

## Get Involved!

### Ways to make a difference through social action

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*Appropriate for ESL & EL/Civics students, Intermediate – Advanced levels*

## Resources

### [Get Involved in Your Community](#) - You Tube video

Sponsored by Common Knowledge Group

### [Get Involved](#) - KQED's *Climate Watch*

Different environmental calls to action

### [If You Ask Me](#) - *Election 2012*: KQED's Election Coverage

*Tell us what matters most to you.*

[In San Jose, Once a Class Project, Now a Major Political Battle](#) - *Election 2012*: KQED's Election Coverage. Peter Jon Shuler reports on San Jose State students' social action class where students developed the minimum wage Measure D, based on their own struggles to raise wages from \$8.00 an hour to \$10.00.

### [How to Create a Community Page on Facebook](#) - You Tube video

## Objective

Identify ways to improve the quality of life in one's community through getting involved - through volunteering, using social media or organizing grass roots campaigns. The objective is to explore social action as a way of finding a voice and making a difference.

## Context

**Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has!"**

As the 2012 Elections draw near, the national conversation is addressing many issues that are important to Americans. Some of these issues are global, some are national, state or local issues, and some unique to various communities.

In addition to voting for elected officials and statewide propositions, there are other ways for students to make their voices heard and affect change in their communities, neighborhoods, or schools. Through volunteering, social media or organizing grass roots campaigns, they can make a difference in their world, for themselves, their families and community members.

### Preview Activity/Introductory Questions

Prepare students for this activity by asking them to think about a problem in their community or school which they would like to see corrected. They should be able to state the problem, or show a photograph to illustrate it. .

1. What are some other ways for people to make their voices heard – apart from voting?
2. How can people who cannot vote participate in their communities? Civic participation can still be important.
3. How can contributing to the community improve a person's quality of life?
4. Can students offer examples of volunteer work they are currently engaged in?
5. What issues do students care about on a local level?
6. Are there issues/problems/difficulties at your school which you would like to change?  
If so, what are they? (*i.e., student fees escalating, limited computer access, funding for student activities.*)
7. What are some ways to solve problems or address issues like the ones above?

### Vocabulary Review

Clubhouse   heavy lifting   homebound   house calls   insured   isolated  
make time   repay   resolution

### Listening Practice

Give students the **HANDOUT** attached to this lesson. Review instructions and check understanding of the underlined words in the handout: ways, reasons & benefits.

Play **You Tube** video, [Get Involved in Your Community](#).

Replay video 2-3 times, allowing students to check off the items on the **HANDOUT** as they watch. Discuss any vocabulary they are not familiar with and ways, reasons & benefits suggestions.

### Post Viewing Activities

Arrange students in groups of 4 or 5. Appoint a **recorder**, a **facilitator** to ensure everyone is heard, a **timekeeper**, and a **reporter**. Agree on a time limit (10-15 minutes).

Ask each group to:

- 1 List major issues facing their neighborhood, community or school that need to be addressed. Choose **one** to concentrate on.
- 2 Discuss campaign strategies and ideas. Ideas could be: writing or emailing a local official, organizing a petition, contacting local groups working to support issue, signing up to volunteer, setting up a campaign page on Face book etc...

Discuss the issues and decide either by voting or reaching a consensus:

- which issue the class would like to tackle as a group.
- what the best method of attacking the problem would be.

**a) If students decide to organize a campaign:**

For a sample campaign, listen to Peter Jon Shuler's report (August 28, 2012)

[In San Jose, Once a Class Project, Now a Major Political Battle](#)

- Suggest that students work together to devise an action plan and clarify objectives and strategies.
- From this **action plan** organize volunteers to make phone calls, collect signatures, organize email blasts, design flyers and posters, or set up a Facebook page or website. Agree upon dates and deadlines.

**NOTE**

To set up a community Facebook page, view the **You Tube video**, [How to Create a Community Page on Facebook](#). For an example of a community campaign see [Rock the Vote](#) on Facebook.

**b) If students decide on an email or letter-writing campaign:**

Decide who should receive letters (*i.e., college President, Dean of Students, President of Student Council, School Principal, City Supervisor, etc.*) and research online names, titles and addresses of appropriate recipients of correspondence.

Information (video interviews and activities) on San Francisco District Supervisors including names and addresses may be obtained by going to <http://www.sfbos.org/>.

## Extension Activities

- If sufficient interest exists, students may form a committee to meet regularly to address the issue taken on by either of the above campaigns. The committee can create an action plan, and set up a website with events, activities, and contact information... The sky is the limit!
- Allocate a small bulletin board or classroom space to updates & communication about activities to support the selected issue. Post photos volunteers and events - cite quotes from the communities being served.

- In a later class, allow 15-20 minutes for peer review of letters. Circulate to provide individual feedback and assistance. Identify one or two strong examples to share. Mail letters!

## Reflection

How does volunteerism benefit your community?

How does volunteerism benefit YOU?

Can you make a difference?

## Additional Resources

[Sample Letter to Senator re: Dream Act](#)

## HANDOUT A

Watch the video [Get Involved in Your Community](#). Play it again if necessary.

Listen for the following **WAYS** to volunteer while you watch the video.

Check off each one as you hear it.

- Drive a bus or van to transport children to a homework club
- Bring books from the library to people who are homebound
- Volunteer at a "clubhouse" or senior center, doing heavy lifting
- Read books to children in an elementary school
- Form a committee to work on improving the neighborhood with a playground
- Deliver food to people who are homebound

Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Listen for the following **REASONS** to get involved while you watch the video.

Check off each one as you hear it.

- Make your voice heard
- Repay your community for the good things it has done for you
- Provide a good example for your child/children
- Represent your community
- Know you are accomplishing something for someone else
- Get other people involved
- Gain confidence in yourself

Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Listen for the following **BENEFITS** you may gain when volunteering while you watch the video.

Check off each one as you hear it.

- Gain more connections with people
- Discover more goals for yourself
- Feel more reliable and responsible
- Achieve personal growth
- Experience personal joy
- Make a difference in people's lives

Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After watching video 2-3 times, go back and write in your additional ideas on the lines where you see the word **OTHERS**