

XI. City Council in Action: Balancing Needs in Our Town

11 Activity

WHAT?

Students will role play decisions, representing different viewpoints held in town about controversial issues.

WHY?

- To analyze the effects of the changing population distribution in Texas
- To explain the changes in the types of jobs and occupations that have resulted from the urbanization of Texas
- To describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels
- To analyze the economic impact of the free enterprise system in local, national, and international markets
- To analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions
- To use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages/disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution
- To use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

Geography:

- Understand the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas
- Understand the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas

Economic:

- Understand the factors that caused Texas to change from an agrarian to an urban society
- Understand the interdependence of the Texas economy with the United States and the world

Government:

- Understand the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution
- 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

Culture:

- Understand the concept of diversity within unity in Texas

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 4: Geographic 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:

- For each member of a group, a copy of the situation card that applies to the that group’s dilemma

Suggested Teaching Time: A total of 5 to 7 class periods, spread out, if you prefer, over the course of several weeks. This stretching out of the unit allows students to do research on their own time, and allows you to continue with the unit during the intervening days.

Suggested Procedures:

1. Divide the class into groups, each of which will select a dilemma from those presented, or who can create their own scenario to correspond with an issue they know about, but which has not yet been resolved in real life. (The more students have to create their own responses to the situation, the better.)
2. Give the group planning time to:
 - figure out how they will role play the dilemma in class
 - gather facts to use in fleshing out the roles in each dilemma
 - decide how they will resolve the issue for their imagined community
 - rehearse their role play
3. Have the groups present their role plays to class. If you wish to invite community members to observe, that might lend a more serious tone to the skits. (Or it may inhibit students— you decide.)
4. Evaluate the skits in class, asking students to share their feelings about:
 - what a given group did well
 - how well the group had researched their topic
 - how realistically the community members and politicians in the skit were portrayed
 - how thoughtfully the group analyzed the issues in the case
 - how practical and beneficial to the community the group’s final resolution of the dilemma was

Follow-Up Possibilities: Invite a member of the city council or the city staff, an interest group or a community activist to class to discuss how such problems are resolved in real life.

Evaluation: Students could complete a self-evaluation of their role in the group and their satisfaction with the final product presented to class.