue changing from their initial impression as they become more informed about the topic. You may wish to ask students to reconsider their original opinions to see if they have changes at all.

**Evaluation:** These evaluation sheets can be graded for clarity and completeness. You may wish to give a participation grade or group grade.