

Community Detectives

Summary

Students will study, discuss, and research ways in which their Utah community is unique.

Time Frame

2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials

NOTE TO TEACHERS: You may wish to locate specific information about your community. Some communities have web pages, brochures, and other information available for educators.

- [Governor's letter](#) (pdf)
Worksheet: ["Your Unique Community"](#) (pdf)
Worksheet: ["Mental Field Trip of My Community"](#) (pdf)
- [Suggested lesson plan](#)

Background for Teachers

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

: Students will recognize that each Utah community is unique and will identify and describe ways in which their community is a unique place to live.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What do I like about my community, and what makes it an interesting place to live?

OBJECTIVES: Students will research positive aspects of their community and show what they have learned by submitting an entry in the [ULCT essay contest](#).

NOTE TO TEACHERS: There are several components to this lesson: (1) a challenge from the governor to learn more about the student's community, (2) activities that help students identify unique features about their community, and (3) a lesson that encourages students to enter the [ULCT's Essay Contest](#).

Instructional Procedures

SETTING THE STAGE

Ask students to identify the person who is in charge of the government of the State of Utah?

Explain that the governor is elected by citizens of the state and works at Utah's capital city, Salt Lake, and that the class has received a letter from the governor!

ACTIVITY: "Governor's Letter"

Invite a student to read the [governor's letter](#) to the class.

Discuss the letter and ask students if they are willing to take on the governor's challenge. Explain that we will start by discussing what we know about our city.

ACTIVITY: WORKSHEET #1 "YOUR UNIQUE COMMUNITY"

Pass out ["Your Unique Community" worksheet](#).

Instruct students to circle words that describe their town and add descriptive words of their own, which are not found on the worksheet. (Students may wish to work in pairs or small groups to describe specific neighborhoods.)

Debrief the activity. Ask students to identify which neighborhood or community they are describing and then compare and contrast their observations.

ACTIVITY: ENVISIONING (DRAFT ESSAY)

Pass out "[Mental Field Trip of My Community](#)."

Explain that students will close their eyes, imagine their community through a "mental field trip," and then jot down their ideas. This activity may be used as a draft for the "Why I Like My Community" entry.

Script the "Envisioning Activity" to meet the needs of the class. Example: "With your eyes closed, imagine waking up in the morning and walking out the door to go to school. What do you pass as you travel towards school? What kinds of roads are in your neighborhood? Are they large or small? Are there sidewalks along the roads? Does your neighborhood have favorite spots where you like to play? What are these places called and what do they look like? Imagine that you want to get something from a store. What are the shopping areas like in your community? Are there large department stores or small neighborhood shops? Which stores do you like to visit? Are there any parks in your town? What do they look like? Do they have lots of trees? Are there places for dogs to run and play? Have you visited the place where someone in your family works? What kind of business is it?"

ACTIVITY: ENTER ULCT "WHY I LIKE MY COMMUNITY ESSAY CONTEST" (GRADES 4 AND 7)

Explain that the Utah League of Cities and Towns sponsors an essay contest each year. After discussion and activities, assign each student to write a draft or actual essay to enter in the competition.

LESSON CONCLUSION

Use student notes to begin individual descriptions of their local municipality. Ask students to record their observations over a period of time. Students may also wish to sketch, draw, or photograph images of their community to be sent to the governor after completion of the unit.

Bibliography

This lesson plan is part of the Utah League of Cities and Towns [This Must be Utah! A Teacher's Guide to Utah Cities and Towns](#)

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