

### **Lesson Description**

In this lesson, students are encouraged to attend local civic meetings, read local newspapers, and view local cable TV to learn about their community and how it operates. They will brainstorm ideas and will compile information into a “Community Resource Guide.” The guide can be published and distributed through the Chamber of Commerce or other local civic organization. This activity will encourage partnerships among businesses, governmental agencies, civic organizations, and the school. Such collaborative projects serve to remind everyone that the community’s future well-being depends on how well it prepares students to assume the mantle of leadership and civic responsibility when they become adults.

### **Concepts**

Civics – local government services, welfare, planning and zoning, traffic and parking

### **Related Subject Areas**

Social Studies – community history, current events, decision-making

Math – charts, graphs, percentages, computation

Language Arts – reading, writing, oral presentation, interviewing

Science – environment, health and safety

Fine Arts – posters, presentations

Technology – word-processing, database, spreadsheet

Research – community statistics, budgets, organizational (flow) charts, directories, maps, schedules, government charters

### **Instructional Objectives**

Students will be able to:

collect, organize and analyze data.

provide examples of community characteristics.

### **Time Required**

4-6 class periods (with out-of-class time for research)

**Materials Required**

- Visual 1, *St. Louis Brochure* (and one copy for each student)
- Assessment, *Observing the Characteristics of a Community* (one per student)
- five sheets of poster board
- markers, crayons or colored pencils
- dictionaries (print or CD-ROM)
- catalogs from office supply stores
- computer with word processing and database capabilities
- duplicating paper (4 - 5 reams)

**Procedure**

1. Explain that every organization, from a small family unit to an entire nation, performs services for its members. Ask students to suggest services that are provided within a family. Record their responses on the chalkboard or overhead projector. (*Examples: cooking, cleaning, lawn care, carpentry, first aid, homework help, advising, etc.*) Ask students to suggest services provided by a school, and record their answers. (*Examples: education, health care, physical fitness training, social services, clerical work, etc.*)
2. Remind students that they were able to give many responses to these questions because they are familiar with families and schools. Explain that in this lesson students will become familiar with larger agencies in their community and with the services these agencies perform for citizens. Depending upon where the students live, some of the services may be provided by their county and some may be provided by their city.
3. On the chalkboard or overhead projector, list the following:

			RECREATION/ NATURAL	
SOCIAL		GOVERNMENT/ INFRASTRUCTURE	RESOURCES	HERITAGE
<u>CHARACTERISTICS</u>	<u>ECONOMY</u>			

4. Explain that all communities have characteristics under each category and that the class will be involved in a project that requires compiling information to describe their community using these five categories. For example, social characteristics of a community would include characteristics of people, such as race and age, as well as characteristics of groups, such as neighborhoods, civic associations, sports leagues, and churches. Economic characteristics would include the income of the

community's citizens and the unemployment rate. The characteristics of government/infrastructure would include information about roads, sewers, and bridges provided by government, as well as information about elected officials and the form and function of local government. The recreation/natural resources category would include both man-made and naturally occurring recreational areas, such as parks and zoos or streams, lakes and mountains. Heritage would include the story of the community's founding, events in the community's history, and stories of its people.

5. Divide the class into five groups. Assign tasks to each group member according to her abilities (e.g., recorder, leader, timer, quality control). Explain that each member is specializing in a task that she does best. Ask students the following question: Why is it a good idea to specialize in the thing you do well and let others do the things that they do well? (*The job gets done more efficiently, people enjoy work that they're good at, the work gets done faster.*)
6. Each group will focus on one of the five characteristics: social characteristics, economy, government/infrastructure, recreation/natural resources, and heritage. If group members are still unclear of what their topic entails, have them use a dictionary to define it.
7. Have each group brainstorm the type of detailed information it would seek to help it better understand its topic. Allow 10 minutes for brainstorming and recording ideas. Remind students of their specialized roles in the group.
8. Instruct each group to prepare a short statement explaining its assigned characteristic. Record responses on the chalkboard or overhead projector. After each group's statement, allow other groups to comment, adding or deleting information appropriately. (*Student responses should include the following: **social characteristics** — demographic information such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, and information on groups, such as civic associations and churches; **economy** — information about income, housing costs, employment opportunities, business, and industry; **government/infrastructure** — facts about villages, cities, towns, counties, elections, and officials; details about buildings, roads, traffic, and underground cables; **recreation/natural resources** — data regarding forest preserves, waterways, agricultural land, and other vacant areas; **heritage** — a timeline of the community's history, its historical buildings, its people in history.*)
9. Have each group design a large poster defining its topic and the ideas that were generated through brainstorming and discussion. Display the posters around the room.
10. Tell students that they will be conducting research to describe their community.

By focusing on the five categories, the class will be able to compile a vivid description. By working in teams and specializing in one topic, each group will be able to concentrate its efforts and be more productive, i.e., groups can each do a little of the work, but combined they will accomplish much more.

11. Explain that students will use the information they gather to develop a better understanding of their community and its service providers and to design a promotional brochure about the community.
12. Before students begin to create the brochure, engage them in a discussion of community services that are related to the categories on their posters.
13. Ask the following questions:
  - a. What kinds of services does the community provide for people of different ages, races, ethnic backgrounds? (*senior citizen and teen activities, neighborhood festivals featuring ethnic foods and traditions*)
  - b. What kinds of services does the community provide for economic development? (*tax breaks to attract businesses to the area, zoning laws that encourage competition, job training programs for citizens*)
  - c. How does the community use information about its infrastructure characteristics? (*decisions about production of maps, construction of new roads, placement of traffic signals*)
  - d. How are recreation/natural resource issues handled by the community? (*setting aside land for forest preserves, building hiking trails that preserve plant and animal habitats, encouraging agricultural diversity*)
  - e. How do governmental agencies operate in the community? (*The mayor suggests better ways to run the community; elected officials meet with businesses and households to make improvements.*)
  - f. How does the community preserve its heritage? (*a community "Founders Day," programs encouraging the restoration of old buildings*)
14. Display Visual 1, *St. Louis Brochure* (or brochures from other cities). Explain that many towns publish brochures that highlight the features of their community. These brochures describe social, economic, recreation/natural resource, historical, and government and infrastructure characteristics and are given to new residents or are sent to prospective businesses. Discuss why. (*to give newcomers an overview of community life and services, to entice businesses to relocate, to provide information to residents*)
15. Ask students why a community wouldn't publish a brochure and send it to everyone in the United States. (*It is too expensive, not everyone is interested, distribution would take a long time.*)
16. Teacher note: To discuss cost/benefit analysis, a rational decision-making model

and opportunity cost, insert the optional lesson *Community Brochure: A Cost/Benefit Analysis* found in Unit Six Lesson Two.

17. Place students in their “community characteristics” groups and explain that they may occasionally be reassigned to different groups during the project. This will allow students to develop good working relationships with a number of others.
18. Explain that in order to produce a community brochure, each group must find information relative to its topic (i.e., social characteristics, economy, infrastructure, recreation/natural resource, government, and heritage). Later, all the data will be put together. The brochure, when complete, will contain a description of the community using the five characteristics.
19. After the groups have compiled descriptions and combined them into a narrative for the brochure, assign each group one of the following additional topics:
  - guide to service agencies: how to contact agencies and an outline of the services they provide
  - map (with key and legend): show key sites such as police, fire, parks, schools, hospitals, shopping, library, etc.
  - historical background: a narrative and timeline
  - other information students find interesting
  - photographs or drawings: use a computer to scan, or cut and paste into the brochure
20. Allow about one week for students to compile data, but check their progress each day. Encourage groups to record their findings either on computer disk or in a secure folder. Assign one member from each group to supervise the organization of the information the group gathers on its two topics.
21. When all groups have completed their research, assign committees to organize the data and design a layout for the brochure. Encourage students who have artistic talents to illustrate free-hand or with computer graphics. Choose good writers to create the text for each panel. Students with good math skills can calculate the amount of paper and other materials needed to produce the brochure. They can also estimate the cost of the project.
22. While the brochures are being prepared, contact (or have students contact) the

city or county council and ask that the class be put on an agenda for a council meeting. Assign students with creative speaking skills to prepare an oral presentation for the meeting. It should include a review of what the students have done and a description of the brochure's contents.

23. Schedule a date for students to present the brochure to members of the council (or local chamber of commerce). Invite local newspaper or cable TV coverage of the presentation and take the opportunity to ask for financial assistance in duplicating and distributing the brochures to businesses and service organizations.

**Closure**

Invite a representative from a local public relations or advertising firm to visit the class and evaluate the students' brochure. Encourage constructive criticism, and remind students that because their work will be observed by many people in the community, they should make corrections, striving to do their very best.

**Assessment**

Distribute Assessment Activity, *Observing Characteristics of a Community*.

***Part One Answers \* :***

1. NR
2. SOC, ECON
3. GI
4. GI
5. ECON, SOC
6. NR
7. GI
8. GI
9. GI, ECON
10. SOC, GI
11. HER

*\*Accept other answers that students can justify using sound reasoning.*

**Extension**

Have students work in groups to prepare a PSA (public service announcement) about their community. The announcement should include the same type of information that was part of the class brochure and should emphasize oral speaking skills. Work with students on articulation, volume, pitch, pacing, facial expressions, gestures, and sincerity of emotion. Videotape the students' presentations, or, if possible, invite a local radio station or cable TV station to record the students for actual broadcast to the community.

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**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY**

**Observing Characteristics of a Community**

Identify the following statements, noting whether they describe the social (**SOC**), economy (**ECON**), infrastructure (**INF**), recreation/natural resources (**NR**), government/infrastructure (**GI**), or heritage (**HER**) characteristics of a community. If the statement seems to relate to more than one characteristic, list them all.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Townsville has three forest preserve regions. Each measures more than 28 square miles in area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The population of Las Lindas is 28,000. Nearly all the residents are Mexican-Americans, and their average income is \$34,000 annually.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Gray Lake has a mayor and city council. The council is made up of 20 committee persons, one from each ward. Their monthly meetings are held at City Hall, 200 West Biltmore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Eagle River flows to the east of Hinton, forming a natural boundary between the city and nearby farmland.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The largest industry in Sandalwood is Rowen's Logging Mill. It employs nearly 60% of Sandalwood's 4,000 residents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The vacant land surrounding Carlisle features wide prairies of wild grasses and indigenous insect species.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Every three years, citizens of Harperton elect trustees who oversee and administer township operations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Three interstate highways I-20, I-42, and I-87 intersect in the town of Iverson.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Blasting a road through the hills outside of Georgeburg will cost taxpayers about \$325,000.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The teens in Brighton, nearly 400 students in all, join together every summer to clean up the litter in the town's parks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The Preservation Society holds an annual holiday event offering tours of newly restored buildings.



### **Lesson Description**

The economic concept of scarcity means that there are insufficient resources to satisfy people's wants. Because of scarcity, people --and communities --cannot have everything; they must examine the alternatives available to them and make choices.

In this supplement to Unit Six, students will learn to allocate scarce resources by using a five-step decision-making grid and will apply decision-making skills as they create a brochure about their community.

### **Concepts**

Economics – scarcity, opportunity cost, natural resources, capital resources, human resources, cost/benefit analysis

### **Instructional Objectives**

Students will be able to:  
perform a cost/benefit analysis using the p ACED Decision-Making Model.  
determine the opportunity cost of their decision.

### **Time Required**

2 class periods

### **Materials Required**

Activity 1, *Cost and Benefits of a Community Brochure* (one per group of five students)

Activity 2, *Deciding How to Promote Our Community* (one per student)

Visual I, *Cost of a Community Brochure*

Visual 2, *Benefits of a Community Brochure*

Visual 3, *Deciding How to Promote Our Community*

### **Procedure**

1. Explain that, as the students have learned, people want many services from their local governments; however, the resources, those inputs that are used to produce the services, are scarce.
2. Explain that the community must choose whether it will have a brochure by weighing the costs and benefits of producing and distributing them. Display Visual 1, *Cost of a Community Brochure*

3. Have students suggest inputs needed to produce and distribute a brochure and list them on Visual I. (*paper, copy machine, workers, ink, illustrators, computers*)
4. Explain that most inputs are also resources. Resources are divided into natural (those found naturally such as air, water, trees), human (workers and their ideas), and capital (manufactured things such as tools, computers, and printers that are used to produce other goods).
5. Ask students to name the natural, human, and capital resources needed to produce a brochure. (natural – wood, land, sunlight; human – typists, writers, artists; capital – computers, copy machines, trucks)
6. Define opportunity cost as the next best alternative that is given up when a choice is made. Explain that when a community chooses to use its resources to produce a brochure, it cannot use those same resources to produce banners for a weekend celebration. The banners are the opportunity cost.
7. The wages paid to laborers and the price of paper and other materials must be considered when producing a brochure. The cost of postage and shipping must be considered in the distribution of brochures.
8. Provide students with office supply catalogs listing prices of duplicating paper and other materials. Have them phone the post office to find out about shipping costs. Distribute Activity I, *Cost and Benefits of a Community Brochure*, and have students work in groups to complete *Part One – Cost of a Brochure*. Instruct students to calculate the total cost of producing brochures about a school dance. When students complete their calculations, discuss their answers, and write them at the top of Visual I.
9. Ask students how else the community could have spent that money rather than on brochures. (*flags, street signs, clean-up services, lawn mowing, snow removal*) As students suggest answers, write them on the bottom of Visual I.
10. After six suggestions have been entered on Visual 1, explain that this city chose to use its resources to produce a brochure, so the brochure was most highly prioritized. Ask students to continue ranking the remaining alternatives, beginning with #2 (their most favorite of the remaining alternatives) and continuing through #7 (their least favorite).
11. Repeat that the opportunity cost is the next best alternative that is given up when a choice is made. Therefore, the item that was the #2 priority is the opportunity cost. Put an asterisk next to it on Visual 1.

12. Display Visual 2, *Benefits of a Community Brochure*, and direct students back to Activity 1. Instruct them to complete *Part Two – Benefits of a Community Brochure*. As students work together to complete the activity, ask if the cost of the brochure was worth the benefit gained by bringing 50 more people to the dance. Write their answer on the bottom of Visual 2. (*The benefit of the 50 additional students at the dance is  $\$2.50 \times 50$ , or  $\$125$ . If the cost of materials, postage and labor is greater than  $\$125$ , then the benefits do NOT outweigh the cost.* )
13. Ask students what methods besides a brochure could be used for publicity. (*billboards, TV and radio commercials, magazine ads, newspaper spreads*)
14. Explain that as communities seek to attract new residents and companies, they examine a number of promotional strategies. They may compare the costs and benefits of producing brochures to the costs and benefits of alternative publicity methods.
15. Introduce the PACED Decision-Making Model. Explain that this is a five-step method for solving problems. As you explain the following steps, record them on the board. Suggest that students record the steps and place them in their notebooks.
  - a. Identify the PROBLEM
  - b. List several possible ALTERNATIVES
  - c. Identify CRITERIA that are important to the decision maker
  - d. EVALUATE the alternatives based upon the criteria
  - e. Make a DECISION
16. Display Visual 3, *Deciding How to Promote Our Community*, and distribute a copy of Activity 2 to each student. Explain that the grid can be used to evaluate alternatives a community might consider during a promotional campaign. Take students through the five-step process. (*Possible responses: Identify the problem – The community wants to attract visitors; Alternatives – TV commercials, newspaper advertising, billboards, brochures, radio commercials; Criteria – reaches many people, low in cost, easy to design, appealing to the public*)
17. Using the grid, demonstrate how each alternative is evaluated based upon the criteria by writing pluses or minuses in the cells of the grid. The alternative with the highest score is the choice. The next highest score is the opportunity cost.
18. Tell students that, based upon your analysis of costs and benefits, the availability of materials and costs of production, you have decided that they are going to produce a brochure to publicize their community.

**ACTIVITY 1**

**COST AND BENEFIT OF A COMMUNITY BROCHURE**

If a group, such as the Youth Club, produces a brochure about an upcoming dance, it must decide whether the benefit of the announcement (i.e., more people attending) will outweigh the costs (i.e., printing, postage, labor, etc.).

Using cost-benefit analysis, see if you can determine whether the group's costs will be more or less than the benefits of the dance. Assume that 1,000 brochures will be produced.

**Part One -Cost of a brochure**

<u>Resources needed to produce and distribute a brochure</u>	<u>Price in dollars</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>_____</b>

**Part Two – Benefits of the brochure**

Assume that the brochure attracted 50 additional teens to the dance at an admission of \$2.50 per person. Was the cost of the brochure worth the benefit gained by bringing 50 more people to the dance? Briefly explain your answer.



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**ACTIVITY 2**

**PACED DECISION-MAKING MODEL**  
**DECIDING HOW TO PROMOTE OUR COMMUNITY**

CRITERIA 				
ALTERNATIVES 				

**VISUAL 1**

**COST OF A COMMUNITY BROCHURE**

The opportunity cost of producing a community brochure is whatever else could be produced using the same resources....

Resources needed to produce and distribute a brochure	Price in dollars
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>_____</b>

If the community spent the same amount of money that a brochure requires on something else, what kinds of things could be purchased instead?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## VISUAL 2


### BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY BROCHURE

Assume that by distributing 1,000 brochures announcing a community teen dance, the community's Youth Services Division succeeds in enticing 50 additional students to attend the dance. The price of an admission ticket is \$2.50 per person.

Was the cost of the brochure worth the benefit gained by bringing 50 more people to the dance?

**VISUAL 3**

**PACED DECISION-MAKING MODEL**  
**DECIDING HOW TO PROMOTE OUR COMMUNITY**

CRITERIA 				
ALTERNATIVES 