

MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHARACTER EDUCATION



BY DAWN WOODY

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TO THE TEACHER

Character Education: An Overview

Throughout history, a major goal of education has been to develop character in young people. The Greek philosopher, Plato believed that, “The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life.” Building upon this theory, Aristotle proclaimed, “Virtues are not mere thoughts but habits.” The very foundation of American education has always been the preparation of students for full participation in a democratic society. Benjamin Franklin said, “Nothing is more important for the public weal [well-being] than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue.” Today more than ever, societal needs call for a renewed emphasis on traits such as respect, responsibility, integrity, and citizenship. These character traits transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences, resulting in a common good for all of society. While the family is and always has been the primary influence on character development, support for character education is the responsibility of all community members.

Dr. Thomas Lickona, of the Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs defines character education as “the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values.” An intentional and comprehensive character education initiative provides a moral lens through which every aspect of school is seen as an opportunity for character development. A comprehensive model provides for curriculum integration, climate infusion, and community involvement. Perhaps most instrumental in the success of any character education initiative is a commitment to the initiative through the modeling of good character. Jane Addams, winner of the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize, noted, “America’s future will be determined by the home and school. The child becomes largely what it is taught, hence we must watch what we teach it, and how we live before it.”

Middle school social studies teachers are afforded the unique opportunity to address character education through the prescribed curriculum. While it is true that all curricular areas provide opportunities to address character through classroom rules and procedures, exploration of ethical issues, and curriculum links, social studies is the only academic area to provide direct instruction in civic education, world cultures, and global ethics. Using the state-mandated curriculum and national standards in history and social studies, you as middle school social studies teachers have the enviable position of helping to create a generation of engaged citizens by stressing to your students the knowledge, skills, and virtues necessary to become active participants in a democratic society.

Your classrooms include a variety of students who are dealing with a wide range of complex social, emotional, and academic issues. These same students face the daunting challenge of determining what it means to be morally good in a world where globalization, technological advances, and world politics provide an ever-changing landscape for their future. In presenting your social studies lessons, you often need to examine many core issues, including respect for others, rights versus responsibilities, ethical decision making, and moral reflection. Some strategies that you might use to promote character education include service learning, peer programs, moral discussion/reflection activities, and student-led initiatives.

The following 10 lesson plans address economics, geography, historical context, people, and social organization. Each lesson provides an overview, a list of the character traits the lesson is focusing on, student objectives, and classroom activities. The activities provide ample latitude for implementation. You may choose to assign activities as independent assignments or as group projects. Each topic is broad in scope to



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allow you to modify and implement it as you see fit. Opportunities for cross-curricular integration with art, science, language arts, and technology abound. Most of these lessons are issue-based and provide an opportunity for discussing ethical dilemmas. Some suggestions for organizing class discussions of ethical dilemmas and for planning additional issue-based lessons are included, as well as suggestions for a variety of culminating activities.

In Neil Postman's 1996 book, *The End of Education*, Postman says, "Public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. And in creating the right kind of public, the schools contribute to strengthening the spiritual basis of the American creed . . . The question is not 'Does or doesn't public school create a public?' The question is, 'What kind of a public does it create?'"

With a focus on character education and moral decision making, you, as a middle school social studies teacher, are empowered to create a public worthy of our children. By examining the past, we can create a better future.



TO THE TEACHER

DEFINITIONS

In relating character development to the curricular area of social studies, it is helpful to define the parameters of both character education and social studies. These definitions coupled with those attributes promoted through the purposeful and comprehensive study of these two disciplines provide a common ground for discussing how best to integrate character development into social studies. Service learning is a proven strategy for successfully linking academic study, community service, and personal reflection.

SOCIAL STUDIES is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. *

Promotes:

- Civic competence and civic engagement
- Respect for social, cultural, and religious differences
- Democratic leadership

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of National Council for the Social Studies, 1992.

CHARACTER EDUCATION is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values.* An intentional and comprehensive character education initiative provides a lens through which every aspect of school becomes an opportunity for character development.

Promotes:

- Character development through the exploration of ethical issues across the curriculum
- Positive classroom climate
- Respect for others

*Dr. Thomas Lickona, The Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs

SERVICE LEARNING is an instructional method that provides opportunities for meaningful community service through curriculum integration and personal reflection.

Promotes:

- Academic growth through experiential learning
- Personal growth
- Civic engagement



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Suggestions for Discussing Ethical Dilemmas

The following suggestions for discussing ethical dilemmas provide common activities and methodologies that you can use to integrate moral decision making and character development into any social studies lesson. One of the core character traits every comprehensive character education initiative seeks to foster in students is respect.

Discussing ethical dilemmas provides students the opportunity to model respect by sharing differing ideas and opinions. Concurrently, this process of sharing ideas and opinions encourages responsible decision making, honesty, kindness, and compassion. You may wish to adapt one or more of the following methods in your classroom as you teach students about ethical dilemmas.

1. Socratic dialogue/Paideia seminar
2. Small group discussions related to an “essential question” with assigned student roles (i.e., time keeper, clarifier, reporter)
3. Dramatization with students acting out different roles of the dilemma
4. Individual representing the one facing the ethical dilemma with remainder of the class divided into sympathetic and antagonistic viewpoints
5. One-on-one debate with remainder of class voting on “winning” action
6. Panel discussion with either student “experts” or community experts

Suggestions for Planning an Issue-Based Lesson

The following suggestions will help you plan an issue-based lesson following one of the lesson plans in this booklet or adapting your own lessons to focus on relevant issues.

1. Identify Issue: Survey students about personal interests; examine public policies and laws that impact student lives, research current events and global affairs.
2. Identify Curriculum Objectives: Link with state-mandated curriculum; identify opportunities for cross-curricular integration and character education implementation.
3. Determine Final Assessment/Activity: Allow student input in creating culminating product or activity, utilize service learning and community service opportunities, reach beyond the classroom walls.
4. Develop Lesson Hooks: Create essential questions and reflection activities that engage students in the issue.
5. Plan Related Activities: Provide opportunities for students to research the topic and involve community resources.



TO THE TEACHER

Culminating Activities

Allowing for both individual and collaborative products, this list of culminating activities is intended as a creative starting point for allowing students to examine specific people and topics through a moral lens. As is the case in most creative assessments, the process by which the student creates the product proves instrumental in allowing the real learning to take place. It is often that the culminating activity itself is simply the synthesis of all that has been examined and processed. Allowing student choice and modification will usually result in higher quality products. The following culminating activities can be adapted for use in your classroom.

Personal narratives

- Letter to the Editor
- Op-Ed Article
- Role playing
- Debate

Online Interviews:

Using the Internet, research organizations, and/or agencies or schools in the region being studied, identify a contact person with an e-mail address on the site and submit a series of questions for that person to answer.

Bio-poems:

- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Four describing traits
- Line 3: Sibling of (son or daughter of)
- Line 4: Lover of (3 people or ideas)
- Line 5: Who feels (3 items)
- Line 6: Who needs (3 items)
- Line 7: Who gives (3 items)
- Line 8: Who fears (3 items)
- Line 9: Who would like to see (3 items)
- Line 10: Resident of
- Line 11: Last name

Learning Groups:

Form groups of 3 to 5 students. Assign each member of the group a number. After discussing the question(s), the facilitator calls out a number and the person with that number from each group reports the group's discussion.

Characterizations:

Generate a list of 100 or more words that are used to describe people. Have students place checkmarks next to each word that applies to the person being studied. Using these words, students write a brief character sketch.



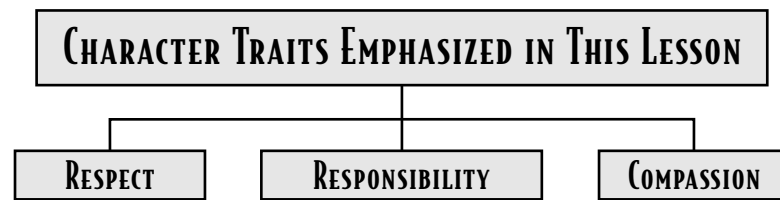
ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Lesson 1



OVERVIEW

Any study of economics examines the allocation of resources with regard to their ability to satisfy human wants either directly or indirectly. This allocation of resources is determined largely according to social guidelines. In this lesson students will identify the economic resources found in the region being studied and determine how that region's government makes decisions regarding the allocation and use of those resources. Students will also examine the ways in which specific economic institutions enable people to meet their needs.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- explain the relationship between the location of natural resources and economic activity.
- identify the goods and services produced within a specific region.
- determine the factors of production that result in these goods and services.
- relate the ways in which the goods and services that are produced in a specific region are distributed among the members of that society.
- describe how the economic status of this region has changed over time.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Either in small groups or independently, have students identify the natural resources found in the region being studied. Ask them to determine how these resources are used and distributed both locally and globally. Work with students to explore the relationship between the location of these natural resources and a specific economic activity. Have students research government policies as well as social practices that affect the preservation and distribution of these resources. Instruct students to prepare a simple report relating their findings. Reports should include a map illustrating the geographic distribution of these resources.

Activity 2

Have students research the goods and services produced in a particular region. Students should focus on determining the factors of production (i.e., land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship) that are utilized in the production of these goods and services. Instruct researchers to identify the percentage breakdown of the labor force between agriculture, industry, and services and to create bar graphs or charts illustrating the industries, agricultural products and commodities that are both imported and exported. Students might also choose to include information on annual budgets and global trade partners. After students have completed their research, have them present an analysis of the region's economic status and recommend future economic expansion and/or participation in a global economy.



ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Lesson 1 (continued)

Activity 3

Have students research economic relationships in a particular region, being certain to examine the causes and effects of economic interdependence. Instruct students to focus their research on answering the following questions:

- How does this region make decisions regarding the distribution of economic resources?
- What role does the government take in ensuring that every citizen is provided for?
- What policies and programs are in place to protect against unequal distribution of economic resources?

Have students write letters to the editor from the viewpoint of a citizen of the region they are studying. Point out that letters should concentrate on the following information from that citizen's perspective.

- Relate the economic hardships or advantages experienced as a result of the region's economic system.
- Identify specific policies or programs that should be continued or abolished and why.

- Challenge government leaders and policymakers to agree with the citizen's ideas by citing specific examples.

You may also wish to have students work in small groups to create a short video documentary chronicling a typical day in the life of a common worker. Students may wish to do this in addition to writing letters or instead of writing them.

Activity 4

Assign individual students specific topics relating to inventions, discoveries, and innovations that have had an impact on the economic status of the region being studied. Have students research the key person or people involved, paying particular attention to the historical and economic climate of the period as well as the personal character traits exhibited by the individual or individuals involved. Once students have shared their research, have the entire class create a time line illustrating the economic impact of these discoveries on the region's economy.

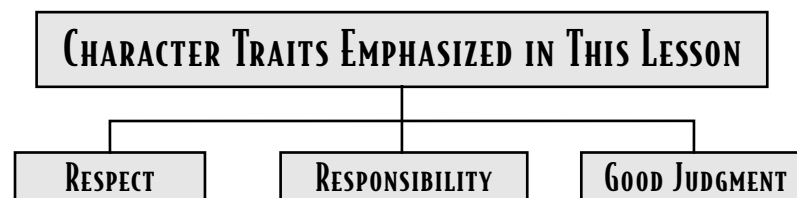


THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Lesson 2

OVERVIEW

The development of technology, improved global communications, and multinational businesses have combined to create a global economy that has encouraged economic growth and improved social conditions for some, while creating economic hardship and an increased gulf between rich and poor for others. In this lesson students will identify the ways in which a chosen region participates in a global economy. Students will identify the positive contributions of multinational corporations to a specific region's economic development as well as any conflicts of interests. Lastly, students will examine the ethical behavior of specific multinational companies with regard to the social and economic development of the region being studied.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- define the concept of globalization as it pertains to a world economy.
- identify economic relationships between the region being studied and other countries.
- describe the social and economic impact of multinational corporations on the region being studied.
- analyze the effects of participation in a global economy on the social and economic status of the region's citizens.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Through the use of class discussion, small group discussion, or journaling, have students research or brainstorm answers to the following questions:

- What does the term *globalization* mean? (*The open flow of information and movement of money, goods, images, ideas, and people between different countries and cultures.*)
- What is economic globalization?
- How have advances in technology and worldwide communications contributed to the creation of a global economy?
- How has a global economy helped or hindered the region being studied?

- How does the geographic location and climate of the region influence its participation in a global economy?

Upon completion of this activity, have students write a persuasive essay either in support or against the establishment of a multinational corporation in this region.

Activity 2

Have students research what role the global community has taken in aiding the citizens of a particular region (i.e., UNICEF, Red Cross, and so on). More specifically, what impact has global economic influence had on the social and cultural climate of this region?



THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Lesson 2 (continued)

Either independently or in groups, have students identify a multinational corporation that depends on the region for natural resources, a workforce, and/or consumption of specific produced goods. Have students address these questions:

- How has this company adapted to the unique environmental, political, and social structure of this region?
- Are there any cultural issues that this company has had to address?

Have students use the information they have collected to formulate an argument on one of the following assertions:

- Globalization has stimulated the economic growth and social improvement of this region.
- Globalization has created an economic burden on the people of this country and further divided the economic gap between the rich and the poor.

Activity 3

Using an actual multinational corporation as a model, have students create a new company seeking an economic relationship with the region being studied. Assuming the identity of the CEO of this company, have students prepare a package of information “selling” this region on the merits of entering into an economic partnership with this company. Students should identify specific resources and/or economic benefits available in this region. Other issues to address might include the following:

- What other global relationships will be necessary?
- How will this company make a positive contribution to the economic growth of this region?
- What conflicts of interest might occur between the company and the host country or region?
- How will these conflicts be addressed?

Activity 4

Those who protest economic globalization usually base their opposition on unethical practices by multinational corporations in developing countries. Have students determine the difference between an industrialized and developing nation. Apply this definition to the region being studied. If this region is considered industrialized, have students identify the government policies and social practices that provide safe work environments, environmental protection, ethical wage standards, and ethical marketing and quality control guidelines. If this region is considered a developing country, have students identify areas of potential conflict between the development of a successful partnership with a multinational corporation and the social and economic impact of that corporation on the citizens of the region. Using this information, have students present their opinions regarding the minimum requirements for businesses to address in establishing global, economic relationships.

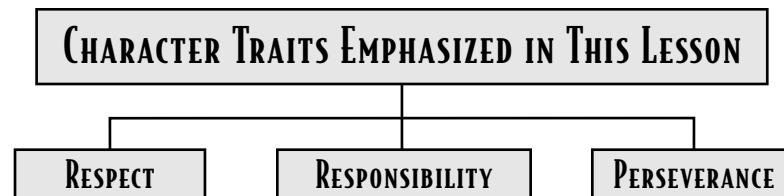


POLITICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BOUNDARIES

Lesson 3

OVERVIEW

Geography relates to the study of spatial presence. It is the “where” in a study of any human activity. By examining the environment in which people live, students are developing a way of examining all aspects of that civilization. While geography at its most basic level is concerned with place and environment, many complex factors combine to provide a full scope of a region’s geography. In this lesson students will study the physical environment of the region being studied and assess the influence of major physical features on the people of that area. Students will explore ways in which these people have utilized, modified, and adapted to their physical environment as well as examine the reciprocal influence of natural and political boundaries in determining the geography of a region. Lastly, students will analyze the environmental impact of governmental decisions and social practices in these regions.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- find the absolute and relative location of major landforms, bodies of water, and natural resources within the region being studied.
- discuss the impact of geographical features on the political, social, and economic development of the region.
- describe how the people of the region have used, modified, and adapted to their physical environment.
- formulate an educated opinion of the responsibilities of citizens to their physical environment based on specific examples of environmental neglect in the region being studied.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Provide students with an outline map of a particular region being studied. Students should research and identify all major landforms, bodies of water, and other physical characteristics of that region. Geographic regions and major cities should be located. Using reference tools, students should research the population of major cities, the natural resources of the region, and the climate. Using this information, have students produce either a

travel brochure or video advertising the geographic landmarks of this region.

Activity 2

Through research and class discussions, have students analyze the impact of the physical geography of a selected region on such issues as military or political strength, economic stability, and social growth. Questions to consider include the following:

- Have the geographic boundaries of the region changed in the past 100 years? Explain.



POLITICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BOUNDARIES

Lesson 3 (continued)

- What influences led to these changes?
- How is the region perceived globally?
- What is the United States's relationship with this region?
- What are the primary exports of this region?
- Has the region experienced any political or natural occurrences that have had an impact on that region's global image (i.e., African famines, dissolution of the Soviet Union, or civil wars and "ethnic cleansing")?

Have students identify a current issue in the region that relates to political or geographic boundaries and present their interpretations and opinions of this issue to the rest of the class.

Activity 3

Either independently or in small groups have students research specific examples of the geographic influence of a specific region on the culture of its people. For example, the accessibility of seafood in Asian countries greatly influences Asian cuisine. Another example might be the influence of geographic formations on the leisure activities of Europeans (i.e., mountain climbing, skiing, and so on). Have students address the ways in which the people of a region have used, modified, or adapted to their physical environment.

Activity 4

Have students identify the natural disasters of a selected region being studied

(i.e., volcanic activity, flooding, drought, monsoons, and so on.). Ask: What impact have these disasters had on the people of the region? Have students research a recent or current example of a natural disaster and present specific details about its economic, social, and political implications. Ask:

- How has the international community responded to these disasters?
- What have the people of the region done to minimize both the personal and environmental impact of these disasters?

Activity 5

In adapting to one's physical environment, people often utilize and modify that environment in irresponsible ways. Have students identify current environmental issues relating to the region being studied (i.e., pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, and so on) Ask:

- How have government decisions and social practices led to these examples of environmental neglect?
- What policies have been enacted to minimize environmental damage?
- What social changes need to occur in order to address these issues?

Have students write an editorial for a local newspaper in the region being studied in which they identify the issue and challenge citizens to accept responsibility and modify whatever actions led to this environmental problem.



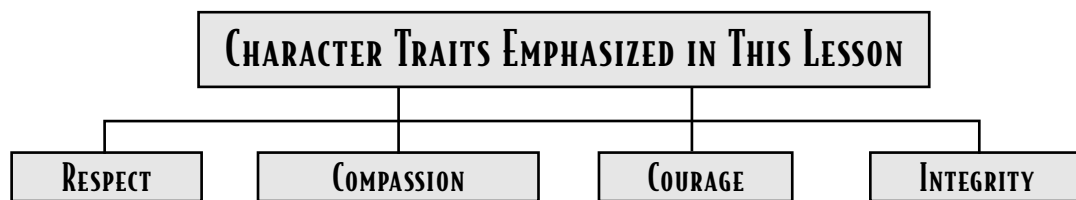
NATIONALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

Lesson 4



OVERVIEW

Nationalism is a sense of national consciousness among members of a particular group exalting their nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on the promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations. Many times nationalism carries with it a sense of national superiority and often the members of the nation-state have a shared history, religion, or race. In this lesson students will examine the attributes of nationalism in the countries being studied and identify the historical occurrences that have contributed to or undermined a sense of nationalism for the citizens of those countries. Students will examine the relationship between governments and their citizens and research the ways in which different governments allow or exclude civic participation.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- define the concept of nationalism and identify the conditions necessary for nationalism to occur.
- trace the history and discuss the influence of nationalism in the countries being studied.
- identify similarities and differences in civic participation between U.S. citizens and citizens of other governments.
- formulate an informed opinion about the rights and responsibilities of government versus the rights and responsibilities of its citizens.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Through reading, research, and class discussions, students should address the following questions:

- What is nationalism?
- How does nationalism differ from patriotism?
- What characteristics are necessary for nationalism to occur (i.e., a common history, religion, language, race)?

Have students research the history of nationalism in a particular country. Students should examine the influence of physical boundaries, wars, and trading practices. Based upon this research, students (either in small groups or independently) should create a media campaign using posters, brochures, or public awareness video spots to promote nationalism in a selected country. Students might examine the wave of nationalism that occurred in the United States after September 11, 2001, for ideas.



NATIONALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

Lesson 4 (continued)

Activity 2

The German Empire and later Nazi Germany illustrated intense nationalism based on a common identity and a totalitarian government. Have students identify other governments that illustrated this type of extreme nationalism. Ask:

- How have wars and changing geographic boundaries affected nationalism in the country you are studying?
- What other geographic features affect nationalism?
- What kinds of institutions do extreme nationalists rely upon to indoctrinate the populace into providing blind loyalty to the state (i.e. public education and government agencies)?

Instruct students to provide specific examples from the countries they are studying to answer questions listed above. Have students share this information with the rest of the class through group projects, time lines, research papers, and oral presentations.

Activity 3

Organize students into groups and have each group identify an important issue facing the citizens of a particular country (i.e., education, human rights, health care). Through research, students should address the following questions:

- How does the government address this issue?
- What government programs are in place to protect or promote this issue?

Encourage students to use debates, video “infomercials,” or some other presentation medium to share their information with the rest of the class.

Activity 4

Point out that the United States is a limited government guided by the principles of the United States Constitution. Through research, class discussion, and writing

assignments, have students explore the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a limited government?
- What is an unlimited government?
- What rights and responsibilities does the Constitution spell out?

Next, have students research the government of another country. Ask:

- What type of government does this country have?
- How do citizens participate in it?
- What responsibilities do the citizens have toward the government?
- What responsibilities does the government have toward its citizens?
- How is the government organized?
- How does this government compare to the government of the United States?

Activity 5

Organize students into small groups. Allowing three to five minutes (per question) for discussion, allow groups to explore the issue of citizenship and what it means to be a citizen not only of a community, state, and nation, but of the world in general. At the end of each discussion period, have one student from each group summarize that group’s discussion. As a culminating activity, you might ask students to journal or complete a formal writing assignment. Essential questions you might consider addressing during this activity include the following:

- Which identity is more important, being an American citizen or a citizen of the world?
- When are these identities in conflict?
- What kinds of decisions do American citizens make that affect the world?
- What kinds of decisions have American citizens made in the past that have affected other countries?
- What guiding principles do the citizens of (the country being studied) embody?
- Has the country under study made any decisions or taken any actions that have had a global impact?



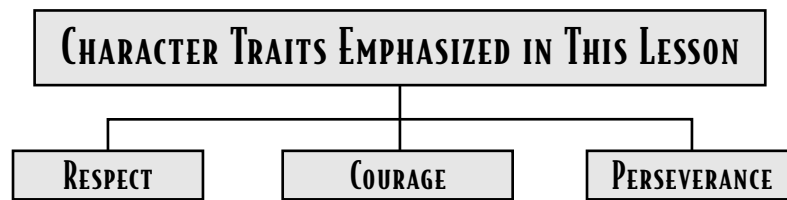
LOOKING TO THE PAST

Lesson 5



OVERVIEW

History is the study of the past with particular attention to nations, their people, and their collective knowledge and activities. By examining history, students can gain a frame of reference for understanding current events and predicting future developments. In this lesson students will examine the key figures and events that have molded the identity and characteristics of the region being studied. The changing roles of government and society will be examined, and important political, economic, and religious events will be addressed.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify significant people and events in the development and formation of a selected region.
- analyze the impact that other regions have had on the development of this region.
- relate specific historical events to current political, social, and religious situations.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Have students research the political history of the region being studied. Have them use either a time line or an outline to create a visual representation of this region’s history. Have the class divide the region’s history into specific time periods and organize into groups to research each period.

Instruct students to examine government, social structure, economic productivity, and foreign relations during their assigned time period. Students should identify key people and events associated with this period and relate these people and events to attitudes and practices of the time. Encourage students to pay special attention to the moral dilemmas created or addressed by these people and events. Groups can report their findings to the class through oral or written

reports, annotated posters, or videotaped skits and reenactments.

Activity 2

Upon completing the previous activity, have each group document the moral and ethical dilemmas they discovered by writing the dilemma on one side of an index card and the actual course of action the society took on the back of the index card. These cards can be used as journal prompts or bell-ringers throughout the study of the region. Students can provide the historical account of the event as a review and then explain the ethical dilemma and the decisions made. Another follow-up activity would be to create a list of historical “heroes” and “villains.” Have students provide character traits identifying these historical figures as either heroes or villains based upon their actions.



LOOKING TO THE PAST

Lesson 5 (continued)

Activity 3

The Roman orator and leader, Cicero once said, "History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tiding of antiquity." Assign students (either individually or in small groups) a specific historic event. Using Cicero's quote as a prompt, have students examine this event with regard to its impact and influence at the time and the legacy it left.

Activity 4

Abraham Lincoln admonished, "We cannot escape history." Have students identify a current social or political problem relating to the region being studied. Research the history of this issue. Ask: How have the actions of previous generations and governments led to the current status of this problem? Based on this historical perspective, have students formulate a plan of action to address this problem so that future generations will not be faced with the same task.



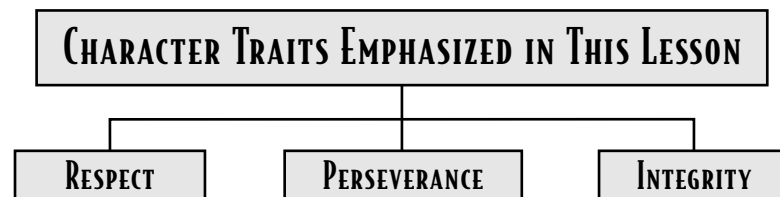
VOICES OF THE PAST

Lesson 6



OVERVIEW

The history of a culture is as much an interpretation of the past as it is a collection of dates, events, and people. The societies that preceded our own have had a profound effect on societies today. In this lesson, students will research those people who have had a hand in shaping the current status of a particular region. The famous and ordinary will be examined for their contributions to the rich tapestry of a region’s history. Inventions, discoveries, documents, and artifacts will be analyzed to determine the motivations and values of earlier societies.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify significant historical figures from a specific region and their contributions.
- analyze the cultural and social needs that motivated the people of a selected region.
- discuss the impact the contributions of a particular society had on future generations.
- articulate those elements of character that each figure embodied.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Work with the class to brainstorm defining moments in the political history of the region being studied. Some events to consider might include government leadership, wars (both foreign and civil), and migration (either forced or voluntary). Either individually or in small groups, have students choose one event and research the political climate at that particular time. Students should use the following questions to guide their research:

- Who were the leaders?
- What rights and responsibilities did the citizens have?
- What was the relationship of this region to its neighbors?

Have students identify an individual or group of people who influenced the outcome of the event being studied. Instruct students to assume the identity of this person or persons and create a personal diary that reflects the activities of this figure before, during, and after the event. Point out that the diary should include specific, important dates. Conclude the activity by asking students to reflect on their own interpretations of their chosen figure’s motivations and values.

Activity 2

Organize the class into 10 small groups. Assign each group one year in a particular decade (i.e., 1831, 1832, up to 1840). Instruct students to use an almanac as a model and to create an illustrated time line of significant people and events that occurred that



VOICES OF THE PAST

Lesson 6 (continued)

year in the region being studied. Students should look for common themes among the topics and create a summarizing title and paragraph for the year (i.e., “A Year of Change,” or “A Year of Contentment”).

Activity 3

Using the information collected in the previous activity, have the class create an illustrated magazine of the 10 or 20 most influential people or events of the decade. Be sure students address such areas as the arts, politics, science, and the military. Each person or event should be represented with an illustration and article. The article should include specific accomplishments and fictional quotes from the featured persons or their contemporaries. As a culminating activity, have each student write a summary of the decade. Summaries should address the social and political climate of the decade and analyze the impact of these events and people on changing or improving this climate. Students should pay attention to the moral attitudes of the time and examine how these events and people represented or changed these attitudes.

Activity 4

Storytelling is one of the earliest forms of documenting the history of a people. Stories, fables, and myths from past generations help us learn more about a particular historical period. Have students examine literature of the region being studied. Through independent and whole-class readings, identify common characters, features, and themes. Use the following questions as the basis for class discussions:

- Who was the audience for these stories?
- What purpose did they serve in preserving the history of the region?
- What morals and values do these stories reflect?
- What events of the period can these stories be related to?

Have students use the stories that they have studied as the basis for creating their own stories, fables, or myths about life today. These writings can be published in a classroom anthology or performed in short skits.



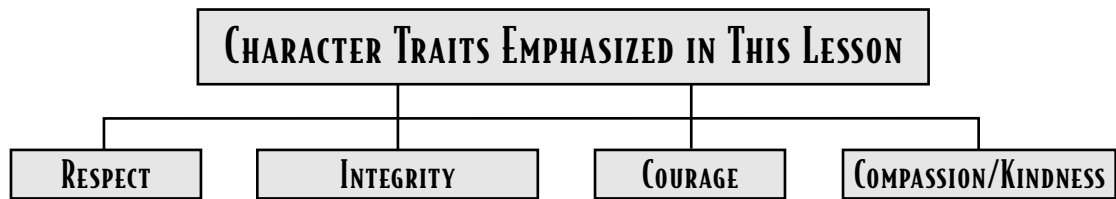
RELIGION, VALUES, AND BELIEFS

Lesson 7



OVERVIEW

The world today includes many different religions, each with its own set of beliefs and basic moral codes. In this lesson, students will examine the predominant religions found in Europe, Africa, and Asia, as well as the religious history of their state. The history of these religions with regard to social, cultural, and political influence will be discussed. Students will also reflect upon their own values and beliefs.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify the major religions of Europe, Africa, Asia, and their state.
- discuss the main tenets of each religion and identify significant historical and contemporary leaders of these faiths.
- articulate their own values and beliefs.
- identify the social and cultural influences that have affected the development of their values and beliefs.
- examine the values and beliefs held by the people of Europe, Africa, Asia, and their state and compare these values and beliefs with their own.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Have students research the major religions of the region being studied and plot their locations on a map. Students should then create a chart identifying the basic tenets of the religion, the practices and traditions, sacred texts, and religious leaders.

Activity 2

Have students choose a religion indigenous to the country being studied and document the history of that religion. Students should address the following questions:

- What are this religion's rituals and traditions?

- How has this religion affected the country's history?
- What impact has this religion had on cultural practices (i.e., dress, communication, art)?
- Who are the current religious leaders?

Activity 3

Many cultures use storytelling and fables to help transmit religious and moral beliefs. Have students research some of the great stories told throughout the country being studied and write a brief report answering the following questions:

- What are the dominant themes?
- What are the moral lessons illustrated through these stories?

Have students conclude the activity by creating their own folktale or fable with a moral lesson.



RELIGION, VALUES, AND BELIEFS

Lesson 7 (continued)

Activity 4

Religion often plays a key role in a region's fashion, social behavior, economics, and political and judicial policy. For example, many of the documents that provide the foundation of the American legal system include religious references. Have students research legal documents (i.e., constitutions, declarations, and so on) of the country being studied to find answers to the following questions:

- What impact has religion had in the formation or wording of these documents?
- How has religion influenced the ways in which the citizens dress, communicate, and organize themselves socially?

Have students reflect upon the impact of religion in their own lives. Lead a class discussion based on the following questions:

- How has religion shaped students' values and beliefs as Americans?
- How have these values and beliefs shaped their attitudes as citizens of the world?

Activity 5

We are citizens of a multicultural nation that protects the rights of individuals. Have students reflect on and discuss the following questions:

- What social customs, policies, and traditions do Americans embrace that encourage the acceptance of differing values and beliefs?
- How does the United States address religious diversity?

Have students examine religious diversity in the country being studied. Ask:

- What religious rights and freedoms are provided for citizens of this country?
- Does the nation promote an ethical system that upholds respect and compassion for people of all religious beliefs?
- What historical examples can you find that support this?
- What evidence can you find today that indicates either a changing or static climate for religious tolerance?



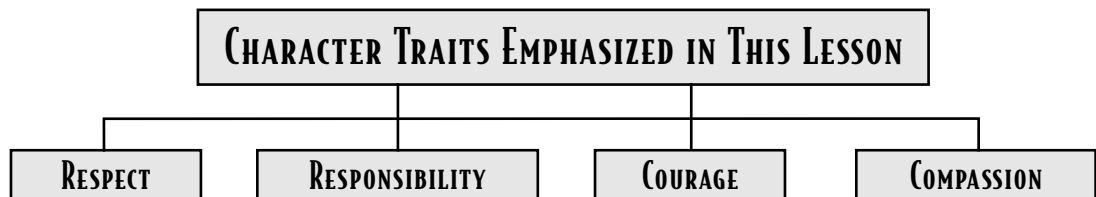
GENDER, CULTURE, AND ETHNICITY

Lesson 8



OVERVIEW

The creation of a multicultural society that respects and values the differences of each citizen continues to be a goal in many cultures throughout the world. Through this lesson, students will examine the defining characteristics of gender, culture, and ethnicity and explore the influence that these characteristics have in a diverse society. Students will examine the rights of indigenous peoples and immigrant minorities, as well as the status afforded to women. Students will reflect upon the concept of human rights and identify the necessary components for harmonious living in a pluralistic world. Students will explore the history and current status of political and economic equality for women and other groups in the United States and around the world.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- define and provide examples of race, ethnicity, and culture.
- present an argument linking gender, culture, and ethnicity to one’s moral identity.
- recount the economic, social, and political history of women in the country being studied.
- compare the current economic, social, and political status of women in the United States with women in other countries.
- examine the role of gender as it pertains to the organization of family, social status, and political power.
- formulate a list of necessary virtues that ensure human rights.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Have students create a simple time line of women’s activism throughout the history of the country being studied. Students should identify key figures in the evolution of women’s rights. Then have students research the representation of women in government. Students should use the following questions as the focus of their research:

- How well does political representation reflect the percentage of female citizens? Explain.
- What is the economic earning power of women in this country? How does this compare to men in comparable positions?
- Which professions are still dominated by a specific gender?
- What types of programs have been instituted to address these inequalities?
- What gender-imposed restrictions prohibit women from enjoying the same rights as men?



GENDER, CULTURE, AND ETHNICITY

Lesson 8 (continued)

Activity 2

Have students research and examine gender as it pertains to the following social practices and values: dress, social and public behaviors, recreation and sports, courtship and marriage, divorce and widowhood. Ask:

- Are there global contexts for both women and men with regard to these areas?
- How have attitudes and behaviors changed from both a national and global perspective?
- Are there areas in which one gender is still oppressed? Explain.

Activity 3

Point out that stereotypes of ethnic groups are sets of ideas—based on distortion, exaggeration, and oversimplification—that are applied to all members of a group. Have students research ethnic stereotypes in art, music, literature, and mass media. Use the following questions to focus student research:

- What stereotypes are reflected?
- What assumptions about a particular ethnic group are being made?

Then use the following questions as the basis for a class discussion:

- What personal biases or assumptions do you hold about your own race?
- What biases or assumptions do you hold toward other ethnic groups?

Activity 4

Point out to students that in light of the rapidly changing face of the global population, it has become increasingly important that basic human rights be protected. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 1 of the document states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Have students keep this quotation in mind as they research one aspect of American life (politics, culture, education, business, and so on) and identify ways in which U.S. citizens can more fully embody this assertion.



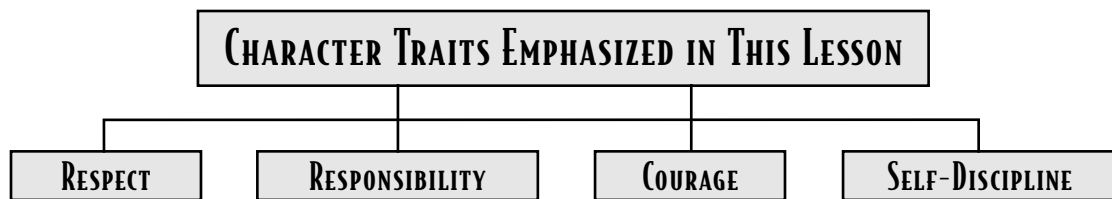
CREATING A JUST GOVERNMENT

Lesson 9



OVERVIEW

A just government provides a set of laws and regulations limiting the powers and influence of certain people or groups while providing a distribution of powers among different branches of government. In this lesson, students examine governments of the region being studied, as well as historical examples of governments abusing their powers. Discussions regarding the concept of a higher or fundamental law that governs all, including those in positions of power will afford students the opportunity to formulate their ideas of what constitutes a moral government. Discussions relating to the need for an informed citizenry and responsible civic participation will allow students to examine the influence of a typical citizen in the creation of a just government.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- define and give examples of a just government.
- list the attributes of moral leadership.
- identify and explain the functions and powers of the government being studied.
- describe the rights and protections provided for citizens by their government.
- Explain the various ways in which citizens can participate in government.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Have students define the term *just government* and provide an example. Discuss with students the factors that make a government just. Then discuss what it means to be a moral leader. Have students identify someone whom they consider to be a moral leader. Ask:

- What moral attributes does this person possess?
- What examples of ethical decision making support this person as an example of a moral leader?

Have students share their ideas and generate a list of characteristics of a just

government and a list of characteristics of a moral leader. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two lists. Discuss with students whether it is possible to have one without the other.

Activity 2

Have students research the functions and powers of the government being studied and determine whether it is a constitutional government. Students should then create a chart listing the similarities and differences between this government and the United States government with regard to organization; purpose; citizen participation; and the power, rights, and responsibilities of the citizens.



CREATING A JUST GOVERNMENT

Lesson 9 (continued)

Activity 3

Through class discussion or journaling, have students address what it means for a government to have a system of checks and balances. Give specific examples of how such a government avoids potential abuse of power. Ask:

- What are the rights of the citizens?
- What are the responsibilities of the citizens?

Activity 4

Have students research the ways in which citizens of the region being studied participate in their government. Instruct students to use library resources or the Internet to research civic participation in elections. Students should find answers to the following questions:

- Which areas of the region had the most civic participation?
- Which demographic group illustrated the highest level of participation?
- Which group illustrated the lowest?

Have students create charts or graphs detailing the information they have found. Then assign students to use the data to help them assume the identity of a typical citizen

of that government and write an editorial addressing the following questions:

- Is civic participation a right or responsibility?
- Should citizens be held accountable for being “informed”?
- What segments of society have been excluded from civic participation?
- What steps have been taken to make civic participation more accessible to all citizens?
- What role does education play in creating an informed and responsible citizenry?

Activity 5

Students should research an example of a government abusing its power and identify the political leaders involved. Have students list the attributes of moral character that these leaders lacked. Use the following questions as the focus of a class discussion:

- What powers did the leaders abuse in order to achieve their goals?
- What national and global impact did this abuse of power have?
- What, if anything, has this government done to prevent further abuse of power?

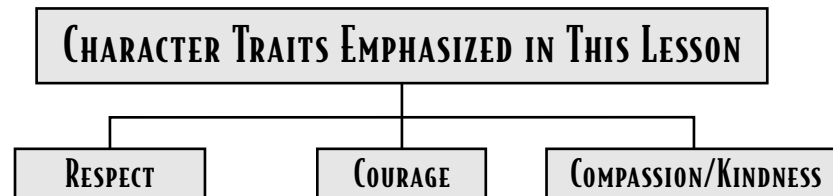


SOCIAL IDENTITY

Lesson 10

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will research the structures, traditions, and people of different cultures. They will examine the influence that environment, politics, religion, gender, and individual status play in the development of a society. Respect for diversity, personal pride, and citizenship will be discussed as they relate to the development of national and cultural identity. Lastly, students will reflect on what it means to be a citizen of the region being studied.



◆ OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- analyze the elements that are part of social identity.
- identify common elements of cultures from around the world.
- discuss how social identity and cultures change, and identify influences that bring about that change.

◆ STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Have students create a working definition of social identity. Questions for them to consider might include the following:

- What are the defining elements of an individual's identity?
- How do people reveal their values through their identity?
- How do the physical characteristics of the environment influence social identity (i.e., agricultural/rural v. industrial/urban)?
- What is the function of the family as the primary influence in establishing social identity?
- What is the function of the government?

Through journaling, have students describe their own social identity. They should address those influences that have

contributed to their identity and explore where they "fit" with regard to their school environment, their identity as an American citizen, as well as their identity as a member of a global community. Have students create an artistic rendering of their identity, using color and symbols to fully depict their social identity.

Activity 2

Through research, have students identify several cultures from the region being studied. They should examine social organizations, customs and traditions, language, art and literature, religion, government, economic systems, and food and clothing. They should also identify the needs that influence the members of this culture. Have students create a fictional identity for themselves assuming the characteristics of a specific social identity (i.e., an African herder in Uganda in the 1900s or a soldier of the Third Reich in Nazi



SOCIAL IDENTITY

Lesson 10 (continued)

Germany). Allow students to select a presentation format such as a biopoem or a personal narrative to share information about their person with the class.

Activity 3

Students should choose one culture from the region being studied and research how it has changed over the past century. They should be prepared to discuss the influence of technology, migration, globalization, and history on these changes. Conclude the activity by having students create a time line that includes specific cultural examples to document this cultural transformation.

Activity 4

All cultures exist within a global culture. Have students reflect upon and discuss the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of our global culture?
- What are the core values that affect relationships between and among the subcultures of this global culture?
- How do current issues such as political instability, the environment,

nationalism, religion, and a global economy affect the concept of a global culture?

Students should identify a current social conflict in the region being studied and develop a theory about how this conflict can be addressed without sacrificing cultural identity.

Activity 5

Organize students into small groups to address the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a member of the culture region being studied?
- What are the essential characteristics of this culture?
- What values are revealed through this culture?
- How do the values in this culture compare to those in American culture?
- What do you consider to be the greatest influences on American culture? How are these influences similar and how are they different from those influences in the culture under study?
- How has the culture of the region under study influenced American culture?
- How has this culture influenced global culture?



You might find the following resources useful as you tailor character education to your own particular classroom.

Character Education

Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs

www.cortland.edu/www/c4n5rs

Housed at the State University of New York College at Cortland, the Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs disseminates articles relating to the teaching of character traits, publishes a newsletter, and sponsors an annual summer institute.

Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character

www.bu.edu/education/caec/index.html

Founded in 1989 by the School of Education and the College of Liberal Arts at Boston University, the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character supports character education through research and publications addressing teachers and teacher training as well as providing resources for both educators and parents through their “Character Education Network.”

Character Counts!

www.charactercounts.org

This nationwide nonprofit initiative supports a nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of schools, communities, and nonprofit organizations that support character education through the teaching of the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The comprehensive Web site offers a rotating collection of lesson plans, a quote library, articles on character education, and more than 40 essays from prominent Americans. An exhaustive list of online links and a section “En Español” are two more unique features.

Character Education Partnership (CEP)

www.character.org

CEP serves as a national resource center through the dissemination of information on “educational and community programs designed to develop moral character and civic

virtue.” A searchable database of character education resources and organizations, a character education bulletin board offering continuous online discussion of character education, assessment tools, and promising practices in the field of character education through the national Schools of Character awards program are only a few of the resources available from this site.

CHARACTERplus

info.csd.org/staffdev/chared/characterplus.html

Representing more than 30 public school districts in the St. Louis area, CHARACTERplus offers a comprehensive approach to character education through its innovative collaborations with various members of the community. Online resources include teacher lesson plans, Internet resources, samples of student work and initiatives, and information about their annual conference.

Community of Caring

www.communityofcaring.org

Founded by the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, COC addresses destructive attitudes, which lead to “early sexual involvement, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and dropping out of school.” The development of positive values is approached through a total community approach.

Ethics Resource Center

www.ethics.org

This business-based center has a character education program with an interesting feature—the Character Education Encyclopedia. Included in the Encyclopedia is a Character Calendar providing a list of all major character education events. Links to other character ed Web sites, a resource list, and a bibliography of related articles and books on moral development are included as well.

Institute for Global Ethics

www.globalethics.org

The institute’s Ethics in Education Program provides K–12 curricular materials; character education community programs; staff development workshops; classroom activities based on news stories and current events; and



ONLINE RESOURCES

(continued)

a comprehensive, annotated list of links to other sites supporting the instruction of ethics in the classroom.

Josephson Institute of Ethics

www.josephsoninstitute.org

Ethics in the workplace, a collection of 41 essays revealing the "Power of Character" and a step-by-step guide for making ethical decisions are only a few of the unique features found on this site. A searchable database of books on ethics and character and a database of motivational quotes complete the picture.

Civic Education Resources

North Carolina Civic Education Consortium

www.civics.org

Housed at the Institute of Government at UNC-CH, this Web site provides access to curriculum resources including sample lessons and unit plans, *Citizen I Am* town meeting activity, links to community resources, Web site links to other resources, and information about small grants.

Center for Civic Education

www.civiced.org

The center has created a campaign to promote civic education with the purpose of preserving and improving constitutional democracy for future generations. The Teacher Resource Section provides free instructional materials and teacher training for *We, The People* and *Project Citizen*. Other features include articles, papers, and speeches related to civic education, research and evaluation information, and links to other civic education Internet resources.

Newspapers-in-Education

www.newsobserver.com/nie

This Web site offers ideas for utilizing newspapers to focus on character and citizenship in

the classroom. It also provides access to free teaching materials and classroom newspapers.

Constitutional Rights Foundation

www.crf-usa.org/

CRF has provided leadership in law-related education programs for more than 20 years. This site contains curriculum materials, newsletters, and workshops and summer institutes in law and government for teachers of all levels.

Street Law

www.streetlaw.org

This Web site includes classroom materials for mock trials, law and justice study, a Youth Summit Planning Guide, Summer Institute on the Supreme Court for high school teachers, and mediation and conflict resolution training materials.

Capitol Forum: The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project

www.choices.edu/edaboutchoices.html

Sponsored by Brown University, this project is an annual competition of student/teacher teams on international topics. Information regarding teacher workshops, curricular materials, and annual competitions can be accessed.

National Archives and Records Administration

www.nara.gov

This site offers lessons and materials for teaching from primary sources in the National Archives with a focus on both current and historical issues.

USInfo

usinfo.state.gov/homepage.htm

This Web site of the U.S. Department of State contains news articles, background papers, and original documents organized around national and international topics for civics and history classes.



ONLINE RESOURCES

(continued)

ThinkQuest

library.thinkquest.org/13506/

A Web site of the Department of Education, this site contains many issue-based and participatory lessons, curriculum units, and other resources such as a guide to government written for kids; an annual contest for kids aged 12–19; and chat communities organized around civics topics of interest.

FREE Resources

Resources and lessons on American history, culture, and civics can be found at:

Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/free/what.html>

Service Learning Resources

Learn and Serve North Carolina

www.dpi.state.nc.us/service_learn/

This Web site offers teacher training, model curricula, small grants, an annual state conference, and support network for educators

designing service-learning programs in their classrooms and schools. Research data and other learn and serve Internet links can be accessed as well.

America's Promise

www.americaspromise.org

This national youth-focused campaign coordinated by Communities in Schools, Inc., hosts youth summits and provides materials for providing marketable skills through effective education, fostering healthy relationships between youth and caring adults, and providing opportunities for community service.

Do Something

www.dosomething.org

With a focus on creating citizens as well as scholars, this Web site offers schools program manuals, curricula, activities, training, evaluation tools, and a national network of schools focusing on the integration of service learning and community involvement as tools for developing student leadership and improving schools.

