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# LANGUAGE & CIVIL SOCIETY

## CIVIC EDUCATION E-JOURNAL

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### PREFACE

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The Civic Education volume is designed specifically for language teachers who are turning toward content-based instruction to promote content learning and language learning in their classes. Through the exploration of topics related to civic education, language teachers can help their students master English and simultaneously become more knowledgeable citizens of the world. The combination of improved language skills and increased knowledge can enhance students' studies, work, and ability to become more active and conscientious participants in their communities.

**The primary author for this volume is Dr. Fredricka Stoller.**

Fredricka L. Stoller is Associate Professor of English at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, where she teaches in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Applied Linguistics graduate programs. Her professional interests include content-based instruction, language teaching methodology, curriculum design, materials development, and program administration. She has published numerous articles in the English Teaching Forum and has published in the TESOL Journal, Applied Linguistics, and Applied Language Learning. She co-edited a volume entitled *A Handbook for Language Program Administrators* (with Alta Book Center) and co-authored a reading text for developing readers entitled *Javier Arrives in the US* (Prentice Hall Regents). She has trained EFL teachers and language program administrators in many parts of the world including Bolivia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Poland, Slovakia, and Tunisia. She is an active member of international TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages).

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Civic Education volume has been created to provide language teachers with content resources that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. Each chapter of the volume will provide teachers with resources that they can use to create content-based lessons related to civic education, a topic which has great potential for the language classroom because of its relevance to the daily lives of students around the world. Each chapter will highlight one theme related to civic education and will equip teachers with relevant background information, interactive and communicative classroom activities, and a list of related resources that will allow them to extend and expand the lesson further, if so desired.

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## ASPECTS OF CIVIC EDUCATION THAT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS AS MEANINGFUL CONTENT

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In a field as broad as Civic Education, topic selection is challenging. Because civic education can be interpreted in many different ways, language teachers have many options to choose from for course design and thematic-unit development. Civic education often includes the study of political institutions and their values, commitments, assumptions, and challenges. For example, a content-based unit emphasizing political institutions could explore different styles of government, the diverse responsibilities of government, governments of the past, or governments of the present. In such settings, students could study the government of their own country or the governments of other countries. Or they could compare and contrast different forms of government, all the while developing their language skills.

Civic education can also include "a study of the purpose of government, the nature of law, the way private behavior affects the public order and the political system, and the international context of politics" (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991, p. 3). In such classrooms, teachers can create lessons that explore why people form governments, how governments are formed, why governments enforce laws, and how different types of laws shape society. Related to these topics are content-based lessons on elections and the role informed (and not-so-informed) citizens play in that process.

Civic education can also focus on geography, symbols associated with different countries and governments (e.g., flags, national anthems, historical sites, buildings, monuments), and more provocative topics such as the nature of propaganda, the role of the press, civil disobedience, public life, diversity, global issues, tolerance, negotiation, war and peace, human rights, and societal dilemmas (e.g., finding a balance between individual beliefs and majority rule, individual rights and public safety, power of the people and power of the government).

In democratic societies, civic education emphasizes civic participation and the skills necessary for informed and responsible citizenship. It also explores the political process with an eye toward understanding how it promotes the rights and responsibilities of the individual and the responsibilities of government. In such settings, civic education seeks to reinforce values such as liberty, equality, justice, and the common good (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991).

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# CHAPTER 1

## RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

**T**he contemporary concept of individual **rights** is "that all persons, by virtue of their membership in the human species, have certain rights" (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991, p. 613). *Rights of the Individual* has been selected as the theme for the first chapter of the Civic Education volume because it is pertinent, provocative, and of interest to students worldwide. While exploring aspects of human rights, students can learn the vocabulary and concepts associated with the topic. While improving their language skills, students can develop an understanding of the complexities of individual rights and their role in civil societies. Because the topic is so broad, teachers have the option of using it in a variety of ways: They can create a single, stand-alone lesson on one aspect of the topic; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. The lesson plan ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in introducing this topic to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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In December 1998, the United Nations marked the 50th anniversary of the world's most comprehensive human rights declaration: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR was approved by the United Nations General Assembly, with no dissenting votes, on December 10, 1948. The thirty articles of the UDHR were expected to serve as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." The signers of the UDHR emphasized the need for all people and all nations to promote respect for the rights and freedoms specified in the document through education. As a whole, the document was meant to recognize the **inherent dignity** and **equal rights** of all human beings. In essence, the document represented the basic needs, hopes, and wishes of men and women around the world. A review of the thirty articles of the UDHR (a simplified version is included below) reveals a commitment to education, health, work, and culture as well as legal and political rights:

Article 1: Right to equality

Article 2: Freedom from discrimination

Article 3: Right to life, liberty, and safety

Article 4: Freedom from slavery

Article 5: Freedom from torture and cruel, **inhumane** punishment

Article 6: Right to be protected by the law

Article 7: Right to be treated in the same way as others by the law

Article 8: Right to legal aid if rights are not respected

Article 9: No **arbitrary** arrest, prison, or exile

Article 10: Right to a public and fair trial

Article 11: Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty

Article 12: Right to privacy and protection

Article 13: Right to move within one's country and to leave/return to it when one wishes

Article 14: Right to protection in another country if one's rights are **violated** in one's own country

Article 15: Right to be a citizen of one's own country or to become a citizen of another country

Article 16: Right to marriage and family  
Article 17: Right to own property  
Article 18: Freedom of religion  
Article 19: Freedom of opinion and speech; freedom to give and receive information  
Article 20: Right to organize meetings  
Article 21: Right to participate in government and in free elections  
Article 22: Right to personal development by taking part in the economic, social, and cultural life of the country  
Article 23: Right to work for fair pay and to join labor unions. Right for women to receive pay equal to men's pay  
Article 24: Right to paid holidays and reasonable work hours  
Article 25: Right to food, housing, and medical care  
Article 26: Right to an education  
Article 27: Right to participate in the cultural life of one's community  
Article 28: Right to a social and international order that protects all these rights  
Article 29: Community duties are necessary for free and full development of people  
Article 30: Right to all these freedoms without interference by government or individuals

The thirty articles of the UDHR were written and agreed upon by representatives of many different nations, nations with different political systems and different populations. The United Nations was not the first organization to promote respect for human rights. In 1791, for example, the Constitution of the United States of America was amended to include a Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights, in actuality the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, was created to protect the basic rights of U.S. citizens. As an example, the first amendment protects individuals from governmental interference by means of freedom of speech, **press, assembly**, and religion. Amendments five to eight define and protect specific rights of individuals accused of crimes or involved in **disputes** under law; more specifically, the sixth and seventh amendments guarantee an individual's right to a lawyer and a trial by **jury**.

Since the passage of the Bill of Rights in the late 1700s, an additional 17 amendments have been added to the U.S. Constitution. For example, slavery was outlawed in 1865 with the 13th amendment; women were granted the right to vote in 1920 with the 19th amendment; and in 1971, the minimum voting age in the U.S. became 18 with the passage of the 26th amendment.

Other nations have passed similar declarations to recognize and protect individual rights. Sadly, many people around the world find themselves living in environments without the rights set forth in the UDHR some fifty years ago.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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One way to keep the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights alive and to promote their importance is to integrate them into education. Language teachers can create many different content-based lessons around the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Bill of Rights, and the concepts underlying these declarations. One possible 50-minute lesson is described here.

### Preliminary Lesson Planning

**Materials:** Create two sets of handouts, with four different versions of each. Each handout in the first set should include five provocative statements, each one related in some way to at least one of the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The goal is to include statements that are likely to stimulate meaningful and extended discussion among students. The four sample handouts in Appendix B ([Handout #1, versions A, B, C, D](#)) could easily be adapted for different student populations by (a) changing the emphasis of the statements in response to student interests and/or issues of current relevance in one's country and (b) adjusting the language used (so that the statements are more or less complex) in response to students' language proficiency and language needs. (The UDHR articles tied to each statement in these sample handouts are listed in [Appendix D](#)).

The second set of handouts ([Handout #2, versions A, B, C, D, in Appendix C](#)) requires students to match UDHR articles with statements made on Handout #1. These handouts, like the first set, can be adapted for different student populations. For more advanced students, teachers might want to include the original UDHR articles; for less proficient students, even more simplified versions could be included.

**Student grouping decisions:** Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activities #1 and #2. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members for each activity. It is recommended that groups have no more than six participants each. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

**Vocabulary considerations:** Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they'll need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix A](#).

### Warm-Up Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

#### *Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of individual rights
- To tap students' background knowledge
- To introduce vocabulary that will facilitate successful completion of the lesson

#### *Procedures:*

- Write "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" on the blackboard.
- Ask students what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is. Put key words from students' responses on the blackboard. If students are unfamiliar with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, be prepared to provide students with relevant background information, adding words to the blackboard as you introduce key ideas.

- Underline the word "Rights" on the blackboard. Ask students what "rights" might be included in the declaration. Add key words and concepts to the blackboard.

(Do not erase the blackboard. Come back to it at the end of the lesson as a way to provide meaningful closure to the lesson.)

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### Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1

Tell students that the class session will be devoted to exploring aspects of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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### Activity #1 (approximately 25 minutes)

Purpose:

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To introduce students to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in relation to real-world situations
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

Procedure:

1. Divide students into four groups (A, B, C, D) in the quickest way possible. The number of groups that you actually have will depend largely on the size of your class. For example, with a small class, all students in group A can sit together. With a large class, you can create multiple A groups, multiple B groups, multiple C groups, and multiple D groups. Distribute [Handout #1](#); give appropriate version of the handout (A, B, C, or D) to each group.
2. Working alone, students should read each statement on their handout and indicate with a check ( ✓ ) whether they strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. If students have never engaged in an exercise like this, put an example sentence on the blackboard to model the process in front of the entire class. Ask students to be ready to explain the reason for their responses to classmates. While students are working individually, circulate among them to make sure they understand all important vocabulary and the task at hand.
3. Ask students to be ready to explain the reason for their responses to classmates. While students are working individually, circulate among them to make sure they understand all important vocabulary and the task at hand.
4. Ask students to discuss their responses with members of their group (A, B, C, or D). Ask students to do the following (if necessary, write instructions on the blackboard):
  - a. Compare your responses with group members.
  - b. Explain your reason for each response.
  - c. Ask group members questions if you do not understand their reasons.

5. While students are working in groups, circulate around the classroom. Make sure students stay on task. Answer questions and/or provide clarification when needed.
6. Distribute [Handout #2](#); give appropriate version (A, B, C, or D) to each group. Ask students to do the following:
  - a. Match each situation on Handout #1 to the appropriate Universal Declaration of Human Rights article(s).
7. While students are working together, circulate and provide them with feedback on their responses, referring to the Answer Key (in [Appendix D](#)) for reference. Point out key words which might help them with the matching exercise.
8. Ask groups to identify the situation and UDHR article which caused the most discussion (or controversy, debate, interest) among them. Tell students to be prepared to explain group selection (and reasons for the selection) to other students in class.

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### Activity #2 (approximately 15 minutes)

Purpose:

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To give students the opportunity to be successful in English by asking them to report information discussed earlier with other classmates

Procedures:

1. Create new student groups--ideally with at least one representative from original groups A, B, C, and D--in the fastest way possible.
2. Ask students to do the following in their new groups:
  - a. Identify the situation and Universal Declaration of Human Rights article which caused the most discussion (controversy, debate, interest) in original group.
  - b. Explain diverse opinions of classmates.
  - c. Answer questions from new group members.

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### Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

Purpose:

- To provide some closure to lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss relevance of lesson

Procedures:

Look back at blackboard. Ask students the following questions:

What words can we add to the blackboard to create a more complete picture of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Add students' responses to the blackboard.

Which concepts are most controversial? (Circle students' responses.)



Which concepts are most interesting? (Box students' responses.)

Which concepts are most important? (Put a star next to students' responses.)

Why are they important?

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### Possible Extensions for this lesson

Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.

- a. Which UDHR articles do you find most interesting? Most important? Least important? Why?
- b. Are universal standards, such as those listed in the UDHR, possible in today's world? Why? Why not?
- c. Do you think the United Nations should enforce the UDHR? Why? Why not?
- d. What would society be like if everyone followed the UDHR?
- e. Why do you think so many nations have not been able to live up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Remind students that the UDHR was written in 1948, in response to the events of World War II and the global depression of the 1930s. Ask students to consider these two questions: Which UDHR articles, if any, are no longer needed today? What new articles need to be added to the Declaration to respond to today's life and world situation?

Ask groups of students to select one article of the UDHR that they feel is important. Give groups time to plan a presentation about the UDHR article that they've selected, in the form of a poster, skit, song, poem, or essay. While students make their presentations, their classmates should be asked to guess which UDHR article the group is highlighting.

Ask students to work in groups to draft a "Declaration of Individual Rights for the 21st Century." Students should be prepared to defend and provide a rationale for their choices. Have students compare their drafts and generate a final "Class Declaration of Individual Rights."

[Background](#)

[Classroom Applications](#)

## Appendix B

### Handout #1 for students in group A

| Read each statement. Indicate with a check ( ✓ ) whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. | SA A U D SD |
|---|-------------|
| A1. Men and women who have the same job responsibilities should earn the same pay.  | _____       |
| A2. Magazines that advertise harmful products, like cigarettes and alcohol, should not be sold.   | _____       |
| A3. People should be able to practice any religion they want.   | _____       |
| A4. People should be able to marry whomever they'd like, regardless of nationality, religion, race.   | _____       |
| A5. Everyone who works deserves a paid holiday.   | _____       |

### Handout #1 for students in group B

| Read each statement. Indicate with a check ( ✓ ) whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. | SA A U D SD |
|---|-------------|
| B1. A newspaper should be able to print whatever information it wants.  | _____       |
| B2. A killer who has tortured his victim should be tortured as punishment.  | _____       |
| B3. A person who has a police record of disrupting public events should be put in jail before future events to protect people.  | _____       |
| B4. People should not have to work without wages and without rights.  | _____       |
| B5. All people--young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, powerful and powerless--should be treated equally under the law.                                     | _____       |

**Handout #1 for students in group C.**

| Read each statement. Indicate with a check ( ✓ ) whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. | SA A U D SD |
|---|-------------|
| C1. Everyone should be able to own a small piece of land.   | _____       |
| C2. School textbooks that focus on the weaknesses of minority ethnic groups and minority religious groups should not be allowed in schools.                                 | _____       |
| C3. People who want to move from one part of a country to another region of the same country (for example, from the countryside to the city) should be able to.             | _____       |
| C4. All trials should be open to the public.  | _____       |
| C5. Police should be able to enter any home, apartment, school, or business if they think that a search is necessary.   | _____       |

**Handout #1 for students in group D.**

| Read each statement. Indicate with a check ( ✓ ) whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. | SA A U D SD |
|---|-------------|
| D1. All children--rich and poor, urban and rural, well and ill--deserve a good education.   | _____       |
| D2. All adults should be able to vote the way they wish.  | _____       |
| D3. Workers should be able to decide if they want to join unions or not. No one should be forced to join a union.   | _____       |
| D4. During times of war and economic troubles, citizens should not criticize government policies.   | _____       |
| D5. Poor people from the countryside should be given the opportunity to sell products on the street to earn a living.   | _____       |

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## Appendix C

### Handout #2 for students in group A.

Read the following Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles. Match the appropriate UDHR article to appropriate statement on Handout #1 (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5). Write the UDHR article number to the left of each statement on Handout #1.

UDHR article 16: Right to marriage and family

UDHR article 18: Freedom of religion

UDHR article 23: Right to work for fair pay and to join labor unions. Right for women to receive pay equal to men's pay

UDHR article 19: Freedom of opinion and speech; freedom to give and receive information

UDHR article 24: Right to paid holidays and reasonable work hours

### Handout #2 for students in group B.

Read the following Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles. Match the appropriate UDHR article to appropriate statement on Handout #1 (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5). Write the UDHR article number to the left of each statement on Handout #1.

UDHR article 11: Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty

UDHR article 5: Freedom from torture and cruel, inhumane, or degrading punishment

UDHR articles 1 & 7: Right to equality; Right to be treated in the same way as others by the law

UDHR article 4: Freedom from slavery

UDHR article 19: Freedom of opinion and speech; freedom to give and receive information

## Handout #2 for students in group C

Read the following Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles. Match the appropriate UDHR article to appropriate statement on Handout #1 (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5). Write the UDHR article number to the left of each statement on Handout #1.

UDHR article 17: Right to own property

UDHR article 26: Right to an education

UDHR article 13: Right to move within one's country and to leave/return to it when one wishes

UDHR article 10: Right to a public and fair trial

UDHR article 12: Right to privacy and protection

## Handout #2 for students in group D.

Read the following Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles. Match the appropriate UDHR article to appropriate statement on Handout #1 (D1, D2, D3, D4, D5). Write the UDHR article number to the left of each statement on Handout #1.

UDHR article 26: Right to an education

UDHR article 21: Right to participate in government and in free elections

UDHR articles 20 & 23: Right to organize meetings; Right to work for fair pay and to join labor unions. Right for women to receive pay equal to men's pay

UDHR article 19: Freedom of opinion and speech; freedom to give and receive information

UDHR article 22: Right to personal development by taking part in the economic, social, and cultural life of the country

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## Appendix D

| Answer key: Article(s) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) associated with each Handout #1 statement |                                      |                                |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| A1. Related to UDHR article 23   | B1. Related to UDHR article 19       | C1. Related to UDHR article 17 | D1. Related to UDHR article 26         |
| A2. Related to UDHR article 19   | B2. Related to UDHR article 5        | C2. Related to UDHR article 26 | D2. Related to UDHR article 21         |
| A3. Related to UDHR article 18   | B3. Related to UDHR article 11       | C3. Related to UDHR article 13 | D3. Related to UDHR articles 20 and 23 |
| A4. Related to UDHR article 16   | B4. Related to UDHR article 4        | C4. Related to UDHR article 10 | D4. Related to UDHR article 19         |
| A5. Related to UDHR article 24   | B5. Related to UDHR articles 1 and 7 | C5. Related to UDHR article 12 | D5. Related to UDHR article 22         |

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## CHAPTER 2

# INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

The theme of individual freedoms has been selected for the second chapter of the Civic Education volume because it is pertinent, provocative, and of interest to students worldwide. While exploring a set of individual freedoms, students can learn the vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme. While improving their language skills, students can develop an understanding of the role of individual freedoms in civil societies and the complexities associated with such freedoms. In this chapter, students will examine a set of individual freedoms and evaluate situations in which those freedoms might have to be limited. Teachers can use the proposed lesson by itself or design a series of connected lessons that explore the theme in more detail. An even more elaborate thematic unit that examines each freedom in depth, from a variety of perspectives, could be developed and extended over a longer period of time. The lesson plan ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in exploring the theme of individual freedoms with their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lists many freedoms that should be granted to individuals around the world. Some examples of individual freedoms include the following: freedom of opinion and speech, freedom to give and receive information, freedom from discrimination, freedom from slavery, freedom from torture, freedom of religion, and freedom to organize meetings. In this chapter, we'll limit our exploration of individual freedoms by focusing on five different, though often overlapping, freedoms:

**Freedom of speech:** Freedom to say what you want; to express your opinion; to explore new ideas; to share different points of view

**Freedom of press:** Freedom to write what you want; to express your opinion in writing; to explore new ideas in writing; to share different points of view in writing; to criticize or support people and ideas in writing

**Freedom of assembly:** Freedom to meet in groups peacefully, in parks, in schools, on the streets, in restaurants, in private homes, and in other public and private places

**Freedom of religion:** Freedom to follow whatever religion you want; freedom to practice religious beliefs  
**Freedom of conscience:** Freedom to decide what to believe

Together these freedoms represent the freedom of expression: Freedom to express oneself through speech, writing, art, clothing, hair (length, color, and style), music, religion, and so forth.

Although most civil societies endorse freedoms such as these, they do not do so without debate and controversy. Members of civil societies often engage in animated debates about the limits of different freedoms, including the boundaries of free speech and the limitations of freedom of expression. Debates center around questions such as these: Should people be allowed to tell lies in court? Should people be allowed to shout in libraries? Should people be able to ruin someone's reputation with an untrue newspaper report? Should a military officer be allowed to tell a newspaper reporter about secret military plans? Should controversial groups be allowed to hold a meeting in a public park or stage a march through a downtown area? Should controversial art be displayed in public museums? Should young people be able to wear whatever clothes they want to school? Should a religious group be allowed to recruit new members? Should a citizen be allowed to protest a new government law? The answers to such questions are complex and hardly straightforward.

Some governments limit individual freedoms with time, place, and manner restrictions. For example, they may govern when, where, and how an individual may speak but not what that individual may say. The challenge faced by such governments is in finding the proper balance between individual freedoms and the rights and interests of society at large.

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## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The 50-minute lesson plan which follows highlights select issues related to the theme of this chapter: individual freedoms. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of low- or high-proficiency English language learners.

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### Preliminary Lesson Planning

**Materials:** For Activity 2, compile sets of three scenarios--highlighting issues related to individual freedoms--for each group of students. Choose from the scenarios listed in [Appendix A](#) or create scenarios of your own that highlight issues of concern to your students. Each scenario should depict a situation in which at least one individual freedom might need to be limited. Scenarios can be used with more than one group.

**Student grouping decisions:** Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activities 1 and 2; participants will remain in the same groups for both activities. It is recommended that groups have no more than six participants each. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

**Vocabulary considerations:** Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix B](#). Items listed in the glossary are written in **bold** print the first time they are mentioned in the lesson plan.



## Warm Up Activity (5-10 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of individual freedoms
- To draw upon students' background knowledge
- To introduce vocabulary that will facilitate successful completion of the lesson

### *Procedures:*

Write the following list of five freedoms on the blackboard:

- Freedom of speech*
- Freedom of press*
- Freedom of assembly*
- Freedom of religion*
- Freedom of conscience*

(If you do not think your students will understand this terminology, use key words from the definitions provided in the [Background Information](#) section of this chapter to explain their meanings.)

Ask students what comes to mind when they think about these freedoms. Write key words and phrases, from student responses, on the blackboard next to each freedom. (Once again, refer to the [Background Information](#) section for some possible key words and concepts.)

Ask students if they want to add other individual freedoms to the list on the blackboard. If students respond to your request, ask contributors to define the freedom for their classmates. Put key words on the blackboard.

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## Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1

Tell students that the class session will be devoted to exploring the individual freedoms listed on the blackboard.

---

## Activity #1 (approximately 15-20 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To rank order individual freedoms and come to a group consensus on the importance of different freedoms
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

### *Procedures:*

Ask students to work individually to rank the freedoms listed on the blackboard from most important (1) to least important (5). (If students have expanded the original list of five freedoms to include new items, the number associated with the least important category will have to change so that one number can be assigned to each freedom on the blackboard.)

Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers. Circulate while students are completing their rankings to make sure everyone completes the assignment; help students who are having difficulties.

Assign students to groups. Ask groups to do the following:

- a. Discuss and compare rankings
- b. Explain reasons for ranking decisions
- c. Agree on a group ranking; come to a group consensus

Circulate in the classroom while student groups are working. For groups that have difficulties reaching a consensus, ask them to try to agree on only the most and least important freedoms. For groups that finish much earlier than other groups, ask them to identify the most controversial freedoms and to discuss the nature of the controversies.

Ask volunteers from each group to report on group decisions. Focus on those freedoms considered to be most important and least important. As each group reports to the class, record responses on the blackboard by putting a check plus ( ✓ +) next to the freedoms considered most important and a check minus ( ✓ -) next to the freedoms considered least important. If time permits, ask group members to provide a rationale for their decisions.

Do not erase the blackboard. Come back to it at the end of the lesson as a way to provide meaningful closure to the lesson.

### **Activity #2 (approximately 20 minutes)**

*Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To explore the intricacies of the freedoms listed on the blackboard

*Procedures:*

Ask students to think about the freedoms listed on the board. Should the freedoms ever be limited? When? Under what circumstances?

Ask students to consider the following situation: A teenager, in a movie theater, yells "fire" even though there is no fire.

- a. Should the teenager be allowed to yell, "fire"? Why? Why not?
- b. Which freedoms are being questioned here?

Ask students to work in their original groups. Give each group a set of three (or four) scenarios from [Appendix A](#). For each scenario, students should consider the following questions:

- a. Which freedom(s) is being questioned?
- b. Should the freedom be limited? Why? Why not?

As students are beginning to finish up their group discussions, ask each group to identify the most controversial scenario.

Ask a volunteer from each group to comment on the most controversial scenario to classmates from other groups.

---

### **Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)**

*Purpose:*

- To provide some closure to lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss relevance of lesson

*Procedures:*

Remind students that, at the beginning of class, they identified certain freedoms as being more important than others are. Point to freedoms marked with a check plus (✓+) on the blackboard. Ask students if they still agree with their original decisions. Ask for comments.

If time permits, ask students to think about the class session on individual freedoms. Pose questions such as the following:

- a. What did you learn in class today?
- b. What differences in opinion did you hear today?
- c. Should some individual freedoms be limited? If so, under what conditions?

### **Possible Extensions to Lesson**

1. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.
  - a. Why is it important to protect freedom of expression: freedoms of speech, press, assembly, religion, and conscience?
  - b. Why are restrictions of freedoms based on time, place, and manner sometimes necessary?
  - c. How does the principle of "separation of church and state" relate to individual freedoms, in particular, freedom of religion?
  - d. What can a society do to find a proper balance between individual freedoms and the rights and interests of the larger society?
  - e. Why do you think so many nations have not been able to live up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
2. Ask groups of students to write up new scenarios that highlight the discord between individual freedoms and societal interests. They can be asked to present the scenarios to their classmates, identify the freedom(s) involved, and explain possible restrictions.
3. Ask students to list (and then present) arguments in favor of and against an individual freedom.

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## Appendix A

### News Reports Handout

1. Consider the topics below and then answer these questions.

a. Which topics are most important for daily news **coverage**? Why? *Circle* the eight most important news topics. Be prepared to report your answers to other class members.

b. Should news sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, radio, television) limit their reports about any of these topics? Why? *Underline* topics which might need to be restricted.

c. Should any topics be **banned**? Why? *Put a box* around topics that might need to be banned.

|                               |                                       |                                    |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Science                       | Weather                               | Cultural events                    |
| Environment                   | <b><u>Natural disasters</u></b>       | Social events                      |
| Crime                         | Sports                                | National <b><u>legislation</u></b> |
| Education                     | Business                              | National economy                   |
| Health                        | Wars and regional conflicts           | National security                  |
| Famous people's private lives | News about the local community        | New restaurants                    |
| Famous people's public lives  | News about the country                | Traffic                            |
| Government leaders            | News about neighboring countries      | Politics                           |
| Births and deaths             | News about countries in other regions |                                    |

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([back to Classroom Applications](#))

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## CHAPTER 3

# INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

The theme of individual freedoms is extremely broad; it can accommodate animated discussions on the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and the all-encompassing freedom of expression. This chapter concentrates on select issues related to freedom of the press. While exploring the reliability, truthfulness, and biases of television, radio, news magazines, and the Internet (to name a few news sources), students will not only develop an understanding of some of the issues related to freedom of the press, but they will also improve their language abilities. Teachers can use the proposed lesson by itself or design a series of connected lessons that explore freedom of the press in more detail. An even more elaborate thematic unit could be developed and extended over a longer period of time. The lesson plan ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in exploring the theme of individual freedoms, in particular freedom of the press, with their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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It has been said that the 21st century will usher in the Information Age, a time when technologies will give people easy and rapid access to information of all kinds. With every year, new (and old) technologies bring the promise of greater information exchange. In addition, increasing numbers of people around the world have access to television, radios, computers, the Internet, and information that reaches them via satellites and cables.

At the same time, the Information Age brings with it numerous challenges. The Information Age raises new issues about media responsibility, honest journalism, the rights of the public to be informed, and the impact of information access on civic life. The Information Age also provokes questions about the truthfulness, reliability, and biases of news coverage. In addition, it focuses attention on the freedom to give and receive information, which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares a basic human right.

This chapter of the Civic Education volume focuses on select issues related to one individual freedom, specifically freedom of the press. Freedom of the press is often defined as the freedom to (a) write or report what one wants, (b) express one's opinion, (c) explore new ideas, (d) share different points of view, and (e) criticize or support people and ideas. Yet, freedom of the press does not simply give individuals the ability to report whatever they please, it also grants individuals the power to choose what to report, what not to report, and the extent, tone, and manner of reporting.

Proponents of freedom of the press cite numerous benefits including the following:

It promotes individual growth and human dignity; the right to express one's ideas and communicate with others contributes to one's growth as a person. The right to consider other people's views and opinions also contributes to individual growth.

It is important for the advancement of knowledge; new and improved ideas are likely to be developed in societies that allow free discussion, debate, and the consideration of multiple perspectives.

It is a necessary component of representative governments; freedom of the press is crucial in both determining policy and checking how well governments carry out their responsibilities.

It facilitates peaceful social change; the right to express oneself freely provides an outlet for individuals trying to influence public opinion by persuasion rather than violence.

It is essential for the protection of all individual rights; the ability to express oneself allows people to speak out against the violation of one's rights by others or by the government.

The challenges related to freedom of the press, however, are many. When contemplating freedom of the press, one must consider if and when limits and restrictions are advisable. Should freedom of the press be absolute? Should freedom of the press be limited to protect individual privacy, people's reputations, and national security? Should journalists be allowed to report lies? What should be reported when there is limited space, for example, in a newspaper or limited time, like on a television news broadcast? These provocative questions do not have any straightforward answers. Nonetheless, consideration of questions such as these and discussions of related issues are critical for those of us entering the Information Age.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following 50-minute lesson plan highlights select issues related to the theme of this chapter: freedom of the press. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower- or higher-proficiency English language learners.

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### Preliminary Lesson Planning

Materials:

Create a handout for Activity 2. (Use [Appendix A](#) as a model.) Add news items to the list (or adjust those that are currently listed) to stimulate student discussion and debate.

Student grouping decisions:

Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activities 1 and 2; participants will remain in the same groups for both activities. It is recommended that groups have four participants each. If a large class size makes groups of four unrealistic, form larger groups. The lesson plan suggests that each member of the group be assigned a special role (e.g., chairperson, recorder, reporter, responder). For larger groups, be prepared to assign additional roles such as a checker of understanding (one who makes sure everyone in the group understands what is being done and said); a cheerleader/encourager (one who offers encouragement and praise for contributions of group members); a turn-taking monitor (a person who makes sure all members participate); a voice/noise monitor (a person who asks students to either speak up or speak more quietly). If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

Vocabulary considerations:

Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to have explained. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix B](#). Items listed in the glossary are written in **bold** print the first time they are mentioned in the lesson plan.

---

### Warm Up Activity (5 minutes)

*Purpose:* To draw upon students' background knowledge

*Procedures:*

1. Ask students the following question: Where can we get information about local, national, and world news? List student responses on the blackboard. (Possible student answers include newspapers, news magazines, television, radio, the Internet, friends, and family.)
2. Before asking the next question, add "1st choice" and "2nd choice" to the blackboard so that the blackboard looks something like this:

|                | 1st choice | 2nd choice |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| Newspapers     |            |            |
| News Magazines |            |            |
| Television     |            |            |
| Radio          |            |            |
| Internet       |            |            |
| Friends        |            |            |
| Family         |            |            |

3. Conduct an informal class survey. Ask students "Which news sources do you prefer? What is your first choice? What is your second choice?" Read off each news information source listed on the blackboard, one at a time, and ask students to raise their hands if it is their first choice, and then their second choice. Put tally marks in each column.
  4. Ask students to examine the results of the informal class survey. Ask them "What news sources do we prefer as a class?" Circle the news sources that students most commonly use.
- (Do not erase the blackboard. Students will refer to it in following exercises.)

---

**Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1**

Tell students that this class session will focus on one individual freedom. Ask them "Which individual freedom do you think we will be talking about today?" Try to elicit **freedom of the press** from them. Define the term, if necessary. Relate student responses to the notion of freedom of the press.



### Activity #1 (approximately 15-20 minutes)

Purpose:

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To hold students responsible for their own learning

Procedure:

1. Put students into groups of four. Have students in each group choose numbers from 1 to 4 and then give them their role assignments:
  - Chairperson (leads group discussion)
  - Recorder (writes down group's ideas)
  - Reporter (reports group deliberations to the rest of the class)
  - Responder (answers questions from the whole class after the group report)

While students are forming their groups, erase the "1st choice" and "2nd choice" headings and tally marks from the board. Replace them with new headings, as indicated below:

|            | <u>Reliable</u> | <u>Biased</u> | <u>Truthful</u> |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Newspapers |                 |               |                 |
| News       |                 |               |                 |
| Magazines  |                 |               |                 |
| Television |                 |               |                 |
| Radio      |                 |               |                 |
| Internet   |                 |               |                 |
| Friends    |                 |               |                 |
| Family     |                 |               |                 |

2. Also write the following questions on the blackboard:
  - A. Which news source is the most reliable? Least reliable? Why?

B. Which news source is the most biased? Least biased? Why?

C. Which news source is the most truthful? Least truthful? Why?

3. Ask students to work in their groups to answer these questions. Before they begin to work together, make sure they understand the three key terms: reliable, biased, and truthful. Remind students that they should be able to defend their responses to these questions. Give students a time limit (about 10 minutes).
4. Ask reporters to report on group deliberations. While reporters are speaking, record their answers with check marks ( ✓ ) on the blackboard. Encourage other class members to ask responders for clarification. Put these questions on the blackboard to encourage and model appropriate questioning: How did your group come to that conclusion? Why does your group feel that way? How can your group defend that answer?
5. Ask the class if any of the news sources that are listed **limit** or **restrict** their reports about local, national, and world news. Ask the class why news is sometimes limited or restricted. Write student responses on the blackboard. (Student answers might include national security, number of stories to report, time or space limitations, politics, privacy, protection of the innocent, protection of people's reputations, secrecy, fear, power.)

---

### Activity #2 (approximately 20-25 minutes)

Purpose:

To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way

To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

To encourage students to take a stand in English about important issues

To give students an opportunity to defend their opinions in English

Procedures:

1. Ask students to remain in the same groups. Assign new roles to students, using these guidelines:

Recorder (writes down group's ideas)

Reporter (reports group deliberations to the rest of the class)

Responder (answers questions from the whole class after the group report)

Chairperson (leads group discussion)

2. Distribute one copy of the News Reports handout ([Appendix A](#)) to each group. Go over instructions, introduce new vocabulary, and if necessary, review key vocabulary.

3. Have students work in their groups to answer questions on the handout. Give students a time limit (about 10 minutes) to keep them on task.

4. Ask reporters to report on group deliberations. Encourage other class members to ask responders for clarification. Refer back to the questions on the blackboard to encourage/model questioning: How did your group come to that conclusion? Why does your group feel that way? How can your group defend that answer?

### **Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)**

Purpose:

To provide some closure to the lesson

To give students an opportunity to discuss relevance of the lesson

Procedures:

1. Ask students to review what happened in class. ("What have we done in class today?")
2. Ask students "How is today's lesson related to freedom of the press?" (Help students understand the intricacies associated with freedom of the press. Freedom of the press does not simply give individuals the ability to report whatever they please, it also grants individuals the power to choose what to report, what not to report, and the extent, tone, and manner of reporting.)

### **Possible Extensions to Lesson**

1. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.
  - a. Who is responsible for reliable **journalism: journalists**, editors of newspapers, directors of radio stations, the government?
  - b. Should all citizens have equal **access** to information? Why? Why not?
  - c. What should the public know to be considered informed citizens?
  - d. Should newspapers and radio stations be able to report whatever they want? Why? Why not?
  - e. How has public access to information changed in the last decade in our country? Are these changes positive or negative? Why?
2. Ask students to list and present their arguments in favor of and against freedom of the press.
3. Ask students to imagine that they are the directors of the evening news for a popular local television station. Their job is to choose stories for the evening news, a 15-minute broadcast featuring local stories. Tell them that four of the 15 minutes are dedicated to commercials, giving the students a total of 11 minutes of news time. They can combine three different story lengths: 30-second spots, 60-second stories, and 2 ½ minute (150 second) features. Give students a list of at least 20 "headlines" to choose from (using many of the news categories listed in [Appendix A](#)). Have students plan the evening news by creating a program schedule with three columns: Column one: List the news items in order of presentation (1, 2, 3,

etc.); Column two: Identify the length (spot, story, feature) of each news item (for a total of 11 minutes);

Column three: State the reason(s) for choosing the news for this position and length. (This exercise has been adapted from Croddy, Degelman, & Hayes, 1998a, 1998b.)

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## Appendix A

### News Reports Handout

1. Consider the topics below and then answer these questions.

a. Which topics are most important for daily news **coverage**? Why? *Circle* the eight most important news topics. Be prepared to report your answers to other class members.

b. Should news sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, radio, television) limit their reports about any of these topics? Why? *Underline* topics which might need to be restricted.

c. Should any topics be **banned**? Why? *Put a box* around topics that might need to be banned.

|                               |                                       |                                    |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Science                       | Weather                               | Cultural events                    |
| Environment                   | <b><u>Natural disasters</u></b>       | Social events                      |
| Crime                         | Sports                                | National <b><u>legislation</u></b> |
| Education                     | Business                              | National economy                   |
| Health                        | Wars and regional conflicts           | National security                  |
| Famous people's private lives | News about the local community        | New restaurants                    |
| Famous people's public lives  | News about the country                | Traffic                            |
| Government leaders            | News about neighboring countries      | Politics                           |
| Births and deaths             | News about countries in other regions |                                    |
| <a href="#">Glossary</a>      |                                       |                                    |

[\(back to Preliminary Lesson Planning\)](#)

[\(back to Activity #2\)](#)

[\(back to Possible Extensions to Lesson\)](#)

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# CHAPTER 4

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND CITIZENSHIP

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

In civic education curricula, citizenship and individual responsibilities is an important theme. Discussions about the role of citizen participation at local, state, and national levels usually lead to provocative questions such as these: What does it mean to be a good citizen? What is the importance of being an informed citizen? To what extent should citizens participate in society and politics? Recently, questions about world citizenship and individual responsibilities--to ensure a safe and sane world--have been raised. In this lesson, students will explore select aspects of this theme. While discussing citizenship and individual responsibilities, students will learn associated vocabulary and concepts. As a result of this content-based lesson, students will not only improve their language skills, but they will also gain knowledge about this important and timely theme. The lesson outlined here can be used by teachers in a variety of ways: They can use it as a single, stand-alone lesson; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the theme in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the theme from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. These lesson plan ideas are meant to serve as a springboard for teachers interested in introducing the theme of citizenship and individual responsibilities to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Discussions of citizenship and the responsibilities that accompany it are common in civic education curricula. An exploration of these topics can take on many dimensions, though it is important for students to understand, early on, that being a citizen is not simply limited to having a passport from the country in which one is born, or being a resident of a particular city, state, or country. Citizenship implies certain rights (e.g., legal, political, social); it also implies responsibilities, including placing the well-being, or **common good**, of society before private and personal interests.

When exploring citizenship and individual responsibilities, classroom teachers can shape lessons to examine a range of perspectives. Some teachers interested in this topic divide responsibilities into two areas: personal and civic. Personal responsibilities include taking care of oneself, accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, taking advantage of opportunities to become educated, and fulfilling responsibilities to one's family, friends, and neighbors. Civic responsibilities, on the other hand, comprise obeying laws, respecting the rights and opinions of others, paying taxes, serving in the military, voting, and being informed and attentive to the needs of one's community and nation. Civic responsibility can also include the obligation to be honest, compassionate, tolerant, fair, trustworthy, respectful, open minded, and open to negotiation and compromise.

Other discussions of responsible citizenship center around the issue of participation in society at local, state, and national levels. Responsible citizens are often said to be active socially and politically. Social activity might entail joining citizens' groups that are devoted to solving societal problems, such as homelessness, race relations, or neighborhood crime; social activity could also involve volunteering in a local hospital, school, homeless shelter, or senior citizens' home. Political activity is quite different from social activity. Students need to understand that political activity usually refers to more than the simple act of voting in periodic elections. It might entail talking about public issues; writing letters to **public officials**; presenting a problem to a governmental council; staying informed about important issues by reading the newspaper, listening to television news, or attending public meetings; or getting involved in a political campaign.

Recent discussions of responsible citizenship have taken on new dimensions and have expanded to include the concept of worldwide citizenship. As international travel, communication, and exchanges have become easier and more common, citizens of different countries are becoming more dependent upon one another. This interdependence has given birth to the notion of world citizenship, that is, being a citizen of the world. In general, world citizens are concerned about issues that affect all nations and all people, including overpopulation, the mismanagement of natural resources, and pollution. World citizenship, as a new type of citizenship, requires new sets of individual responsibilities.

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## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The 50-minute lesson plan which follows highlights select issues related to the theme of this chapter: individual responsibilities and citizenship. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

---

### Preliminary Lesson Planning

Materials:

- Create Handout 1 for Activity 1 using items in [Appendix A](#). Format the handout so that it looks like this:

Individual citizens can participate in both community and national life in many different ways. How important are these forms of participation? *Very important (+)*; *Important (✓)*; *Not important (−)*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Voting in elections

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Running for office

- For Activity 2, original student groups
- should be assigned one single quotation from [Appendix B](#). Ideally, each group will be assigned a different quotation from the appendix. If the class is made up of more than nine groups, either find

additional quotations on citizenship and individual responsibilities, or assign quotations from the appendix to more than one group.

- Teachers may simplify the vocabulary of original quotations, without changing the meaning, to make them accessible to their students. Students in each group should receive their own strip of paper with the quotation assigned to the group. Thus, teachers will need to make sets of "quotation strips" before class begins.

*Student grouping decisions:*

- Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activities 1 and 2. Students will remain in the same groups for Activity 1 and the first part of Activity 2. Half way through Activity 2, students will be assigned to new groups. The new groups will consist of students who have considered different quotations in the first part of Activity 2. It is recommended that groups have no more than six participants each. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

*Vocabulary considerations:*

- Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix C](#). Items listed in the glossary are written in **bold** print the first time that they are mentioned in the lesson plan.

---

### Warm Up Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

Purpose:

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of individual responsibilities
- To tap students' background knowledge
- To introduce vocabulary that will facilitate successful completion of the lesson

Procedures:

1. Write the following two questions on the blackboard before class: What does it mean to be a citizen of a community, state, and country? What responsibilities do individual citizens have? Underline the word "citizen" in the first question and the word "responsibilities" in the second question.
2. When class begins, ask students to read the two questions silently. Ask students what they think the theme of the lesson will be. Make sure students understand the key words: **citizen** and **responsibilities**. After soliciting responses from a few students, reinforce the theme of the lesson by writing "Individual responsibilities and citizenship" on the blackboard above your questions. Spend no more than one minute soliciting student responses.
3. Ask students to take two minutes (and only two minutes) to write down whatever comes to mind in response to the two questions on the blackboard. The focus of the activity should be on idea generation, not correct grammar or proper formatting. Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers.



4. After students have written for two minutes, ask them to turn to a neighbor and take an additional two minutes to share their ideas. Students should not exchange papers. Rather they should only consult their written work for ideas.

---

### **Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1 (a few minutes)**

Pointing to the first question on the blackboard (What does it mean to be a citizen of a community, state, and country?), ask student volunteers to share some ideas with the class. Then point to the second question on the blackboard (What responsibilities do individual citizens have?) and ask for other student volunteers to share possible answers. Tell students that the class session will be devoted to exploring the responsibilities that individual citizens have in their city, state, and nation.

### **Activity #1 (approximately 15-20 minutes)**

*Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To give students the opportunity to consider a range of individual responsibilities and their importance to society
- To give students a chance to express their opinions to others and to consider (possibly) diverse opinions of others
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

*Procedures:*

1. Distribute Handout 1 to all students. Ask students to work individually to complete the handout. Tell students that they should consider each responsibility listed on the handout and decide whether it is very important, important, or not important. They should indicate their opinion in the space provided with a plus (+) for very important, a check mark (✓) for important, or a minus (-) for not important. Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers. Ask students to work as quickly as possible.
2. As students are filling out their handouts, circulate and make sure students understand all of the vocabulary. Provide clarification if necessary.
3. Put students into groups. Ask students to compare their answers. To focus group discussions, ask students to concentrate on those responsibilities where differences of opinion exist (i.e., on items with different responses). Students should explain the reasons for their responses. (Groups that finish early--because group members are basically in agreement with one another--should concentrate on whether their reasons for similar responses are the same or different.)
4. Ask student volunteers to report a few into
5. resting differences of opinion and reasons for differing views.

---

### **Activity #2 (approximately 20-25 minutes)**

Purpose:

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To give students the opportunity to consider different perspectives and come to a group decision
- To provide students with time to express their opinions

Procedures:

1. Ask students to remain in the same groups. Assign a different quotation (from [Appendix B](#)) to each group of students; give each group member a strip of paper with the quotation assigned to the group.
2. Ask student groups to discuss the quotation assigned to them to determine its position, directly or indirectly stated, about citizenship and individual responsibilities. Put the following question on the blackboard to guide student discussion: What does the author of this quotation think about citizenship and individual responsibilities? Remind students that each and every student must be prepared to report on group deliberations/opinions.
3. While groups are engaged in discussion, circulate to keep students on task and to assist them with any vocabulary that they may need to express their opinions.
4. Put students in new groups; the new groups should be made up of students who can report on different quotations. Ask students to take turns reading their quotations to new group members and explaining authors' positions on citizenship and individual responsibilities.
5. Circulate to keep students on task.
6. Ask groups to select one of the quotations, from those represented in their groups, as their favorite. The group should be able to defend their choice.

### **Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)**

Purpose:

- To recycle important concepts
- To provide some closure to lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss relevance of lesson

Procedures:

1. Ask groups to report on their favorite quotation about citizenship and individual responsibilities. Ask student volunteers to explain their groups' reason(s) for selecting the quotation as their favorite.
2. Ask students what new insights they gained about citizenship and individual responsibilities from the lesson.

### Possible Extensions to Lesson

1. Ask students to write up their own original statements about citizenship and responsibility based on the information that they learned in the lesson. Then ask students to share their "original quotations" with each other.
2. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.
  - A. What should a citizen do if a law conflicts with his/her beliefs, morals, and/or religion?
  - B. Under what circumstances do you think a citizen has a right to violate a law?
  - C. What arguments can you make to convince a friend to become a more active citizen?
  - D. What are the best ways to become an informed citizen?
  - E. Should all citizens who are **eligible** to vote be required to vote? Should people who do not vote be **fin**ed? Why? Why not?
  - F. What can a citizen do to make a difference?
  - G. What is more important, being an active citizen at the local level or the national level? Why?
3. What does it mean to be a citizen of the world?
  - A. What advantages come with world citizenship? What disadvantages?
  - B. Do you think world citizenship will be possible in your lifetime? Why? Why not?
  - C. Does everyone have a responsibility to help with worldwide problems, such as overpopulation, **misuse** of natural resources, pollution? What can be done to eliminate these serious problems?
  - D. What can people do to become more **conscientious** citizens of the world?
4. Refer to the websites listed in the next section of this chapter for more information and lesson planning ideas.

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## Appendix A

### Items for Activity 1: Handout on Individual Responsibilities

Individual citizens can participate in both community and national life in many different ways. How important are these forms of participation?

*Very important (+); Important (✓); Not important (-)*

1. Voting in elections
2. Running for office
3. Participating in political life
4. Getting an education
5. Being active in the community
6. Staying informed by reading newspapers, listening to the news on the radio, etc.
7. Talking about public issues
8. Writing letters to **public officials** about important issues
9. Obeying laws
10. Reporting **crimes**
11. Helping the community or nation in emergency situations
12. Respecting other people's **property**
13. Respecting other people's rights
14. Respecting other people's opinions
15. Paying taxes
16. Serving in the military
17. Serving on a **jury**
18. Doing volunteer work with community organizations (e.g., a school, a homeless shelter, a neighborhood crime watch)
19. Joining a citizen's group to work on a community problem
20. Keeping the environment clean
21. Recycling
22. Being tolerant, fair, truthful

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## Appendix B

### Quotations for Activity 2

1. No man is an island. (John Donne, 1631)
2. I have a dream that one day...the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. (Martin Luther King, 1963)
3. Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. (John F. Kennedy, 1961)
4. Each citizen must see the connection between self-interest and the **common good**. (Tocqueville, 1830s)
5. Citizenship is the most important **office** in the land. (Brandeis, between 1916-1939)
6. Citizens must understand that political participation includes more than simply voting in periodic elections. (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991)
7. I may **detest** what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it. (Voltaire, 1770s)
8. Citizenship implies certain responsibilities including placing the common good before private interest. (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991)
9. If you believe in something badly enough, you can make a difference. (Lightner, 1980s)

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## CHAPTER 5

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

The theme of this chapter, governmental responsibilities, has the potential of being examined from numerous perspectives. In this chapter, students will consider what life would be like without government and then will focus on select governmental services that citizens around the world often take for granted. While exploring these perspectives on governmental responsibility, students will learn vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme. As students improve their language skills, they will develop an understanding of some of the challenges that governments face while serving the citizenry of their countries. The 50-minute lesson which follows can be used in a variety of ways: teachers can use it as a single, stand-alone lesson; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. The lesson-plan ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in introducing this topic to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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A civil society depends on the active and ethical participation of both its citizenry and government--at local, regional, and national levels. Governments that provide for the safety, security, health, and basic necessities of all citizens, rather than particular groups or individuals, help nurture civil societies. Ideally, all citizens in civil societies share in the benefits of economic growth. When governments work for the benefit of society as a whole, instead of catering to private, self-seeking interests of class, dynasty, race, religion, or ethnicity, it is said that they are working toward the "common good." Basically, attending to all citizens, rather than a select few, is the hallmark of governments attempting to work toward the common good. (See Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991, for a more detailed discussion of the common good.)

How can a government cater to the common good? What responsibilities does a government have toward its citizenry? The answers to these questions are largely dependent on how one defines government. Consider the following definitions:

- Government can be described as the people and groups within a society with the authority to make, carry out, and enforce laws; to manage disputes about laws; and to provide for the defense of the nation (National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994).
- Government, when directed toward worthy purposes and conducted effectively in accord with basic principles of justice, can be a powerful force for the protection of personal, political, and economic rights of individuals and the promotion of the common good (National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994).
- Government is the formal institution of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts (National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994).

Based on these definitions alone, one can see that governmental responsibilities are monumental. A few moments of contemplation lead to the realization that differing ideas about the purposes of government can have profound consequences for the well-being of individuals and the society. In this chapter, the focus is on select governmental responsibilities and corresponding services, including public health, safety, transportation, education, and the protection of individual rights and freedoms.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The 50-minute lesson plan which follows highlights select issues related to the theme of this chapter: governmental responsibilities. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

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### Preliminary Lesson Planning

#### *Materials:*

Create two handouts (A and B) from the information provided in [Appendix A](#). Handout A should list major governmental responsibilities (in capital letters in Appendix A). Include only two examples of governmental services that are associated with each governmental responsibility (in lower case letters, immediately following governmental responsibilities, in Appendix A); select governmental services that will assist students in understanding the governmental responsibility associated with them. Leave space on the handout for students to fill in additional services for each responsibility. A suggested format is as follows:

| Major governmental responsibilities | Related governmental services |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Cultural resources               | 1. Museums, theaters          |
| 2. Public safety                    | 2. Police, fire fighters      |

In Handout B, list all remaining services ([Appendix A](#)) in random order or in alphabetical order.

When creating Handouts A and B, delete items from Appendix A that are irrelevant to your country and add items in both categories -- governmental responsibilities and services -- that are pertinent to your country.

#### *Student grouping decisions:*

Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activities 1 and 2. Participants will remain in the same groups for both activities. It is recommended that groups have no more than six participants each. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

*Vocabulary considerations:*

Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to have explained. Time has been allotted in Activity 1 for a discussion of key vocabulary. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix B](#). Items listed in the glossary are written in bold print the first time that they are mentioned in the lesson plan.

---

### Warm Up Activity (5 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of governmental responsibilities
- To draw upon students' background knowledge
- To give students the opportunity to express their opinions to others

*Procedures:*

1. Ask students to listen to the following questions. (Emphasize the word "without" when reading the first question to the class.): Can you imagine living in a place **without** a government? What would it be like?
2. Ask students to take out a piece of paper. Give students one minute to work individually to jot down as many ideas as possible in response to the questions. (They can do this as a list of relevant words and phrases or a short free write). Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers. If necessary, repeat the questions and/or expand upon the questions to guide student responses (e.g., What services would we lose? What would be missing in everyday life? What would we gain? What would be better? Worse?).
3. Ask students in pairs to share ideas about living in a place without a government. Give students two minutes to share their ideas. (Ask students to do this orally; they can use their notes as references, but they should not simply hand their papers to their partners.)
4. Ask students to share a few of their ideas with the rest of the class. Write two types of student responses on the blackboard: Words characterizing major areas of governmental responsibility (e.g., items in capital letters in [Appendix A](#)) and governmental services (e.g., items in lower case letters in [Appendix A](#)) which serve as examples of different responsibilities. Include student contributions that are not listed in [Appendix A](#), but are appropriate to the discussion to follow.
5. (Do not erase the blackboard.)

---

### Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1

Briefly summarize students' conclusions about living without a government. Make a point of emphasizing responses that focus on services that the average citizen would lose in a society without government. Tell students that the class session will be devoted to exploring a range of governmental responsibilities.



---

### Activity #1 (approximately 15-20 minutes)

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To give students the chance to build their vocabularies and see relationships among words in semantic groups
- To raise students' consciousness about governmental responsibilities and services

#### *Procedure:*

1. Ask students to form groups. Give each group one copy of Handout A and one copy of Handout B. Ask groups to look at Handout A and consider the major governmental responsibilities listed on the left side of the handout. Make sure students understand the meaning of each governmental responsibility. If necessary, use the two examples listed to the right of each category to help students understand the differences among the categories.
2. Ask students to look at the governmental services listed randomly on Handout B. Ask them to transfer the items on Handout B to the appropriate categories on Handout A. Give students 8-10 minutes to finish this task. (Tell students that some items listed on Handout B might fit into several governmental responsibility categories.)
3. While students are working in groups, circulate to keep students on task and to assist them with necessary vocabulary. Ask groups that finish early to brainstorm additional services for already existing categories and/or to add entirely new categories to their handout.

Return to the blackboard occasionally to add major "governmental responsibility" categories to the list started during the warm-up activity. Before the class moves to the next part of the lesson, write all categories listed on Handout A on the blackboard.

4. Review group deliberations. If possible, ask student volunteers to come to the blackboard to add services to different "governmental responsibility" categories. Assign one student to each category. If space does not permit such student participation at the blackboard, fill in major categories on the blackboard with students' oral responses as you move from one category to another.

Encourage students to cross check responses on the blackboard with responses on their handout.

5. If time permits, ask students if any important categories or services are missing on the blackboard. Add student responses to the blackboard.

(Do not erase the blackboard. Students may want to refer back to it in the next activity.)

## Activity #2 (approximately 20 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To give students the opportunity to make and defend judgments about different governmental responsibilities

### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to continue working in the same groups. Ask students to consider their lists of governmental responsibilities and services that are on the blackboard and on their completed Handout A. Put the following instructions on the blackboard.
  - A. Identify the five most important governmental responsibilities.
  - B. Rank your choices from 1 to 5 with 1 equal to "most important."
  - C. Write down a rationale for your decisions.
  - D. Be prepared to defend your decisions with real-life explanations.

Remind students that every group member should be able to report on A, B, C, and D.

If necessary, model a response by identifying one governmental responsibility that you consider a high priority. Provide a rationale for your decision, accompanied by a real-life explanation. For example, you might tell students that you think that education is a critical governmental responsibility and that without an educated population, society cannot progress and meet the challenges of the future. In general, a more educated, literate population tends to be healthier and more affluent.

If time is limited, ask groups to identify three priorities rather than five.

2. Give students up to 10 minutes to formulate their responses. Circulate to keep students on task.
3. Ask for three volunteers from each group. Volunteer #1 should report the responsibility that the group considered most important (the item ranked #1) by the group. Volunteer #2 should provide a rationale for the group's first choice. Volunteer #3 should defend the group's first choice with a real-life explanation

## Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide some closure to lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss opening class question for a second time

### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to turn to a nearby classmate and reconsider the issues raised at the beginning of class: Would you rather live in a place with a government or without a government? Why?

2. Ask students to report back any interesting answers to the whole class.

---

### Possible Extensions to Lesson

1. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.
  - a. What other responsibilities do governments have?
  - b. What can governments do to respect and protect individual rights and individual freedoms?
  - c. Why is it difficult for a government to meet all of its responsibilities?
  - d. How can governments ensure that all people, not just a few, benefit from governmental laws and policies?
  - e. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of government?
  - f. Should powers of governments be limited? Why? Why not?
2. Ask students to list and present arguments in favor of and against limited government.
3. It is said that one of the main responsibilities of governments is the promotion of common good," that is the promotion of the general welfare of all individuals and groups. Why is this responsibility so challenging?
4. Government has been defined as "people and groups within a society with the authority to make, carry out, and enforce laws and to manage disputes about them." Do you like this definition? If so, why? If not, how would you define government?
5. Ask student groups to create posters highlighting five of the most important governmental responsibilities and rationales for their decisions. Posters can then be displayed around the walls of the classroom.
6. Refer to the web sites listed in the next section of this chapter for more information and lesson planning ideas.

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## Appendix A

### Governmental Responsibilities and Services

*Governmental responsibilities are listed in all capital letters on the left; associated services are listed in lower case letters to the right of each major responsibility. The lists should not be considered all inclusive. Teachers should adjust entries so that they are pertinent to their countries.*

BUSINESS AND **TRADE**: Bank regulations, monetary regulations, in-country and out-of-country commerce, price controls

CITY PLANNING: Zoning for businesses, housing, schools, public libraries, parks, green spaces; road maintenance, snow removal

CULTURAL RESOURCES: Museums, theaters, dance/ballet, music, art, preservation of historic buildings and landmarks

EDUCATION: School buildings, universities, vocational schools, school libraries, teacher training, teacher certification, teacher supervision, grade-level standards, curricula, textbooks, national exams

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS: Television, radio, telephones, telegraph, post office, the Internet

PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: Freedom of expression (speech, press, religion, assembly, conscience), freedom from discrimination, right to privacy, right to an education, right to vote, etc.

PUBLIC HEALTH: Health care, disease control, hospitals and clinics, ambulances, food inspection, drug regulations, inoculations, regulations about air and water pollution, family planning, vehicle inspections, garbage collection, toxic waste disposal

PUBLIC SAFETY: Police, fire fighters, military forces, jails and prisons, courts, judges, street lighting, traffic laws

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Highways, roads, traffic lights, road signs, buses, subways, trains, airports, harbors

PUBLIC UTILITIES: Electricity, gas, water, sewage

PUBLIC WELFARE: Social security; assistance for the unemployed, the disabled, the handicapped, and injured workers; childcare

RECORD KEEPING: Births, deaths, passports, immigration, voter registration, taxes

RECREATION: City parks, sports facilities, national parks, after-school activities

WORKER PROTECTION: Labor laws, child labor laws, controls about unsafe working conditions, laws to protect workers from discrimination and harassment

[Glossary](#)

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# CHAPTER 6

## RULES AND LAWS

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**By Fredricka L. Stoller and Katherine Reilly**

**R**ules and laws affect our daily lives. They pervade our personal space at home and at work, our recreational activities as part of sports and games, and our interactions with others at the street corner, on the highway, in the market place, at school, at the bank, in restaurants, at the post office, and so forth. Most people would agree that rules and laws provide some degree of order, predictability, and security in our lives. Yet, not all rules and laws are just.

This chapter is a 50-minute lesson that will give students the opportunity to explore select aspects of rules and laws. Students will learn the vocabulary and concepts associated with the topic, practice their English language skills, and develop an understanding of the role of rules and laws in civil societies. Teachers have the option of using the lesson plan in a variety of ways: They can create a single lesson on one aspect of the topic; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. These lesson plans are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in introducing the topic to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Rules and laws are ever present in our lives. In families, rules based on customs and traditions play an important role in guiding behavior, determining relationships, and establishing order. At sports events, like soccer matches and basketball games, rules dictate the behavior of players, coaches, referees, and fans. When playing games such as chess, rules specify the ways in which the chess pieces can be moved and the ways in which players may proceed. At school, rules determine teacher-student relationships in addition to how students contribute to class discussions, when students need to turn in homework, and how students must behave in and out of the classroom. In the workplace, rules govern when employees begin their workday and when the workday ends, and rules govern proper behavior and performance expectations of workers and administrators. As becomes apparent, rules are pervasive in all aspects of our lives.

Laws, often defined as rules made, carried out, and enforced by local, regional, and national governments, are pervasive too. Laws influence our lives in many ways and play many roles in society. Consider these varying functions of the law:

- Laws dictate the ways people should behave (e.g., people must respect the property of others).

- Laws specify what activities are permitted and prohibited under certain conditions (e.g., drinking under age, smoking in school buildings).
- Laws serve to maintain order, ensure predictability, and provide security (e.g., they require that people drive on a given side of the road; they require that people pay for services rendered).
- Laws in many nations spell out which individual rights and freedoms will be protected (e.g., personal, political, and economic rights).
- Laws guarantee certain benefits to citizens (e.g., schools, health services, public transportation, and garbage collection).
- Laws assign responsibilities to citizens (e.g., paying taxes and serving in the military).
- Laws define what duties the government will perform and, in some locales, limit the power of governmental officials.
- Laws can facilitate different forms of social change (e.g., toxic waste disposal, anti-discrimination, and prohibition of sexual harassment and spousal abuse).
- Laws are used to manage different forms of conflict, in turn, keeping courts, lawyers, and judges busy worldwide.

An examination of this list reveals the varying functions of laws in society. Laws serve many different purposes, though not every rule or law is a good one. Ideally, laws should be well designed to achieve a just purpose; they should be understandable so that the average citizen can interpret them. Laws that protect individual rights and that promote the common good of all citizens, regardless of class, race, religion, or ethnicity can nurture environments open to values associated with civil societies.

This introduction only briefly discusses select issues related to rules and laws. The topic is actually quite extensive. Fuller coverage of the topic would need to include discussion of the similarities and differences among international law, constitutional law, common law, religious law, civil law, criminal law, corporate law, etc. It would also need to cover issues related to equal protection and equal opportunity under law. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter, we have chosen to focus on an exploration of the purposes of rules and laws, and on issues related to fairness, usefulness, and necessity.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following 50-minute lesson plan highlights select issues related to the theme of this chapter: Rules and laws. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the lesson to meet the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

### Preliminary Lesson Planning

#### *Materials:*

Create a "Laws and Purposes" handout for each pair of students in class ([Appendix A](#)). There are 18 laws suggested in Appendix A; an ideal number of laws for students to work with is seven, plus an example that can be used to model the activity. Choose the seven most provocative, unusual, or interesting laws from those suggested when you create your handout, or create entries of your own. Include the example below as your model entry. The handout can be adapted to different proficiency levels by using more or fewer laws from the list and by adjusting the vocabulary. A suggested format follows:

| Law and Purpose  | Is it fair? | Is it useful? | Is it necessary? |
|--|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. A person may not cross the street unless there is a crosswalk (no jaywalking).<br>Purpose _____ | .           | .             | .                |

Make one copy of the "New Country Rules and Laws" handout for each group of students that will be working together during Activity 2 ([Appendix B](#)).

#### *Student grouping decisions:*

During Activity 2, students will work in pairs. For Activity 3, students will work in larger groups. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members for Activity 3 before class. To promote as much discussion as possible, groups should have no more than six participants each. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

### *Vocabulary considerations:*

Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms and their definitions are included in a glossary in [Appendix C](#). Items listed in the glossary are underlined the first time they are mentioned in the lesson plan.

---

### **Warm Up Activity (approximately 5 minutes)**

#### *Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of **rules** and **laws**
- To access students' background knowledge
- To introduce key vocabulary that will help students successfully complete the lesson

#### *Procedures:*

1. Write "Rules" and "Laws" on opposite sides of the board.
  2. Ask students to think for a moment about the differences between rules and laws (e.g., legal distinction and criminal punishment). Ask for volunteers to describe or define each of the words. List their explanations, noting key words, under the appropriate word on the board.
- 

### **Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1**

Tell students that they will be exploring issues about rules and laws in society.

---

### **Activity #1 (approximately 10 minutes)**

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To introduce students to the concept of rules in relation to their daily lives
- To give students a chance to analyze the intended **purpose** of rules that affects them

#### *Procedures:*

1. Ask the class if it is "rules" or "laws" that exist at home and among their family members (the answer should be "rules"). Ask who makes the rules in their houses.



2. Give an example of one rule that you had to live by when you were growing up (e.g., I had to be home by 11:00 p.m., I could not yell at my parents, I had to clean my room). Ask students to write down 3 rules that they have to live by in their parents' houses. While they are doing this, write the word "rule" at the top of the board, on the left side; write the word "purpose" at the top of the board, on the right side.
3. Have volunteers explain one of the rules on their lists. Write each of the rules, in a shortened form, on the left side of the board under the heading "rule."
4. After listing 4 or 5 rules on the blackboard, ask the class to suggest what the intended purpose of each rule is. List the shortened purposes on the right, next to the appropriate rules on the board. Ask whether students think the rule is effective in achieving its purpose.

---

### Activity #2 (approximately 15 minutes)

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To provide students with opportunities to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different laws
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

#### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to work in pairs. Hand out one copy of the "Laws and Purposes" worksheet to each pair of students. Tell the class that this is a list of actual laws, not rules, from several countries; violators of the laws are either **fin**ed or jailed.
2. Ask a volunteer to read the first law on the list. Ask the class to identify the purpose of the law. Have them write the purpose in the appropriate space on the worksheet. Possible student answers might include *to save lives* and *to prevent traffic accidents*.
3. Ask each pair to evaluate the first law on the handout by discussing and then answering the three questions listed to the right of the law on the handout (Is it fair? Is it useful? Is it necessary?). Remind them to consider the purpose of the law and its effectiveness in achieving that purpose. Ask for volunteers to report on group decisions.
4. Ask pairs to complete the worksheet with their partners in the same way they worked on the first law. Emphasize the need for discussion and agreement with their partners.
5. Ask for volunteers to report on the law that they found most interesting, controversial, difficult, or easy to evaluate.

### Activity #3 (approximately 15 minutes)

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To empower students by giving them the opportunity to create something new using the information and thought processes introduced in the lesson
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson

#### *Procedures:*

1. Have students form groups for this activity. Give one copy of the "New Country Rules and Laws" handout to each group.
2. Explain that they are the leaders of a new country and must decide both the country's name and its key laws. The 15 categories on the list are areas in which new laws must be created. Their job is to choose three of the categories from the list and create one law that helps govern issues related to each category. Each law must be fair, **useful**, and necessary; they must state the law and give its purpose (list these points on the board). They should be able to explain each law and discuss the reasons for their choices. Give groups a time limit for completing their laws (approximately 10 minutes). Depending on your students' proficiency levels, you may want to adjust the number of laws created.
3. Have students identify the most important of their three laws. After groups have made their selections, ask for volunteers to explain their most important law to the class.

### Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide some closure to the lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the relevance of the lesson

#### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to identify three elements that should be considered when laws are created. List these on the board.
2. Ask students the following question: Why is it important to understand the intended purposes of rules and laws? List abbreviated responses on the board.

---

### Possible Extensions to Lesson

- Ask students the following questions: Should parents clearly state the purposes of their rules before they have children follow them? Should lawmakers clearly define the purposes of their laws before they enact them? Why? Write key words on the board.
- Ask students to think of three rules in their homes or laws in their country that they think are **fair**. Have them discuss which aspects of the laws are fair. (This may be done orally or in writing.)

- Ask students to think of three rules in their homes or laws in their country that they do not think are fair. Have them discuss which aspects of the laws are unfair. How can the laws be changed so that they are fairer? (This may be done orally or in writing.)
- Ask students to think of three rules in their homes or laws in their country that they think are **necessary**. Why are they necessary? Why do they think the rules or laws were enacted? Who benefits from these rules and laws? (This may be done orally or in writing.)
- Ask students to think of three rules in their homes or laws in their country that they do not think are necessary. Why are they not necessary? Why do they think the rules or laws were enacted? Who benefits from these rules and laws? (This may be done orally or in writing.)
- Have students identify an unpopular school rule. Ask these two questions: Why is the rule unpopular? How would you change the rule?
- Have students think of a popular sport or game. Ask the following: Which rules are necessary? Not necessary? Fair? Unfair? How would the sport or game change without these rules?
- Ask students to create a "Declaration of Cultural Rules," identifying 10 or 15 of the rules most vital to the social success of their culture.
- Have students develop a "Charter of Effective Lawmaking," listing issues to be considered by those in charge of creating new laws.

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## Appendix A

### Laws and Purposes

1. A person may not cross the street unless there is a **crosswalk** (no **jaywalking**).
2. No one may urinate in public places, such as parks, streets, or elevators.
3. People of different races must use separate drinking fountains and bathrooms, though the facilities must be of equal quality.
4. **Littering** is not permitted.
5. All drivers and passengers of motor vehicles must wear **seatbelts**.
6. Smoking is **prohibited** in all indoor public places.
7. It is illegal to sell chewing gum.
8. All motorcycle riders must wear **helmets**.
9. It is illegal to **commit suicide**.
10. **Spitting** in public is prohibited.
11. No one under the age of 16 can get married unless parents agree.
12. Persons under the age of 18 cannot be out in public after 10:00 p.m.
13. Drinking alcoholic beverages is **prohibited** for people under the age of 21.
14. No person can make verbal or written **threats** to the leader of the country.
15. No one under the age of 18 may vote in national elections.
16. All persons must obtain a **license** to catch fish.
17. It is illegal to ask job applicants to provide photographs of themselves.
18. No one under the age of 16 can obtain a driver's license.

[Glossary](#)

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## Appendix B

| New Country Rules and Laws |         |                       |          |             |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|
| Marriage                   | Death   | Murder                | Stealing | Alcohol     |
| Driving                    | Voting  | Taxes                 | Drugs    | Religion    |
| Childbearing               | Animals | <b>Mass<br/>Media</b> | Guns     | Environment |

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# CHAPTER 7

## SOCIETAL DILEMMAS: FINDING A BALANCE

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By **Fredricka L. Stoller**

**T**his chapter explores one of the complexities of civil societies, specifically the tensions that exist between the values, needs, and interests of individuals, on one hand, and the values, needs, and interests of society at large, on the other. Civil societies are constantly struggling to find a balance between these two powerful forces (i.e., individuals and society). Both forces play an important role in shaping communities and nations, and both have the potential to strengthen or weaken communities and nations.

In the following lesson, students consider several societal dilemmas that exemplify the tensions that can exist between individuals and society. While exploring these dilemmas, students learn a new set of concepts, become familiar with associated vocabulary, and have multiple opportunities to improve their language skills. Because the topic is so broad, it has the potential for being explored from multiple perspectives and in different ways. Teachers have the option of using the proposed lesson for a single, stand-alone class, or they can expand upon the proposed lesson to create a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in greater detail. They can also develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. The lesson plan ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in introducing the topic of "Societal dilemmas: Finding a balance" to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Societies are complex; their complexity is partially due to the fact that they comprise two separate, but overlapping, components:

1. individuals with their own values, desires, and needs
2. groups of individuals with common interests, religion, values, educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, political orientations, and other factors

When merged together, these two components--individuals and groups of individuals--form a society. Interestingly, societies, as free-standing entities, have their own sets of needs and priorities, distinct from those of individuals and groups of individuals.

The presence of two other separate, but overlapping, entities, the government and its citizens, adds to the complexity of societies. In a civil society, the government and its citizens have two major responsibilities: The promotion of the common good (that is, the well being of society) and the protection of individual rights. This dual responsibility often results in tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. In civil societies, it is not uncommon to witness tensions between

- personal responsibilities and civic responsibilities
- individual needs and societal needs
- individual interests and societal interests
- individual priorities and societal priorities
- individual values and societal values

For a civil society to function, the government and its citizens must strive to find a balance between these competing perspectives. To maintain a civil society, personal desires and interests often have to be subordinated to the public good. This means that the well being of society must take precedence over the needs of individuals or small groups of individuals. This "balancing act" often leads to situations in which the government and its citizens must choose between two alternative positions, one which caters more to the individual and the other which caters to the society. The need to choose between two alternative possibilities results in a wide range of societal dilemmas.

A sampling of societal dilemmas is listed below. These dilemmas share at least one common feature - the fact that there are always at least two sides to every issue, at least two alternatives from which to choose, or at least two different solutions to a given problem. This duality of possibilities creates the dilemmas faced by many civil societies.

Consider these examples:

*Societal dilemma #1:* Individual beliefs versus majority rule

*Societal dilemma #2:* The need to obey the law versus the right to dissent

*Societal dilemma #3:* The appreciation for cultural variety versus the need for cultural unity

*Societal dilemma #4:* Individual rights versus the concern for public safety

*Societal dilemma #5:* The need for national security versus the right for individuals to have access to information

*Societal dilemma #6:* The desirability for free enterprise versus the need for public planning

*Societal dilemma #7:* Global business versus national interests

*Societal dilemma #8:* Local control versus national control

*Societal dilemma #9:* Power of the people versus power of the government

*Societal dilemma #10:* Right to privacy versus the right of the public to know

These dilemmas represent just a few of the tensions that can exist in civil societies. In countries that have experienced similar dilemmas, one major challenge, faced by governments and citizens centers on finding a balance which meets the needs of individuals and society.

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## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following 50-minute lesson highlights select issues related to societal dilemmas: Finding a balance. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

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### Preliminary Lesson Planning

#### *Materials:*

Create two handouts. Handout #1 should list at least ten dilemmas, such as those listed in [Appendix A](#). (Information for Handout #1 can be written on an overhead transparency or on the blackboard before class.) Handout #2 should list at least five scenarios illustrating tensions that can arise when two different perspectives exist about a common issue. To create Handout #2, either select a subset of the scenarios provided in [Appendix B](#) or create scenarios that are more suitable to the society in which your students live. In Handout #2, make sure to create a space to the left of each scenario (as modeled in [Appendix B](#)), where students can note the number of matching dilemmas (from Handout #1).

#### *Student grouping:*

Group students for Activities 1 and 2 since students will remain in the same groups for both activities. It is recommended that each group have no more than five participants.

#### *Vocabulary considerations:*

Decide the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix C](#).



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### Warm Up Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of the lesson
- To introduce vocabulary and concepts that will be used in this lesson

*Procedures:*

1. Write "societal dilemmas" on the blackboard.
2. Point to the word **dilemmas** and ask students what it means. Write a definition or key words on the board to assist those students who are unfamiliar with the word.
3. Ask students the following question: Can you think of any dilemmas that you are currently facing or that you have faced in the past? For each dilemma introduced, ask students to identify at least two sides of the issue and/or the two (or more) choices that they are considering. Be prepared to share a personal dilemma of your own to clarify the meaning of the word.
4. Point to the word **societal** and ask students what it means. Write a definition or key words on the board to assist those students who are unfamiliar with the word.
5. Ask students the following question: What societal dilemmas is our community (or nation) currently facing? For each dilemma introduced, ask students to identify at least two sides of the issue and/or the two alternatives that are in conflict. List responses on the blackboard. You may want to introduce a dilemma and ask students to help you identify the two sides of the issue.

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### Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1

Tell students that the class session will be devoted to exploring a variety of situations in which society has to decide between two or more possibilities or positions. The challenge is "finding a balance" to meet the needs of the individual and the society. Write "finding a balance" on the blackboard next to "Societal dilemmas." (Do not erase the board. You may want to return to it at the end of the lesson as a way of providing meaningful closure to the lesson.)

## Activity #1 (approximately 20-25 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To allow students to use key vocabulary and concepts associated with the topic of the lesson
- To introduce students to a set of societal dilemmas that reinforces the lesson
- To encourage students to engage in critical thinking and problem solving

### *Procedures:*

1. Distribute a copy of Handout #1 to all students or display an overhead transparency of the same material. Ask students to look over each pair of contrasting possibilities and each pair reflecting a dilemma and to explain what the societal dilemma is. Clarify new vocabulary at this time.
2. Read a sample scenario to the class. Ask students to identify one or more of the societal dilemma(s), listed on Handout #1.

Sample scenario: In a recent election, voters passed a law requiring drivers of automobiles to wear safety belts. Some citizens do not want to wear safety belts and are protesting the law.

(Possible societal dilemmas resulting from this situation: individual beliefs versus majority rule, need to obey laws versus right to protest unfair laws, individual rights versus public safety)

3. Discuss students' interpretations of the scenario, focusing on the dilemma(s) being faced.
4. Assign students to groups. (Students should take their copies of Handout #1 with them, if handouts rather than an overhead transparency were used earlier.)
5. Give each student a copy of Handout #2; orient students to the handout. Then ask students to number off, 1-2-3-4-5, in each group. Tell students that they are individually responsible for reporting group deliberations on one of the scenarios on Handout #2. For example, student #1 will report on scenario #1; student #2 will report on scenario #2, and so forth. (If there are more than five students in a group, multiple students can be assigned to each scenario and share the responsibility for reporting group deliberations.)
6. Ask students to read over the scenarios and discuss them in their groups. Students should match the most appropriate societal dilemmas, from Handout #1, with each scenario on Handout #2.
7. While students are working in groups, circulate to clarify new vocabulary, answer questions, and keep students on task.
8. Discuss each scenario. Ask for a student volunteer to report on his/her group's interpretation of scenario #1. Encourage students from groups with different views to add to the class discussion. Continue with scenarios 2-5. Possible interpretations are listed in [Appendix D](#). (Keep in mind that students in different parts of the world may interpret scenarios differently.)

---

## Activity #2 (approximately 15 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To contextualize the lesson in a meaningful way
- To engage in problem solving

### *Procedures:*

1. Ask student groups to follow these steps:
  - a. Identify three dilemmas facing our community/nation.
  - b. Rank order the dilemmas from most to least serious (1 = most serious; 3 = least serious).
  - c. Consider the most serious dilemma. What are the different perspectives that people have on this issue?
  - d. What can be done to find a balance between people's different views? Be prepared to report your answer to the class.
2. Ask students to report group deliberations about the most serious dilemma on their list. What can be done to solve the dilemma?

---

## Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To conclude lesson
- To allow students to discuss the relevance of this lesson

### *Procedures:*

1. Pointing to the blackboard, ask students why "finding a balance" is important when facing societal dilemmas.
2. Ask students the following question: What happens when societies do not or cannot find a balance?

### Possible Extensions to Lesson

1. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson:
  - a. Under what circumstances should individual freedoms be limited to protect other members of society?
  - b. Should "hate speech" be allowed in societies that value freedom of speech? Why or why not?
  - c. How much privacy should citizens and governmental leaders have?
  - d. How can a society balance the public's right to know what the government is doing and the need for national security?
  - e. Should citizens who own property be able to do whatever they want on their properties?
  - f. Should landowners be able to destroy the environment on their properties?
2. Ask student to evaluate the statement that "all rights have limits."
3. Ask students to write an action plan to solve one of society's most pressing dilemmas.
4. Refer to the web sites listed in the next section of this chapter for more information and lesson planning ideas.

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## Appendix A

### Suggested Dilemmas for Handout #1

1. Individual rights versus Public safety
2. Individual beliefs versus **Majority rule**
3. Freedom of the press versus Right to privacy
4. Need to obey laws versus Right to protest unfair laws
5. National security versus Public health
6. **Cultural pluralism** versus **Cultural unity**
7. Use of **Natural resources** versus **Preservation** of resources
8. Local control versus National control
9. **Free enterprise** versus Public planning
10. **Global** business versus National interest

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## Appendix B

### Possible Scenarios for Handout #2

\_\_\_ Scenario #1: A teenage boy in a crowded movie theater shouts "Fire." His actions cause major chaos in the theater. The boy defends his actions by referring to **freedom of speech** laws. The owner of the movie theater claims that there are limits to free speech and that the boy was wrong.

\_\_\_ Scenario #2: A popular newspaper recently published a detailed story about the private life of an important politician. The newspaper defends its actions by saying that it is protected by **freedom of the press** and that the public has a right to know about the private life of an important leader. The politician strongly objects to the story because of his right to **privacy**.

\_\_\_ Scenario #3: A small community has just passed a law that requires all bike riders to wear **helmets**. Those **in favor of** the law claim that the law protects its citizens from possible **injury**. Those **opposed to** the law claim that they have the right to decide whether they want to wear a helmet or not.

\_\_\_ Scenario #4: A **navy official** reported the dumping of **toxic wastes** in the ocean. The official is being accused of **treason** because he has revealed top secret information. He claims that as a concerned citizen, he had the obligation to report this illegal and dangerous act.

\_\_\_ Scenario #5: A community has decided to honor its different cultural groups with a special celebration each month of the year. Opponents claim that such celebrations will destroy unity in the community.

\_\_\_ Scenario #6: A group of citizens living in a mountain community wants to cut down the nearby forest to build 100 new houses. Opponents of the plan want to protect the forest for future generations.

\_\_\_ Scenario #7: Parents want local control of school curricula and textbook selection. The national government does not want to give up the control it currently has over school curricula and textbook selection in the country.

\_\_\_ Scenario #8: A new company, which has its home office in another country, wants to open in town. The new company will compete with local businesses in a number of ways: It will take workers away from local businesses, and it will take customers away from local businesses. An active community group is holding a protest because it does not want the foreign company to come to town. It wants to protect local businesses.

\_\_\_ Scenario #9: A local business, a **lumber mill**, employs 1,000 people. It has cut down most of the trees in the area. The wood from the lumber mill is used to build houses and furniture. An active community group wants the lumber mill to close down to protect remaining forests.

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## Appendix D

### Possible Interpretations of Activity #1

**Scenario 1:** Individual rights versus public safety

**Scenario 2:** Freedom of the press versus right to privacy

**Scenario 3:** Need to obey laws versus right to protest unfair laws;  
Individual rights versus public safety; Individual beliefs versus majority rule

**Scenario 4:** National security versus public health

**Scenario 5:** Cultural pluralism versus cultural unity

**Scenario 6:** Free enterprise versus public planning; Use of natural resources versus preservation of resources

**Scenario 7:** Local control versus national control

**Scenario 8:** Global business versus national interests

**Scenario 9:** Use of natural resources versus preservation of resources; free enterprise versus public planning

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## CHAPTER 8

# SOCIETAL DILEMMAS: GAINS AND LOSSES

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

**S**ocietal **dilemmas** are varied and numerous. In Chapter 7 of this volume, societal dilemmas were associated with the tensions that exist between the values, needs, and interests of individuals, on one hand, and the values, needs, and interests of society at large, on the other. In this chapter, we examine the societal dilemmas that result from the two-sided nature of the "change process." As we know, the world is constantly changing. Whether the changes are intentional or unintentional, they are often accompanied by positive and negative **consequences**. Because most changes result in **gains** for some and **losses** for others, societies find themselves in the difficult position of having to deal with "winners" and "losers" whenever a change occurs. The lesson in this chapter allows students to examine global changes with an eye toward identifying (a) the winners and the losers and (b) the gains and the losses associated with them. While exploring these real-life societal dilemmas, students learn relevant vocabulary in context and become more comfortable using English to discuss topics of a serious nature.

Teachers have several options of using this lesson: They can use it, with appropriate adaptations, for a single, stand-alone lesson; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. The ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in exploring one aspect of societal dilemmas with their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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One way to build a civil society is to prepare citizens to be conscientious and responsible. Being a conscientious citizen involves such responsibilities as respecting neighbors, obeying laws, paying taxes, serving as a juror, registering to vote and voting knowledgeably, performing public service, and being informed and attentive to public issues. It is this last responsibility--being informed and attentive to public issues that is of local, national, and global importance and is the focal point of this chapter.

Being informed involves much more than reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, or debating issues with family, friends, and colleagues. It involves an understanding of the complexities of different issues and the consequences of various actions. Few issues and actions in society are simple.



Almost all have positive and negative consequences, whether political, economic, social, or environmental. What this suggests is that most issues and actions have both winners and losers. With any issue, an informed citizen should have the skills necessary to determine what is **at issue** and what is **at stake**. Similarly, with any given action (e.g., a decision, a solution to a problem, a law), an informed citizen should have the ability to describe the consequences of the action in terms of costs and benefits, gains and losses, winners and losers, as well as improvements and problems.

Situations in which there are both winners and losers create dilemmas for society. These dilemmas often result in tensions, conflicts, and contradictions. For a civil society to function, decision makers and citizens must strive to find a suitable balance between gains and losses, and between winners and losers, so that as many people as possible benefit from decisions that effect society. One way to develop the critical thinking skills needed to understand the gains and losses associated with societal dilemmas is to examine issues of local, national, and global significance. Consider the following examples:

- **Fact #1:** Between 1970 and 1990, worldwide chemical fertilizer usage tripled.
  - *Gains/Winners:* Better crops, increased food production, increased food supplies; people have better, more nutritious diets; people are healthier
  - *Losses/Losers:* Depletion of water resources, higher rates of illness, higher rates of cancer, soil degradation
- **Fact #2:** It is projected that over the next 25 years, 1.3 billion people will be added to the world's population.<sup>1</sup>
  - *Gains/winners:* Few if any
  - *Losses/losers:* Less resources (food, water) for each new child, more disease, higher infant mortality, overcrowding of cities and villages, fewer opportunities for education for women
- **Fact #3:** The number of people living in **urban** areas will increase from 45.3 % in 1995 to 54.4% in 2015.
  - *Gains/winners:* Greater access to work, education, and health facilities
  - *Losses/losers:* Overcrowding of cities, lack of water, poor sanitation, poor garbage collection, lack of good housing
- **Fact #4:** It is predicted that global energy use will increase 40% between 1993 and 2010. Between 1971 and 1998, global energy use increased 70%.
  - *Gains/Winners:* Improved heating and cooling, health benefits, more stable food supply
  - *Losses/losers:* Loss of fossil fuels, air and water pollution, increase in earth's temperature (global warming), more illness because of pollution

In this lesson, students will examine dilemmas such as those listed above. Through group discussions, students will see how each change has created a dilemma for the world at large. They will use their problem solving abilities to (a) determine the gains/losses and winners/losers for each situation under

consideration and (b) understand the complexities of the world in which we live. It is hoped that the skills developed in this lesson will assist students in considering issues of more personal significance (for their families, communities, and countries), so that they can make wise decisions (or choices) and then accept the consequences of their actions, two characteristics of conscientious and responsible citizenship.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following 50-minute lesson plan requires that students identify local or national changes that have led to gains (i.e., improvements) or losses (i.e., problems). Later they consider a set of changes with global significance to identify gains/losses and winners/losers. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

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### Preliminary Lesson Planning

#### *Materials:*

Create a handout for Activity 1 that lists five to ten authentic global changes. When creating the handout, select items from [Appendix A](#) that will stimulate interest among your students, or incorporate other facts from an up-to-date almanac or reference book in the library. Make enough copies for everyone in class. If copying facilities are limited, list items on the blackboard or create an overhead transparency that can be displayed during Activity 1. Ideally students should not see the list until they have finished the warm-up activity.

#### *Student grouping:*

To save class time, have students form pairs with the person sitting next to them for the warm up activity; students will return to this original partner for Activity 2. The teacher will need to decide on procedures for grouping students for Activity 1. It is recommended that groups have no more than six participants each. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

#### *Vocabulary considerations:*

Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix B](#). Items listed in the glossary are written in **bold** print the first time that they are mentioned in the lesson plan.

## Warm Up Activity (10 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic
- To tap students= background knowledge
- To give students a chance to communicate in English in a meaningful way

### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to fold a blank sheet of paper in half, lengthwise. (Model the process, if necessary.)
2. Ask students to write "changes Y improvement" at the top of the left-hand column and "changes Y problems" at the top of the right-hand column. (If necessary, model for students on the blackboard.)
3. Give students two minutes to list a minimum of two recent changes in their communities, countries, or regions that have led to improvements (in the left-hand column) and a minimum of two other recent changes that have led to problems (in the right-hand column).
4. In pairs ask students to compare their lists and consider the following questions (that can be written on the blackboard): Do you agree with your partner? Have the changes listed led to improvements or problems?
5. While students are conversing with their partners, write "changes Y improvement" on the left-hand side of the blackboard and "changes Y problems" on the right-hand side of the blackboard if you haven't done so before this time.
6. Ask pairs to look at their lists once again. Ask them to put an asterisk (\*) next to the one change that has led to the most improvements and a double asterisk (\*\*\*) next to the one change that has led to the most serious problems.
7. Ask volunteers to report briefly on changes that have led to improvements or to serious problems. Write student responses, in an abbreviated manner, on the blackboard. For each example, ask students who gains and who loses as a result of each change. (The goal here is to demonstrate that most changes, whether they are perceived to be positive or negative, have winners and losers.)
8. Tell students that they will work with the same partner toward the end of class.

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### **Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1**

Inform students that the class session will consider the effects of different changes around the world in relation to three questions: Do the changes represent gains, losses, or both? Who are the winners? Who are the losers?

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### Activity #1 (approximately 20-25 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To provide students opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To engage students in critical thinking activities
- To give students the chance to use key vocabulary and concepts

*Procedures:*

1. Assign students to groups. As students are forming their groups, give each student a copy of the handout (adapted from [Appendix A](#)).
2. Ask students in groups to do the following:
  - a. Consider each change listed on your handout.
  - b. State the change in your own words.
  - c. Decide if the change represents a gain, a loss, or both.
  - d. Decide who the winners are/what the gains are.
  - e. Decide who the losers are/what the losses are.

Have students to write down group decisions for (c), (d), and (e) on their handouts.

3. While students are working, circulate from group to group to answer questions, provide clarification, and keep students on task.
4. If one or more groups finish the task early, give them an additional task to keep them focused on the theme. For example, ask them to reconsider the items on the handout to identify (a) the change with the most serious implications, (b) the change with the least serious implications, and/or (c) the change that has impacted their own country the most, etc.
5. Ask for volunteers to report on group deliberations. As you go over items on the handout, solicit group interpretations for questions b-e listed in step 3 above.

## **Activity #2 (approximately 10-15 minutes)**

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the lesson
- To relate the previous activities to students' own lives

### *Procedures:*

1. Ask students to return to the partners, with whom they worked during the warm-up activity.
2. Ask each pair to reconsider the change marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) on their original worksheets. That is, ask students to focus on the change that has led to the most serious problems in their communities, countries, or regions. Ask them to discuss the problem by considering the questions listed below. Tell students to be prepared to report the problem and at least one solution to their classmates.
  - a. How can the problem be solved?
  - b. What can be done to create more winners than losers?
  - c. Ask for volunteers to report on problems and solutions generated in their discussions.
  - d. As student volunteers finish their brief reports, ask the class if they think the solutions are reasonable, possible, and/or feasible.

## **Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)**

### *Purpose:*

- To provide closure to the lesson
- To give students an opportunity to apply these concepts to their environment

### *Procedures:*

Ask students to consider this question: What kinds of changes would you like to see in your country in the future? Who will the winners be? Who will the losers be? (Depending on the language skills needs of the students, they can be asked to respond to the questions in writing, with a free write, or in an open discussion.)

### Possible Extensions to Lesson

1. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson.
  - a. To what extent do the dilemmas introduced in this lesson have global implications? National implications? Local implications?
  - b. What major dilemma(s) did this lesson **reveal**? Do all societies face similar dilemmas? Is our society any different from others?
  - c. Do all changes have winners and losers? Can you think of any changes that have only winners? Can you think of any changes that have only losers?
2. Identify the most serious problem facing your country today and then brainstorm a list of possible solutions. For each solution, identify the winners and losers.
3. Choose one of the issues listed on the handout. Find more information on the topic in the library. Prepare a written summary or an oral presentation of your findings.
4. Ask students to identify and discuss other societal dilemmas facing their nation.
5. Refer to the web sites listed in the next section of this chapter for information and lesson planning ideas about other societal dilemmas.

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## Appendix A

### Possible Items for Handout

1. The world's population grows by about 1 million persons every four days.
2. The 20<sup>th</sup> century began with less than 2 billion people on earth; it ended with more than 6 billion people.
3. The United Nations grew from 51 member nations in 1945 to 185 members in 1996.
4. The number of people living in urban areas will increase from 45.3 % in 1995 to 54.4% in 2015.
5. In 1988, the average infant **mortality rate** for developing nations was 86 (per 1000 live births). In 1992, the average rate was 75 (per 1000 live births).
6. Between 1970 and 1990, worldwide chemical **fertilizer** usage **tripled**.
7. Each year the size of the earth's desert lands increases by about 15 million acres.
8. It is estimated that tropical forests once covered 16 percent of the earth's land surface; by 1990, they covered only 7 percent of the land surface.
9. In the last 100 years, the level of the ocean has risen 10-20 centimeters.
10. **Life expectancy** in less-developed countries increased by 16 years between 1960-1990.
11. The average life expectancy on earth increased from 60 (in 1975) to 65 (in 1990).
12. It is predicted that global energy use will increase 40% between 1993 and 2010. Between 1971 and 1998, global energy use increased 70%.
13. In 1998, developed countries **consumed** nearly three quarters of all commercial energy.
14. Between 1960 and 1980, the percentage of people working in agriculture changed from 51% to 27% in Panama, from 95% to 91% in Niger, and from 84% to 76% in Thailand.
15. In 1992, sub-Sahara Africa experienced 3% population growth and 1.5% food production growth.
16. Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand could lose half their 1985 forest cover by the year 2000.
17. Deforestation in the Amazon **doubled** from 1994 to 1995.
18. Global paper **consumption** tripled between 1968 and 1998.
19. Global water consumption rose **six fold** between 1990 and 1995, more than double the rate of population growth during the same five year period.
20. By mid-1997, 171 countries had some access to the Internet.
21. During the past 30 years, larger numbers of children have been attending school and adult **literacy** has increased

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# CHAPTER 9

## CULTURAL PLURALISM

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By **Fredricka L. Stoller and Katherine Reilly**

**T**he theme of this chapter is cultural pluralism. A society that advocates cultural pluralism respects, values, and appreciates the contributions that are made by diverse groups within the society. Although some nations are made up of more diverse populations than others, each and every country has its share of diversity. Diversity, defined as variation among members of a society, may be linked to ethnicity, tribal affiliation, race, religion, socio-economic class, language and dialect, national origins, educational level, wealth, property ownership, age, gender, and disability. Societies that view diversity as a positive force strive to balance societal unity with societal diversity. In general, societies that promote cultural pluralism also nurture the values and beliefs that are associated with civil societies.

The 50-minute lesson outlined in this chapter provides students with an opportunity to explore aspects of cultural pluralism while simultaneously improving their language skills. Teachers have the option of using the suggested lesson in several ways: They can adapt it to meet the needs of their students, as a single, stand-alone lesson; or they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the topic in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the topic from a variety of perspectives. The ideas presented here are starting points for teachers interested in exploring the topic of cultural pluralism with their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Societies that value cultural pluralism, or at least work toward understanding the benefits of cultural pluralism, face the challenge of finding a balance between diversity and unity. To find the appropriate balance, such societies must nurture two complementary orientations:

1. the cultural enrichment that develops from multiple beliefs, ideas, and loyalties
2. the commitment to shared values, principles, and beliefs

The first orientation honors diversity while the second orientation unifies society and promotes a common identity (see Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991).

In stable pluralistic societies, citizens view diversity as positive rather than negative; they view diversity as a benefit rather than a threat; they appreciate the multiple viewpoints, customs, and choices that result from cultural pluralism rather than fear different traditions and opinions. In a society that is proud of its



diversity, citizens see differences as having the potential for strengthening society rather than weakening it.

Because most societies are diverse in one way or another, a positive orientation toward diversity and cultural pluralism benefits the society. Yet, when an appreciation for diversity does not exist in society, what often results is discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, hatred, unjust practices, violence, persecution, racism, and a lack of support for individual rights.

Unfortunately, conflicts in diverse societies are common. They often occur when citizens do not communicate, are unwilling to consider different points of view, and refuse to accept different traditions and beliefs. The negative perspectives and potentially harmful behaviors associated with societies that do not value cultural pluralism may be minimized when citizens take the following steps:

1. face their prejudices;
2. work on identifying common beliefs, interests and goals;
3. learn about each others' customs, traditions, and histories;
4. listen to new perspectives with open minds; and
5. respect the rights of others to promote the common good.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following lesson plan highlights issues related to cultural pluralism. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students.

### **Preliminary Lesson Planning**

#### *Materials:*

Collect a series of pictures (from magazines, newspapers, or other sources) that corresponds to the checklist of items in [Appendix A](#). The pictures should represent people from different ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds, as well as a variety of different physical appearances (e.g., body size and shape, clothing, age, gender). For each group of students, make a photocopied set of 10 pictures (pictures representing 10 of the suggested picture-items on the checklist). It is best if all groups have photocopies of the same pictures. If a photocopier is unavailable, collect sets of similar, though not necessarily identical, pictures for student groups. On the back of each picture, write a letter from A-J; pictures representing specific sub-cultures in each of the sets, whether they are identical pictures or similar pictures, should be assigned the same letters. (For example, a picture of someone wearing formal business attire should be labeled A in all sets of pictures.)

Make a set of identity cards, such as those listed in [Appendix B](#), for each group. Adjust the vocabulary in the identity descriptions to the proficiency levels of your students. On the back of each identity card, put a number from 1-10, as indicated in Appendix B; identity cards in each of the sets should be given the same

numbers. (As an example, the information on identity card #1 should be the same for each group of students.)

To complete Activity 2, match each identity card (1-10) to a specific picture (A-J). These matches should be assigned counter-intuitively. That is, assign each picture to an identity card that your students would *not* expect. For example, picture A (a woman in her 40s) matches identity #10 (Vice Presidential skills); picture B (a 26 year old man from the majority religion) matches identity #6 (secretarial skills). Assign matches after reading the job descriptions proposed in [Activity 1, step1](#).

Create a list of the identity card-picture matches; write the assigned identity card numbers along one side of a sheet of paper and the letter of the matching pictures along the other side. This list will be used later to challenge learners' assumptions about people's capabilities for certain jobs.

*Student grouping:*

For the warm-up activity, group students in pairs or in groups of three, depending on class size. Participants will remain in the same groups for activities 1 and 2. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

*Vocabulary considerations:*

Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix C](#).

### **Warm Up Activity (5 minutes)**

*Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest in the topic of **cultural pluralism**
- To draw out participants' background knowledge
- To introduce vocabulary that will be useful in completing the lesson

*Procedures:*

1. Ask students to find one or two partners. While they are doing this, write "List at least three reasons why people do not get along or socialize together" on the board.
2. Elicit only one suggestion from the class, to be used as a model before groups begin brainstorming on their own. Some possible examples include age, religion, race, gender, social class, physical appearance, or job status. Ask students to discuss the prompt/task in groups and complete their lists as quickly as possible.
3. Ask for volunteers to report on their lists. Write their answers on the board.
4. Ask students the following question: What do we call it when people make **judgments** and refuse to interact with people for these reasons? (Direct students' attention back to the board when you state "for these reasons.") Student responses might include **prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination, racism, ageism, or sexism**.

## **Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1**

Tell participants that today's class will focus on prejudices, stereotypes, and judgments that make it difficult for a variety of groups to interact harmoniously in their shared community or country.

## **Activity #1 (approximately 20 minutes)**

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To give students an opportunity to consider their feelings and assumptions based on physical appearance alone
- To develop students' language confidence by allowing them to express their choices and opinions in English

### *Procedures:*

1. Divide students into groups. While students are getting into their groups, write the three job descriptions listed here on the board. (Adapt the vocabulary in these job descriptions to the proficiency level of your students.)
  - a. A secretary to do general office work such as answering phones, typing, running the fax machine, scheduling appointments, and greeting clients;
  - b. A salesperson to interact with long-time clients and increase business by finding new clients;
  - c. A vice president to manage the company, supervise and hire staff, and handle upset customers and their complaints.
2. Explain that each group represents the owners of a medium-sized, import/export business; the company is called Around the World, Inc. The company needs to hire 3 new employees, one person for each of the positions listed on the board.
3. Distribute an identical set of 10 photocopied pictures to each group. Tell the class that these are pictures of people who have applied to work at Around the World. Looking only at the pictures, they will have to decide which of the applicants to hire for each position. They must select one person for each position. Groups must discuss and to explain their rationale for choosing or rejecting each person. They should be prepared to report their assumptions about each candidate's a) general abilities, b) personality, and c) character, and d) potential conflicts that could arise with different applicants in each position. (List these four points on the board). Give students about 15 minutes to reach their decision.

4. Ask volunteers to explain one of their choices, until an example has been given for each position. Then ask volunteers to explain one of their rejections, until an example has been given for each position. Ask all groups: Were any of your choices based on the ability of certain groups to get along with other groups (e.g., in the business world, within the country, internationally)? Were any of your choices based on the ability of certain groups to be accepted by other groups (e.g., in the business world, within the country, internationally)?

## **Activity #2 (approximately 20 minutes)**

### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To require students to make judgments about people based their abilities and experience
- To challenge student perceptions about interacting with a variety of people

### *Procedures:*

1. In groups ask students to take the pictures off their desks. While they are doing this, hand out a set of identity cards to each group.
2. Explain that they must now reconsider their 3 hiring choices, based solely on the information listed on each card. They will be looking for the three sets of qualifications that best fit the positions available. Again, they must discuss and be able to explain their rationale for accepting or rejecting each identity card. Give students about 10 minutes to reach their decision.
3. For each position, ask for 3 volunteers to report their groups' choices. If there are differences among the groups, have them discuss reasons for their choices.
4. Ask the groups why they think their identity card selections match their picture selections.
5. Once students have chosen their ideal pictures and identities, give them the "true" identity/photo matches. Tell students to look at the letters and numbers on the backs of their pictures and identity cards. Read the numbered and lettered list of "true" identity/photo matches; groups listen and match each picture to its proper identity card.
6. Ask students one or more of the following questions:
  - a. Was it difficult to complete the previous activities? Why?
  - b. Which activity was more difficult? Why?
  - c. Did your feelings about people in the pictures make you feel uncomfortable in any way?
  - d. Would your choices have been different if each picture initially came with an identity card? Why?

## Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To conclude the lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss the relevance of the lesson

### *Procedures:*

1. Write "Cultural Pluralism" on the board.
  - a. Ask students what they think the term means. Write key words on the board.
  - b. If students are unsure, explain that cultural pluralism is the idea of one society built around many cultures and groups. Explain that cultural pluralism can only work if groups learn to appreciate people's differences and respect their abilities and contributions.
2. Ask students to suggest what they have learned about their attitudes toward different cultures, different groups, and cultural pluralism. Ask the following: Suggest ways in which your prejudices and stereotypes might make it difficult for our country to successfully promote cultural pluralism. How can you change this?

### **Possible Extensions to Lesson**

1. Ask students to respond, either orally or in writing, to any of these follow-up questions:
  - a. How important is a person's physical appearance in determining his or her ability to do a job?
  - b. What is the ideal physical appearance for a man and a woman in our country?
  - c. Think of foreign films that you have seen or foreign books that you have read. Are standards of physical beauty the same in other parts of the world? How do they differ?
  - d. Which groups are most valued in our country and why? Why do you think other groups are viewed as less valuable? Do you think these ideas can or should be changed? Why or why not? How can they be changed?
  - e. How frequently do you interact with members of other groups/cultures? What types of interactions do you have with members of other groups/cultures?
  - f. Think of all the different cultures, sub-cultures, and groups that exist within our country. How many of these do you belong to?
  - g. How would society be different if the contributions, skills, and ideas of all cultures were valued equally? Is this possible? Why or why not?

2. Have groups create a story about an imaginary country where every citizen is from the same ethnic and religious background, where everyone has the same eye and hair color, where everyone's skills and contributions are identical. Could such a country exist? How would it function? Would it be successful? What problems would it have? Would everyone get along? Would you want to visit such a country? Why? Why not?
3. In groups, have students draft a "Bill of Cultural Pluralism," denoting 10 rules which, if followed, would greatly enhance attitudes toward cultural pluralism.
4. Ask students to consider this question: What are the advantages of cultural pluralism? Then ask students to develop a list of strategies that will encourage cultural pluralism and tolerance within their community. What will they do to help their children appreciate other cultures and sub-cultures?

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## Appendix A

### Checklist for Picture Collection

Following are descriptions of the types of people that might be represented in your set of pictures. It is important to have a great deal of variety in your pictures. Descriptions may be mixed and matched, so that there is, for example, both a well-dressed woman and a casually dressed woman or elderly people from minority and majority races or cultural groups. Famous or well-known people should NOT be used.

1. People from the minority race(s) or cultural groups in your country
2. Someone from the majority race or cultural group in your country
3. People from the minority religion(s) in your country
4. Someone from the majority religion in your country
5. Men
6. Women
7. People from each of the predominant social classes in your country
8. Someone wearing extremely formal, business attire
9. Someone wearing casual, relaxed clothing
10. People who fit the ideal standard of beauty in your country: consider eye and hair color, hair style, weight, height, body shape
11. People who are considered less attractive by your country's beauty standards: consider eye and hair color, hair style, weight, height, body shape
12. People of a wide variety of ages (between 18 and 75 years old)

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## Appendix B

### Identity Cards

#### **Identity 1**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in English

*Experience:* 4 years in sales for a large, international advertising company

*Other:* Satisfactory number of sales; hard worker; had problems with upper management at old company

#### **Identity 2**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in art history

*Experience:* 1 year as a doctor's receptionist; 2 years as a secretary for an advertising agency

*Other:* Computer knowledge, quick typist, gets along with most people

#### **Identity 3**

*Education:* High school and 1 year of secretarial college

*Experience:* 3 years as a secretary for a small business; 5 years as a secretary for a large company

*Other:* Excellent telephone skills; computer knowledge; sometimes impatient; does not get along with everyone

#### **Identity 4**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in business; Master's Degree in business administration

*Experience:* None; just graduated from university

*Other:* Highly recommended by professors; expected to be very successful

#### **Identity 5**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in international relations

*Experience:* 5 years as a manager at a large European company

*Other:* Some complaints from employees, though gets along very well with upper management; fair communication skills



**Identity 6**

*Education:* High school

*Experience:* Worked in father's office for 3 months

*Other:* Excellent references, very fast typist, pleasant personality, extremely patient and organized, computer and phone skills

**Identity 7**

*Education:* High school and 2 years of university

*Experience:* 12 years as a salesperson at a medium-sized international company

*Other:* Large number of sales; strong ties to customers; excellent communication skills; easy to work with

**Identity 8**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in political science

*Experience:* 3 years as a low-level employee for a large, multinational company; 3 years middle-management for a large, U.S. company

*Other:* Excellent writing and communication skills; works well with all types of people; strong leadership skills

**Identity 9**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in business and a Master's Degree in advertising

*Experience:* 3 years sales with a life insurance company; 4 years sales for a clothing company; 3 years sales for an international magazine

*Other:* Large number of sales, hard worker, works well with clients, poor communication skills and difficulty getting along with other employees

**Identity 10**

*Education:* Bachelor's Degree in economics

*Experience:* 1 year with a large, Japanese company; 1 year with a small local business; 2 years with a large European company

*Other:* Good leadership skills, though no management experience; excellent references; good verbal and written communication skills; considered to have management potential; gets along well with everyone

(back to [Preliminary Lesson Planning](#))

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# CHAPTER 10

## BUILDING A CIVIL SOCIETY: BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES

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By Fredricka L. Stoller

This chapter focuses on one important aspect of building a civil society, specifically the need for breaking down **harmful** stereotypes. Because this lesson raises potentially sensitive issues, it is recommended that the lesson only be implemented after students and teacher have gotten to know one another, after they have developed some level of trust, and after some of the other lessons in the Civic Education volume have been used. The lesson not only raises students' consciousness about the impact of **stereotypes** and stereotyping on society, but it also gives them the opportunity to improve their language skills through meaningful interactions with classmates. Because the theme of the lesson can be explored and interpreted from multiple perspectives, teachers may use the proposed lesson plan in a variety of ways: They can use it for a single, stand-alone lesson; they can design a series of connected lessons that explore the theme in more detail; or they can develop a thematic unit that examines the theme from a variety of perspectives over a longer period of time. The ideas presented here are meant to serve as a starting point for teachers interested in introducing this topic to their students.

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Building a civil society is a complex task. It requires that individuals, groups of individuals, and governmental institutions make a commitment to tolerance, respect, a willingness to listen and consider new perspectives, openness, honesty, compassion, self-control, understanding, cultural sensitivity, compromise, and participation with the common good of society in mind.

Civil societies are difficult to nurture because there are so many forces that can tear them down. Some of these negative factors include **ethnocentrism, xenophobia, prejudice, discrimination, racism, intolerance, hostility, attitudes of superiority, alienation, and stereotypes**. In this chapter, we'll focus on the importance of breaking down stereotypes as one way to build civil societies.

Stereotypes are defined in a number of ways. Consider these definitions of a stereotype:

1. A simplified and fixed image of all members of a culture or group (based on race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origins)
2. Generalizations about people that are based on limited, sometimes inaccurate, information (from such sources as television, cartoons or comic books, minimal contact with one or more members of the group, second-hand information)
3. Initial predictions about strangers based on incomplete information about their culture, race, religion, or ethnicity
4. A single statement or attitude about a group of people that does not recognize the complex, multidimensional nature of human beings
5. Broad categories about people that fail to differentiate among individuals, peoples, and societies
6. Identification of easily observable characteristics of groups of people

Stereotypes can be either positive or negative, but they are all unfair and misleading. In general, stereotypes reduce individuals to a rigid, inflexible image; they do not account for the fact that human beings are complex and multidimensional, with unique attributes. Stereotypes suggest that people or groups of people are the same, when, in fact, they are quite different. Stereotypes about human beings tend to dehumanize people, placing all members of a group into one, simple category.

Although generalizations, the basis for stereotyping, represent a natural part of the learning process, when they are directed at human beings, they can be dangerous and harmful. When we stereotype people, we prejudge them; we assume that all people in a group have the same **traits**. This form of blind categorization leads to false assumptions about people and causes misunderstandings, hostility, abusive behaviors, conflicts, discrimination, and prejudice.

Civil societies can only thrive when damaging stereotypes are broken down. The difficulty is that stereotypes are sometimes hard to recognize because they are fixed beliefs. Learning to identify stereotypes is one of the first steps we must take to build a civil society. After identifying stereotypes, we can work toward eliminating them from society. When stereotypes are eliminated, it will be easier to acknowledge and appreciate individual differences. When we live in a society that is open to cultural diversity and that values the contributions of all society members--regardless of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, race, life styles, and belief--we will be one step closer to living in a civil society.

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## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The following 50-minute lesson highlights special issues related to the theme of stereotypes. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this lesson to the language and content learning needs of their students. Adjustments can easily be made so that the lesson matches the needs of lower or higher proficiency English language learners.

### Preliminary Lesson Planning

#### *Materials:*

- For the warm up activity, create a list of five partial sentences (see [Appendix A](#) for sample items). The goal is to create prompts that will generate quick responses from students and highlight stereotypes that exist in the students' communities.
- For Activity 1, create two separate sets of cards. For the first set of cards, you'll need pairs of city/country cards; select cities and countries (or states and provinces) that all students in class are likely to be familiar with. There should be one card per student so that half the students in class receive a city card and half the students receive a country card. (See [Appendix B](#) for some examples.)

- For the second set of cards, you'll need pairs of group/stereotype cards. For each matching pair of cards, you'll need a "group" card that identifies a nationality, cultural group, religious group, or ethnic group. Each group card should begin with the word "all" (e.g., "All Americans..." or "All Canadians..."). The matching stereotype card should include a positive or negative stereotype about the group; stereotype cards should include a verb, followed by a common stereotype (e.g., "...drink strong coffee" or "...are materialistic" or "...eat garlic"). Stereotype cards need to be provocative and should reinforce stereotypes that are prevalent in the students' communities. There should be one card per student so that half the class receives an "All..." card (the group card) and half the class receives a matching stereotype card (verb plus stereotype).
- For Activity 2, be prepared to distribute a handout with discussion questions (see [Appendix C](#)). If copying facilities are unavailable, write these questions on the blackboard. Ideally students should not see these questions until they are put into groups for Activity 2.

*Student grouping decisions:*

Decide on procedures for grouping students for Activity 2. It is recommended that groups have five participants each. If appropriate, make up tentative lists of group members. Make last minute adjustments when it is determined which students are actually in class.

*Vocabulary considerations:*

Consider the vocabulary that students need to know to complete the lesson successfully. Determine which vocabulary items the students already know and which items they will need to be introduced to. Some important terms, and their definitions, are included in a glossary in [Appendix D](#).

### Warm Up Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To stimulate student interest
- To tap students' background knowledge
- To introduce concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To build up student expectations about the rest of the lesson

*Procedures:*

1. Ask students to turn to a neighbor so that they can work in pairs.
2. Tell students that you are going to read the first part of five different sentences, one at a time. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for sample items.) Ask students to take turns completing the sentences with their partners. (If students would benefit from some limited practice in writing, you can have them write down their responses. If you would prefer that students practice speaking and listening, have them share responses orally).

3. After reading each prompt, and after students have conferred with one another, ask students to report on their answers. (Do not spend a lot of time going over student responses.)
4. After completing all five prompts, ask the class these questions:
  - a. What do these statements have in common? (Possible student responses: Every sentence begins with "all." They are all **generalizations**. They are all stereotypes. They are all based on some degree of truth but they are not true for everyone in the group.)
  - b. Did the completed statements make you feel uncomfortable? Why? Why not?
  - c. Was it easy to complete the sentences? Did your answers come naturally? Why? Why not?
  - d. In general, were your responses positive or negative?

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### Transition from Warm Up to Activity #1

Ask students what topic they think the class session will be devoted to. (Try to elicit concepts related to stereotypes, the theme of the lesson.)

---

### Activity #1 (approximately 20 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To introduce students to procedures (matching cards)
- To focus on stereotypes that are prevalent in students' communities
- To begin to understand the nature of stereotypes
- To begin the process of breaking down negative stereotypes

*Procedures<sup>[1]</sup>:*

1. Distribute one card (from the city-country set of cards) to each student. (Refer to [Appendix B](#) for sample items.)
2. Ask students to stand up and circulate around the room to find the student with a matching card. Encourage students to find their match as quickly as possible. When students find their "match," they should stand (or sit) side by side.
3. After every city-country pair is matched, ask pairs of students to read their matching cards aloud, starting with the city, followed by the country.
4. Collect cards quickly.
5. Distribute a new card to each student (from the group /stereotype set of cards).
6. Again ask students to circulate and match a group card with the most appropriate (whether they agree or not) stereotype card. Encourage students to find their match as quickly as possible. When students find their "match," they should stand (or sit) side-by-side. (Note:

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<sup>[1]</sup> I'd like to thank Mike Maggio, who introduced me to a version of this activity in the early 1980s. Since then, I've used the activity successfully, in a variety of ways, with hundreds of language students and language teachers.

- Anticipate uneasy laughter and possibly a bit of discomfort. Walk around to see what matching takes place, to see if the matches reflect your intentions.)
7. Ask each pair to read their completed statement (the combination of the two cards). Before going to the next pair, ask the class questions such as these:
    - a. How do you feel about this statement?
    - b. Is the statement true 100% of the time?
    - c. Is the statement true some of the time? When?
    - d. What's wrong with the statement?
    - e. Where do people get ideas like this?
    - f. Are you angry when you hear statements like this? Why? Why not?
  8. Follow the same pattern for each "match."
  9. Once all student pairs have read their statements and discussion has taken place, pose the following questions to the class:

What do all these statements have in common? (Possible student responses: Every statement begins with "all." They are all generalizations. They are all stereotypes. They are all based on some degree of truth but they are not true for everyone in the group.)

10. Put students' answers on the blackboard in an abbreviated form. When you have enough information on the board to generate a good definition of "stereotype," ask students to define the term.
11. Collect cards.

### **Activity #2 (approximately 15 minutes)**

#### *Purpose:*

- To provide students with opportunities to use English in a meaningful way
- To reinforce key vocabulary and concepts associated with the theme of the lesson
- To continue the process of breaking down negative stereotypes
- To give students the opportunity to discuss a topic of a serious nature in English

#### *Procedures:*

1. Assign students to groups. While they are forming groups, distribute the handout ([Appendix C](#)) to all students.
2. Ask students to number off 1-2-3-4-5, in each group. Tell students that they are each individually responsible for reporting group responses to the question corresponding to their assigned numbers. For example, student #1 will report on question #1, student #2 will report on question #2, and so forth. If groups have more than five students, multiple students can be assigned to each question and share responsibility for reporting group responses. (If necessary, remind students to take notes so that they can represent their classmates' opinions accurately when they report responses to the entire class.)
3. Ask students to discuss the questions on the handout. Give students a time limit so that they understand how much time they have to get through all five questions.
4. While students are working in groups, circulate to answer questions and keep students on task.
5. Review student responses to the five questions on the handout by asking for student volunteers to report on group deliberations.

## Cool Down Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

### *Purpose:*

- To provide some closure to the lesson
- To give students an opportunity to discuss the relevance of the lesson
- To give students tools for breaking down negative/harmful stereotypes.

### *Procedures:*

Ask the class to consider questions such as these to provide closure to the lesson:

1. Why is it important to break down stereotypes?
2. What can you do personally to break down stereotypes?
3. How would our country benefit from breaking down common stereotypes?

---

## Possible Extensions to Lesson

1. To find out what stereotypes students have, ask students to complete statements such as the following: "You can always tell who is a XXX because of the way they..." Students can compare responses and then answer questions such as the following:
  - a. Are your perceptions similar or different?
  - b. Where do your ideas come from?
  - c. To what extent do your statements represent stereotypes?
2. Ask students any of these questions to extend the lesson:
  - a. Some people think that stereotypes get in the way of communication. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Have you ever experienced communication difficulties because of unfair stereotypes? Explain.
  - b. Do stereotypes serve any useful purpose? Why or why not?
  - c. Is it possible to have a society free of stereotypes? Why or why not?
  - d. Who is responsible for breaking down stereotypes? What can they do?
  - e. Is there a relationship between stereotypes and prejudice? Between stereotypes and discrimination? If so, explain the relationship.
  - f. How can stereotypes help you understand people from other groups? How might they prevent you from understanding other groups?
  - g. Why are all stereotypes potentially harmful?
3. Bring in items that reinforce stereotypes (e.g., food packages, newspaper and magazine advertisements). Ask students to identify the stereotypes being reinforced. Can they think of other ways in which society reinforces stereotypes? Can stereotypes be eliminated from society?
4. Ask students to research commonly misunderstood cultural, religious, or ethnic groups in your country/region. Ask students to share their findings with classmates in oral presentations or poster/bulletin board displays.
5. Have groups choose one stereotype that interests them. Ask each group to develop a formal plan of action for breaking down the stereotype. Is the plan of action really possible? How long will it take to accomplish?

- 6.
7. Refer to the web sites listed in the next section of this chapter for more information and lesson planning ideas.

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## Appendix A

### Sample Items for the Warm-Up Activity

Put together a set of five "partial" sentences for the warm-up activity. Every sentence should begin with the word "all." Choose from the list below or create a set of your own. Devise partial sentences that will elicit a quick and strong response from your students.

1. All famous actors and actresses...
2. All politicians...
3. All university professors...
4. All doctors...
5. All teenagers...
6. All vegetarians...
7. All rock stars...
8. All professional athletes...
9. All university students...
10. All smokers

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## Appendix B

| Sample Items for City/Country cards   |                |                 |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| For Activity 1, create pairs of matching cards, one card with a city name and the matching card with a country name. Select cities and countries that are well known to class members. There should be one card per student. Possible city/country pairs include the following: |                |                 |
| Paris--France   | Madrid--Spain  | London--England |
| Washington, DC--USA   | Tokyo--Japan   | Beijing-- China |
| Taipei--Taiwan  | Warsaw--Poland | Lima--Peru      |
| Tunis--Tunisia  | Nairobi--Kenya | New Delhi—India |
|   | Rome--Italy    | Seoul--Korea    |
|   | Dakar—Senegal  | Moscow--Russia  |

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[\(back to Activity 1\)](#)

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## Appendix C

| Discussion Questions for Activity 2 Handout   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Are all stereotypes negative? Positive?</li><li>2. Why do we have stereotypes?</li><li>3. How do people learn stereotypes? Who do we learn them from?</li><li>4. How harmful are stereotypes? What kind of <b>harm</b> do they cause?</li><li>5. What can we do to break down stereotypes?</li></ol> |

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## INTERNET RESOURCES

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### **Center for Civic Education Lesson Plans**

[http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=lesson\\_plans](http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=lesson_plans)

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to promoting an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy in the United States and other countries.

### **The University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center**

<http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/>

The Human Rights Resource Center makes excellent human rights resources produced by non-profit organizations and independent publishers accessible to all. These resources include more than 50 curricula, guides, videos, documents, and other educational aids. The Resource Center also creates and publishes innovative materials through its own *Human Rights Education Series*. Our two human rights Web sites contain thousands of materials essential for anyone with interests in international human rights.

### **The Human Rights Educational Association (HREA) Electronic Resource Centre for Human Rights**

[http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/Bells of Freedom/index\\_eng.html](http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/Bells of Freedom/index_eng.html)

Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) is an international non-governmental organization that supports human rights learning; the training of activists and professionals; the development of educational materials and programming; and community-building through on-line technologies. HREA is dedicated to quality education and training to promote understanding, attitudes and actions to protect human rights, and to foster the development of peaceable, free and just communities.

### **HREA Electronic Resource Centre for Human Rights Education: First Steps - a Manual for Starting Human Rights Education**

[http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/First Steps/index\\_eng.html](http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/First Steps/index_eng.html)

This manual is for teachers and others who work with young people and who want to introduce human rights in their educational practices. It is designed to be a basic introduction, with age-specific activities for younger and older children. There is also advice on methodology, and help for those who want to go further into this subject. The approach stresses the practical rather than theoretical.

The manual was written in response to a need expressed by Amnesty International members and other Human Rights Education activists in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The material has therefore been adapted or specially written for this region. Please bear this in mind if you use the activities in another region.

## OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

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These can be used to provide background information and to create materials.

*Cornell University Law School*

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.billofrights.html>

Copy of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution

*UNICEF*

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Rights from UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child and includes the full text version and unofficial summaries of the preamble and substantive provisions.

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>

*UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child*

This guide to the Convention includes background on the treaty, what it means for children, the UNICEF commitment to child rights, what you can do, answers to questions parents often ask, full text of the treaty, and more.

*University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center*

<http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/b1udhr.htm>

This link provides a full listing of the original 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/e4devw.htm>

Full text version of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

*Human Rights Education Association*

<http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/simplified-udhr.html>

Simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/frame.htm>

Full text version of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

*United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>

Full listing of the original 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- available in over 270 languages.

## RELEVANT FILMS

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Here is a movie that presents and explores societal dilemmas. Films cannot be viewed over the Internet.

[http://www.irisfilms.org/SD/cat\\_how.html](http://www.irisfilms.org/SD/cat_how.html)

*Skin Deep*, directed by Frances Reid  
1995, USA, 53 minutes

This documentary film follows 23 U.S. university students from all over the country as they confront racism. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds (racial, religious, and economic). There are private interviews as well as group discussions. This film is intended as a tool for sparking discussion about race and racism.

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## GLOSSARY

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**Access:** the ability to get/receive something .....

**Ageism:** belief that a certain age group is superior or inferior to another; prejudice or discrimination based on age

**Alienation:** feeling of being separate, a feeling of not belonging

**Arbitrary:** by chance; without planning; without reason

**Assembly:** a group of people who meet together (freedom of assembly: freedom to meet together in public)

**Assistance:** help

**At issue:** (to be) of concern

**At stake:** (to be) at risk, in danger of being lost or changed .

**Attitude of superiority:** belief that one is better than others are

**Authority:** power .....

**Banned:** (to be) prohibited, stopped .

**Biased:** (to be) prejudiced; in favor of or against something without enough information ....

**Citizen:** a legal member of a country, state, or city

**Commerce:** trading, buying, and selling ..... [back](#)

**Commit suicide:** to kill oneself

**Common good:** well-being of society as a whole, not of individuals

**Consequence:** a result

**Consume:** to use .....

**Consumption:** use .....

**Conscientious:** careful about doing things in a responsible way

**Coverage:** reporting by TV, newspapers, or other media

**Crimes:** serious illegal acts

**Crosswalk:** an area marked for crossing the street

**Cultural pluralism:** the peaceful coexistence of more than one culture in a society; situation in which all cultures within a society are valued, respected, and appreciated for their different contributions

**Cultural unity:** a situation in which society is committed to similar values, principles, and beliefs

**Depletion:** loss, reduction in quantity .....

**Detest:** to dislike, to hate

**Dilemma:** a problem involving a difficult choice between two (or more) possibilities .....

**Discrimination:** special treatment (good or bad) based on a characteristic, such as race, religion, physical appearance, age, or social class

**Disposal:** the act of throwing something away .....

**Disputes:** arguments; disagreements

**Double:** to become two times larger, to increase by two times .....

**Earn a living:** to make money

**Enforce:** to make people obey rules and laws .....

**Ethnocentrism:** belief that one's own group (culture, race, country) is better than others are

**Fair:** just to all

**Fertilizer:** a chemical or natural product that is used to increase growth of plants and crops

**Fined:** (to be) required to pay money for illegal actions

**Free enterprise:** a business with little government control

**Freedom of the press:** freedom to write or report what one wants, to express one's opinion, to explore new ideas, to share different points of view; to criticize or support people and ideas

**Freedom of speech:** the freedom to say what you want, to express your opinion

**Eligible:** qualified, having the right to do something

**Equal rights:** the same rights for all people

**Gain:** (noun) an increase that is positive, an advance, an improvement; (verb) to get something useful or necessary, to benefit

**Generalization:** a statement that does not include details or important differences

**Global:** relating to the world, worldwide, international

**Harassment:** the act of annoying someone continually; the state of being annoyed by someone continually

**Harm:** physical or emotional pain

**Harmful:** causing physical or emotional pain

**Hostility:** anger, hatred, strong opposition

**Helmet:** a hard, protective cover for the head

**In favor of:** (to be) in support of, on the side of, supportive

**Informed:** knowing a lot

**Inherent dignity:** natural worth; natural value that human beings are born with

**Inhumane:** not kind; very cruel; without feelings

**Injury:** harm, damage

**Intolerance:** lack of kindness or understanding toward people who are different

**Inoculation:** an injection of the virus of a disease to immunize the body

**Journalism:** the work or profession of collecting and reporting news .....

**Journalists:** people who collect and report news .....

**Jaywalk:** to cross the street where there is no crosswalk

**Judgment:** an opinion, idea, or decision about someone or something

**Jury:** a group of people who decide if a person is innocent or guilty

**Live up to:** to satisfy; to perform responsibilities or obligations as expected

**Law:** a rule that must be followed by people and is made by a government

**Landmark:** building or place of special interest .....

**Labor:** work .....

**Legislation:** laws, the act of making laws .....

**License:** an official permit to own, use, or do something

**Limit:** to restrict, to reduce .....

**Life expectancy:** estimated length of life .....

**Litter:** to throw trash in public places, not in a trash can

**Literacy:** ability to read and write .....

**Loss:** something that is taken away, destroyed, or lost .....

**Lumber mill:** a factory where wood is cut and processed

**Majority rule:** a principle of democracy which states that 51% (or more) of citizens should select officials and determine policy

**Mass media:** communication systems that reach large numbers of people, such as TV, radio, and newspapers

**Mortality rate:** number of deaths from illness or disease .....

**Misuse:** to use something in the wrong way or for the wrong purpose

**Natural disasters:** natural events which cause loss and destruction (e.g., earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, storms, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions) .....

**Natural resources:** materials from the earth that are useful to humans, like water, oil, minerals, trees

**Navy:** a branch of the military that includes sailors and ships



**Necessary:** required, essential

**Official:** person who works for the government

**Office:** an official position in an organization or government (e.g., The President holds the highest office in government; the mayor holds the highest office in a city government.)

**Opposed to:** (to be) against something

**Prohibited:** (to be) told by others that one cannot do something, prevented by others from doing something

**Prejudice:** an opinion, usually negative, formed before getting to know someone

**Press:** newspapers, magazines, and their reporters (freedom of press: freedom to write--print or publish--what you want)

**Preservation:** the act of protecting something; protection

**Privacy:** being alone

**Property:** objects owned by someone (e.g., land, buildings, car)

**Public officials:** people who work for the government

**Purpose:** a reason for, intention

**Racism:** belief that an ethnic group is superior or inferior to other groups; prejudice or discrimination based on race

**Recreation:** fun things to do (such as sports and hobbies) .....

**Regulation:** rule or law .....

**Restrict:** to limit .....

**Reliable:** dependable, responsible, regularly does what it should do .....

**Responsibility:** something that someone must do

**Reveal:** to show .....

**Rights:** the powers and privileges that a person has or should be given

**Rule:** a statement, which controls what one does and how one behaves

**Search:** a careful look at some place

**Seatbelt:** a safety strap in a car or on an airplane that secures passengers

**Sewage:** waste and liquid that goes from toilets to pipes underground .....

**Sexism:** belief that one sex/gender is superior or inferior to the other; prejudice or discrimination based on sex/gender

**Six fold:** being six times larger .....

**Societal:** of or related to society

**Spit:** to eject saliva or other substances from one's mouth

**Social security:** government money for people who cannot or do not work .....

**Stereotype:** a popular preconception; a conventional and oversimplified concept, opinion, or image

**Threat:** a statement of an intention to hurt, punish, or cause pain

**Toxic waste:** poisonous, deadly, dangerous materials .....

**Trade:** commerce or business .....

**Traits:** characteristics, features

**Treason:** the act of being disloyal to one's country

**Triple:** to become three times larger, to increase by three times .....

**Truthful:** true, accurate, honest .....

**Union:** an organization of workers that protects workers' rights and interests

**Urban:** city .....

**Useful:** benefits one's purpose

**Utilities:** basic services such as running water, electricity, or gas .....

**Violated:** ignored; not respected; broken

**Wages:** money paid for work

**Zoning:** the act of marking an area of land for a special purpose (e.g., business, housing) .....

**Xenophobia:** fear or dislike of foreigners and strangers