



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

## **PUBLIC POLICY: FACTS, MYTHS, AND VALUES**

By Jim David

### **Teacher's Guide**

#### **Lesson Overview**

This lesson introduces students to public policy. Students will understand what public policy is and what facts, myths and values surround public policy. Students will first define public policy. Students will have an opportunity to share prior knowledge about public policy. Students will read an article titled *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values* by Jerri Cockrel. They will finish their activity by taking a test and talking about the difference between facts, myths and values regarding public policy.

Students can correlate this activity with the *Project Citizen* materials. However, this lesson can be used by itself in any classroom and does not require prior knowledge of SVPDP materials. Correlations to SVPDP curricula are found at the end of this lesson plan.

#### **Variation**

The lesson could be approached from the perspective of *Responsibility* or *Authority* from the *Foundations of Democracy* materials and the public policy piece as a practical application of the lesson.

#### **Suggested Grade Level**

Middle school

#### **Estimated Time to Complete**

Two to three days (or four to five days using variation method)

#### **Lesson Objectives**

Students will be able to

- define public policy;
- define public policy in light of facts, myths, and values;
- define levels of government responsible for public policy.

#### **Materials Needed**

- Copy of *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values* at [www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ip/ip20/ip20.pdf](http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ip/ip20/ip20.pdf)
- Print off a copy of the test at the end of the article.
- *Project Citizen*, Level 1 book
- KWL worksheet (What I Know, What I Want to Learn, What I Learned; follows)
- T-chart organizer for costs and benefits of public policy making (follows)

## Lesson Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students: Who is in charge of making sure our streets are clean? Or: who changes the light bulbs on the streetlights? After a few questions, ask why it is important to have such rules in place to make sure such jobs are done. (These are open-ended questions, don't give the answer.)
2. Divide your students into two groups. One will define the word *public* and the other will define the word *policy*. Have each group come up with as many terms, ideas or examples as possible. Make it a competition for more fun. Let the activity run for about eight minutes, or until at least one group exhausts their knowledge about the one term. Using both terms, have students come up with one term called *public policy*.
3. Read pages 4–5 in the *Project Citizen* book. If time exists, do the activity on page 5, as it is a good follow-up activity.
4. Read pages 6–8 with your students.
5. Do the activity on page 8.
6. Preview the article titled *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values*. Have students fill out the KWL organizer sections (What I **K**now, What I **W**ant to Learn, What I **L**earned; follows, see below) and encourage them to think about what they have read in *Project Citizen* so far.
7. Have students read the two-page article *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values*—filling in the KWL chart as they go.
8. Reflect on the article as a class. Stress the terms *facts*, *myths*, and *values*.
9. Give students the test attached to the article.
10. Go over the answers.

## Lesson Procedures Variation

1. Begin the lesson by asking students: Who is charge of making sure our streets are clean? Or: Who changes the light bulbs on the streetlights? After a few questions, ask why it is important to have such rules in place to make sure such jobs are done. (These are open-ended questions; don't give answers.)
2. Have students complete *Authority*, Unit Three or *Responsibility*, Units Two and Three, from the *Foundations of Democracy* book. (Schedule three days total to complete all three lessons.)
3. Have students read the two-page article *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values*—filling in the KWL chart (follows, see below) as they go.
4. The teacher can make a T-chart organizer on the board and talk about costs and benefits of public policy making.

## **National Standards for Civics and Government**

### **I. What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?**

- A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?

### **II. What are the Foundations of the American Political System?**

- A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
- B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?

### **III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?**

- A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
- B. What does the national government do?

## **Common Core State Standards**

### **English Language Arts, Reading: Literature, Grade 8**

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

#### **Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

### **English Language Arts, Reading: Literature, Grade 7**

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

#### **Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

### **English Language Arts, Reading: Literature, Grade 6**

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

#### **Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

## **Correlations to SVPDP Curricula**

### *Project Citizen*

- What is Public Policy and Who Makes It?
- Step 1: Identifying Public Policy Problems in Your Community

### *Foundations of Democracy*

- *Authority*
  - Unit Three: What Are the Benefits and Costs of Using Authority?
- *Responsibility*
  - Unit Two: What Might Be Some Benefits and Costs of Fulfilling Responsibilities?
  - Unit Three: How Should Conflicts Between Competing Responsibilities Be Resolved?

**PUBLIC POLICY: FACTS, MYTHS, AND VALUES**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** After reading the article *Public Policy: Facts, Myths and Values* and completing the cost and benefit units of Authority and Responsibility, fill out this chart in regards to public policy making.

<b>Cost of Public Policy Making</b>	<b>Benefit to Public Policy Making</b>
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What Do I <b>K</b> now?	What Do I <b>W</b> ant to Learn?	What Did I <b>L</b> earn?