

Class Guide

Lesson 24 - How can citizens promote the common good?

Name: _____

What are some ways that you can participate in your school's leadership?

Step 1 – Higher Order Thinking Question

Read the background before we begin.

We learned the purpose of government was to protect our **natural rights** of life, liberty, and property. We pick a government the promises to protect these rights, we protect our self-interest. We want to make sure that government fulfills its duties to us as individuals.

When we studied the ideas of republican government, we learned that the government and its citizens have a duty to serve the **common good**. Citizens and government work together for the good of the whole community. We might have to give up some of our self-interest in the name of the common good.

Sometimes the common good is clear. For example, it is good for all of us to live in a healthy environment. Our country needs to be protected by our armed forces. In other situations, citizens might disagree about the common good. For example, people disagree about whether it is good for everyone to begin each school day with a prayer.

Some may disagree about how to serve the common good. We know that protecting the environment serves the common good. But, some ways of protecting the environment might endanger people's jobs and violate property rights. Sometimes it is difficult to decide between our self-interest and the common good.

Step 2 – Critical Thinking Exercise – How should the Town Council Vote?

Background: Suppose the town council calls for a public hearing to seek opinions and advice from the people living and working in Smallville, USA. The council has arranged a public hearing on Monday at seven o'clock. They have invited the people who live and work in the town to attend the hearing. They are hoping for a good turnout. The town council wants to get some good ideas that might help to solve the town's problems.

Getting Ready for the Public Hearing. Read the facts about the problem in Smallville. Prepare to play the role of one of the groups described after the story. Each group should prepare a presentation to make at the public hearing. The town council will ask your opinion about solving the problem.

Problems in Smallville, USA. Imagine you live in a small community. Most of the people in Smallville work in one large factory. The smoke from the factory pollutes the air and is a danger to everyone's health. The smoke also pollutes the air of communities nearby.

It would be very expensive to stop the pollution. The owners of the factory say they cannot afford to buy the machinery needed to stop the pollution. They would lose money and might not be able to stay in business. If the factory closed, the owners say that many people would lose their jobs. There are no other good jobs available nearby, and many people would be without a job.

The town council is looking for ways to solve the problem and is hoping that the public hearing will help them to make a decision on how to solve the town's problem with pollution. The town council is supposed to protect the people's rights. It is also supposed to support the common good.

Group 1: The Town Council Members	Group 2: Owners of the Factory
<p>The town council must find a way to rid the town of air pollution that is harming the health of the people living in town and in communities nearby. The council does not want the factory to close and cause most of the town residents to lose their jobs. The council wants to speak with groups that have valuable information about the situation. The town council must consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What might be some self-interests of the people who live in the community?2. Are there individual rights that should be considered?3. What might be the common good of the community?4. To make a good and fair decision, what issues does the town council have to consider?5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each solution suggested? <p>After the hearing the town council will make a decision.</p>	<p>You earn a living from the factory, and you employ many workers who also earn their living from the factory. If the town council requires you to install expensive machinery onto the smokestacks of your factory, you would not be able to afford the cost and have to close the factory.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Group 3: Employees of the Factory</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Group 4: Citizens for Better Health</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">You have worked in the factory for many years. Your father and your grandfather worked in this factory. You do not want to lose your job because you realize there are no other good jobs in Smallville.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You think that pollution is a direct cause of serious health problems in your town. You want machinery installed to limit the amount of smoke the factory can produce.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Group 5: Citizens for a Pollution-free Environment</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">You believe that pollution is damaging animal habitats and harming trees and other plants in nearby wooded areas. You believe that environmental agencies should be contacted to give advice.</p>	

Taking Part in the Public Hearing

1. The president of the town council will start the meeting.
2. Each group will have four minutes to explain its position to the council.
3. After each presentation, the council member may ask questions of the group for two minutes. Each person in the group should help answer the questions.
4. After hearing all the groups, the town council will meet and decide what to do.

Talking it Over

1. Do you agree with the town council’s decision?
2. Why might citizens disagree about which opinion is most important for the town?
3. Are there any ways to solve the problem other than those discussed in the hearing?
4. Did you change your opinion after listening to all of the groups? If you did, which argument convinced you?

Step 3 – Interactive Notetaking

<p>HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR GOVERNMENT?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• VOTING IS THE OBVIOUS MEANS TO PARTICIPATE.• BECOME EDUCATED ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT. IT IS CRITICAL TO BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN.• EXPRESS YOUR OPINION TO THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH MEETINGS AND WRITING COMMUNICATION• VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY PROMOTES THE COMMON GOOD	<p>What do you think is the connection between education and being a citizen?</p>
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Step 4 – Quote Analysis – Quick Small Group Instruction.

<p>Thomas Jefferson said, “<i>If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, ... it expects what never was and what never will be.</i>”</p>	<p><i>Explain the meaning of Jefferson’s quote.</i></p>
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