

Suggested Audiences

- Citizens
- Community Leaders
- Educators
- Students

Standard Categories for Grades 6-12

- Civics and Government
- Environment and Ecology
- Geography
- Service Learning

Standard Statements for Grades 6-12

- 4.8** Humans and the Environment
- 5.1** Principles and Documents of Government
- 5.3** How Government Works
- 7.1** Basic Geographic Literacy
- 7.3** Human Characteristics of Places and Regions

Content Objectives

- Discuss and compare current articles about land use
- Correlate articles to land use principles
- Share information about communities
- Identify concepts and additional information
- Match vocabulary and definitions
- Discuss citizen responsibility

Instructional Strategies

- Analysis
- Compare and contrast
- Discussion
- Listening
- Matching

Assessment Strategies

- Discussion and review

Materials

Included:

- Land Use Principles: Posters (posted around room)
- Need-to-Know flip chart displayed to the large group
- Concept Map worksheet and display
- Vocabulary word cards and definitions in envelopes for each team
- "Anybody" story worksheet or display

Additional Materials:

- Name tags
- Markers
- Large state map
- Post-it notes
- Name tents or note cards
- Flip charts (at least 3)
- Extra articles
- PA Land Choices PowerPoint

Time

- 1.25 hours

Getting Started...Making Choices

Pennsylvania is a tapestry of communities, rich in character, charm, independence and a strong allegiance to the landscape. The communities are shaped by our rich history, hardworking people and bountiful natural resources. The forests, rivers, mountains, soils, geology, wildlife and weather all are important in defining our communities and shaping our perception of “place.” This is our state. These are our counties. This is our community. People, space and environment are critical in defining our perceptions, attitudes, values and worldviews. We are shaped by our communities. In turn, we have a great responsibility in guiding the future of our communities.

Pennsylvanians stand at a critical crossroad facing unprecedented pressures on the use of our land...the natural, historic and cultural resources of our changing communities. The choices that we make for our communities and our natural resources will ultimately impact the future of Pennsylvania for generations to come. The future is in the hands of citizens who will realize the power and value of local government and the importance of active community leadership and stewardship. It is the responsibility of each citizen to guide their communities toward a sustainable future. It is not only important to educate municipal officials but to focus on opportunities to empower every citizen and educate every student about land conservation and sustainable communities.

Overview

Getting Started...Making Choices includes three activities:

Activity 1: *What Do You Know?*

Activity 2: *How to Speak "Planning"*

Activity 3: *Who is Responsible?*

During the following activities, participants will reflect on their local communities as places that have shaped their lives. This bond between people, environment and community constitutes a "sense of place." By exploring the media, participants define local issues. Articles abound on topics such as new housing developments, traffic, highway construction, land conservation and community character. The activities in this lesson focus on comparing local news articles from various communities throughout Pennsylvania and aligning them to basic land use principles.

Being a community leader requires an understanding of the vocabulary. It is important to learn the language of "planning". Participants match vocabulary words and definitions to begin to translate the language. Participants share information about themselves and positive aspects of their community. Participants share objects and artifacts that represent the character of their community as they begin to discuss and define the importance of citizen responsibility.

Activity 1:

What Do You Know?

Summary: Communities are important in shaping our lives. Participants will review local articles on land use. They will relate the articles to land use principles and compare issues with other participants. They will analyze what they know and what they need to know. They will develop a concept map for studying land use.

Activity 1

Questions: How do communities influence our lives? What are the six basic principles of land use planning? How do your local issues relate to the principles? What information do you know and what information do you need to better understand the issues to become more involved?

Preparation

- Provide extra articles from the local papers.
- Place "Land Use Principles" posters around the room (pp 8-13).
- Prepare a flip chart or projection of the "Need to Know" chart (p 7).
- Copy and distribute the Concept Map to each participant and display it on a flip chart (pp 14-15).

Procedure

1. Discuss the importance of the community and "a sense of place." There is a bond between people and place. Places shape people and vice versa. There is a growing awareness about the importance of people, space and environment in shaping perceptions, attitudes, values and world views. Landscapes act as a teacher in shaping our perception of place. For many people, their community and the region where they live is their "life space." It is important for citizens to be actively involved in defining their community...their life space...so that it will grow and change in a direction that they want for future generations. Discuss how their communities influenced them.

2. Discuss the changes participants have seen in their communities in the past five years. Summarize and list the issues that are addressed. Participants are invited to bring an article from the local newspaper that addresses a land use issue or examples of changes in their community.

Participants are to read their article and be prepared to share it with others.

There are six land use principles that are included in the curriculum as mini posters.

They are printed and displayed around the room.

Review the six principles that are posted around the room. Participants are to move from poster to poster, selecting the one that best relates to their article.

Participants are to stand by a principle that relates to their article. (Establish a maximum number of people who can stop at any one poster.)

Land is a finite natural resource that provides habitat for much of the living world—including humans.

Land is used for many different purposes. If land is used for one purpose, its use for other purposes is limited. Each use has its consequences.

People have different attitudes and values about land use. Those differences may cause conflicts. Resolution requires cooperation, compromise and careful consideration of all information.

Land use planning is a dynamic process that involves local citizens, community leaders and special interest groups, each having an impact on the future decisions of the community as well as the region. “Not to plan” is a decision just as “planning” is a decision.

It is a civic responsibility for citizens to be involved in community decisions that impact the character, values and resources that are important now and for the future.

Ownership of land means you accept responsibility for the care of that land and follow the laws and regulations, making responsible decisions about the use of the land.

3. In their small groups, participants will summarize their articles to the rest of the small group and relate it to the poster.

One person in the group will be assigned to summarize the articles to the whole group. As each group summarizes the issues, the facilitator will project the issues on a flip chart or projection unit upon which a “Need to Know” table is drawn. Participants will discuss similarities and label the issues as local, regional, national and global.

4. Refer to the “Need to Know” chart. As the articles are discussed, summarize the issues. Fill in the “Need to Know” chart. What do participants know and what do they need to learn? The chart is used as a guide to assess the audience levels of understanding. It can be expanded throughout the training.

5. Copy and distribute the Concept Map to each participant. Prepare Concept Map for display.

Using the Concept Map as a guide, participants are invited to consider important topics about land use and to add concepts as they are addressed throughout the workshop. Review the concept map periodically and expand upon it.

6. Summarize and review the activity.

Activity 2:

How to Speak “Planning”

Summary: Participants will match sets of vocabulary cards with the definitions. Discuss vocabulary about land use. Display words on a flipchart throughout the workshop.

Questions: What are some of the vocabulary words used in conversations about land use? Why is it important to understand vocabulary?

Preparation

- Copy the vocabulary words worksheet (pp 16-17).
- Cut the words and definitions and place in an envelope for each team.

- Write on a flipchart:

“Sprawlsmartgrowthmunicipalityzoningordinancesfeesimpletitleconservationbrownfields.”

Procedure

1. When working on land use issues, there are many new vocabulary words. It’s almost like learning a new language. Invite someone to read this word on the flipchart: “Sprawlsmartgrowthmunicipalityzoningordinancesfeesimpletitleconservationbrownfields.”

(Remember Mary Poppin’s “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious?”)

This is what “land use” sounds like to someone who has not been involved in local government.

2. In order to be informed about land decisions, it is important to become familiar with the language. Ask participants to share vocabulary words used in the articles or in previous discussions and list them on a chart. Distribute envelopes with words and definitions to each group. Ask participants to work in teams to match the words and the definitions. Provide 10 minutes to conduct the matching activity.

Municipalities Planning Code

Legislation that empowers municipalities within the state to enact regulations for the development and preservation of land. It has three main sections:

- (1) The Comprehensive Plan, (2) Zoning, and (3) Subdivision and Land Development.

Municipality

A unit of local government, a political subdivision of a state where a corporation has been established to govern the population concentrated in a defined area such as a county, city, township or borough. The officers make policy decisions, levy taxes, spend money and make decisions on local planning and zoning.

Zoning

It is the act of designating specific types of land use in specific areas within a municipality. Each zone or district allows for a designated type of land use such as residential, agriculture, commercial, industrial or mixed uses. A map is used to indicate the location of the zones.

Sprawl

A condition of development which conjures up a vision of continuous patterns of strip malls, parking lots, traffic and unconnected styles of development creating a need to drive everywhere and leaving a community without character or a sense of place.

Planning

A dynamic process of deciding how best to provide a proper arrangement of land uses, transportation patterns, development, agricultural lands and desirable environmental features for the future.

The Comprehensive Plan

It is a document developed by either a county or municipality that provides recommendations for the growth and changes that are anticipated in the future. A county comprehensive plan provides recommendations for communities within the county but it is not enforceable. It is a document that outlines community or countywide vision, goals and objectives. It includes a land use plan, housing plan, transportation plan, community facilities plan, natural and historic resources plan and water supply plan.

Environmental Advisory Council

An officially constituted municipal board created to advise local governments on environmental issues and policies including recommendations on open space.

Greenways

Corridors of open space that can be land or water-based whose purpose is protecting natural, cultural, and/or scenic resources. Its defining function is its connectivity to other places.

3. *Discuss the definitions in a large group.* Discuss why it is important to understand the language of “planning.” Summarize and review.

Activity 3:

Who is Responsible?

Summary: Participants will review a short story and discuss its meaning. Participants will incorporate previous discussions to define issues and citizen responsibilities as it relates to land use issues.

Questions: In your community, who is responsible for planning? Who is responsible for finding solutions to community problems? What are problems in your community and who solves them?

Preparation

- Distribute or display the “Anybody” story on a flip chart or screen (p 18).

Procedure

1. *Read aloud the story about ‘Anybody, Somebody, Nobody and Everybody.’*

2. *Discuss the story by referring to the questions related to the activity.*

- Who are the people responsible for deciding the future of the community?
- What organizations, individuals and groups work toward improvements in your community?
- What is the role of each citizen?
- What are conservation measures that could help a community?
- Why are more people not involved?
- What motivates citizens to become involved?

3. *Summarize and review.*

Assessment and Review

1. *Summarize and categorize the types of news stories related to land use. What are common themes? Who are common players?*

2. *Review vocabulary related to land use. Expand the list to include new vocabulary throughout the workshop.*

3. *Discuss the role of leaders in a community and leadership traits. How can we become leaders in our community?*

The problem, *then is how to bring about a striving for harmony with land among a people, many of whom have forgotten there is any such thing as land, among whom education and culture have become almost synonymous with landlessness. This is the problem of ‘conservation education’.*

Aldo Leopold (Naturalist/Conservation Advocate)

Activity 1: *Need to Know Chart*

What do you know about land use? What issues are in the news?	What more do you need to know?	How can we find out?

Land is a finite natural resource

**that provides habitat for
much of the living world—
including humans.**

If land is used for one purpose, its use for other purposes is limited.

Each use has its consequences.

People have different attitudes and values about land use.

Those differences may cause conflicts. Resolution requires cooperation, compromise and careful consideration of all information.

Land use planning is a dynamic process

**that involves local citizens,
community leaders and special
interest groups, each having an
impact on the future decisions of the
community as well as the region.
“Not to plan” is a decision just as
“planning” is a decision.**

It is a civic responsibility

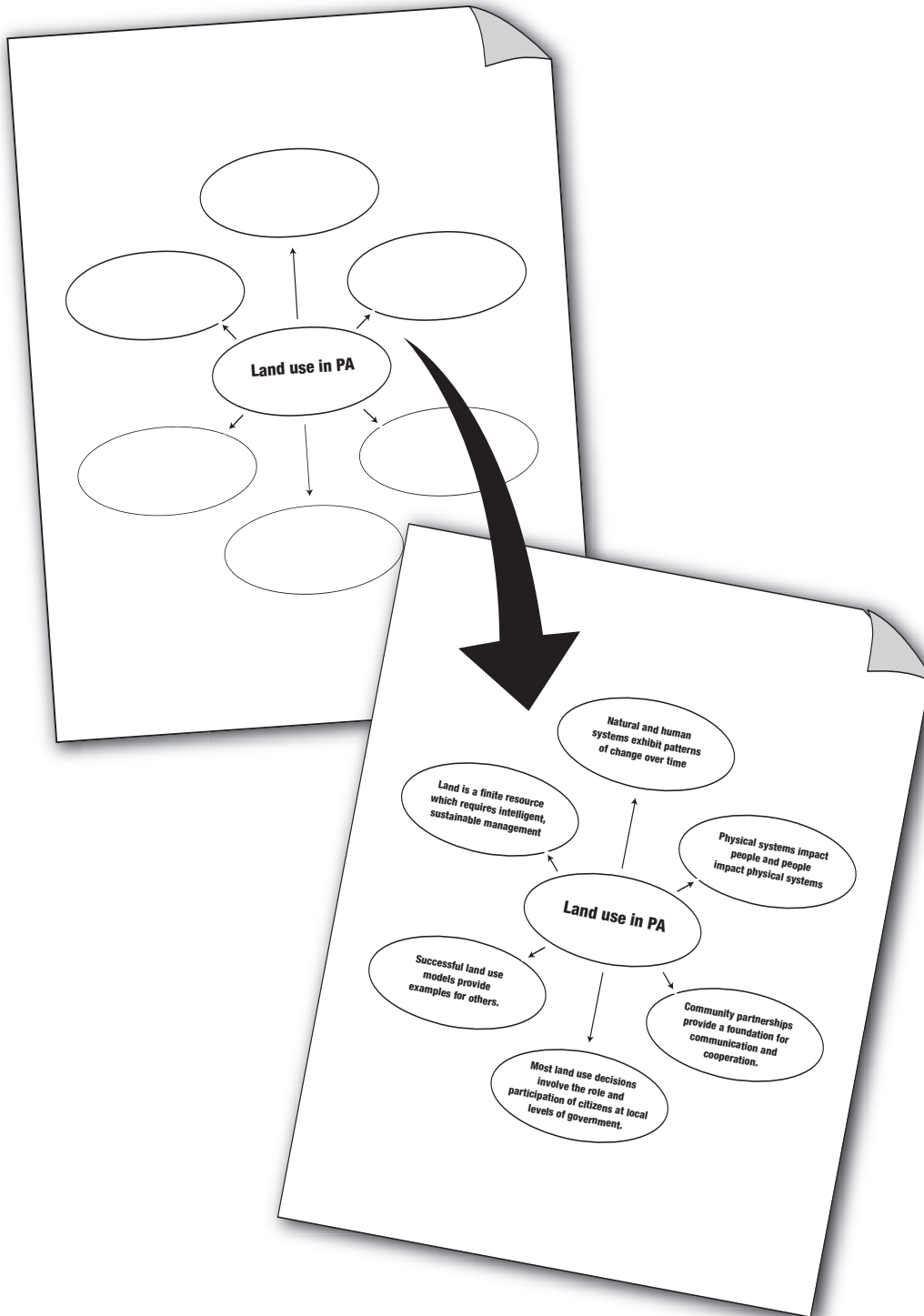
**for citizens to be involved in
community decisions that
impact the character, values and
resources that are important
now and for the future.**

Ownership of land means you accept responsibility

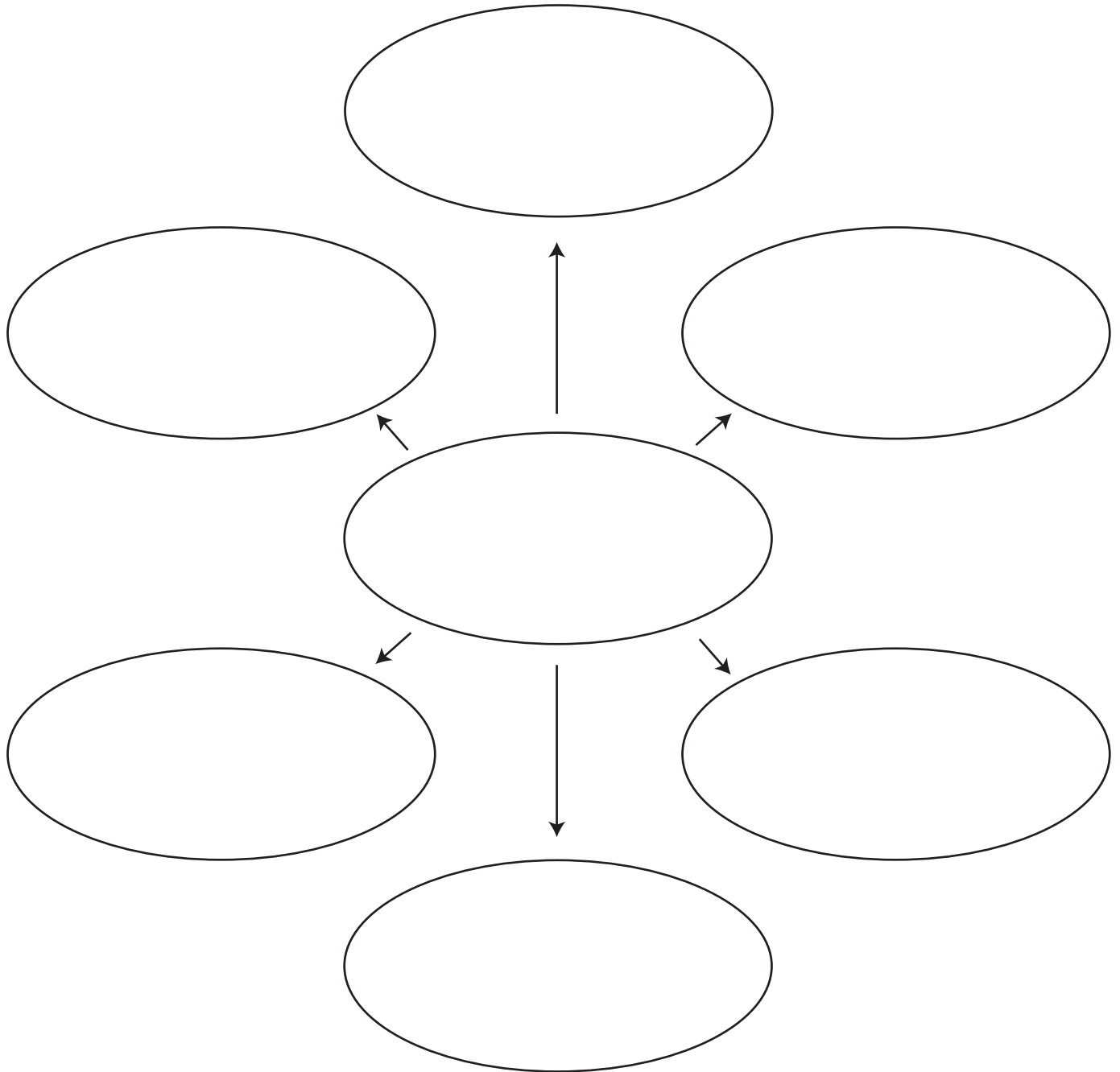
**for the care of that land and
follow the laws and regulations,
making responsible decisions
about the use of the land.**

Activity 1: Sample Concept Map - Front (1/2)

Write the problem in the middle circle. In the other circles, show a web of relationships connected to the central focus. Expand the concept web to include as many aspects of the issue. Categorize the examples.



Activity 1: *Sample Concept Map - Back (2/2)*



Municipalities Planning Code ▶

Municipality ▶

Zoning ▶

Sprawl ▶

Planning ▶

The Comprehensive Plan ▶

Environmental Advisory Council ▶

Greenways ▶

Activity 2: *Land Use Definitions - Page 2 (2/2)*

<p>Legislation that empowers municipalities within the state to enact regulations for the development and preservation of land. It has three main sections: (1) The Comprehensive Plan, (2) Zoning, and (3) Subdivision and Land Development.</p>
<p>A unit of local government, a political subdivision of a state where a corporation has been established to govern the population concentrated in a defined area such as a county, city, township or borough. The officers make policy decisions, levy taxes, spend money and make decisions on local planning and zoning.</p>
<p>It is the act of designating specific types of land use in specific areas within a municipality. Each zone or district allows for a designated type of land use such as residential, agriculture, commercial, industrial or mixed uses. A map is used to indicate the location of the zones.</p>
<p>A condition of development which conjures up a vision of continuous patterns of strip malls, parking lots, traffic and unconnected styles of development creating a need to drive everywhere and leaving a community without character or a sense of place.</p>
<p>A dynamic process of deciding how best to provide a proper arrangement of land uses, transportation patterns, development, agricultural lands and desirable environmental features for the future.</p>
<p>It is a document developed by either a county or municipality that provides recommendations for the growth and changes that are anticipated in the future. A county comprehensive plan provides recommendations for communities within the county but it is not enforceable. It is a document that outlines community or countywide vision, goals and objectives. It includes a land use plan, housing plan, transportation plan, community facilities plan, natural and historic resources plan and water supply plan.</p>
<p>An officially constituted municipal board created to advise local governments on environmental issues and policies including recommendations on open space.</p>
<p>Corridors of open space that can be land or water-based whose purpose is protecting natural, cultural, and/or scenic resources. Its defining function is its connectivity to other places.</p>

Activity 3: Anybody, Somebody, Nobody and Everybody

This is a story by an unknown author about four people named “Everybody,” “Anybody,” “Somebody” and “Nobody” with an important job to do. Read the story, then discuss using the questions below.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry because it was Everybody’s job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn’t do it. The result was Everybody blamed Somebody, when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Questions

- Who are the main characters of the story?*
- What is the author trying to say by using indefinite pronouns in this way?*
- How would you summarize what happened in the story?*
- How does this story relate to your community?*
- Explain a situation or incident in your community, school or life that relates to the story.*
- What are some of the “important jobs” in a community or at school that people expect others to accomplish and then complain (or blame someone) if nobody does them?*
- Select one or more of the following examples of “important jobs to be done.” Read the story again with one of the following as the “important job.” (picking up litter in your community, cleaning up a polluted stream, removing unwanted trash from a public park, turning off lights when leaving a room, reducing traffic problems, saving an historic building from being demolished, protecting a local woodland, constructing a biking/hiking trail from your neighborhood to the shopping area or school, planting trees to shade a parking lot, constructing a corner playground or garden on an empty lot).*
- What is the moral of the story?*
- Who is responsible for making things happen in your community?*
- Why is it important to learn about your role in local government?*
- Explain the quote “Democracy only works when you participate.”*
- What are some actions you can take to improve your community?*