

III. The Mayor

WHAT?

Students will determine the duties of a town's mayor.

WHY?

- To describe the duties and functions of mayors
- To identify the levels of responsibility of mayors in small and large towns
- To interview a town's mayor or city council member
- To use a map to locate the Texas towns identified in the lesson

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

Geography

- Understand the purpose of maps and globes

Government

- Understand the role of authority figures and public officials

Social Studies Skills

- Apply critical-thinking skills and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology
- Communicate effectively in a variety of forms

TAKS:

- Objective 4: Political Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 5: Critical-Thinking Skills

HOW?

Materials needed:

- Transparencies of the handouts about mayors of the following towns: Laredo, Temple, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, and McAllen
- Handout titled “Notes to the Teacher for Each Transparency”
- Handout titled “Symbols That Match the Mayors’ Transparencies”
- Transparency titled “The Sequence of Symbols”
- Drawing paper
- Markers
- Wall map of Texas
- Sticky flags to mark locations on the map

Suggested advanced planning:

- Invite the mayor of the students’ town to talk about his/her role in the town. If it is inconvenient for the mayor to come in person, ask if a city council member or another representative could come instead. Some towns do not have a mayor. If the students’ town has a city manager-city council system of government, invite a city council member to tell how the city council members have some of the same duties as a mayor. A city council member would be more appropriate than a city manager because the city manager is not an elected position.
- Make copies of the handout titled “Symbols That Match the Mayors’ Transparencies.” Cut out the symbols and arrange them in sets for small groups to use during the lesson. Be sure to scramble them out of sequence.

Suggested teaching time: one class period or two class periods if you choose to conduct the lesson on one day and have the mayor’s visit on another day

Suggested Procedures:

1. Ask the students what a mayor does. Establish that a mayor is a person the people of a town elect to be their leader.
2. Tell students that they will learn about what a mayor does for a town.
3. Arrange the students in small groups. Give each group a set of the symbols from the handout titled Symbols That Match the Mayors’ Transparencies.”
4. Tell students that you are going to show them pictures of mayors in some Texas towns and read a sentence the mayor says about one of his or her duties. (**Note:** The mayors’ pictures appear on their towns’ web sites. The words attributed to them are paraphrases of something they wrote as a welcome to those visiting the web site. The Laredo statement is a direct quote, and the Dallas statement is from the mayor’s inaugural address.)
5. Show each transparency. Place a sticky flag on each mayor’s town on the Texas wall map as you present the mayors. After reading the transparency, discuss what students think the transparency tells them about one of a mayor’s duties.
6. After discussing each transparency, tell the groups to decide which of their symbols matches what the mayor said that describes one of the mayor’s duties. Tell them that

after they see each picture, their group will decide which of the symbols matches the mayor's duty in the picture. When they have seen and heard from all the mayors, each group will have a row of symbols in the order of the presentation of the mayors.

7. After the presentation of mayors, ask the students if they are ready to see if their symbols are in the correct order. Show the transparency titled, "Symbols That Match the Mayors' Transparencies."
8. Discuss how each symbol represents a mayor's duty. The handout titled "Notes to the Teacher for Each Transparency" is available as a guide.
9. When the mayor, mayor's representative, or city council member visits the class, ask him/her to ask students what they know about a mayor's duties, then clarify and/or elaborate on each of the students' comments.

Evaluation: Students draw a picture of a mayor performing a duty. Students explain their pictures to the class. Display the pictures in the room.