

ENGAGING WITH MY COMMUNITY

In this lesson students will identify communities that they are a part of and come up with a plan to make difference in one of them.

Grade Levels 3-6

Note: Lessons are designed to support multiple grade levels. Modification suggestions and extensions are for alternative pacing and to engage students at various levels.

Standards

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

SOCIAL AWARENESS The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

SELF AWARENESS The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across context.

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

Social Studies Standards (NCSS)

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

What You'll Need

"A Place to Play" article from TIME for Kids, "Getting Involved" worksheet, access to [video](#) from Khan Academy

Essential Question(s)

- What is civic engagement?
- What communities am I a part of?
- Which communities need support, and how can I provide it?

Learning Objectives

- I can define *civic engagement*.
- I can explain why civic engagement is important.
- I can list ways that I can support the various communities I'm part of, and create an action plan.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN**Introduction**

Begin with a discussion of the term *civic engagement*. Where, if anywhere, have students heard the term before? Have them turn and talk to a partner and try to define the term. For a little assistance, tell them that *civics* is defined as “a social science dealing with the rights and duties of citizens.” Call on pairs to share their definition. Then watch the [video from Khan Academy](#) that defines and gives examples of civic engagement. Have partners summarize what they learned and adjust their definition accordingly. Use the list (minute markers 1:20–2:09) to come up with specific examples of civic engagement.

Discussion

Have students read “[A Place to Play](#)” independently. As they read, have them take note of the community for which Kason is working to make an improvement, and why. Then bring the class back together for a discussion.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Kason and his grandmother start a campaign to change playgrounds?
2. What step did Kason take to reach his goal?
3. What are some examples of accessible playground equipment?
4. Nick Farline says the city plans to create more inclusive play spaces. What does *inclusive* mean? What are some of the ways a community can become more inclusive?
5. What does Kason’s motto “from my heart to my brain to my mouth” mean? What does the motto tell you about him?

Ask students what communities Kason helped (*kids with disabilities and residents of Kennewick, Washington*). Then make a list of different communities. Rewatch the Khan Academy video, if necessary. On the board, write the following categories: location, interests, identity. Remind students that communities can fall under any of these categories. Have a class brainstorm session to name examples of each kind of community. For example, your school and town would fall under the location category; a sports team or club would fall under the interest category; and religion, gender, nationality, and race would fall under the identity category. Tell students they’ll be

choosing several of their own communities and thinking about how they can be a better member of each.

Independent Work

Provide students with a copy of the “Getting Involved” worksheet. Have them use the circles to list as many as possible of the communities they’re part of. Then have them choose a community from each category that they think could use some support. Have them identify a need and indicate how they can help address it.


Closing

Have a discussion about why civic engagement is important. Why should people support and/or give back to their communities? Ask students to put a star next to the act of civic engagement that appeals to them most on the “Getting Involved” worksheet. Have them consider what their next steps would be toward taking action. Invite students to map out the steps they’d need to follow and the people/resources they’d need to gather in order to take action. Have volunteers share their ideas with the class. If time and resources permit, have students put their ideas into action.

Exit Ticket (Survey)

Have students complete the “Engaging with My Community Survey” to capture the impact this lesson has had on them.

Optional Extension Opportunities

Read or watch videos on Your  Job about people who have dedicated their lives to bettering their communities.

- [Teaching to Inspire](#) (video): High school teacher Billy Green uses his role to inspire students and open doors for them.
- [“Reimagining Cities”](#) (article): Carlos Moreno helped develop the idea for an accessible, inclusive, and eco-friendly city in Paris.
- [“Fashion Forward”](#) (article): Grace Jun is the CEO of an organization that designs more-inclusive clothing.

Discuss the communities these people are supporting and how they are doing it. You can also challenge students to find their own examples.

Home-to-School Connections

- **Talk about it.** Ask students to go home and talk with their family about communities they’re part of. Encourage students to discuss each of the three categories they learned about in the lesson. Have them ask their family how they might engage with or support each of these communities. Invite students to share with the class what was discussed.
- **Act on it.** Have students take home the “Getting Involved” worksheet. With a family member, have them identify a community they are both part of. Have them choose a way to help that community and create an action plan to do so.