



GeoCivics Lesson: *Civic Action in our Community*

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Teacher(s): Jake Wager	Lesson Title: Civic Action in our Community	Grade Level: Middle School
Notes: This lesson will take multiple days to complete.		
Pre-existing Knowledge: Students will need to know about their school, community and potential improvements or issues they face.		
Overview of Content: Civic engagement involves “working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” 1 Civic engagement includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service. 2 Volunteering, national service, and service-learning are all forms of civic engagement.		
Purpose: <i>What will students learn?</i> In this lesson, students will learn about ways citizens can engage in their school or city community to affect change through brainstorming and the development of an action plan. They will also learn how to engage with their environment to affect change by developing an action plan to solve a local problem and presenting their action plan to the class, school and/or community stakeholders, and how to become leaders and changemakers in their communities.		
National & State Social Studies Standard(s): NCSS National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.		

- **Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- **Theme 6: Power, Authority and Governance:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- **Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

Iowa Social Studies Standards

- SS.8.11. Analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at the local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.
- SS.8.12. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action in classrooms, schools, and communities.

National & State Geography Standard(s):

NCGE - National Council for Geographic Education standards

- Standard 13: How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.
- Standard 14: How human actions modify the physical environment.

Iowa Geography Standards

- SS.8.18. Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions influence culture.

ELA Standards:

- Craft and Structure
 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. (RH.6-8.4)
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. (RH.6-8.7)

ISTE Teacher and/or Student Standard:

- 1.7 Global Collaborator
 - a. Global Connections
 - Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.
 - b. Multiple Viewpoints
 - Students use collaborative technologies to work with others, including peers, experts and community members, to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.

- c. Project Teams
 - Students contribute constructively to project teams, assuming various roles and responsibilities to work effectively toward a common goal.
- d. Local and Global Issues
 - Students explore local and global issues, and use collaborative technologies to work with others to investigate solutions.

Language Functions:

- Inquiry/Seeking Information
- Summarizing/Informing
- Justifying/Persuading
- Solve Problems/Problem Solving

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:

- SOCIAL JUSTICE
 - Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and enact change.
- HIGHER ORDER THINKING
 - Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to engage in higher cognitive processing, applying learning to big-picture analysis and creative applications for learning.
- CONNECTION
 - Lesson/Activity incorporates real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.

Objective(s): (Explicit & Measurable - suggested one per standard in each category.):

Students will be able to...

- Describe how citizens can engage with their communities to affect change through the development of an action plan.
- Demonstrate ways citizens can engage with their community to affect change by presenting their action plan to the class, school leaders, and/or community stakeholders.

SIOP

SIOP Elements		
Preparation	Scaffolding	Grouping Option
Adapting content	Modeling	Whole class
Linking to background	Guided practice	Small groups
Linking to past learning	Independent practice	Partners
Strategies used	Comprehensible input	Independent

Integrating Processes	Application	Assessment
Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Hands-On Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Individual Group Written Oral

Evidence of Mastery (Measurable):

Formative - The satisfactory completion of the action plan is assessed by the teacher prior to moving on to the completion of the final project. The Guided Action Plan (at end of lesson) will be used for the formative assessment.

Summative - The students will create a CAP and choose a method for presenting their information. They may create a poster, public service announcement, podcast, video, live presentation, brochure, physical work such as clean-up of an area and/or installing something, TV and/or radio interview, attending city council and/or school board meeting, etc. The students will be graded on the completion of their product. The product depends on the action plan.

Exceeds Expectations	Information, research and ideas for change are presented to an audience or stakeholders that can bring about the intended change that is at the heart of the research (for instance: school board, school leadership, city hall, etc.	4
Meets Expectations	Creates and presents a product that effectively communicates the civic action issue at the heart of the research or change issue, and includes an action plan to make change.	3
Approaches Expectations	Product created teaches and/or represents the critical information and/or issue at hand, but falls short of laying out an action plan to make change, or fails to accurately present the critical information to the intended audience.	2
Fails to Meet Expectations	Fails to convey the issue or supply an action plan for making change.	1

Key vocabulary:

- **Citizen:** A citizen is a participatory member of a political community. Citizenship is gained by meeting the legal requirements of a national,

Materials:

- Civic Action Plan worksheet -- *see below*
- Communication Preparation Worksheet -- *see below*

state, or local government. A nation grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens. In return, citizens are expected to obey their country's laws and defend it against its enemies.

- **Civic Action:** Civic engagement involves “working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”¹ Civic engagement includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service.² Volunteering, national service, and service-learning are all forms of civic engagement.

- Computer or iPad for research and product development

Sources:

No outside resources needed to teach the lesson other than group research.

Engage

Teacher Will:

1. Ask students: *have you ever been faced with an issue or problem and were able to solve it? How did you solve the problem?* Have students share their experiences. Now, have them brainstorm about problems or issues in our school or community they have noticed.
2. Using the provided guided action plan sheet, instruct the students to make a list. Now ask students to circle or highlight the two or three of the most important issues on their list *to them*.
3. Call on students to share out one or both items on their list; the teacher makes a list on the board to document student responses.
4. Now, divide the students into small groups to explore one of the issues from the class list;

Student Will:

1. Make a list of all the issues or problems they can think of in their school or community that they feel needs or should be addressed or changed.
2. Highlight or underline the one or two most important items on their list to them.
3. Share out and then volunteer your one or two items or problems they see in the school or community to the class from their list.
4. Volunteer ideas for how to solve some of the problems students have shared for the board.

student groups each select a different issue.

Explore

Teacher Will:
IQ 1# - *In what ways can community problems get solved?*

1. In their groups, instruct students to think about their problem they have been selected for and think about active steps they can take to solve the issue or problem.
2. After they have made their list, ask each group to choose three actions they think will have the biggest impact on leading to a solution.
 - Ask the students to write each of the three action steps separately and explain in writing why they think these steps would be effective.
3. Now instruct the groups to research their issue by finding out if there are solutions that have been tried in other cities, and who are community or school stakeholders or decision makers that they would need to contact that can help make a change.
 - You may wish to introduce students to the [PAUSE assessment](#) which can help them identify credible sources.

Student Will:

1. Think about the problem you have been assigned and think about active steps you can take to solve the issue or problem.
 - a. Make a list of these steps, but do not discuss the steps or their likelihood they might make an impact, just write the ideas down.
2. Now, as a group, pick three ideas you think would be both accomplishable and impactful and indicate these with a star, or marking.
 - a. As a group, write each of the three action ideas separately and explain in writing why they would be effective.
3. Now, spend research the problems using your electronic device and answer these questions:
 - a. Have solutions to this issue or problem been addressed in other cities, communities or schools?
 - b. Who are stakeholders in the community and school who would need to be contacted and/or educated that could help address this issue?

Explain - Formative Assessment

Teacher Will:

1. The teacher will ask each group to share the information learned during research activities with the class.
 - a. This would include if other communities have worked on similar issues already and what success they may have had there.
2. This will serve as a formative assessment.

Student Will:

1. Each member of the group will take a turn sharing the information learned during research activities with the class.
2. Turn in the Guided Action Plan to the teacher and be ready to take appropriate steps to solve the issue or problem you are attempting to address.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make sure each group has researched their issue thoroughly and are prepared to make appropriate action steps to address their issue. <p>3. Students will also turn in their Guided Action Plan to check for a formative assessment as well.</p>	
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Elaborate

Teacher Will:

IQ #2: How will you work to solve this problem or make change?

- 1. The teacher will work with and monitor students as they work on their civic action plan.
 - a. Be sure to help students connect with appropriate agencies, organizations, or community groups that might be able to assist, or possibly need convincing in order to address the issue.
- 2. The teacher will guide the students as they put together their civic action plan (CAP) in a form of their choosing.
 - a. Poster, public service announcement, video, live presentation, brochure, physical work such as clean-up of an area and/or installing something, TV and/or radio interview, attending city council and/or school board meeting, etc.
- 3. The teacher will help students in building awareness and support by using social media and other avenues of communication.
 - a. Help the students connect with the community.
 - b. Also, provide the students with the Communication Preparation planning sheet (see below), to help them think

Student Will:

- 1. Using the Guided Action Plan, the student will begin putting their ideas into motion.
- 2. Make flyers, brochures, posters, etc. to raise awareness of the issue.
- 3. Use social media, or other types of media like podcasts or TV to raise awareness.
- 4. Begin listing and contacting community groups and leaders in the school and community about the issue and offer ideas for what needs to be done.
- 5. Work closely with your teacher as a mentor or guide as you navigate through all of this.
 - a. Also use the Communication Preparation tool (see below) to assist you in talking about it with others.

<p>of how to talk to other people or groups about their issue.</p>	
<p>Evaluate</p>	
<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will implement their civic action project (CAP) and work to accomplish addressing their goals for the issue they chose. <p>(NOTE) The teacher will continue to monitor students as they implement their CAP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students will communicate the goals and results of their project to the class. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This can be through a slide show, poster presentation, etc. 3. The teacher will evaluate the effort and results of student’s civic action projects using the included rubric. 	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will implement their civic action project (CAP) and work to accomplish addressing their goals for the issue they chose. 2. Students will communicate the goals and results of their project to the class. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This can be through a slide show, poster presentation, etc. 3. Students are assessed on their CAP projects using the included rubric.
<p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are encouraged to continue pursuing this or other issues or ideas that can make a difference to their school or community. 	

Guided Action Plan

<p>Group Members</p>	
<p>List of Issues or Problems in our School or Community</p>	

<p>Our issue or problem to solve</p>	
<p>List of possible active steps to solve the issue or problem</p>	

<p>Our Three Action Steps</p>		

Communication Preparation

Fill out this form to prepare you to talk to community stakeholders and leaders about your problem or issue you'd like to see addressed.

Hello, I'm here today to discuss the problem of...

This issue is important because...

If this problem was solved, it would improve our (school, community) by...

To solve this problem, we need to...

Thank you all for listening and I look forward to working with you on this issue.