

VI. A Web of Work

WHAT?

Students will analyze the non-elected and non-appointed jobs that keep a town operational.

WHY?

- To identify jobs necessary to maintaining a town's operations
- To investigate what people do in various town related jobs
- To compare kinds of town-related jobs among various cities on the basis of size of population
- To build webs as graphic organizers to map out city jobs
- To discover information about town related jobs in the students' own community through a classroom visitation of person from the city's department of personnel.
- To visit one of the town's area of work to see jobs in action
- To compare the students' town jobs with the jobs of another town about the size of the students' town.
- To contrast the jobs in a smaller or larger town with the students' town

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

History:

- Understand common characteristics of communities, past and present

Geography:

- Understand the locations and characteristics of places and regions

Government:

- Understand the purpose of government
- Understand basic structure and functions of local government

Social Studies Skills:

- Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources
- Communicate in oral, written, and visual forms

TAKS:

- Objective 1: Issues and Events in U.S. History
- Objective 2: Geographic Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 4: Political Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 5: Critical-thinking Skills

HOW?

Materials needed:

- If available, computers loaded with “Kidspiration” or Inspiration
- Butcher paper
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Glue or tape
- Handout “An Example of a Web of City Jobs” for a teacher-made transparency
- Five copies of the handout, “An Example of a Web of City Jobs” for distribution to groups to use when constructing their webs
- Handout titled “Job Descriptions of City Workers”
- Handouts with information for creating webs: “Some of the City Jobs in Kerrville,” “Some of the City Jobs in Weatherford,” “Some of the City Jobs in Hamilton,” “Some of the City Jobs in McAllen,” “Some of the City Jobs in El Paso,” “The City Jobs in New Waverly.”
- Handout titled “A List of Questions For a Guest Speaker”
- Wall map of Texas
- Sticky flags attached to the Texas wall map labeled Huntsville, Kerrville, Weatherford, Hamilton, McAllen, El Paso, New Waverly.

Other resources:

- A person from the personnel or human resources department of the student’s town or community to visit the class (Note: Give the guest the handout titled “A List of Questions for a Guest Speaker” prior to the classroom visit.)
- Representatives from several of the city’s departments to visit the class with the person from personnel to discuss their jobs.
- Field trip to one of the job areas of the students’ town to see the duties carried out of the people who work there, such as the library or city hall.

Suggested teaching time: 2-3 class periods

Suggested Procedures:

1. Students brainstorm jobs they think are needed to run a city. Point out that these are not jobs held by people who are elected like the mayor or a city council member. Record answers on the board. If they record incorrect kinds of jobs, leave them on the board for the students to correct at a later time.
2. Tell the students that they are going to learn about the jobs needed to keep a city in good running order. As they go along, they will check the board to see which ideas they will keep and which ones they might decide to take away. (For example they would keep the job of policeman on the board, but later decide that a cashier at the grocery store does not work for the city.)

3. Give each student a piece of construction paper and one of the jobs described in the handout titled "Job Descriptions of City Workers." Students write the name of the job on one side of the paper and glue or tape the description on the other side.
4. Tell students that these are some of the jobs that people have to help a town run smoothly.
5. Students take turns standing before the class and holding their signs for the rest of the students to see. Students read or tell the description for their jobs. As each student completes the report, attach the sign to the board beside the brainstorm list or on the wall nearby.
6. After all students have reported, review what students learned about the jobs.
7. Form five groups of students. Tell them that each group is going to receive information about jobs in a certain city. They will make a web to show the kinds of jobs that city has. Some of the cities are large, and some are small. Two cities are small enough that one of the groups will construct two webs, one for each small city. Students will include how many people are in the town and how many people have city jobs.
8. Note: There are several possibilities for constructing webs:
 - If "Kidspiration" or "Inspiration" is available, have students construct their webs on the computer. If the students construct their webs electronically, they will need to print five copies for groups to analyze later.
 - If students construct webs by hand, they can do so on large pieces of butcher paper that can hang on the wall for everyone to see.
 - Students could construct the webs electronically and then copy them on butcher paper.
9. Show students a sample web using a transparency of the handout titled "An Example of a Web of City Jobs" and discuss how students can construct their webs. Distribute one city information sheet to each group using the handouts titled "Some of the City Jobs in Kerrville," "Some of the City Jobs in Weatherford," "Some of the City Jobs in El Paso," "Some of the City Jobs in McAllen." Give one group both "Some of the City Jobs in Hamilton" and "City Jobs in New Waverly" because those towns are small.
10. Students construct webs and make them available for the class to see.
11. In groups, students analyze the webs and make a list of five things they notice when analyzing the webs. (For example they might see that every town has a city secretary or that some towns do not have firemen or policemen.)
12. Conduct a class discussion about their findings.
13. Tell students that a guest is coming to their classroom from the personnel department for their own city. Have groups write three questions about jobs in their city they would like for the guest to answer.
14. Have the groups report round robin, giving one question at a time until all questions have been suggested.
15. Compile the questions, and if necessary, alert the guest to new questions not addressed on the handout titled "A List of Questions for a Guest Speaker."
16. Have the guest speaker visit the class with the students asking questions, and the guest answering. The guest will supply important information that might not arise in the questioning.

17. Students take a field trip to a city department and observe how people perform their duties.
18. Back in the classroom, return to the brainstorm list and ask students if they would add or subtract any of the items on the list.

Evaluation: Students list the five most important ideas they have learned about jobs in city government. Explain why they chose these ideas.