

# WHAT IS CELEBRATE THE CONSTITUTION?

Since 1999, the Pennsylvania Bar Association and its partners have sponsored programs for students about the Constitution. Beginning in September and continuing through Bill of Rights Week in December, students across Pennsylvania can learn about the Constitution in fun and innovative ways.

In 2004, Congress passed a measure requiring all educational institutions that receive federal money to offer students an instructional program on the United States Constitution each September 17 (Constitution Day). The measure applies to all public and private institutions that receive federal money. The Celebrate the Constitution program satisfies that requirement.



*Bill O'Rights*

The Pennsylvania Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Foundation coordinate the Celebrate the Constitution program for schools in Pennsylvania. This unique program gives students an opportunity to learn about the United States and Pennsylvania constitutions through inviting and entertaining learning activities for students of all ages. The Celebrate the Constitution program will be kicked off during the third week of September and will run through Bill of Rights Week in December. This gives everyone an opportunity to have programs throughout the fall. The program can be tailored to fit into any classroom schedule.

The theme for this year's celebration is "Growing Strong Citizens." Schools representing dozens of Pennsylvania counties will take part in this year's program ... with thousands of student participants statewide. Many local bar associations are partnering with schools by helping them to sponsor programs. Judges, lawyers and legislators across the commonwealth will be working with schools to participate in the activities.

Schools are encouraged to use the lesson plans provided in this guide and also to contact the civic learning support organizations listed on page 19 for more Constitution-related materials.

The Pennsylvania Bar Association and Bar Foundation thank everyone for participating in the Celebrate the Constitution program. It should be an exciting one!

**Elementary schools ... be sure to participate in the 7th Annual Celebrate the Constitution Poster Contest! Details are covered on pages 7-8.**

# PROGRAM & PLANNING IDEAS: Part I

*There are three types of programs that have worked well for the Celebrate the Constitution program. \*Don't forget ... making your own school scrolls on parchment paper is a great art project!*

## Mock Constitution Signing



This is one of the most popular ways to celebrate the Constitution. You can choose to hold mock signings in your classroom or during a school-wide assembly.

**The assembly program** brings together the entire student body for a formal program and signing. Invite local judges, lawyers and/or legislators to be the featured speakers and ask them to talk about the U.S. or Pennsylvania Constitution with students. Have a school official emcee the program, and ask each speaker to limit his or her comments to around five minutes (depending upon the number of speakers). Ask them to focus on how the constitutions relate to students. A great way to get students involved is to select one student to speak about the U.S. or Pennsylvania Constitution and have the school choir perform patriotic songs. You can even get the band and school mascot involved. At the end of the formal program, have all students sign Constitution scrolls (parchment paper)\*. The signed scrolls can be displayed in your school lobby. After the signing, invite the speakers to join students in their classrooms to take part in one of the lessons included in this guide.

**The classroom program** focuses solely on your students. Invite a local judge, lawyer or legislator into your class to talk with students about the Constitution. The visitor may want to use one of the lessons provided in this guide or create his or her own. Be sure to review this with the speaker before his or her visit and share any necessary materials. But, you don't need an outside speaker for a classroom program. The lessons in this guide are designed for use by both teachers and outside speakers. When the formal remarks are concluded, have the students sign Constitution scrolls (parchment paper)\* that can be displayed in the classroom or school lobby.

**Constitutional Convention Program:** A constitutional convention is a great way to teach your students about the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions through hands-on learning activities. You can create a constitution for your classroom or the entire school.

**Classroom Lessons:** You don't have to hold a formal program to celebrate the Constitution. The lessons provided in this guide are designed to fit into your existing curriculum or serve as a special project during the fall. They are interactive, include handouts and engage students in an innovative study of the Constitution. They also are matched with the state's Academic Standards for Civics and Government.

If you would like to view additional lessons on the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions, visit the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site at [www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/constitutionwebsite.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/constitutionwebsite.asp). You can download lessons from previous programs. In addition, turn to page 20 of this guide for a list of civic learning support organizations.

# PLANNING A MOCK CONSTITUTION SIGNING: PART II

## How one Pennsylvania school “Celebrates the Constitution”

by Donald Imler, educator, Hollidaysburg Area High School

Celebrate the Constitution has a special place in the curriculum of the civic participation classes at Hollidaysburg Area High School (HAHS), Blair County, Pa.

Our rendition of the Celebrate the Constitution program is intended to reinforce previous learning about the Constitution and excite all of our students about civic participation while introducing young students to the U.S. Constitution. Each school is expected to hold its own Constitutional Event such as a reading or signing program. The culminating event is held annually in the auditorium of HAHS.

In the spring of their senior year, HAHS Civic Participation students discuss the fall theme, write letters to elementary and middle schools and prepare for the fall program. They meet with a select group of juniors to encourage them to take leadership roles in the fall program.

As senior students arrive in August, they join one of four groups: promotional, financial, production and assembly. Each group has various duties and must work both independently and interdependently.

The promotional group is responsible for promoting the program to various schools, teachers and administrators as well as to the community as a whole. This requires assembly and delivery of teaching materials to schools as well as public relations materials to the media in a timely manner. The teaching materials include the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s (PBA) lesson plan guides and additional information about the program.

The financial group is responsible for creating the budget and generating the funds necessary to produce a quality program and assembly. The 1999 budget was just a mere \$315 while the anticipated budget for 2006 is \$4,600. Funding of the program is a major task and teaches students fiscal responsibility while offering a unique opportunity to understand fund raising as young adults.

The production group faces the task of acquiring guest speakers, creating props for the program and designing the souvenir T-shirts for the students. They must maintain a rigid schedule in order to meet the mid-September program date.

The assembly group is responsible for the program and all aspects of the day of the assembly. It may seem that this is the task with the least work, but one must remember they are gathering hundreds of younger students from six area school districts and two private schools.

On the day of the culminating event, several hundred elementary and middle school students are bused to HAHS for the program. Each of the schools has two students on stage during the activities as representatives of their schools’ “signature scrolls.” They cast or pledge the signatures they have acquired to the mock constitution. Additionally, the assembly is energetic and includes music, song, dance, theatre and keynote speakers as a celebration of the Constitution.

Civic Participation Special Projects 2007–2008 hopes to make this year another wonderful program. HAHS would like to thank the PBA for continuing support of the program. This program and other sponsors allow our Civics Participation classes to engage in this wonderful educational experience. The program now begins on or near the Sept. 17 date with the Constitutional readings at the courthouse and ends with the event at the high school on the last Friday in September.

# INVOLVING THE MEDIA & LEGAL COMMUNITY

After your school has picked a program, it's time to start getting the media and local legal community involved.



## THE LEGAL COMMUNITY

Celebrate the Constitution offers your school a unique opportunity to involve members of the legal community in your classroom activities and/or assembly program. Bringing years of legal experience to this project, local judges and lawyers can help you create enhanced learning opportunities for your students.

Your local bar association can help you identify judges and lawyers in your community who would be willing to take part in your activities. If you are not already partnering with your local bar association, please call the PBA at 1-800-932-0311, Ext. 2256, to find the appropriate person to contact in your county. (Hint — elementary and middle school students typically respond well to judges who wear their robes for presentations.) Make sure to invite these people well in advance of your program. Their calendars fill up quickly.

## THE MEDIA

The media can help schools demonstrate their commitment to excellence in learning by reporting on Celebrate the Constitution events and activities in local newspapers and television news programs. You may want to consider asking a local television news anchor or newspaper editor to be a speaker at your program. They are great resources to talk with students about the First Amendment and other related constitutional issues. Below are some tips to help you to get the media to cover your program. If you are partnering with your local bar association on this project, make sure to work with its staff and members. Local bars are great resources because they have relationships established with local media and may be willing to help you with some of the following:

- 1) Compile a current list of local newspaper editors, TV assignment editors and radio station managers. Make sure you have their fax and phone numbers.
- 2) One week prior to your program, mail or fax your media advisory to the local media (a sample media advisory is included in this packet — feel free to use it and fill in the blanks). Include a contact person on the advisory and a daytime phone number in case the media have questions prior to the program.
- 3) One day prior to the program, make follow-up calls to the media that received the advisory. Ask for the newsroom when you call. During the call, confirm that they received the advisory, offer to fax it if they did not and mention how exciting the program will be for students. It's always good to put in a last-minute pitch.
- 4) Prepare a news release to give to the media at the program (a sample news release is included in this packet — feel free to use it and fill in the blanks). After the program is over, mail or fax the news release to any invited media that did not attend.

*Inviting local lawyers, judges, legislators and members of the media to speak during your program is a great way for your school to reach out to the community. Your students also will enjoy hearing their perspectives on the Constitution.*

# SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

The media advisory can be issued by your school or partnering local bar association. Make sure to include the issuing party's address at the top ... using letterhead is always a good idea.

## MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: Name  
Phone Number

### **# OF STUDENTS SCHOOL NAME STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE THE CONSTITUTION**

# of students School Name students will join with list local judges, lawyers, legislators in celebrating the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions as part of the statewide Celebrate the Constitution program on date at time at location (include place, address and city).

The activities will feature (list special activities, if any).

The Celebrate the Constitution program is a statewide celebration commemorating the history and significance of the constitutions. Since 1999, more than 40,000 Pennsylvania students have taken part in constitution-related celebrations, including mock signings and constitutional conventions. The purpose of the program is to increase students' awareness and understanding of the constitutions, their history and their relevance.

The statewide celebration, which is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, runs from Constitution Week in the third week of September through Bill of Rights Week in December. Thousands of students from across Pennsylvania are expected to take part in the program throughout the fall.

For more information on the statewide Celebrate the Constitution program, visit the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site at [www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org).

###

# SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

The news release can be issued by your school or partnering local bar association. Make sure to include the issuing party's address at the top ... using letterhead is always a good idea.

## NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Name  
Daytime Phone Number

### # OF STUDENTS SCHOOL NAME STUDENTS CELEBRATE THE CONSTITUTION

CITY/TOWN (Date) -- # of students School Name students today joined with list local judges, lawyers, legislators in a celebration of the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions as part of the statewide Celebrate the Constitution program at location.

“Quote from school official”

The Celebrate the Constitution program is a statewide celebration commemorating the history and significance of the constitutions. Since 1999, more than 40,000 Pennsylvania students have taken part in constitution-related celebrations, including mock signings and constitutional conventions. The purpose of the program is to increase students' awareness and understanding of the constitutions, their history and their relevance. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, the program runs from Constitution Week in the third week of September through Bill of Rights Week in December. Thousands of students from across Pennsylvania are expected to take part in the program throughout the fall.

“Quote from county bar president” -- if applicable

**(For assembly program)** -- The students participated in an assembly program, which included presentations by the featured speakers and list any other activities.

**(For classroom program)** -- The students participated in classroom activities focusing on the constitutions. The featured speakers assisted the students with the concepts and writing. Each class then list any other activities.

“Quote from a participating judge, lawyer or legislator”

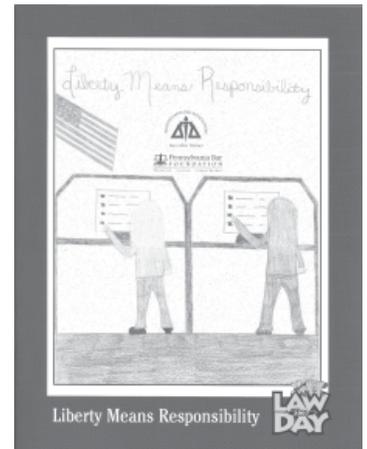
For more information on the statewide Celebrate the Constitution program, visit the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site at [www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org).

###

# 7th Annual Celebrate the Constitution Poster Contest

The Pennsylvania Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Foundation are pleased to announce the seventh annual Celebrate the Constitution Poster Contest for elementary students. The theme for this year's celebration is "Growing Strong Citizens."

The winning poster will be used as the cover of the PBA's 2008 K-College Law Day Lesson Plan Guide, which is distributed statewide. The winning student will be honored during the PBA's formal Law Day ceremony in May 2008. The deadline for entry is December 3, 2007.



*This is last year's winning poster reproduced in black and white.*

This contest helps schools meet Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government 5.1.K across all grade levels, as well as Pennsylvania Academic Standards for History 8.2.B across all grade levels and 8.3.3.B.

## Contest Rules

- 1) The contest is open to all public and nonpublic elementary schools in Pennsylvania.
- 2) One entry per student will be accepted. An entry form must be completed in full and attached to the back of the poster. The entry form must be signed by the student artist, the student's teacher and a parent or guardian of the student. The entry form is included in this packet.
- 3) Students should create posters that show what "Growing Strong Citizens" means to them. Each poster must be an original art composition created by a child. The entry must be the actual work of only one student. Adults may support the student's effort with suggestions and other forms of verbal assistance, however, the work produced must be the product of the student's own effort.

- 4) The poster must be 8.5 inches x 11 inches. The design must be **VERTICAL** to facilitate reproduction on the front of the Law Day guide. The “Growing Strong Citizens” message may be communicated as creatively as possible using ink, tempera, powder paint, water colors, oil or magic marker. No computer-generated posters will be considered. The wording, “Growing Strong Citizens,” is the only wording that should appear on the poster.
- 5) Entries will be judged by a review panel from the PBA’s Law-Related Education Committee. The first-place winner will have his or her poster featured on the cover of the 2008 *K-College Law Day Lesson Plan Guide* and will receive an award during the PBA’s formal Law Day ceremony in May 2008.
- 6) All entries must be postmarked by December 3, 2007. Entrants will be notified of the winners by March 1, 2008. The winning student will be asked to attend the May 2008 PBA Law Day ceremony.
- 7) All entries, including posters and other submitted materials, become the property of the PBA and will not be returned. Entries may be reproduced by the PBA in any form and for any purpose. The PBA reserves the right to modify any poster for reproduction purposes.
- 8) Entry into this contest constitutes permission for the artwork and artists to be photographed for publicity purposes without any compensation to the child, teacher, parents or guardians.
- 9) All federal, state and local regulations apply. Void where prohibited by law. Taxes on any prizes are the responsibility of the winners and their families.

**PLEASE SEND YOUR POSTER AND ENTRY FORM POSTMARKED BY  
DECEMBER 3, 2007, to:  
Pennsylvania Bar Association  
Celebrate the Constitution Poster Contest  
100 South Street  
P.O. Box 186  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17108**

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**Celebrate the Constitution Poster Contest Official Entry Form**  
*(please print clearly)*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

***This form must be attached to the back of each entry.***

# A Look at the Pennsylvania and U.S. Constitutions

- **Grade Levels:** K-6 as modified below.
- **Academic Standards:** Academic Standards for Civics and Government 5.1A, B, C, E, F, I, J, L; 5.2 A, B, C, F, G; and 5.3 A, B, D & G.
- **Materials:** Each student will receive a copy of “Shamus the Squirrel.” The story can be downloaded from the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site [www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp) Copies of such elementary materials as “The U.S. Constitution and You” by Syl Sobel would add to this lesson but are not needed for the basic lesson. If you do not have any materials that outline the three branches of government, please check the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site [www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp) for elementary summaries of the three branches of government and for a copy of the leaf, tree and Shamus.
- This lesson was developed by Megan Murray, a second-grade teacher at Clara Barton Elementary School in the School District of Philadelphia ([meg717murray@yahoo.com](mailto:meg717murray@yahoo.com)). The lesson was modified for PBA use by Amy Niedzalkoski.
- Artwork submitted by Beth Adelsberger and her daughter Emily. Beth is an art therapist and part of the educational training team at Bob Randall Associates Inc.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Have a basic understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the three branches of government.
- Identify the three branches of government.
- Discuss why it is important to follow the laws in our school and in our community.
- Explain about peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.
- Identify strategies for dealing with potential bullies.

## Overview

This lesson plan is based on the short story “Shamus the Squirrel” created by Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyer Division Immediate Past Chair Jennifer J. Clark, a U.S. attorney and mother of three. The story is about a young squirrel named Shamus whose tree community is being disturbed by squirrel bullies. In the story, Shamus learns about the rule of law and the three branches of government and uses that education to help the rest of the squirrels create a safer and fairer community, free of bullying and other problems. Book copies of the story are available while supplies last from the Pennsylvania Bar Association; you can download the story from [www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp). Depending on the grade level, the students will either listen to or read a story about a squirrel named Shamus, who is having a difficult time getting along with his squirrel friends. The story and the lesson based on the story demonstrate how learning about the three branches of government helped Shamus and his squirrel friends solve their problems.

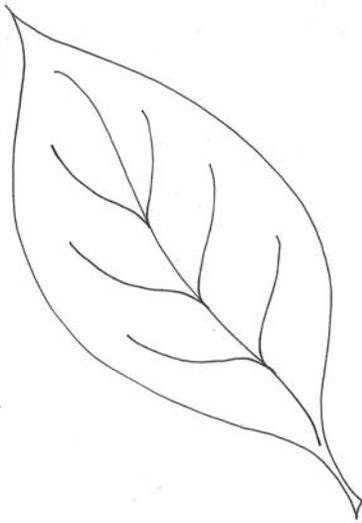
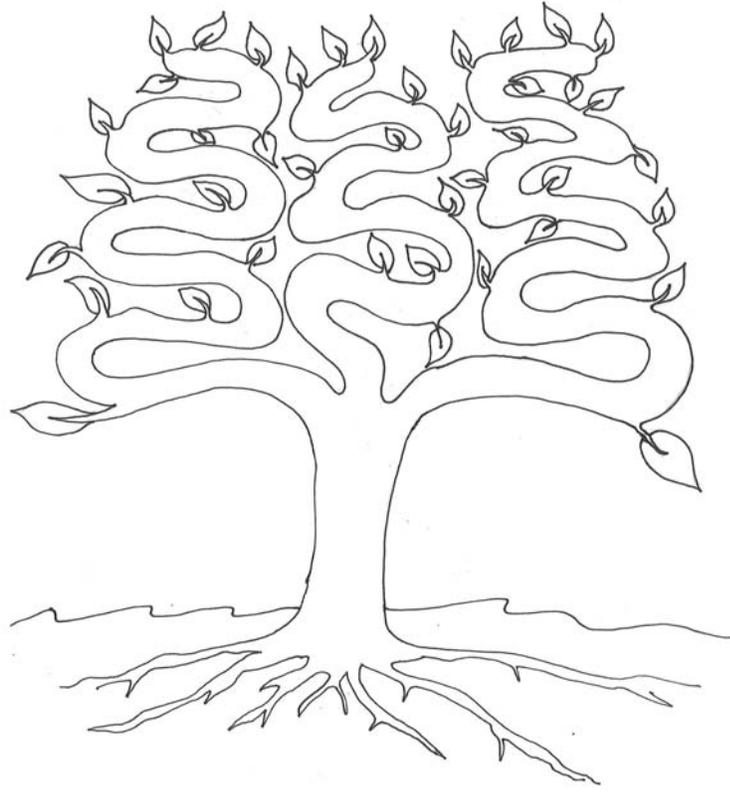
## Lesson

1. Depending on the grade level, either read or have the children read the “Shamus the Squirrel” story.
2. After reading the story, have the students break into three groups. One group will be the executive branch, the second group will be the legislative branch, and the third group will be the judicial branch. Each group will read information about their branch of government. You can use the elementary summaries of the three branches of government on the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site [www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp). Each group will receive a picture of a leaf and a tree with three branches. You can find the leaf and tree on the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site [www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/constitution/07constitutionstuff.asp). Each group will fill in information on a leaf about their branch of government. Then the students will place their leaves on the “branch” of government that they are studying. Each group will then be asked to share with the rest of the class the information about their branch of government.
3. After the class discusses the three branches of government, the students will be given an opportunity to make up some laws for the classroom and/or the school. Each group will be expected to use the information that was discussed in order to make the laws. The students will write a letter to Shamus and his friends to make sure the squirrels understand why it is necessary to obey laws. The students can also write about the laws they follow in school every day.

## Additional Lessons

1. Look at the lesson No Animals in the Library at [www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp) under Law-Related Lessons from Pennsylvania Teachers and Lawyers. This lesson is a wonderful primer on how to draft rules and laws at the elementary level.
2. The class also can create a tree of rights and responsibilities, listing all of the rights (to learn, to be safe, to be loved) and responsibilities (come to school ready to learn, keep weapons out of school, care about others) the students have in their school. The rights and responsibilities listed here are just a few of the dozens listed by the students at Overbrook Educational Center in Philadelphia during Law Day 2006.





# Analyzing the Pledge of Allegiance

**Grade Levels:** K-12 (for younger grades, ask them to recite the pledge and discuss its meaning with them)

**Academic Standards:** Proposed Academic Standards for Civics and Government 5.1 & 5.2

For Americans, the most familiar expression of citizenship is taking the Pledge of Allegiance. The pledge is something you have recited countless times and probably know by heart:

***“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”***



The original draft of the Pledge of Allegiance was written by James B. Upham in 1888 and revised slightly four years later by Francis Bellamy, who included it in the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Columbus’ first voyage to the new world. The phrase “under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance by an act of Congress in 1954.

Ask the students to consider the following questions:

1. What is involved in pledging allegiance? What does allegiance mean? What does the taking of the pledge say about your relationship to government?
2. Why do we pledge allegiance to the American flag? Why not to the president of the United States, our members of Congress or the justices of the Supreme Court?
3. Do we have the right to withhold our allegiance? What would be the consequences of doing that? If you were born here, when and how do you decide to be an American citizen? If you were not born an American citizen, how do you become one? How is a citizen different from someone else living in this country?
4. What is a “republic?” Does the pledge define what that word means? How does a republic differ from a democracy?

*This lesson comes from the Center for Civic Education’s “We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution.”*

# Community Issues

This lesson is from the Student Voices Campaign Curriculum, Unit 2, Lesson 1. The PBA and PBF thank Student Voices and the Annenberg Public Policy Center for permission to share this lesson with Pennsylvania educators.

- **Grade Levels:** 9-12
- **Academic Standards:** Civics and Government 5.2 A, B, D & G
- **Materials:** Community Interviews handout
- *Student Voices* is a non-partisan civic education program designed to improve the dialogue of democracy among our nation's youth and encourage their civic engagement. *Student Voices*, created in 1999 by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, provides high schools with a unique set of resources to complement and enrich their existing civics curricula, helping young people learn about current policy issues in city governments and elections. This introductory lesson from the curriculum has students map their community, express their concerns and discuss the duties of a citizen. The lesson is the property of the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and cannot be altered without permission of the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Identify issues in their community
- Understand the interrelation between and among various issues in the community
- Conduct neighborhood interviews to validate classroom perceptions
- Classify issues according to issue subject

## Lesson

1. Ask students to write down five community strengths and five community problems. Do each list separately.
2. Have the students mark which strength they believe is the most positive and which problem is the most important to address.
3. Put students in groups of three to four to share their ideas on the strengths and weaknesses of their community. You may want to partner students with the person sitting next to them.
4. Ask the class which items came up frequently and write these on the board. Begin to categorize the specific items under broader headings. (See sample chart on page 14.) Make sure to lead students toward ideas that can be acted upon by local government. This activity also helps students to see their specific issues as part of the larger community discussion. NOTE: Be sure to save this list for future discussions.
5. (Optional) Take students into the school community in groups of two to four with an adult. Have the students canvass the area, collecting information about community issues using the Community Interviews handout on page 15. If possible, have the students use a camera or video recorder to document interviews.

Specific Issues	Category
litter; abandoned buildings	ENVIRONMENT
large class size; school repairs	EDUCATION
unemployment; more businesses	ECONOMY
drugs; violence; theft	CRIME
terrorism; safe neighborhoods	SECURITY/TRANSPORTATION/HOUSING
need for insurance; hospitals	HEALTH

## Assignment

- Distribute the Community Interviews handout on page 15 and ask students to use it to interview three people in their community for their opinions about community problems. Students may use family or friends for these interviews. Encourage safety in selection of people to interview.
- (Optional) Have students look at their local newspaper (either in hard copy or online from the Student Voices Web site) and write down two issues they found in the newspaper that concern the community.



# Community Interviews

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** What are the community issues that your neighbors consider the biggest problems? What do you think are the biggest problems? What do other people you know think are the biggest problems? This activity, in which you conduct interviews of people in your community, will help you to get a better idea of what you and the people you know would like to see changed in your community.

**Activity:** Map the community. Start by mapping the place you would consider your community on the back of this sheet. Don't look at any "real" maps, just work from your memory and what you know from living there. Label the important streets and places — stores, friends' houses, recreation areas, etc. When you interview people, stay inside the area you map. Talk only to people who work or live in this area.

**Interviews:** To get a variety of views, interview four different people. Select people you think are likely to have different views. Start by "interviewing" yourself so you can compare your views with those of others. Write down your ideas about what the big issues are in your neighborhood. Then, interview **three** more people, trying to get one person from each of the following categories:

- ✓ Family member
- ✓ Store owner or employee
- ✓ Friend
- ✓ Person who lives and works in the community
- ✓ Person who lives in the community and works somewhere else
- ✓ Person who does a service job in the community — postal worker, etc.

Write down what you learn in the table below.

Name of person	Role (family member, store owner, etc.)	Top three community problems or issues
1. Yourself <hr/> Your Name		1. 2. 3.
2.		1. 2. 3.
3.		1. 2. 3.
4.		1. 2. 3.

# A look at community service and civic problem solving

- **Grade Levels:** 7-12
- **Academic Standards:** Pa. Academic Standards for Civics and Government 5.1C, 5.2A, 5.2B, 5.2D, and 5.2G.
- **Objective:** Students will explore the benefits of community service and develop an appreciation for its value.
- **Materials:** Student handout, “Benefits of Community Service.” The student handout and background materials were adapted from a lesson created for the American Bar Association’s “Lawyers Helping Young People Become Good Citizens” series. We thank the ABA for its willingness to share these materials.

## Ask the students these initial questions:

- Have you ever helped anyone outside your family just because that person needed help?
- What is the distinction between the duty we owe our family (personal responsibility) and the duty we owe society (civic responsibility)?
- Should people be forced to fulfill their duty to society?
- *You may wish to have students explain their answers to these questions before moving to the student handout.*

## Teacher’s Notes for Student Handout

Review before distributing the student handout.

1. What is community service? ***Students should be able to interpret community service (often called “service learning” in schools where it is integrated into the curriculum) as voluntary (unpaid) work to help solve civic problems.***
2. What makes community service effective? ***Successful community service programs have student input, tackle real community problems, allow for reflection by participants and involve participants from diverse groups.***
3. What are some different types of community service projects? ***Answers will vary greatly, but should range from tackling social issues to teaching others about issues.***
4. What person who has served the community has made an impression on you? Why? ***Answers will vary. A great follow-up exercise is to have students write thank-you notes to the people they mention.***
5. What makes you enthusiastic about community service? ***Answers will vary, but might include a desire to improve society and to feel needed.***
6. What concerns do you have about community service? ***Time, safety and need are general concerns in community service programs.***
7. How can community service be a good thing for you personally? ***Career exploration, resume enhancement and a sense of being a positive community force are some of the possible answers here.***
8. How can community service be a good thing for society? ***Community service helps address real problems and teaches good citizenship.***
9. Should community service be required in schools? ***Answers will vary. Some argue that mandatory community service takes away the power of voluntary service. Others point out that the best way to learn how to do something is actually to do it, so we can teach students to serve by giving them required lessons in service.***

# Benefits of Community Service

1. What is community service?
2. What makes community service effective?
3. What are some different types of community service projects?
4. What person who has served the community has made an impression on you? Why?
5. What makes you enthusiastic about community service?
6. What concerns do you have about community service?
7. How can community service be a good thing for you personally?
8. How can community service be a good thing for society?
9. Should community service be required in schools?



After discussing the handout, ask students about the needs in their community — from school to the larger society. Is community service required for graduation? Whether it is or not, ask the students if all high school students should be required to perform community service in order to graduate. The courts have dealt with numerous cases challenging such requirements.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### U.S. Constitution

Find each of the following words:

PREAMBLE	COURT	WELFARE	ELECTIONS
SUPREME	TRANQUILITY	POWER	LEGISLATIVE
BLESSINGS	RIGHTS	CONGRESS	UNION
FATHERS	BALANCE	EXECUTIVE	VOTING
LIBERTY	LAW	AMENDMENTS	
UNITED	BILL	PERFECT	
WASHINGTON	STATES	COMMON	
SENATE	CITIZENSHIP	PRESIDENTS	

R V R I G H T S N I I C I T I Z E N S H I P A  
R S R E S E L A W A N F A T H E R S G W R E P  
L E G I S L A T I V E U N I T E D P O W E R W  
E R S T B H N I S S W A S H I N G T O N C T C  
U A L G R R E L E C T I O N S V E N T P N R E  
O E S S N A B I L L S B A L A N C E T R E H S  
W R V E I I N C L Y E G R N O S P Y T E T C E  
M E I I S I S Q O V O T I N G S R T C S A V N  
N N L E T E L S U N E S R E E W E R E I N O L  
B O P F M U T I E I G S L M T R A E F D E N S  
N R I V A E C A V L L R V I N N M B R E S O E  
R I C N R R R E T I B I E I I C B I E N P M O  
E P C W U T E P X S N L T S H N L L P T E M C  
E C O U R T E A U E T G R Y S C E O N S I O B  
A M E N D M E N T S E E O N T S E C E N P C S  
S E S C R E S T R D I A Q L N W T T I T S T R

Puzzle provided by The National Constitution Center. Additional puzzles can be found at

[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)

**CIVIC LEARNING SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS: For more lesson plans and information on civics and government educational resources, contact the following organizations:**

**Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA)**

Contact: Law-Related Education Coordinator Andrew J. Martin, 100 South Street, P.O. Box 186, Harrisburg, Pa. 17108  
Phone: 1-800-932-0311, Ext. 2256; Fax: (717) 238-2342; E-mail: Andrew.Martin@pabar.org  
Web site: [www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/education/educationprograms.asp).

The PBA's Law-Related Education (LRE) programs are designed to help Pennsylvania schools lay a foundation for teaching civics and government in the classroom. The PBA partners with various national organizations, local bar associations, judges and lawyers to accomplish this goal. The cornerstone LRE projects include Celebrate the Constitution, Project PEACE, Law Day, Mock Trial and Stepping Out. To learn more about these programs and to view past lesson plans, visit the PBA's K-College Law-Related Education area on the PBA Web site.

**LEAP-Kids (Law, Education & Peace for Children)**

Contact: David Trevasakis; P.O. Box 530, 6 Royal Avenue; Glenside, Pa. 19038-0530  
Phone: (215) 576-8690; Fax: (215) 576-8695; E-mail: [david@leap-kids.com](mailto:david@leap-kids.com); Web site: [www.leap-kids.com](http://www.leap-kids.com)

LEAP-Kids is the successor organization to the statewide law-related and civic education (LRCE) program formerly housed at Temple-LEAP. LEAP-Kids develops innovative educational programs aimed at empowering young people through LRCE study. LRCE is a unique blend of substance and strategy. Students learn about laws, the legal system and their rights and responsibilities through strategies that promote cooperative learning, critical thinking and positive interaction between young people and adults. LEAP-Kids conducts a wide variety of teacher trainings and also produces general and Pennsylvania-specific curricula related to civics and government.

**Youth for Justice Initiative**

**Features Five National Partners: Street Law Inc.; Center for Civic Education; Constitutional Rights Foundation; Phi Alpha Delta; American Bar Association**

**Web site: [www.youthforjustice.org](http://www.youthforjustice.org)**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a research and development program that established the potential of law-related education in reducing delinquent behavior. In 1983, the OJJDP established the National Training and Dissemination Program (NTDP) to institutionalize high-quality civic learning delinquency prevention programs in public and private schools, kindergarten through grade 12, throughout the nation. In 1994, NTDP became Youth for Justice, a national civic learning program coordinated by five national partners working in cooperation with a network of affiliated state programs (visit the Youth for Justice Web site to learn more about the partners and the state programs). Over one million students participate in Youth for Justice programs annually. With support from OJJDP, Youth for Justice's five national partners and state programs offer an array of civic learning programs and activities for young people in their schools and communities, working closely with legal, education, government and community groups to initiate and strengthen civic learning programs.

**PennCORD**

**Contact: Beth Specker, Chief of Staff**  
**Office of the First Lady, Hon. Marjorie O. Rendell**  
**Governor's Residence**  
**2035 N. Front Street**  
**Harrisburg, Pa. 17102**  
**Phone: (717) 787-1965**  
**E-mail: [bspecker@state.pa.us](mailto:bspecker@state.pa.us)**  
**[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)**

The Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD) is a unique union of educational, advocacy and governmental organizations that are committed to improving civic learning for students in grades K-12. The coalition's mission is to encourage the creation of local civic learning policy to implement state standards in every school district by: 1) motivating community advocacy for better civic education; and 2) supporting educators across Pennsylvania with civic learning resources and training. The coalition is led by the Office of the Governor, First Lady Marjorie O. Rendell, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, the National Constitution Center and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. PennCORD is housed at the NCC. Contact with both PennCORD and the NCC is best made through Beth Specker.

# Notes