



OUR HOMES, OUR TOWN, OUR COUNTRY

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students construct a concept map of households and discuss the ways that democracy impacts their lives, while promoting the common good, and protecting the rights of individuals.

MATERIALS

Multicolored markers; *Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country* handout; butcher paper; government agencies information

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four.
- ✓ Have ready a set of multicolored markers for each group of students.
- ✓ Make copies of the handout so that each student has one.
- ✓ Give each group one large piece of (butcher) paper.
- ✓ Duplicate the page of city, state, and/or national agencies from your telephone directory for each group.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your class that a useful way to think of democracy is to look at the household unit (the people who live together under the same roof). A democratic government, whether local, state, or national, provides services to the households of a community.
- ✓ Model for the students a handout that you have completed, pointing out the various services the government provides for the different members of a household: *Children need sports leagues and library services; adults need free-ways to get to work; older people need health classes; the house needs a building permit.*
- ✓ Say, *Add as many services as you can think of to the bubbles on the handout. You can use*

the list of city, state, and federal agencies to jog your thinking. Share your ideas with your group members.

- ✓ If you want to expand the activity you can say, If you feel a member of the household has been left out and want to add a bubble to your map, feel free to make that addition.
- ✓ The group should next draw a large concept map (based on the one in the handouts) on the piece of butcher paper. They need to work together to make sure nothing is written more than once. They can then present their map to the class and the teacher can keep track of all the services mentioned.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ Are there any services used by all the people in the household? (Police, garbage, libraries etc.)
- ★ Which services would you miss the most if the community did not provide them? (Garbage collection?)
- ★ If our government provides us these services, what is it that we provide back? (Taxes, votes, civic engagement) Politicians often talk about the services they think are most important. Which ones are most important to you? (Education and transportation are the ones on the top of most community agendas.)
- ★ Why is it special that a democracy provides these services? (Because they represent the people's interests, etc.)

MORE!

Students could invite a speaker from a city agency (police, refuse, animal control, recreation, libraries, etc.) to talk to the class about the agency's work and how children can make a difference in that work.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENTS:

- ★ *List the two services that are most important to your community and explain why.*
- ★ *Write out four questions that you would ask the mayor of your city or town about how your city government provides the essential services.*



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health classes



freeways



building permit



library services



sports leagues
