

DESIGN YOUR OWN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY



CLOSEUP[®]
WASHINGTON DC

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Class/Group: _____

What Is Civic Engagement?

Civic engagement means working with others to help improve your school, neighborhood, community, or world. Examples include:

- Organizing a school recycling campaign
- Writing letters about an issue
- Volunteering at a food pantry
- Creating an awareness campaign
- Holding a community cleanup
- Speaking at a school or town meeting
- Collecting donations for a local cause
- Making informational posters or videos

Your goal is to design an activity that addresses a real issue and encourages people to take action.

To design a community engagement activity that is best suited to your issue of concern, as well as to your own preferred way of addressing that issue, you'll follow these steps.

- **Step 1:** Identify an Issue
- **Step 2:** Research the Issue
- **Step 3:** Choose Your Goal
- **Step 4:** Plan an Activity
- **Step 5:** Consider Your Audience
- **Step 6:** Evaluate Resources
- **Step 7:** Take Action
- **Step 8:** Measure Success & Reflect

Step 1: Identify an Issue

Think about issues affecting your school or community and who/what they impact. These issues might have impacted you or your family personally, or they might just be something you have recognized that is important to you.

1. What issue do you care about?

2. Who is affected by this issue?

3. Why is this issue important to you? Why should it be important to others?

4. What evidence/impact shows that this issue matters?

Step 2: Research the Issue

1. What causes this issue?

2. Who, if anyone, is already working on it?

3. What solutions, if any, have been tried? To what extent did they succeed/fail?

4. What do people in the community think about this issue?

5. What facts or statistics should people know to better understand this issue and its impact?

Sources of Information

List the sources you used.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 3: Choose Your Goal

The goal is to:

If you can complete this sentence, you're on your way to a meaningful act of civic engagement.

By _____, we want to _____

so that _____

_____.

Example: *By the end of October, we want to collect 200 canned goods so that families at a local food pantry have more food.*

Is Your Goal SMART?

It is important to be clear about the key elements that will make your effort more likely to succeed. You might return to this checklist throughout your planning process as your activity comes into focus.

Be sure you can check each box.

- ☐ **Specific:** Clearly explains what we will do
- ☐ **Measurable:** Includes a way to track success
- ☐ **Achievable:** Possible with the time and resources we have
- ☐ **Relevant:** Connected to an important issue
- ☐ **Time-Bound:** Includes a deadline

Step 4: Plan an Activity

What type of civic engagement activity will you organize? Check one or more.

- ☐ Awareness campaign
- ☐ School or community event
- ☐ Volunteer project
- ☐ Fundraiser
- ☐ Donation drive
- ☐ Letter-writing or email campaign
- ☐ Survey or petition
- ☐ Public presentation
- ☐ Cleanup or service project
- ☐ Social media or video campaign
- ☐ Other:

What will participants do?

Who will participate?

Where will it take place?

When will it take place?

Step 5: Consider Your Audience

Who needs to hear about your activity?

- ☐ Students
- ☐ Families
- ☐ Teachers and school staff
- ☐ Community members
- ☐ Local leaders
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Organizations
- ☐ Other:

What is your main message? (Be clear on your issue and why it matters.)

What action do you want people to take?

Create a short slogan or title.

Examples:

- “Small Actions, Big Change”
- “Every Can Counts”
- “Keep Our School Clean”
- “Speak Up for Safe Parks”

Step 6: Evaluate Resources

Consider people or groups you might already have connections with (family, friends, community groups, etc.) and what groups might be sympathetic to your effort and willing to help.

Person/Group	How They Could Help

What resources will you need? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Paper or poster board
- ☐ Computers or tablets
- ☐ Art supplies
- ☐ Permission forms/permits
- ☐ Meeting space
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Money or donations
- ☐ Technology or sound equipment
- ☐ Food or water
- ☐ Other:

How will you get these resources?

Step 7: Take Action

List the steps needed to complete your project.

Task	Person Responsible	Deadline	Completed?

How will people learn about your activity? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Posters
- ☐ School announcements
- ☐ Flyers
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Class presentations
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website or newsletter
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Newspaper or local media
- ☐ Other:

Now, draft your announcement.

Title:

What is happening?

Why does it matter?

When and where is your activity?

What should people who are interested in participating do?

Step 8: Measure Success & Reflect

Choose ways to measure your success.

- ☐ Number of participants
- ☐ Number of donations
- ☐ Number of volunteers
- ☐ Survey responses
- ☐ Amount of money raised
- ☐ Number of letters or signatures
- ☐ Changes in behavior
- ☐ Feedback from participants
- ☐ Other:

What is your measure of success?

What results did you achieve?

Reflection

1. What did your group accomplish?

2. What went well?

3. What was difficult?

4. How did your group work together?

5. What did you learn about the issue?

6. What did you learn about civic engagement?

7. What would you change next time?

8. What should happen next to continue addressing this issue?
