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# Picture Yourself IN Local Government

A Student Guide To California Local Government



**F. CLIFTON WHITE RESOURCE CENTER**  
**INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS**

# Picture Yourself In Local Government

A Student Guide To California Local Government



**PARTICIPATING  
IN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

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# About The Institute For Local Self Government...

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**E**stablished in 1955 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan and tax-exempt organization, the Institute for Local Self Government (ILSG) is affiliated with the League of California Cities. The Institute is engaged in research and education to promote and strengthen local self governance. Its research projects are both privately and publicly funded, with projects that include public safety delivery systems, telecommunications, children and family issues, and curricular materials.

As we prepare to enter the new century, the vitality and success of our local governments depend more than ever before on people who understand the philosophical and historical framework of local government and the opportunities and importance of participating in local government.

This student guide, "Picture Yourself In Local Government," and the cityscape poster, videotape and teacher's guide are components of the Institute's "Participating In Local Government" project — a teacher training and resource project for teachers and students designed to provide an understanding of local self governance and civic participation.

As young students, you will have several opportunities in your journey from elementary through high school to study government, civic education and social studies. You will also have opportunities to join with other students in clubs and activities, many of which include community service. Get involved! The Institute for Local Self Government strongly believes in the promotion of youth development. Getting involved now in your school, neighborhood and community will help you acquire the attitudes, behaviors and skills to be successful in life. Good Luck!

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# About The Citizenship & Law-Related Education (CLRE) Center...

*"Enriching communities by helping youth learn personal and civic responsibility"*

**T**he Citizenship and Law-Related Education (CLRE) Center is a non-profit organization established in 1984. The Center has been working in partnership with the Institute for Local Self Government (ILSG) since 1988 to coordinate the week-long "Participating In Local Government" summer institute and develop the "Picture Yourself In Local Government" classroom materials.

The Center's mission is to rekindle a commitment to individual initiative and the spirit of our democratic traditions; promote active participation as a necessity for a productive workforce; and foster community connections to produce educated and involved citizens.

Center programs, services and materials prepare youth to succeed in rapidly changing communities and workplaces. Through our programs, students have a chance to learn about law, government, leadership and conflict resolution.

## **Center programs and materials include:**

- *Conflict Resolution Training and Materials*
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- *K-12 Civic And Law-Related Education Materials*
- *Youth Leadership Development*
- *Cross-Age Peer Teaching*
- *Applied Academics Institute*
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# Introduction

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## “I’D RATHER DO IT MYSELF!”

**H**ave you ever felt this way? You probably have at one time or another. If you really think, though, about all the things you require to lead a happy and safe life, you surely wouldn’t want to try to do everything yourself.

In a democratic society, there are people and services that exist to do some of the things that would be difficult for you to do yourself. We delegate or give authority to elected and appointed officials who make decisions, collect and spend money, plan for community growth and development, provide for protection and safety, and generally implement the actions that make your community a comfortable place to live.

In addition, there are structures in place to give you and every citizen an active voice in how your community operates.

This student guide is intended to help you explore your local government. Each unit includes an imaginary scenario that raises real issues about local government in California. After you have read the background material and discussed the issues, there are activities proposed for you as an individual, as part of a family or small group or as a member of your whole class.

The guide helps you explore questions about your local government concerning its history, structure, players,

*“What government is the best?  
That which teaches us to  
govern ourselves.”*

—Goethe



services, finances and citizen participation. It also provides many opportunities for you to apply and demonstrate what you have learned.

Government can not and should not do everything for you, but it can, with your help, provide order and services that are vital to a community. The true strength of a democratic government is the realization that you have a voice, an ownership and a responsibility as a citizen, a student, a worker and a voter. In many ways, you really are “doing it yourself!”





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# Where Did Our Local Governments Come From?

1

Dear Pat,

If I started in history class, I was only half listening to Mrs. Chin talk about people coming to America for freedom and opportunity. I looked around the room and imagined that the walls have seen and heard everything that happened here at Jefferson School! If they could talk, they might tell us about things that happened before we got here.

At lunch I told Danny what I imagined. He said we should find out if anyone does know about the history of our school. Mr. Powers is the oldest person around here. Some kids say he started working here when the school was new. He'll be the best person to ask.

Write me with news from your town. Nothing much ever happens around here.

Your friend,

Chris

P.W.B. (Please write back)

Dear Chris,

Nothing ever happens here, either. This school is too new to have much interesting history. My mom says all the land around here was orchards just a few years ago. There was no traffic or anything. There used to be a big old barn right where the fire station is now.

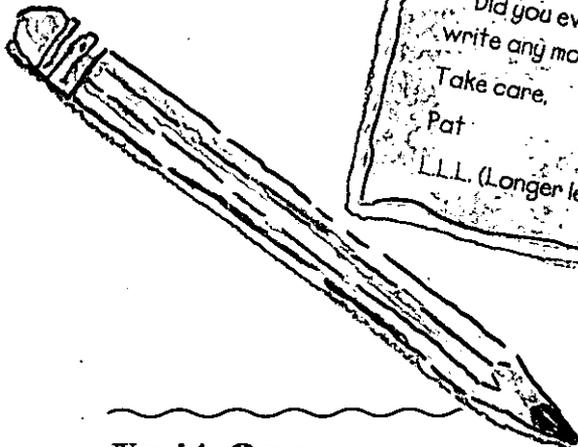
We still don't have any sidewalks or parks, so everyone hangs out at school to play basketball. Some of the big kids skate and the little ones bring their bikes.

Did you ever talk to Mr. Powers? My mom is going to a meeting tonight so I can't write any more.

Take care,

Pat

L.L.L. (Longer letter later)



Dear Pat,

I've been thinking about your letter. It's almost like what Mrs. Chin was saying about immigrants and new settlements. You know, people need stuff like schools and fire stations when they start a new town.

Nina and Felicia talked to Mr. Powers. He remembers almost everything that ever happened in this school. He told them Mrs. Torres, one of our teachers, used to go here herself, and everybody called her Annie. Maya and Shawn want to try calling her Annie some day, but I don't think they want to get in trouble.

Mr. Powers remembers when the library and the multipurpose room were built. Before that everybody had to bring their own lunches or go home at lunchtime. Right across the street used to be a favorite place for cruising until all the parents complained to the city council and the police started patrolling that corner all the time.

I guess things do happen around here. But none of it will ever get into a history book. Next time if you want, you can e-mail me at [Chris@statenet.com](mailto:Chris@statenet.com).

Take care,

Chris  
S.S.S. (Sorry, so sloppy)

## THE INFLUENCE OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

**L**ong before it became a state, California was considered a good place to live. New Californians, called **immigrants**, have come from different states and countries looking for a better life. In the past, they came by foot and wagon across the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. They came by ship from Asia or Panama or around Cape Horn. They came by rail and by antique cars across the desert.

As in the past, immigrants continue to come to California. Where are new immigrants moving today? Why? What services might they need from government?

Various regions of the state have been settled and developed at different times. Some areas were settled because there was water, some because jobs were available, some for other reasons. People in different places and times have wanted government to meet different needs.

If you were a new settler in 1849, where might you have gone? What would you have wanted government to do? Where might you have moved in 1870? Around 1900? What would you have needed from government? After 1941, where did most people settle? What were their needs?

California's population not only grows, but it shifts. New Californians are born each year and many people move from place to place within the state. Local government grows and changes as the population grows and moves around. If your family moved from a large city in Southern California to a **rural** area in Northern California, you would see many differences in local government. As you read on, you'll find both history and geography have played roles in the development of California and have shaped the governments of local communities.

### HOW DID IT ALL HAPPEN?

**T**hese students are curious about their school's history. Do you know much about your school's past? How about your community? Are you curious about how it came to be the way it is today? Did you ever wonder about how your community's government came to be and why it developed the way it did? Understanding something about California's history and geography will help you form a better picture of the growth of your own community and its government.

*"A public office is a public trust."*

—Theodore Roosevelt

## EARLY CALIFORNIA

**B**efore Europeans began settling along the Pacific Coast, California was a land of hundreds of villages inhabited by Native Californians. The size of each village was determined by the available supply of foods like acorns, fish, fruits and nuts, deer and other game. Native people sometimes traveled to several sites each year to take advantage of the available food supply.

When European settlers arrived, they often regarded the Native people as "primitive." But today, many land developers, homeowners' associations and local governments are adopting ideas about land ownership that resemble the practices of Native Californians. Holding some land in common (as the property of a group instead of an individual) is one of their new/old ideas. Another is leaving some land undeveloped for greenbelts or open space.

In 1769, Franciscan padres established the first of their California missions at San Diego, followed by 20 others during the next fifty-four years. Spanish soldiers built presidios (forts) at strategic points throughout the colony, and other settlers established **pueblos** and ranchos. Each pueblo (town) had an **alcalde**, a combination of mayor and judge. The office of alcalde remained a respected title in cities in Southern California until the 1870's.

In 1822, California joined Mexico, declaring independence from Spain. The new government gave most of the mission lands to private citizens. Altogether, the Spanish and Mexican governments issued nearly 800 land grants, some as large as 50,000 acres. Even today, many California roads and community boundaries follow the lines of Spanish and Mexican land grants.

Also, many cities and counties have been given Spanish names.

## THE GOLD COUNTRY

**I**n 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River east of Sacramento. Thousands of gold seekers flooded into California. They came from all over the United States and from many other countries. The most experienced miners were from Sonora, Mexico. All incoming miners were known as '49ers for the year most arrived. Very few settled in Southern California. Instead, they headed for Coloma, where the gold was found, then up the rivers into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Mining camps were established wherever it seemed likely that rivers might have deposited gold washed down from higher elevations. Miners working their lonely claims were sometimes robbed or

*"Whatever befalls  
the earth befalls the  
sons and daughters  
of the earth. This  
we know. All things  
are connected like  
the blood which  
unites one family.  
All things are con-  
nected. We did not  
weave the web of  
life, we are merely  
a strand in it.  
Whatever we do to  
the web we do  
to ourselves."*

—Chief Seattle





you will find stone markers with brass plaques telling how towns grew and died almost as quickly as the wildflowers that line the roads. On one such historical marker reads, "The mining town of Greenwood, which developed during Gold Rush, boasted a theater, four hotels, 14 stores, a brewery, and four saloons." A short distance away is a green highway sign with the present population of Greenwood—375.

### THE CENTRAL VALLEY

**M**ost Californios (the people of Mexican and Spanish descent who lived in California at the time it became a state) used their huge ranchos for raising cattle. Fruits, vegetables and grain were grown on a small scale for local use. The completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1868 meant that California farms could ship their crops to market by rail. At first they grew mostly wheat, because fruits and vegetables would spoil, rolling for days or weeks in boxcars across the hot plains.

Using McCormick reapers and other newly invented machines, farmers in the San Joaquin Valley planted tens of thousands of acres of wheat. These giant farms were called ranches, from the Spanish word rancho. The railroad brought the machines, and the railroad hauled away the harvest.

After the refrigerated rail car was developed in 1888, ranchers also grew and shipped perishable fruits. In Riverside and Orange Counties, towns grew up around packing sheds and railroad spurs. In many places, farmers organized **irrigation districts** to provide the water needed by fruits and vegetables during Central and Southern California's dry summers.

murdered for their gold. One of the first needs in these new settlements like Placerville and Angels Camp was for law and order. Fire was also a threat in these mountain towns. Buildings were made of wood and canvas, heated by wood stoves and cook fires and surrounded by forests. Within a few years, many communities organized volunteer fire departments, some of which are still active today.

During the Gold Rush, supplies of all kinds were expensive in California, including food. Many California immigrants found they could make a better living by farming than by mining. Names like Gold Hill and Garden Valley, only a few miles from each other, reflect the different dreams of early settlers in those places.

When most of the easy gold had been found, the population of many mining camps dwindled. Transportation in the Sierra foothills was too difficult to make farming there profitable. Driving through the gold rush country today,

*"We here highly resolve...that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."*

—Abraham Lincoln

## LOCAL CONTROL AND THE RAILROAD

**W**ith the growth of agriculture in California came an increased need for better ways to transport the goods produced. Because of this, there was a tremendous growth in size and power of the railroad. Builders wanted to “lay the track” as quickly as possible to seize the opportunity to make money. In California, one of the biggest hurdles was the Sierra Nevada mountains.

This mountain range, located in Northern California and Nevada, forced the builders of the railroad to use “specialists” to build in this region. One group of specialists was the Chinese. They were experienced and very skillful in the use of dynamite and blasting. They would blast into the sides of the mountains to create tunnels for the railroad track. The railroad surely would not have been completed as quickly without their tremendous contribution.

Railroads in California meant a more efficient way to transport goods, but also created problems for Californians. When railroad freight rates were too high, ranchers could not make a profit on their crops. Some wanted laws to reduce the freight rates. But the state legislature did not allow local governments to regulate the railroads. The legislature passed laws changing the governments of particular cities, including the method of choosing officials and the powers given to those officials.

Many citizens accused the legislature of running the state for the benefit of railroads and other powerful companies. In the late 1870's, many demanded a **Constitutional Convention**. Delegates at the convention insisted on restricting the great powers the legislature had

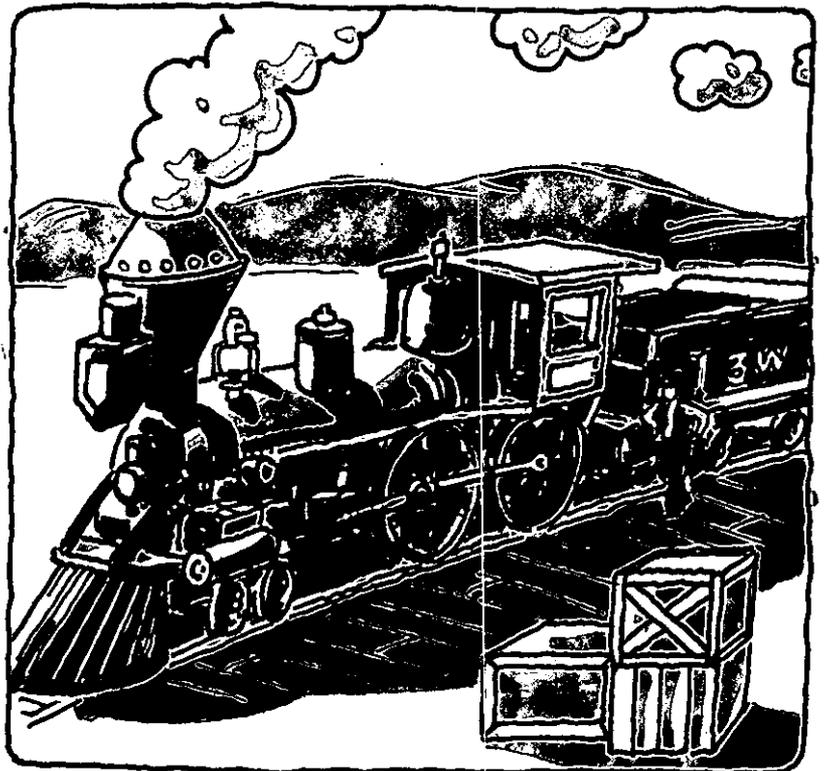
over local communities. They believed that state laws affecting local government should be restricted to health and safety issues that affected people throughout the state. They believed that local issues should be the business of local government.

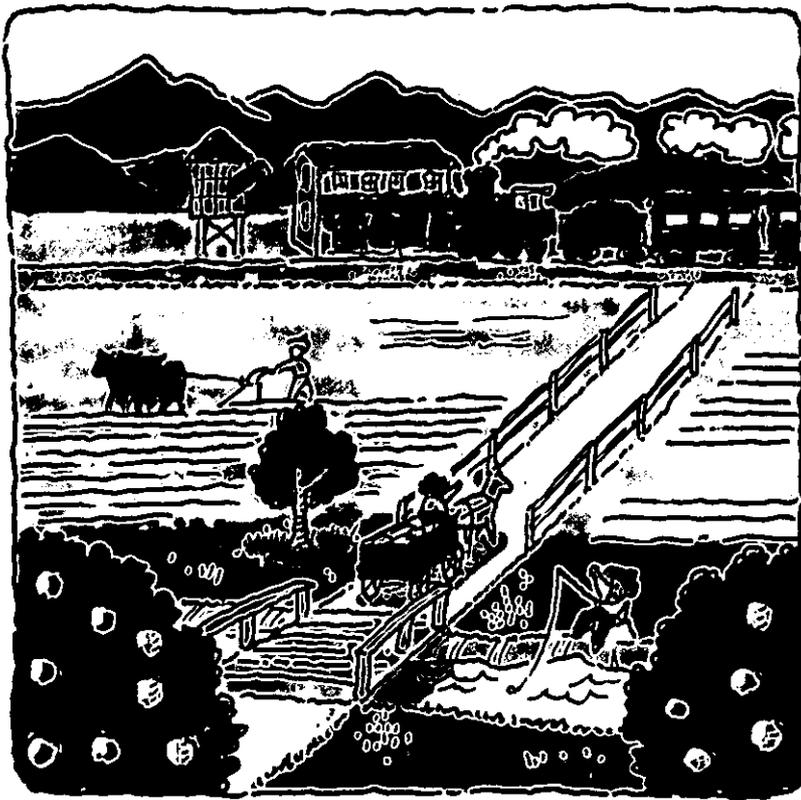
Citizens wanted freedom to debate and decide local matters at the community level. Local matters included such issues as the hours and working conditions of city employees, zoning, building codes, the number of parks and the types and level of service to be paid for with local tax dollars.

The new California Constitution of 1879 succeeded in reducing the influence of the state legislature. However, the political power of the Southern Pacific Railroad continued into the twentieth century. The railroad forced communities in California to pay **subsidies** for the privilege of having a depot (station) in

*“The antidote to the abuse of formal government is the growth of the individual.”*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson





*John Sutter and  
12 Pacific  
Islanders were  
the first settlers  
in Sacramento.*

their town. When San Bernardino refused to provide such a subsidy, the Southern Pacific Railroad established the company town of Colton with a depot that could take business from San Bernardino.

### MORE MIGRATION

**I**mmigrants have come to California in waves. In the 1930's, small farmers fleeing the **Depression** and **Dustbowl** came to California from Oklahoma, Arkansas and other states. Many of them sought work in the fields of the central valley or around Salinas. Because they traveled from place to place following the crop seasons, they often had no homes. In some places, owners of large farms set up labor camps for these families. Elsewhere, federal, state and local governments provided some camps.

Workers often lived in these temporary camps without plumbing. Since that

time, local and state government officials inspect fields to protect public health and prevent contamination of food and drinking water. County governments also give money to people in need. Today we call this money general assistance or welfare. In the 1930's it was called relief.

### THE GROWTH OF CITIES

**F**rom 1769 to 1868, ships were the only practical means of transporting large quantities of goods. So California's first major cities were located in places with great harbors, like San Diego, Monterey and San Francisco. San Francisco had the best access to the interior of the state, by way of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. It was also the seaport closest to the gold fields. San Francisco grew rapidly after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill.

Buildings, including hotels, restaurants and banks, were often large tents—canvas stretched over wooden frames. Many of the wooden ships which brought the gold seekers were left to rot in San Francisco Bay as the crews deserted them to join the rush for gold. On July 1, 1850, 526 vessels were counted in the harbor. Soon more than 100 of them were pulled up onto the mud flats, connected to the streets by wooden walkways, and converted to warehouses, saloons and hotels. Is it any wonder that in less than a year four major fires swept through the city?

By the end of 1850, the city of San Francisco had grown from a few hundred residents to almost 30,000. Over 100 miles of street had been laid out, although none of it was paved. About seven miles of street were planked (covered with boards) to keep wagons from sinking in the mud.

Sacramento and Stockton, although not located on the coast, both grew because ships could travel up river to their ports. And Benicia, which was the capital of California for thirteen months in 1853 and 1854, is on Carquinez Strait, which controls shipping inland from San Francisco Bay. Other cities, such as Fresno and Bakersfield, developed as railroad shipping centers.

## LOS ANGELES

**B**y the 1840's, Los Angeles had become the largest settlement in Southern California, with an extensive trade in hides and tallow (beef fat, used for candles). After the discovery of gold, Los Angeles quickly began to develop because of the demand for beef in the gold fields.

In 1885, the Santa Fe Railroad reached Los Angeles and began competing with the Southern Pacific Railroad. Passenger fares to Middle Western cities like Chicago dropped to only five dollars, attracting thousands of people to the city. However, Los Angeles was in a dry area, without enough natural water to support a large population.

Beginning in 1913, an **aqueduct** from the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada provided plenty of water for Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Aqueduct made possible the growth of the state's largest city. Los Angeles has become a major trade center, due in part to the creation of a modern harbor in San Pedro and an international airport under the jurisdiction of the city government.

In the 1940's, California cities boomed. Shipyards and aircraft factories grew to produce record numbers of vessels and planes needed for victory in World War II. People from other states poured into

California to work in these factories. Cities like Los Angeles, Oakland and Long Beach became the homes of many factory workers.

After the war, public housing projects were created to provide affordable homes for workers. In addition, new suburbs grew with comfortable homes for newly prosperous defense workers. Federal, state and local governments built roads.

The first paved highway in California was built in 1912. Today federal, state and local governments in California have constructed over 160,000 miles of roads. Enough concrete has been used to go all the way around the world.

By 1980, 91 of every 100 Californians lived in **urban** areas. Well over half the state's total population was in Southern California. In 1990, nearly one-third of all Californians lived in Los Angeles County.

*Of the 44 original settlers in Los Angeles, 26 were African American, two were Spanish, and the remaining 16 were mestizos and mulattos.*



## THE INITIATIVE

**A**s California's population grew, its desire to influence government grew also. In addition to electing government officials, California voters can influence government actions in many ways. An **initiative** allows voters to create a new law directly, bypassing elected representatives. A **referendum** nullifies a law passed by elected officeholders. The **recall** can remove elected officials from office before the end of their term. To place these measures before the voters, a **petition** with the required number of signatures of registered voters must be filed with election officials.

In the past twenty-five years, initiatives have become more common. Some groups have paid people to gather signatures so that a measure could get on the ballot. Expensive advertising campaigns for and against initiative propositions often rely on **slogans** - simplified messages that may not reflect the full impact of the proposition.

Some initiatives passed by voters and laws passed by the legislature have limited the independence of local governments. For many years local **property taxes** paid for most local government services. Proposition 13 (passed in 1978) cut property tax rates and gave local governments less **discretionary** income.

State ballot propositions have had other effects on city and county governments. The California Coastal Commission (established by act of the voters) regulates the use of land along the state's coastline, replacing the authority of local agencies. The Fair Political Practices Commission (also established by the voters) regulates campaign fund raising and spending by candidates for all elected offices, and by supporters and opponents of ballot issues.

## WORKING TOGETHER

**G**overnment in California has grown as the population of the state has grown and as the people have required new services. The people of California have acted many times to make government more responsive to them and in many cases have been successful in doing so.

California's traditions of volunteerism, constant adaptation, democratic reform and strong local government are particularly important as our state grows steadily more diverse in population, culture and economics. Our government will be what the people make it or allow it to become!

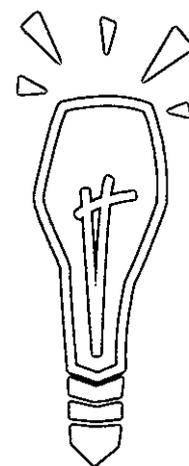
*"No man ever saw a government. I live in the midst of the Government of the United States, but I never saw the Government of the United States."*

—Woodrow Wilson

### New Words

alcalde	petition
aqueduct	property tax
Californios	pueblo
Constitutional	recall
Convention	referendum
Depression	rural
discretionary	slogan
Dustbowl	subsidy
immigrant	urban
initiative	welfare
irrigation district	

# Penning The Past



IMAGINE  
THAT

**B**y reading this brief history of California, you have seen that time and place have had significant effects on local government. To demonstrate your understanding of these effects, put yourself into another time period. Write a letter from a fictional character—one you imagine. Before you can begin, you will have to choose a specific voice, purpose and audience.

the Central Valley or the Sierra, or in the Southern California desert?

Describe the appearance of the community and how its residents make a living.

You know that communities developed at different times in different parts of California. What would be a good year for your character to have lived in the

1. Read pages 9 and 10 completely.

2. Make a chart like the one on page 10. Use the information below to help you. The words in italics are examples of possibilities. You will be making your own choices.

3. Choose a Voice. To choose the voice for your letter, you will have to decide four things:

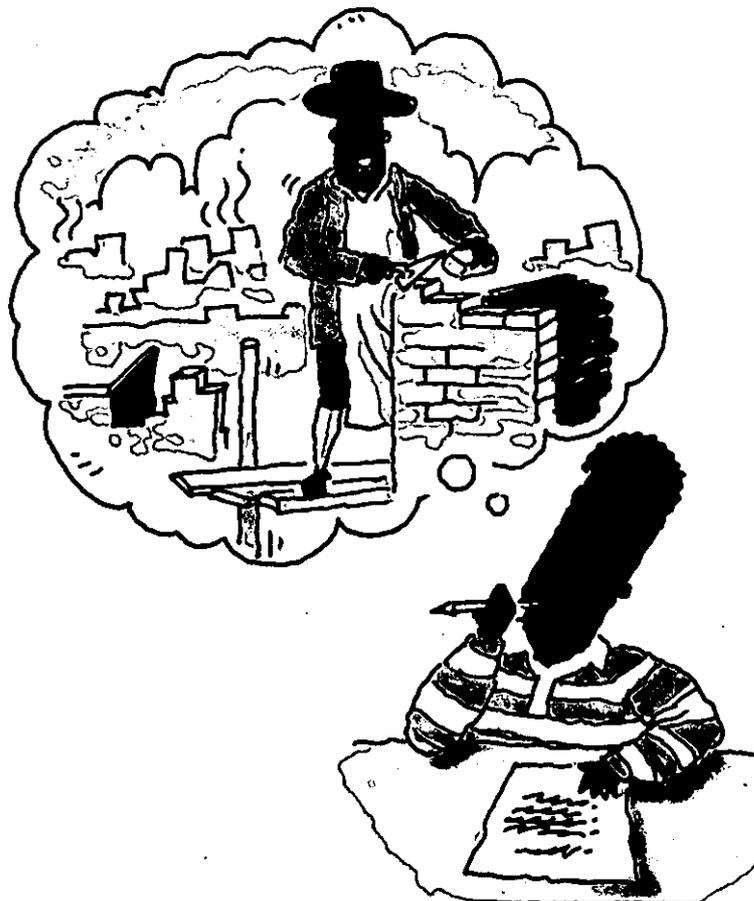
*Where does your character live?*

*What year is the setting for your letter?*

*What kind of community does your character live in?*

*What is your character's occupation?*

Begin by identifying the region of California in which your character lives. The map on page 19 may help you. Does your character live in the San Francisco Bay area? Along the coast, in



region you have chosen? For example, many Southern California suburbs developed after 1940.

Describe your character's job. From now on you can write about that character as "I."

**4. Choose a Purpose.** What are problems for you and your imagined community? What would you like the government to do? What solution do you want to suggest to your audience?

**5. Choose an Audience.** To whom should you write? For example, a miner in 1852 might write a letter to the newspaper, suggesting a meeting to organize a volunteer fire department. A Los Angeles real estate agent around 1887 might have written to the city council, suggesting that they develop a reliable source of drinking water so the city could keep growing.

**Sample Chart:**

### WRITING THE PAST:

#### VOICE:

Sample Voice 1: Region your character lives in:  
San Francisco

Sample Voice 2: Kind of community your character lives in:  
city-But it's just been destroyed by an earthquake

Sample Voice 3: Year your character is writing the letter:  
1906

Sample Voice 4: Your occupation:  
Construction worker

#### PURPOSE:

Sample Purpose 1: What are problems for you or your community?  
Buildings collapsed and burned

Sample Purpose 2: What could government do to help?  
Make a stricter building code. Require brick or stone buildings to be steel-reinforced.  
Require gas stoves and furnaces to be anchored to foundation.

#### AUDIENCE:

Sample Audience 1: To whom could you write for help?  
Board of Supervisors

---

## BUSINESS LETTER FORM AND GUIDELINES

**6. Write Your Letter.** Write at least two paragraphs: one naming your community and describing the problem, and a second suggesting a possible solution.

You can make your letter interesting by including details about the sights, sounds and smells of your neighborhood. Also, try to think of any possible obstacles to your solution (such as cost, or opposition from certain groups) and suggest ways to overcome those obstacles.

Make sure your final draft is in standard business letter form (on this page), including an appropriate fictional date. Use the guidelines below to help you.

### GUIDELINES

1. Be sure to know the purpose of your letter. What do you want to accomplish and what do you want the person to whom you are sending it to know after reading your letter?
2. Before writing your letter, collect all the information you will need. Organize this information in a way that will make it easy for you to arrange in your letter.
3. Keep the reader in mind as you write. Your letter should be courteous and written in a style that is natural and easy to understand.
4. Be sure your final copy is neat and accurately written.

### *Sample Letter:*

#### **Your Name and Address**

{2 Spaces}

#### **Date**

{3-5 Spaces}

#### **Name and address**

{of person to whom you are sending the letter}

{2 Spaces}

#### **Dear Sir or Ma'am:** {Salutation}

{2 Spaces}

#### **Body of letter**

At least two paragraphs

Single Space text

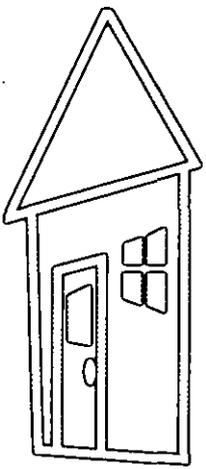
Double space between paragraphs

Do not indent paragraphs

#### **Sincerely,** {Complimentary Closing}

{4 spaces}

#### **Your Signature**



# My Community: Then And Now

**H**istory has been described as being a story well told. There are people in your community who can tell you wonderful stories about how things used to be or how places differ from each other. Take an opportunity to add to your knowledge of California's changing story by interviewing people in your neighborhood. The following activities will help you get a good story and learn more about your community's local government.

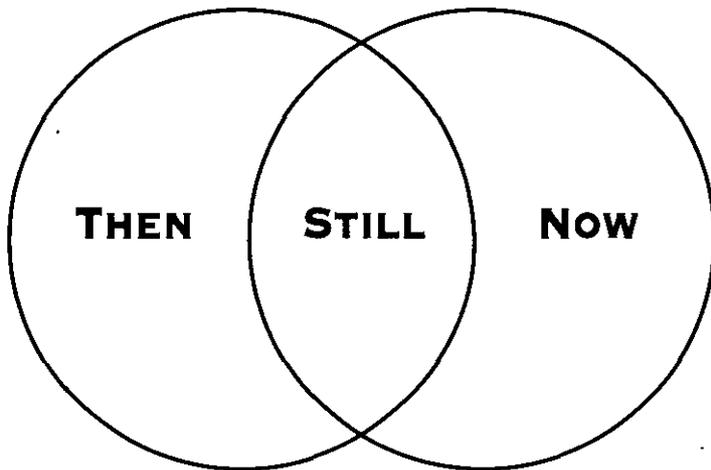
**1. Interview a long-time resident of your neighborhood to learn how local government has changed.** You can ask

how specific services such as police, fire protection, medical care and schools have changed. You can also ask about buildings and how the jobs of people who used to work in local government have changed.

**2. Create a large Venn diagram.** *See example.* Label one circle "Then" and the other "Now." Label the intersection of the two circles "Still." In each circle write notes (words or phrases that will help you remember what you learned from your interview).

**3. Using your notes, write at least three paragraphs describing local government in your community.**

VENN DIAGRAM



A. In the first paragraph describe local government in the past (**Then**).

B. In the next paragraph describe your government today (**Now**).

C. In the last paragraph write about things that have not changed (**Still**).

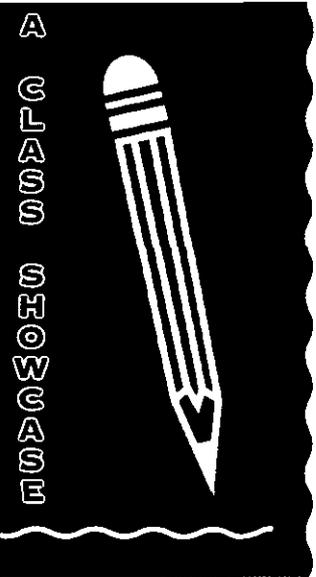
D. You can also write a paragraph suggesting possible reasons for some of the changes.

**Sample Chart:**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT		
Here	There	Both

**4. Next, interview someone who has moved to your neighborhood from another city, state or country.** Ask questions to find out how local government in your community differs from the government in the place in which he or she used to live. To prepare for the interview, make a list of questions in advance. Your teacher may want to use the "Picture Yourself in Local Government" poster to help you think of government services to ask about.

**5. Use a chart to help you organize the information you collect and write an essay.** Make a chart like the one above and use it to write a compare and contrast essay about local government activities in the community the person has moved from and the one in which you both now live.



# For Safe Keeping

**C**reate a time capsule showing local government activities in your community today.

You may wish to use the "Picture Yourself in Local Government" poster for some ideas.

**1. Brainstorm with your class to create a list of government activities.** Then make a chart listing the kinds of evidence you could find for each activity. You might include newspaper articles, a library card or pet license, a bumper sticker, a Neighborhood Watch sign or a 911 telephone sticker. Your teacher may set a limit on the size of your capsule or on the number of items you may contribute to a class capsule.

Add to your chart where you can find this evidence.

**2. Write a label for each item you find.** Explain what it shows about your local government. Think about how to keep the items in your time capsule from deteriorating with age or exposure to the environment.

**3. Bury or store your time capsule.** Be sure to invite members of your school and community and news media to a ceremony when you put the capsule away for the future. An especially good day for such a ceremony is the anniversary of an important local event, such as the day your city government was established or the day your school was dedicated.

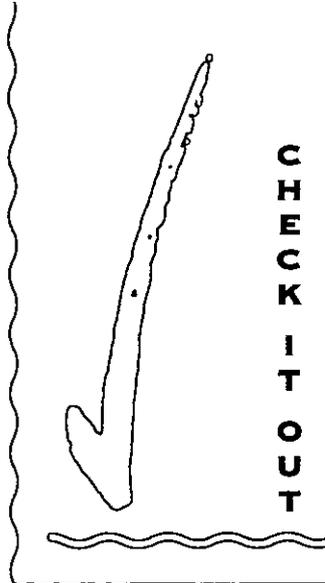
**4. Select several students to speak at the ceremony.** One might give a history of your project. Others could describe some of the objects being placed in the time capsule and what they show about local government in your community.

**5. Arrange for someone to videotape the ceremony.**

Sample Chart:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES		
Activity	Possible Evidence	Where to Find It

# A Journey Through Local Government



**U**se what you've learned in this unit to make a chart like the one on this page.

After you've recorded your thoughts on the chart, try to think of at least one change in local government that might come about in the future.

On a separate piece of paper draw a picture for each of the periods in California history. Complete the columns to show significant events and the effect on local government for the four periods in California history. Then use your imagination to complete information for the future!

*Sample Chart:*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT		
Periods in California History	Significant Events	Effect on Local Government
Early California 		
The Gold Rush 		
The Railroad 		
The Growth of Cities 		
The Future 		



# How Are Local Governments Organized?

# 2

**I**magine that your school is a **city**. The students are the **residents**. The hallways could be the streets and roads. The principal's office could be the **mayor's** or **city manager's** office. The library is just that, the city library! The nurse's office is the city hospital. The building maintenance **department** keeps the streets and sidewalks clean. The gym is the place for **community** sports programs, for Little League and soccer games. The cafeteria is the biggest restaurant in town. And the classrooms are the buildings and meeting rooms for the work that goes on to make this city a place where people want to live.

Where are you in all this? In the classrooms! You're the people who make the school what it is. If it weren't for you, there would be no school at all. The city is just the same: if it weren't for the **citizens**, there would be no city. And it is the citizens who must work to make the city a good place to live. The school and the city are structured or set up to make you happy and safe, to see that things run smoothly.

If there is a problem with too much litter in the hallways of your school, you might form a committee to work with the office in charge of maintenance. The school maintenance office is like a city department. It depends on you to help solve the problem since it is the people who are causing the litter in the first place. If there is a problem at school between two groups of people, at lunch, for instance, you go to the **administrators** who are in charge of the lunchroom. In the city, people can report the problem to the police officers who try to keep the city a safe and peaceful place to live and work.

*"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main..."*

—John Donne

## THE FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNMENT

*"The aim of the city is to make people happy and safe."*

—Aristotle

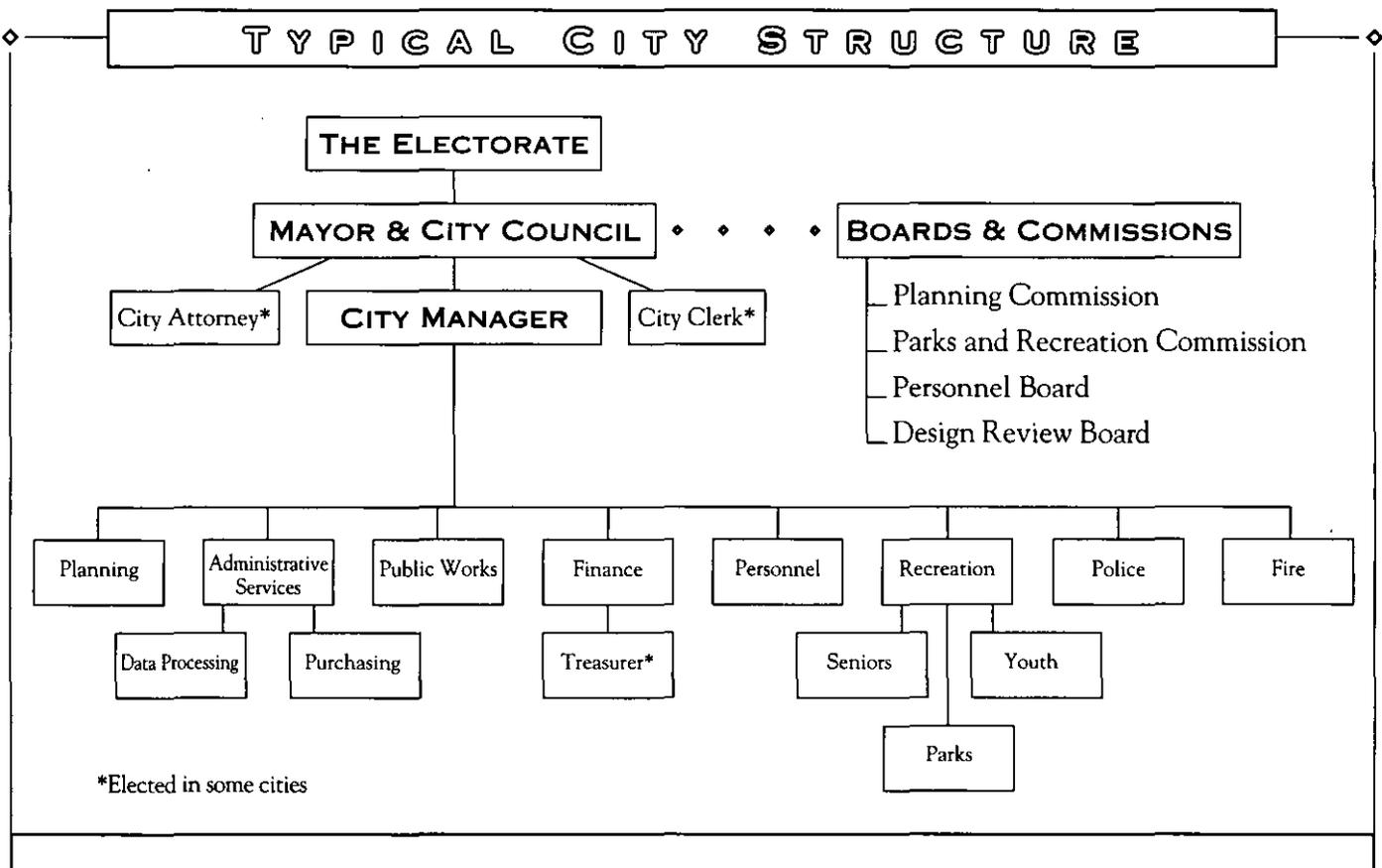
In this unit, you are going to learn how the government of your school, county or city is set up to help you, the people who live, work and play there, be safe and happy. And you're going to see how you can participate in your government by understanding its structure.

Establishing a government is a matter of organizing the way we live together in society. Governments can be big superstructures, like the **federal government** in Washington, D.C. or the state government in California; they can be smaller, like the county government or city government; or they can even be very small, like the structure of your house or school. Every person needs to remember that the government in our country exists only because people **elect** other

people to represent them in making decisions that affect all people. When you are older, you will be part of the **electorate**. The electorate is made up of citizens who live in the community and elect the officials who are in charge of the structure of government. You are learning about government now so that when you are able to vote, you can use your power wisely.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The entire map of California has been divided into 58 pieces of varying sizes and shapes. These are California's 58 counties. You may or may not live in a city, but either way, you do live in a county. Look at the map on page 19 to locate your **county**. Which other counties surround yours?



# California's 58 Counties



*“Civics as an art has to do, not with imagining an impossible utopia where all is well, but with making the most and best of each and every place, especially of the city in which we live.”*

—Patrick Geddes

Counties in California are the basic administrative regions for state government. For example, the state’s welfare programs, the criminal justice and court systems, and public school financing are organized by county, and property taxes are collected at the county level.

Counties are **governed** by locally elected supervisors. They offer a wide scope and variety of services to meet diverse needs. Today, county government is the primary level of local government in many sparsely populated counties, particularly in Northern California, where there are only a few **incorporated areas**.

### SPECIAL DISTRICTS

**S**pecial districts and school districts also play an important role in local government. Special district **boards** are created to provide specific services to a community. The members of the board are elected by the voters and are responsible for the organization, **policies** and money connected with the service they provide. Examples of special districts include:

- Airport
- Cemetery
- Flood Control Maintenance
- Health
- Hospital
- Library
- Mosquito Abatement
- Municipal Water
- Parking
- Pest Control

- Public Utility
- Schools
- Sewer and Sewer Maintenance
- Storm Water Drainage and Conservation
- Transit

### CITY GOVERNMENT

**S**ometimes it is hard to see how the big governments are organized; it is even hard to see how each person is connected to the government. Look at the chart on page 18 called “Typical City Structure.” There you see that the electorate, the people, are at the top. In a **democracy**, the people are in charge of the government, at the local as well as the state and national level. The people elect the **city council** members and in some cities, the mayor as well. They are the ones who **appoint** or choose people to fill all of the boxes that make up the structure of the government.

Look at all of the boxes on page 18! You could pretend that each of these boxes is like a room in a house or apartment. In a house, the boxes would have different names. Most houses have a living room, a kitchen, one or more bedrooms, and one or more bathrooms. Some houses have a separate dining room; others have one room that serves as a living room and a dining room. Some houses have an office or den; others have a family room. Some have a separate laundry room. Many houses have a garage, which might have a workroom in it.



You might want to draw a picture of the structure of your house or apartment. Draw it as if you were looking from the top down so you can show the rooms. If your house has more than one level, make a separate drawing for each level. Write the name of each room in its space. If it serves more than one purpose, put all the names on it. For example, if you do your homework in your bedroom, you will want to label it with two words: *bedroom* and *study*. You can see that the rooms in a house are structured according to their purpose. People prepare food in the kitchen and sleep in the bedroom. They may watch television in the living room or family room.

The important thing about your house is that it takes all of the rooms to make it a home. While each room or space is important, no single room can fulfill all the purposes that make a home in which a family can work, live and sleep. It is just the same with the city government.

Look at the chart on page 18 and see that the boxes at the bottom are all names according to a particular job that people must do. Each job is important, but it takes all the jobs to make the government work for the people. These boxes are like rooms in your house in another way: they often have to work together. The Recreation Department, for example, has to work with the Police Department when there is a game scheduled in a city park. In the same way, the kitchen and the dining room or eating area have to work together so that a dinner can be prepared and served to the family.

### LOOKING AT STRUCTURE

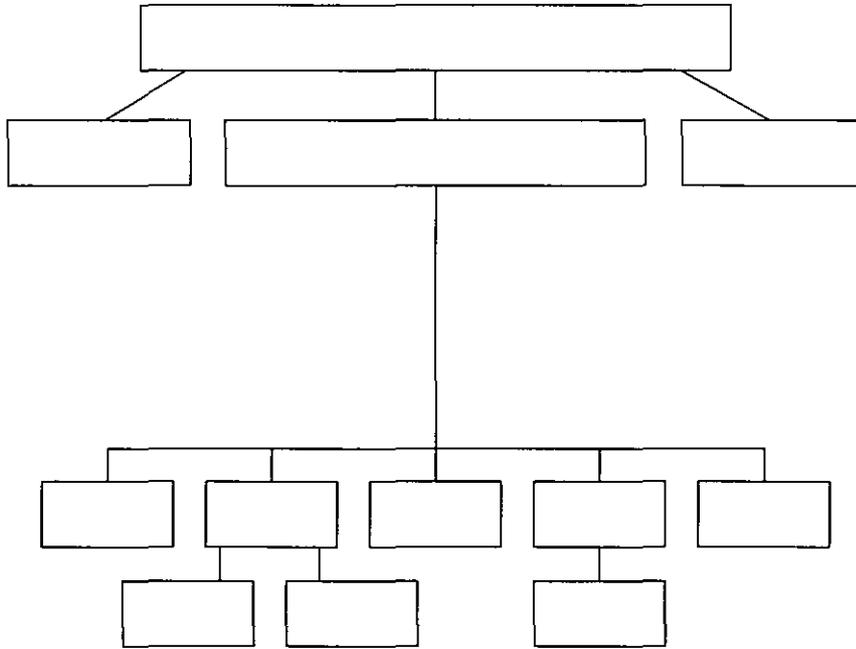
**A**nother way to look at the structure of government is to look at how your school is set up. If your school has a student government, notice how it



is organized, with a student body president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and other officers. You might belong to a club that has a president, a vice-president and other officers such as a secretary and treasurer. These officers or leaders are elected by the members and promise to do what the members want them to do.

Most governments, large or small, have committees or departments to run specific parts of the club, school or city. When there are disagreements among the group, the officers may ask committees to study the problem and make recommendations. The leaders then make decisions that represent what most of the group, the majority of the people involved, wants them to do.

## THE STRUCTURE OF OUR SCHOOL



*"You can only govern men by serving them. The rule is without exception."*

— Victor Cousin

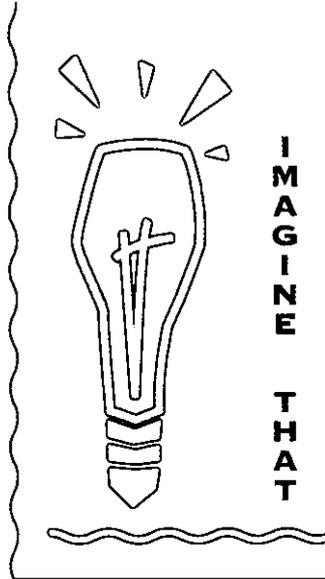
Create a "Structure of Our School" chart similar to the one above. Fill in the names of the positions that you think show how the school is set up. You may want to refer to the "Typical Structure City" chart on page 18 as you fill out your school chart. To show that the *principal* of your school is like the mayor or city manager, write the word Principal in the box at the top of the chart. Since the school is much smaller than the city, there won't be as many positions.

Think of how a school is like a city. Fill in as many blanks as you can. You may make extra boxes or remove boxes if you need to. Remember, the important thing is to see that no single box can make up a school. It takes all the boxes working together. The same is true of local government.

### New Words

administrator	elect
appoint	electorate
board	federal
citizen	government
city	governed
city council	incorporated
city manager	area
community	mayor
county	policy
democracy	resident
department	special district

# Organizing Your Thoughts



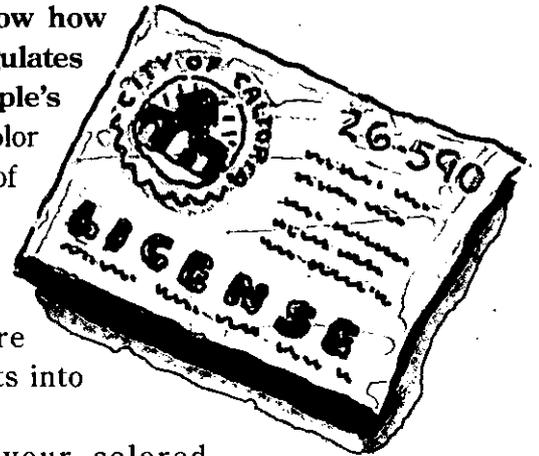
**O**ne way to find out what you know about a topic is to brainstorm and cluster your own thoughts.

**1. In the middle of a clean sheet of paper, write the words *local government*.** Using lines going out from the words *local government*, write as many words as you can think of that have something to do with local government. When you run out of words on one line, go back to the center and start over with another idea about local government. Think of how your school, city or county is set up. Think of all the ways your local government helps people work and play. Don't worry if some of your words don't fit exactly. Put as many words as you can on your page.

**2. Study your cluster of words about local government.** Think about how your words relate to the different ways that local government affects how you live. Some departments of local government regulate personal life, like requiring licenses for dogs. Local government regulates traffic in the community by putting up stop lights and speed limits for cars. Some departments of local government set up parks and playgrounds for children to play in. Others require

people to pay for keeping the community clean. Who pays for all of these services? Your parents do! They pay taxes so that you can go to school and so that local governments can help keep the streets clean and safe.

**3. Use colored markers to circle words that show how local government regulates different parts of people's lives.** Use a different color for each different area of your life that is affected by local government. You may circle the same word with more than one color if it fits into more than one category.



Begin by using your colored markers to circle words that fit into these categories:

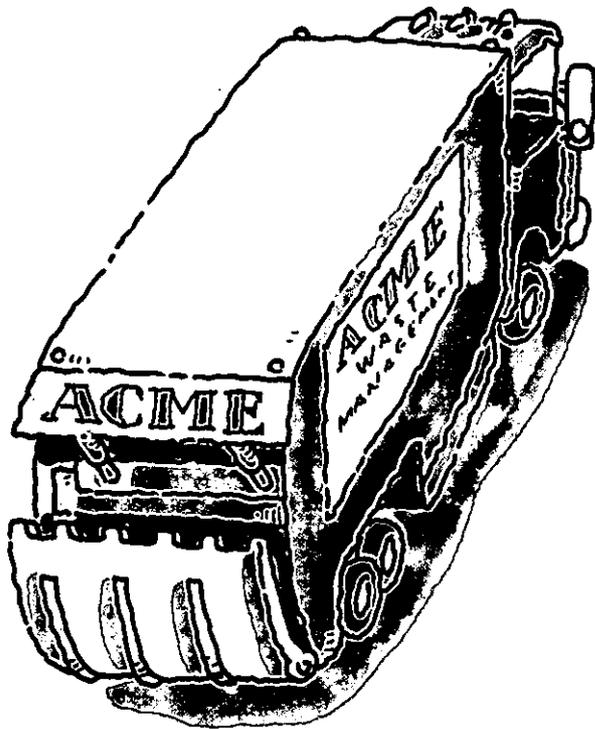
- Category #1:** Regulations about life in people's homes (*Circle in color #1.*)
- Category #2:** Regulations about schools (*Circle in color #2.*)
- Category #3:** Regulations about the county or city (*Circle in color #3.*)
- Category #4:** Regulations about the environment, such as city parks, waste collection, water, pollution or recycling (*Circle in color #4.*)

---

If you have any words left over, make up categories that they might fit into and circle them with different colors.

**4. Compare your colored clusters with your assigned team members.** Talk about the words you put in categories #1 through #4. Then discuss any

words that didn't fit in one of the 4 categories. Tell what you named any additional categories. You may add words to your own cluster as you talk with members of your team. Can your group make generalizations (state big ideas) about how these clusters relate to the different structures you know about? How do your clusters relate to the structures of local government you saw on the "Typical City Structure" chart on page 18? Try to write a one or two sentence "Group Discovery" (description of what new things your group learned).





# Structures For Service

**T**here are many ways that you can learn how governments are structured or organized. One way is to study a particular problem that concerns students, parents and other members of your community. Your teacher will help you form teams that will study how your community's government is structured. Look over the list of questions below. Your task will be to conduct research and apply your research to develop an action plan for your own family.

**1. Choose one of the following issues:**

- a. What departments of government have the responsibility for helping citizens in an emergency? How can citizens be prepared for emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, or other disasters?
- b. What is the role of school and local governments in keeping your community free from graffiti, litter and other pollutants? What can you and your family do to help?
- c. What departments of the government protect the environment? What can your school and family do to help protect the environment and preserve natural resources?

**2. Look for answers.** Here are some questions to help you understand how the government is structured to deal with the issue you have chosen. You may want to add questions to this list. Make notes about the answers to these questions. Then divide up the work among members of your team. Be sure to involve your family in your research. You might want to work with a partner for any interviews you have with your family, neighbors or other people in the community or government.

- Who are the people in your school who can help you learn about this issue?
- What can you learn from your parents? From your neighbors?
- Who are the people in the community who can help you?
- What government agencies might have information for you?
- What can you learn by observing or by conducting your own research? Will a survey help?
- What can you learn from the library? What kinds of books, magazines or pamphlets will give you information?

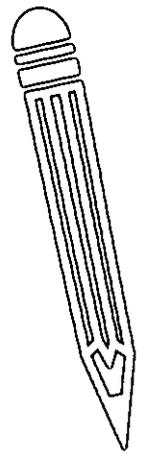
*Sample Chart:*

NOTE TAKING GUIDE	
Research	Family Action Plan

**3. Create a family action plan.** Discuss with your family what you learned while researching your issue. With your family, use the format above to develop an action plan that you and your family will use to address the issue.

**4. Build an action plan folder.** Your teacher will give you the timeline for your study. When you have completed your study of the issue, collect all of the information you have gathered. Put all

of your notes and other resources and your action plan in the folder that your teacher has given you. While you are doing your research, you will also begin working on the final activity for this unit, creating a newspaper.



# Creating A Newspaper

**Y**our local newspaper is a source that will help you share what you've learned with others. In a way, the newspaper is structured the way a government is. It has sections or departments which are responsible for carrying out certain jobs.

**1. Using the newspaper that your teacher has given you, look at all of the different kinds of news that a newspaper has in it.** Look through your newspaper and notice the different sections and departments it has. Sections are usually lettered: Section A has the big headlines for the day on the front page. It also has national and international news. Section B usually has local news and editorials. Section C may be sports. Section D may be special features, which vary from day to day; foods may be featured one day, entertainment one day and teens another. Depending on the size of the newspaper, there may be a special section for finance and one for classified ads.

Look particularly for stories or features that involve the issues you studied. Working with your team, find one or two examples of as many of the following categories as you can. Cut out the stories and put them on the bulletin board under the right heading.

Sample headings may include:

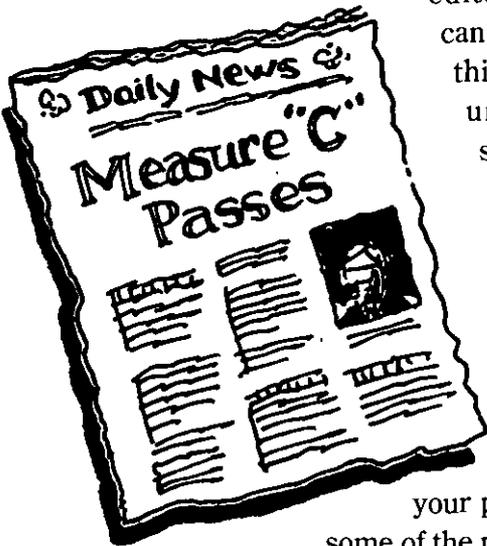
- A local news story
- A story about some natural disaster (such as an earthquake, flood, epidemic or disease)
- A story about sports, parks or recreation
- An editorial



- A letter to the editor
- An advice column
- A review of a movie, a television show, a play or a book
- A special feature about such topics as Food, Teens in the News, Travel
- A comic strip or cartoon
- A puzzle (crossword, jumble, scrabble, dot to dot)

**2. Make up a newspaper page about the issue you studied.** Now that you have learned about how a newspaper is structured, create your own newspaper page about the issue you chose. In teams, make up one page for a newspaper. For your page, you can mix news stories, editorials and cartoons. You can use whatever features you think will help other people understand the issue you studied. You can write an advice column if you want to, or even make up a weather report if that helps you tell the story of your issue.

You can feature your family action plan or use it to give your personal voice or opinion in some of the pieces you write (*i.e.*, editorials or letters to the editor). You may work together or divide up the work. The goal is to make one complete newspaper page entirely about the issue you studied. Be sure to show your understanding of how the local government is involved in the issue your team studied.

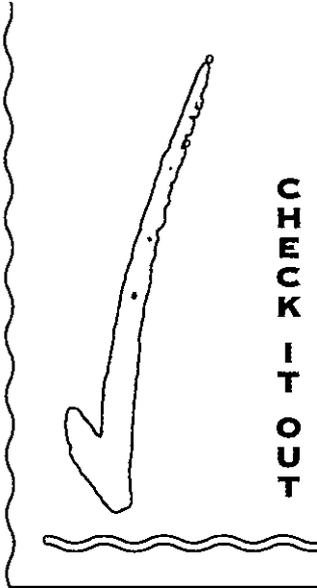


**3. Present your newspaper page to the class.** As a final activity, each team will showcase its research project into the structure of local government by presenting its newspaper page to a special audience. Your teacher will help you decide who you want to invite to your presentation. You may want to invite the people you interviewed and your parents, as well as workers in the local government. Be sure to invite your principal. You might also invite the local newspaper to “cover” the event.

Decide how your team will present its page. You might tell your audience how you did your research. You can tell them what people you interviewed, what books you read or what observations you made. You might read them some of the newspaper articles you wrote or show them pictures. After all presentations are made, the newspaper pages should go up on the bulletin board or on a special table so that the whole class and visitors to your classroom can read them.

**4. Write thank you notes.** Be sure to send a thank you to all guests who helped with your research, gave interviews or attended your presentation.

# How'd We Do?



**W**e can learn from our experiences and mistakes to improve what we are able to do in the future. Use the activities below to learn how to evaluate your work and your teammates' effectively.

**1. In your teams, give verbal feedback to each other.** Giving helpful or constructive feedback to others is a good skill to learn. Make sure you start by telling others the positive or good things that they have contributed. You may want to use comments like excellent research or very creative writing. Give some suggestions for improvement. Remember that most people do better when they receive positive and sincere feedback.

**2. Complete a chart like the one below to help you evaluate your team's contributions.** List members of your team and record how each of you helped make the project a success.

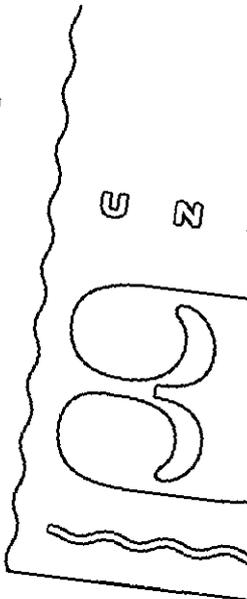
**3. On another page, describe how your team worked together on this project.** Include how you made your decisions about the subject of your project. Tell how you went about doing the work, what research you did, and anything else that affected the way your team worked. For example, what did you do when things didn't turn out as expected? The important thing is to tell how you worked together as a team. Be sure to evaluate your part in the process.

**Sample Chart:**

STUDENT PROJECT EVALUATION					
	Excellent 5	Very Good 4	Good 3	Average 2	Need to Improve 1
Team Members	Degree of Participation	Leadership	Willingness to Work	Creativity Contributions	Other (Specify)
Self					
Other (name)					
Other (name)					
Other (name)					



# Who Are The Players In Local Government And How Can We Get Involved?



## COMMUNITY VOICE

FOUNDED 1857

THURSDAY APRIL 10, 1997

### Take Me Out To The Ball Park?

**V**arious local groups voiced ideas and concerns about the proposed stadium at Council Member Alice Herrera's community meeting last night.

Council Member Herrera began the night's meeting by explaining that she wants to make sure she understands the needs of the community so that she can properly represent them at the upcoming city council meeting on the proposed stadium issue.

James Heron, a representative of the Citizens for Quality Neighborhoods, was the first to share his views about the stadium. He is concerned about the stadium causing an increase in traffic and noise. "I moved here quite some time ago to get away from traffic and noise. Living so close to the proposed site for the stadium, I am sure it will be very noisy."

Laticia Hunter, a local resident and member of the Environmental Council is concerned because the proposed stadium is located so close to Slow Creek. She worries that herbicides and fertilizers used in the stadium may run off into the

creek and could harm the animals that drink from it.

Many other community members were deeply concerned about the size and location of the stadium. However, the owner of the corner gas station welcomes the idea of a stadium because she thinks it will increase business. If the stadium is built, she would use some of her increased proceeds to sponsor a little league team.

Some of the newer home owners said that when they purchased their homes, their real estate brokers told them the city was planning to build a stadium nearby. They look forward to walking to football, soccer and baseball games and feel they are entitled to a stadium being developed.

After the meeting, Council Member Herrera thanked the local residents for taking the time to voice their opinions about the new stadium. Herrera then stated, "Thank you all for your input. I encourage you to come to the city council meeting next Wednesday to share your concerns with the full council."

## WORKING TOGETHER

**T**he account you just read is an example of local government in action. In this situation, a city council member presided over a meeting of citizens interested in a particular issue. Discuss how meetings like this allow government officials and citizens to work together to address their problems:

- Take a moment to look at the chart on page 33. Why do each of these groups have different opinions regarding the development of the stadium? Who do you most identify with? Why?
- Imagine that you are Alice Herrera, the city council member. Which issues mentioned at the community meeting do you consider most important? Do you think she will vote to build the stadium? Why or why not? What would you do?
- Brainstorm changes that have taken place in your community. Who, in



local government, do you think is responsible for those changes?

Elected officials, such as Council Member Alice Herrera, take on a great responsibility when they decide to run for office. Elected officials accept the responsibility to make decisions that reflect the needs and opinions of their community. As mentioned in the article on page 31, some officials hold meetings to maintain contact with their **constituents**, the people they represent.

- Think of your classroom as a government. Discuss the ways in which rules are established in your room. Who makes decisions and who enforce them?
- Does your class send a representative to student council meetings? What are the responsibilities of those representatives? How does the school administration know about the needs of your classroom?

Government officials and their functions differ depending on the type of local government in your area. Your community might be governed by a city council, a county board of supervisors and/or a special district board. Which boards and/or council govern in your community?

## CITY COUNCIL

**W**ithin a city government structure the voters elect a city council that consists of five or more members. These council members are responsible for enacting local ordinances (laws) and establishing policies for the city. The city council may have a mayor who is elected by the voters, or the mayor might be chosen by the city council from its own members.

## STADIUM PLANS DEBATED

### COMMUNITY GROUPS

### CONCERNS AND IDEAS

#### **Citizens for Quality Neighborhoods**

Some citizens are concerned that a new stadium will bring more houses and businesses into the area, thus changing their area from a rural community to a "Big City." They came to this area to get away from traffic and noise. They are also concerned about the tax increases to support a stadium.

#### **Real Estate Brokers**

Newer home owners were told of the city's plans for a stadium in this area. These people bought their homes here partially for this reason. They feel that planners promised them a park.

#### **Chamber of Commerce**

It recommends the stadium be built on this site because the community needs to "revitalize" the area. This is the best of two possible sites in the area. The Chamber believes that the proposed park will bring with it professional sports teams and big business. This, in turn, will create more jobs for the community.

#### **Local Farmers**

Farmers fear the city will eventually want adjoining orchard land for additional parking. They are concerned about preserving the agricultural land so people will have food to eat. They are also concerned about their own livelihood.

#### **Family Gas Station**

The owner thinks that an increase in traffic in the area will probably increase business. More money will be put back into the community. The owner bought the station because a new stadium was going in and he thought business would increase.

#### **Citizens Against Taxes (CATs)**

CATs is concerned about financing the new stadium. Members are concerned that tax increases will be needed to build the stadium. They feel that citizens are already burdened by too many taxes.

#### **Local Developers**

They own land which was donated for the park. They also own much of the undeveloped land in this area. A new stadium would be an attraction for businesses to relocate near the proposed stadium.

#### **Environmental Council**

This park is located very close to Slow Creek. The council fears that the herbicides and fertilizers used in the stadium could run off into this small stream, possibly causing harm to the animals who drink from it.

In most cities the council chooses a city manager to implement city laws and direct the basic operations of the city. The city manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the city and its various departments.

The city council also appoints members to commissions or boards. Board members usually serve four years, although the length of these terms can vary based on local board policies. Examples of commissions and boards include the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Personnel Board.

#### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**R**emember the map of California's 58 counties in Unit Two? Each county is governed by a five member board of supervisors. The county is usually divided into five districts and each district votes for one person to represent it on the board. While the board of supervisors is the main governing body, many other key positions in government help local governments run smoothly.

Review the chart on page 35 to learn about key positions in government. Local government positions cover a variety of areas from fire fighting to finance. Which position most interests you? Why?

#### CIVIC PARTICIPATION

**S**ome people make the decision to participate in local government by becoming a **candidate** for an elected office or by working for a local government agency. Most people participate in other ways. One way is by joining a **special interest group**.

Special interest groups are groups of people who are not elected by the voters but are concerned with the decisions that

local governments make. These groups usually focus on specific issues or areas of interest, such as land development, environmental issues, private business or the safety and welfare of the community residents.

Special interest groups and concerned community members often voice their opinions about community issues at board of supervisor or city council meetings. Special interest groups and concerned community members also learn about current and upcoming issues at these meetings. Consider the following:

- If council meetings were not open to the public, would council and board members have more or less information about how their constituents feel? Would this be good or bad for a community? Why?
- Do you think your concerns would be exactly the same as everyone else's in your family? What is *your* opinion about developing the stadium? How would it differ from others in your family?
- What would happen if no one took the time to let their elected officials know how they feel about their community's problems?

Concerned citizens sharing information with local government officials helps them make fair and informed decisions for the community. Civic participation gives government officials the voice of the community.

### New Words

constituent  
candidate  
resume  
special interest group

*"Municipal institutions constitute the strength of free nations. A nation may establish a system of government but without municipal institutions it cannot have the sprit of liberty."*

—Alexis de Tocqueville

## KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLAYERS

### ASSESSOR

- A. Determines value of taxable property
- B. Keeps track of taxes

### CITY ATTORNEY

- A. Legal advisor for city if it has problems
- B. Advises the city council about laws

### CITY COUNCIL

- A. Approve the city budget
- B. Make major planning decisions
- C. Listen to concerns expressed by residents

### CLERK/RECORDER

- A. Organizes elections
- B. Keeps track of records
- C. Prepares public notices

### COUNTY SUPERVISORS

- A. Make laws for the county
- B. Make decisions on services and taxes
- C. Decide how to zone for land use

### DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- A. Determines which cases to bring to trial
- B. Represents "the people" in criminal cases

### FINANCE/TREASURER

- A. Organizes accounting for the city
- B. Records and spends the city budget

### FIRE FIGHTERS

- A. Prevent and put out fires
- B. Provide emergency medical aid
- C. Inspect buildings

### MANAGER /EXECUTIVE

- A. Executive officer of the city
- B. Coordinates city department efforts
- C. Enforces ordinances

### PARKS/RECREATION WORKERS

- A. Provide parks for community
- B. Provide sports and programs for all ages

### PLANNING/ DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

- A. Helps plan physical development of community
- B. Organizes building inspections

### POLICE/SHERIFF

- A. Protect life and property
- B. Provide crime prevention programs
- C. Provide safety programs
- D. Provide emergency services
- E. Run the jail

### PUBLIC DEFENDER

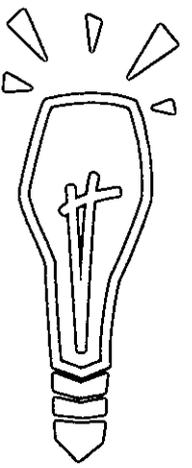
- A. Defends people who need legal counsel and can't afford it
- B. Makes appeals to higher courts

### PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIALS

- A. Maintain water and sewer
- B. Maintain streets, parking and traffic

# Qualities Of A Leader

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**L**earning about your own local government and the key players who affect your life can be an interesting task. Because we are all individuals, we look for different qualities in friends, teachers and our government leaders. This individual difference is what makes us unique.

Choose one of the following activities to learn more:

**1. During the next week, read the local newspapers on a daily basis and as a class, create a scrapbook.** Collect all of the articles that appear concerning key players in local government. Begin

making a list of special interest groups in your area's government that may have an effect on your neighborhood. If possible, visit a city council or board of supervisors' meeting in your area. You might be able to go as a class or you could ask a parent to go with you. If you cannot attend a meeting, watch one on cable television. Give an oral report to your class to describe the meeting. Becoming a key player begins when you start learning about the way government works and how you can influence the decision making.

**2. Using a questionnaire similar to the one on page 37, discuss what it takes to be a good mayor with your parents.** Then discuss the qualities your parents look for in someone who is representing them or helping them. Together you can learn about the qualities that are important to each of you and how those qualities affect the decisions you make in deciding how to vote.



**Sample Questionnaire:**

**QUALITIES WE LOOK FOR IN A MAYOR**

A mayor is a person who is in charge of running a city. He/she must make sure that changes that are made in the community are a benefit to the majority of the people living in that community.

Answer the following:

1. If you were able to vote for a mayor, what are three qualities that you would look for in a person who would hold that office?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Interview your parent or another adult in your home. What are three qualities does he/she think a candidate for the office of mayor should have?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do your responses and your parents' responses compare to each other? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Why Should We Vote For You?

**E**ach one of you participates in a special community on a regular basis. That community is your school community. It is important for each one of us to become a key player in our community. This is an opportunity for you to become involved in your community.

**1. In small groups, brainstorm all of the concerns that you have about your school site.** What are some areas that you feel need improvement in your school community? As a large group, write your responses on butcher paper.

Using these responses, create a class survey. Each student in the classroom must then complete the survey choosing the three areas of concern that they think are most important.

**2. Tally the votes and choose the three school improvement issues that have the most votes.** List each concern on a separate sheet of butcher paper. Then discuss and list all of the people at the school site and in the community who might

be able to help you develop solutions to the problem. For example, if you wanted to plant a school garden, your list might include the principal, school custodian, school maintenance crew, parents, a local nursery owner, a horticulturist, etc.

**3. Break up into three groups and plan your speech.** Each group is responsible for writing and presenting a speech discussing why its issue is the most important one and should be addressed first. Part of your speech should focus on how you and your classmates could help with the solution.

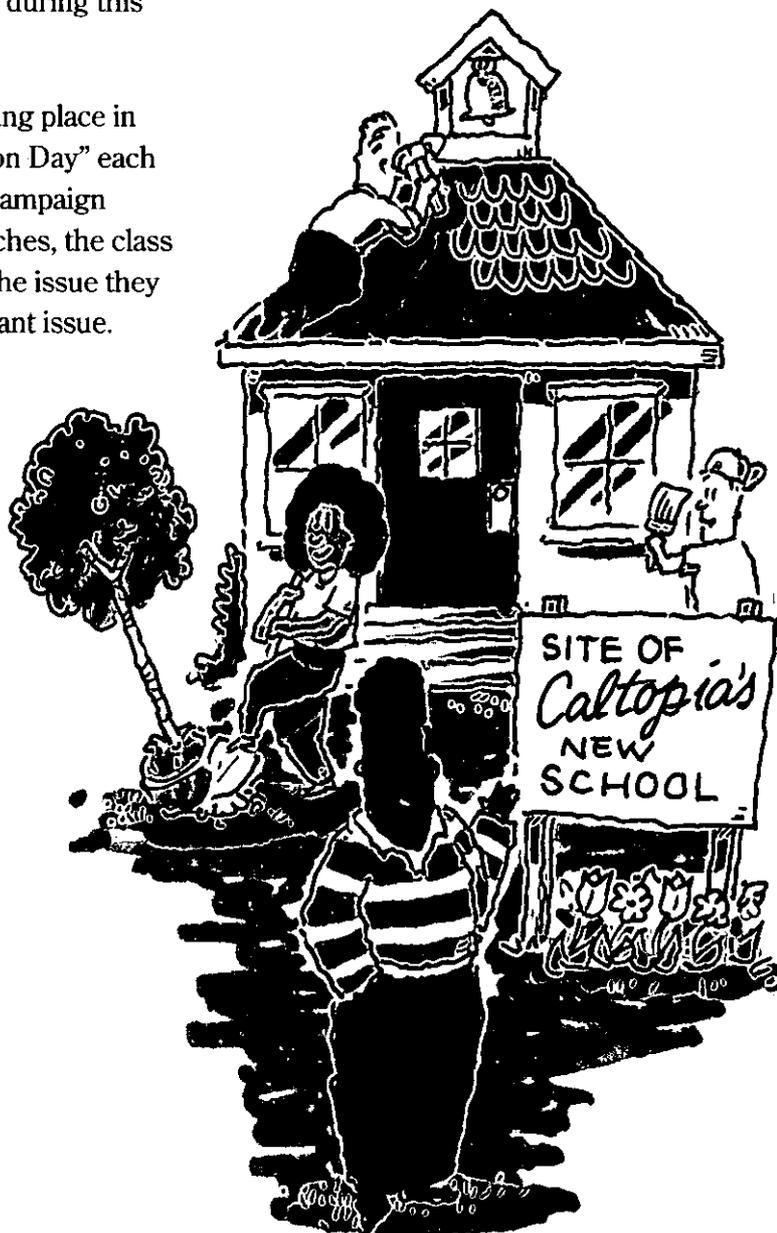
**4. Invite some of the key players you identified to serve on a committee to hear your presentations.** The key player committee will then vote to decide which issue the class will work on. Be sure to write thank you notes to all committee members.

**5. To learn more about campaigns and running for office, choose one or more of the following to help address your issue:**

- Write a plan on how you will organize your campaign.
- Create a poster, button, banner, etc. to publicize your issue.

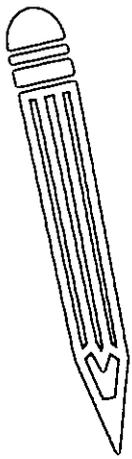


- Write and give a campaign speech to your class or to invited guests about why your issue should be chosen.
- Keep a budget record of the money that you spent on your campaign (posterboard, markers, etc.).
- Keep a daily log of your campaign. Record your own progress in a log as well as ideas you received from others. What are your feelings during this process?
- Create a ballot and voting place in your room. On "Election Day" each group will present its campaign speech. After the speeches, the class or guests will vote on the issue they feel is the most important issue.
- Count the votes and announce the school improvement issue the class will work on.
- Invite other classes to visit and listen to your campaign speeches.



*A journalist asked Harry Truman when he was about to leave the presidency, "Mr. President, now that you are leaving the highest office of the land, what do you propose to do?" Truman responded, "I'm not leaving the highest office of the land when I leave the presidency. I'm assuming the highest office of the land—that's the office of citizen."*

*— Anecdote related by Isidore Starr, Professor Emeritus, Queens College in the American Bar Association video "A More Perfect Union"*



**ACTIVITY THREE**

# Getting The Job

*“There is one thing better than good government, and that is government in which all the people have a part.”*

—Walter Hines Page

**S**ometimes the best way to understand how something works is to become an active participant in that event. For example, it would be difficult to describe to someone how it feels to ride a bicycle if you had never been on a bicycle. Or it would be difficult to explain what it’s like to have a little brother if you only have a big brother at home. Experience is the best teacher. With that thought in mind, you are going to assume the role of someone working in local government.

Let’s take it a step further. What fun is it to learn something if you can’t share that new information with others? This activity allows you to do both. Your mission is to become an expert on the tasks of a local government official. You will

learn what their functions are and how they make decisions for the community. Then, during parent night or Open House, you will have a chance to share your knowledge with your parents.

- 1. Invite local government officials into your classroom to talk about their jobs and what they do.** Use the Note-Taking Guide below to remind yourself of their duties.
- 2. Choose a local government position from the chart on page 35.**
- 3. Research the duties and responsibilities of the job you chose.**
- 4. Use your research and the notes from your Note-taking Guide to write a brief job description of the position you’ve chosen.**
- 5. Write a resume to show your qualifications for the position.** The Sample Resume on page 41 will help you.
- 6. Prepare for a presentation and to “interview” for your position.** Use the “Sample Interview Questions” on page 41 to help you prepare.
- 7. At a parent night presentation, give a brief description of your position.** Parents will interview you by asking questions about your position, your duties and your qualifications. Be prepared to answer questions and remember: Have fun!!

**Sample Chart:**

<b>NOTE-TAKING GUIDE</b>	
Local Government Position	Responsibilities of Job

## **Sample Resume:**

**Full Name**  
**Street Address**  
**City, State, Zip Code**  
**Phone Number**

Objective: (What position are you applying for?)

### **EDUCATION**

List all of the schools that you have attended. Include addresses. Include the years that you attended each school and the subjects that you enjoyed most. If you belong to any clubs related to school, include them in this section.

### **EXPERIENCE**

List any of your past experiences that might help you with this job. List any jobs that you're currently doing that qualify you for this position.

### **SKILLS, TRAINING AND INTERESTS**

List any hobbies, clubs, sports groups, etc. in which you participate that qualify you for this position. Tell about all of the skills that you have which relate to the job you seek.

### **REFERENCES**

List names of people who would recommend you for the job. Include addresses and phone numbers.

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Here are some questions you might be asked when you are interviewed as a local government worker. You can also make up your own questions based on your research. The following questions will be given to the parents to ask you after your presentations:

*How would you describe a typical day?*

*What will be the most difficult part of your job?*

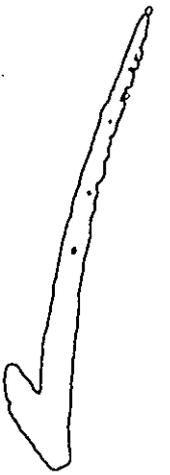
*What might be the most satisfying part of your job?*

*What would happen if no one did this job?*

*Describe one incident that might occur on the job.*

*Have you always done this kind of work?*

*In the future, will more people do this kind of work, or fewer?*



# Points Of View

**I**n this unit you discussed a community issue regarding the building of a stadium. Now is your chance to show what you learned!

**1. Pick another community issue that needs to be addressed.** You may want to brainstorm possible issues with your classmates or watch the news on television to learn about an issue. Once you have a list of issues, select one that seems to be the most important to work on.

**2. With your class teams, discuss the community groups that may be interested in your selected issue.** The chart on page 33 may give you some ideas. You may want to create a chart like the one below to help you organize your ideas.

**3. After completing your chart, give an oral presentation to present your position on the issue to the class.**

### *Sample Chart:*

My Issue: _____	
Community Groups	Concerns and Ideas

# What Does Local Government Do For Us?

## CITY SERVICES FIELD TRIP

**L**ocal governments provide many services for you. Some of them are so much a part of your everyday life that you might not even notice them. In order to think critically about some of the services of local government, you should do some focused thinking about the services needed to make a community work. The announcement on the right describes an activity that will help you start learning about local government in action.

If you were taking this trip with your class, what government services would you expect to see in your community? You would probably see a police car, and maybe a fire truck or fire station. You might see signs that warn of curves in the road or indicate that a school is nearby. You might see streets being repaired or lawns being mowed on city properties. These and many other services are provided by local government. In order to learn more about local government services, you can go along on the imaginary field trip announced above. You'll accompany Mr. Perez and his class on their trip to City Hall and the fire station.

You'll take this imaginary trip by participating in a reader's theater. A reader's theater is a special kind of play that has no sets or movement. You don't even have to memorize the lines! You just read them—that's why it's called a READER'S theater.

What follows is a list of characters in the cast of the reader's theater. Each of you will have an opportunity to assume some role in the reading. Your class and teacher will need to decide who will read each of the roles.

### NOTICE

#### CITY SERVICE FIELD TRIP

*You are invited to a Field Trip to City Hall. We will also visit the fire station and have a picnic lunch at Caltopia City Park. Bring a sack lunch and wear walking shoes. We'll be exploring the services our local government provides for its citizens.*

## READER'S THEATER CAST

**Mr. Perez** ..... teacher at California Hills School  
**Mrs. Conners** . . . tour guide at city hall and also a long time member of the planning department  
**Ms. Hall** . . . . . director of the planning department, recently graduated from a nearby university  
**Mr. Bates** . . . . . waste water treatment engineer for the city and volunteer soccer coach  
**Mr. Matsui** . . . . . chief building inspector for the city and avid softball player  
**Officer Jackson** . . . . . a young member of the city police force  
**Chief Bussey** . . . . . the fire chief for the city, who's looking for ward to retirement this year  
**Mrs. Brown** . . . . . bus driver and mother of three teenagers  
**Mrs. Lee** . . . . . parent helper and new resident of the community

<p> <b>Irma</b>  <b>Steve</b>  <b>Jeanette</b>  <b>Mindy</b>  <b>Francisco</b>  <b>Justin</b>  <b>Arturo</b>  <b>Julie</b>  <b>Linh</b> </p>	}	<p>students at California Hills School</p>
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**MR. PEREZ:** Are we ready? Do you all have your lunches? Name tags? Does anyone need to use the rest room before we go?

**STUDENTS:** All set. We're ready.

*(Various students can make appropriate comments.)*

**MR. PEREZ:** Good. We're all set for our field trip to City Hall and the fire station. While we're on the bus, I want us to look for things we see in our community that show the services local government provides for its citizens.

*(The students anxiously head out to a waiting bus and get on.)*

**IRMA:** I see one already, Mr. Perez. This bus. It takes me to school everyday. That's a service, isn't it?

**MRS. BROWN:** *(chuckling)*: It sure is, Irma. This bus is provided by the school district. School districts are part of local government. They might serve a whole city, part of a city, a county, or overlap more than one city or community.

**MR. PEREZ:** Those school districts also provide more than just the buses that take us to school; they provide the schools themselves, sometimes day care and adult education, too.

**MRS. BROWN:** We'd better get going. Traffic is tough at this time of day.

**STEVE:** Yea, and my Dad says that construction at the end of the block sure isn't helping.

**MRS. BROWN:** Well, it is causing some problems right now, but it's also addressing a need of the people, Steve.

That **intersection** didn't have a left turn lane and it was dangerous. I was one of the people who went to a city council meeting to ask for a change.

**STEVE:** So fixing streets and making changes in the roads are part of what the city does?

**MR. PEREZ:** Absolutely. That's one of the services of the Public Works Department.

**JULIE:** What else do they do, Mr. Perez?

**MR. PEREZ:** They also construct or oversee the construction of new buildings or projects in the city—parks, for example. Oh, look. That sign is new and I'm delighted to see it. What does it say, Julie?

**JULIE:** FUTURE SITE OF BRIGGS RANCH RANCH NEIGHBORHOOD PARK.

**JEANETTE:** That will be great! I hope they have all kinds of cool playground equipment. I want the kind that has playhouses at the top, or maybe the kind that looks like a frontier fort.

**ARTURO:** No Way! What that park should have is a baseball diamond and a soccer field. That's what we really need around here.

**MINDY:** Well, whatever, as long as it has tons of cement pathways. You know, the ones that turn and have a bit of a slope - just right for roller blading.

**STEVE:** Yea, maybe even a skateboard ramp. That'd be cool.

**STUDENTS:** That would be great. How about both? (*Ad lib various comments.*)

**JEANETTE:** The sign says Parks and Recreation Department. Is that who will decide what goes in this park?



**MR. PEREZ:** Well, they will make the final decision, but they have to consider a couple of things. The first is how this park fits in the **general plan** for the community.

**MINDY:** What does that mean - the general plan? Can't we just decide what we'd like to put there?

**MRS. LEE:** If we all built whatever we wanted to, wherever we wanted to, the results could be disastrous. Houses mixed with noisy factories or under an airport flight path, or parks that will attract a lot of cars on streets without good access or parking. So each **municipality** - that's a pretty big word for a city - draws up a general plan spelling out how the land within the area will be used as the area develops.

**FRANCISCO:** Where is our city's general plan? Can we see it?

*"Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants."*

— Edmund Burke

**MR. PEREZ:** I have a feeling we're going to the right place to do just that.

**JUSTIN:** We're talking about services in our community, right Mr. Perez?

**MR. PEREZ:** That's right, Justin.

**JUSTIN:** Well, look in that shopping center. That's where the **branch library** is. That's a service isn't it?

**MR. PEREZ:** You're right. Libraries can be provided by the city, county or schools. Either way, they are part of our local government.

**JUSTIN:** How about the Tastee Yogurt Shop? Every time I go to the library, I stop there afterwards for a treat. That's a service, too.

**MRS. LEE:** (*laughing*) That's the kind of service I like, but many services in our community like stores, churches, clubs, fitness centers, gas stations, theaters, and even some schools and hospitals are part of the private sector. A community is good to live in when the local

government and the private sector cooperate to give the people many of the things they want for their community.

**MRS. BROWN:** Well, look at that. We're here already. That traffic wasn't too bad after all. I'll meet you at the fire station at 2 o'clock for the trip back. Have a great time, kids.

**STUDENTS:** We will. Thanks, Mrs. Brown. (*Students ad lib comments and thank yous.*)

(*The kids exit the bus, and with Mrs. Lee and Mr. Perez, they head up the stairs to the City Hall.*)

*Now you've had a chance to think a little about some of the services your local government provides. Take a minute to talk to a partner about the reader's theater experience that you've had so far. Does it seem realistic? Does it remind you of anything that might be going on in your own community?*

*Your class and teacher can reassign cast members on page 44 for the rest of the reader's theater that follows.*

(*Students continue to read their parts.*)

**MRS. CONNERS:** Welcome. You must be the group from California Hills Elementary School. Gather around and I'll tell you about some of the things you'll see today at City Hall. Your teacher told me that today you will be focusing on city services.

(*Students look at sign listing City Hall personnel – page 47.*)



*"The qualifications for self-government are not innate. They are the result of habit and long training."*

—Thomas Jefferson

## CITY HALL PERSONNEL

City Manager .....	Kuldip Sandhu
Assistant City Manager .....	Joanne Owen
City Clerk .....	Juanita Rodriguez
Personnel Director .....	Patrick Hamilton
Finance Director .....	Mary Wokowski
Police Chief .....	Frank Delgado
Fire Chief .....	Robert Bussey
Planning Director .....	Mary Hall
Chief Building Inspector .....	Paul Matsui
Public Works Director .....	Margaret Olson
City Attorney .....	Sarah Issacs
Parks and Recreation Director .....	Glenn Bejovec
Waste Water Treatment Engineer .....	Richard Bates

**MRS. CONNERS:** All of these people and their staffs help provide services. The city manager, his assistant, the city clerk, city **attorney** and **finance** director make sure city government runs smoothly and does all of its activities legally so that the other departments can provide services citizens need and want.

**LINH:** What's your job, Mrs. Connors?

**MRS. CONNERS:** I'm with the planning department. We can get started now. Let's go right inside the door and down the hall to your left. Follow me.

*(The students follow Mrs. Connors down the hall.)*

**ARTURO:** *(observes sign)* **WASTE WATER TREATMENT.** I've seen that before. It's on a sign right behind the big city park, right next to those big ponds. I've always wondered about those.

**MRS. CONNERS:** Arturo, I'll let Mr. Bates tell you about those and the other services our city provides to deal with its waste products.

**MR. BATES:** Our modern living does create a lot of waste products, so cities have to help residents take care of that. We have garbage collection once a week and some of those products are **recycled** at a city facility called a **landfill**.

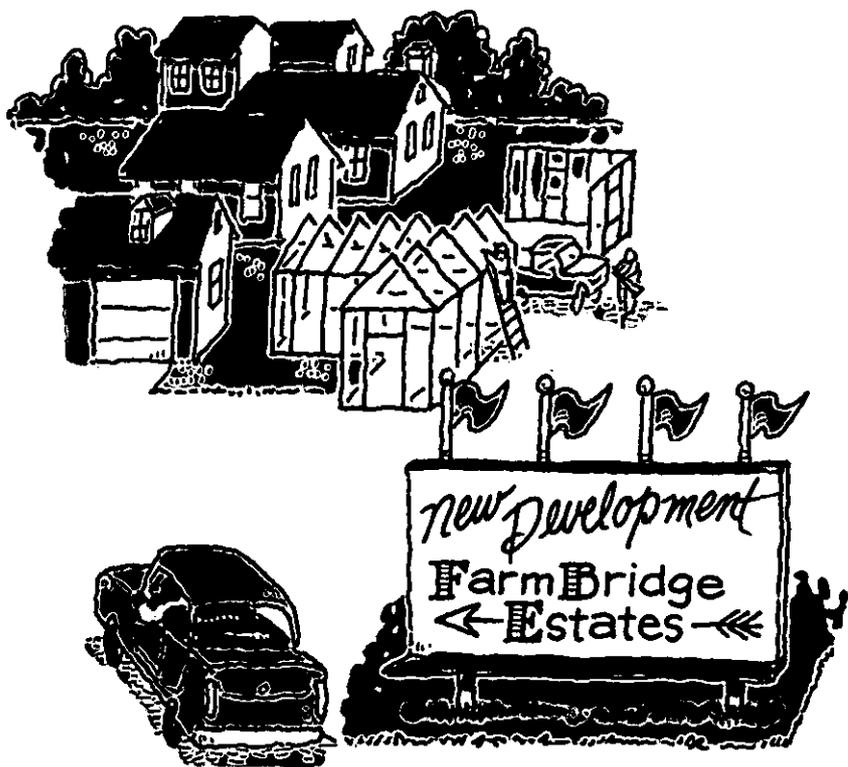
**LINH:** Sometimes you have to take things to the landfill when they are too big for the garbage. We had to do that with the mattress my dog sleeps on. It was gross!

**MR. BATES:** Yes, some items like those that are too big for the garbage, and those that require special handling, like motor oil, have to be taken to the landfill. Our city **contracts** with the county to use its facility. Storm drains and sewers are maintained by the city also. Some cities, like ours, also have their own water treatment plants like the one Arturo noticed.

**ARTURO:** What exactly do they do there?

**MR. BATES:** Those facilities help to purify waste water that comes from our homes and businesses. That water, when it meets health and safety standards, is put back into the water cycle or used again, sometimes for watering our plants and grass along highways and at public buildings. Some cities join together to provide this service; others contract with the county or some other agency for this service. Ours is located right here on this map of our general plan. *(He turns and points to a large colored map on the wall.)*

**FRANCISCO:** Ah, that's what I want to see! Look, it says there will be a shopping center down at the corner of our subdivision. What about this big green space between the school and the new park. What will it be?



**MRS. CONNERS:** Here's the person to help answer your questions, Francisco. This is Ms. Hall. She is from our Planning Office.

**MS. HALL:** Well, that big green area is designated for open space. Preserving some land for agriculture, timber or just open space is part of a good general plan. We also take into account safety when making our general plan. Homes and businesses, for example, shouldn't be located in the floodplain of a river. We even consider noise when making our discussions.

**JULIE:** So after you've looked at where to put open space and parks and where not to put homes and businesses, your job is done, right?

**MS. HALL:** Not quite. We also look at how people will get around in the community using roads and light rail, or in some cases subways. We also look at what kinds of housing are going to be built and where. We cooperate with the city council to design zoning laws that will make sure the area develops according to the general plan. But sometimes the community's needs change and then we can amend, or change, our plan.

**IRMA:** I don't mean to change the subject Ms. Hall, but why is that man wearing a hard hat? Is it dangerous around here?

**MS. HALL:** Paul, come on over here and explain your head gear to these students from California Hills School.

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**MR. MATSUI:** Oh, this. I've been out on some **building sites** all day where the rules require everyone to wear a hard hat. My job is to see that new building that takes place in our community - homes, businesses, schools - meets the **building codes** that our city has set up.

**STEVE:** I thought the rules for building were the same all over. Do we have special rules just for our city?

**MR. MATSUI:** Individual cities may have special rules about buildings, like how far back from the street they have to be, the kind of safety devices required on fireplaces, or how much parking must be available. My office issues permits for building and I check the building sites to see that the rules are being followed.

**MRS. CONNERS:** Thanks, Mr. Matsui.

**MR. MATSUI:** You're welcome. I need to get going. I have a meeting. Nice meeting you kids.

*(Mr. Matsui leaves.)*

**MINDY:** Speaking of lunch...

**STUDENTS:** I'm hungry.

*(Ad lib other similar comments.)*

**MR. PEREZ:** You're right, Mindy. Let's go use one of our city services - the city park - to have some lunch. Thank you Mrs. Connors, Mr. Bates, and Ms. Hall for all the information.

*(Students leave City Hall for the short walk to City Park where they settle down at picnic tables to enjoy their lunches.)*

**ARTURO:** You know, something that's been bothering me is that even though we have this general plan and lots of rules about building permits, some parts of our city have better stuff than others.

**MR. PEREZ:** What do you mean, Arturo?

**ARTURO:** Well, the neighborhood I live in has some nice fancy lights on the streets, a bike path and even some mini parks, but my cousin lives over by the river, and they don't even have sidewalks.

**MR. PEREZ:** You're very observant, Arturo. The answer to your question is that within a city, certain neighborhoods may vote to **assess** themselves at higher rates than the rest of the city. Some citizens want more services, usually extra lighting and landscaping.

**ARTURO:** Do you mean that a neighborhood can't have special things if people can't or don't want to assess themselves? It doesn't seem fair that people can't improve their neighborhoods just because they don't have extra money to pay for more services.

**MR. PEREZ:** That's a good point, Arturo. There does have to be a balance between the services government can provide and the financial resources it has to work with. There are ways, however, other than extra **assessments**, for people to enhance their neighborhoods. Many areas form neighborhood improvement organizations to develop and maintain attractive neighborhoods with extra landscaping and other needed services. Community service clubs are another way people who have pride in their community can do a lot of things that don't cost much money.

**JEANETTE:** Mr. Perez, I picked up this **agenda** from the front of City Hall. I think it's something like you and Arturo are talking about. It talks about lighting and landscaping. The sign said "Help Yourself". I hope that's okay?

**MR. PEREZ:** Of course it's okay. Citizens need to know what is going to be discussed at the city council meetings so they can voice their opinions. Let's see it.

*(Let's stop the reader's theater for a minute to review the agenda for the City Council Meeting. Talk with a partner about items on the agenda that are familiar to you from your reader's theater experience.)*

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 25 — 6:30 P.M.

### COUNCIL CHAMBERS AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PUBLIC COMMENTS
4. STUDY SESSION: AREA WATER FORUM - NEW POLICY
5. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. Resolution of intention to levy and collect assessments for the Cobble Hills Lighting and Landscaping District
  - B. Resolution authorizing city manager to begin discussions with the California Department of Transportation for the White Water River Bridge
  - C. Resolution awarding bid for sewer replacement project to Dominguez Construction Company
6. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Review of proposed subdivision between Smith and 8th Streets

*(Resume reader's theater.)*

**MRS. LEE:** It does have something about setting up a lighting and landscape district. I see something else of interest to many of you.

**STEVE:** The park! They're going to look at proposed plans for the park. Boy, I want to be at that meeting.

**MR. PEREZ:** You should. We all should. When we get back to school, let's think about what would really be best for that park.

**STUDENTS:** Uh, oh, Mr. Perez. It's the police. What did we do? *(Ad lib other comments.)*

**MR. PEREZ:** Hello, Officer Jackson. What brings you here?

**STUDENTS:** You know her? Have you been in trouble, Mr. Perez?

**OFFICER JACKSON:** Hi, Mr. Perez. Your students have reacted pretty typically, assuming that any time the police show up, they must be in trouble. Actually a big part of my job is preventing trouble. I've worked with Mr. Perez setting up the bicycle safety program at the school. Besides patrolling the city and enforcing all kinds of laws, I also help neighborhoods set up Neighborhood Watch Programs and coordinate other programs to make people aware of the laws.

**MINDY:** Well, in that case, please sit down and have a sandwich.

**OFFICER JACKSON:** Thanks, Mindy. Today I'm here to make sure this big crowd gets across the main

highway to the fire station. I understand you have an appointment over there.

**MR. PEREZ:** Yes, we do, and we'd better get going.

*(Students gather up their trash and head across the highway to Fire Station #1. Officer Jackson stops the traffic, so the whole class can cross the street, even though the light has changed.)*

**MR. PEREZ:** Thanks, Officer Jackson. Now remember kids, if that fire alarm goes off, I want you to follow my directions very carefully so we can get out of the fire fighters' way. After all, that's their main job, and one of the important city services they provide.

*(Fire Chief Bussey approaches the group.)*

**CHIEF BUSSEY:** Hello, boys and girls. The fire fighters and I want to welcome you to Fire Station #1.

**JUSTIN:** If your fire stations are numbered, it must mean you have quite a few. How many fire stations are in the city?

**CHIEF BUSSEY:** This city has eight fire stations. Six are on this side of the river, and two on the north side. Why is that, do you think?

**JUSTIN:** I suppose you want to be able to get to a fire or emergency quickly and you need to have fire stations that are spread around. You probably want to be sure there are some on the other side of the river in case the bridge was damaged by an earthquake or fire, and you couldn't get across.

**CHIEF BUSSEY:** Do me a favor, young man. When you turn 21, consider taking the exam to be a fire fighter in this city. You're exactly right.

**IRMA:** Chief Bussey, we live way down on the south side of town, and right down the street from us is a fire station, but it doesn't belong to our city. Would they help us if we had an emergency?

**CHIEF BUSSEY:** Mr. Perez, there are some real thinkers in this class. Yes, Irma, they would. Most cities have agreements with other neighboring cities and counties that they will help each other out, and that the closest or first available fire station will respond to an emergency.

**MR. PEREZ:** Tell us what other services your department provides.

**CHIEF BUSSEY:** We do work on preventing fires through education programs with the schools and community. We also do controlled burning of brush, so that it does not grow too close to homes and businesses and pose a danger in a real fire. We also work with the building inspector to look for and fix fire hazards in buildings. I'll bet you've seen us at your school for inspections and to time your fire drills.

**FRANCISCO:** We're always the first class out. Mr. Perez is really strict about doing that, AND not talking during fire drills so we can listen for directions.

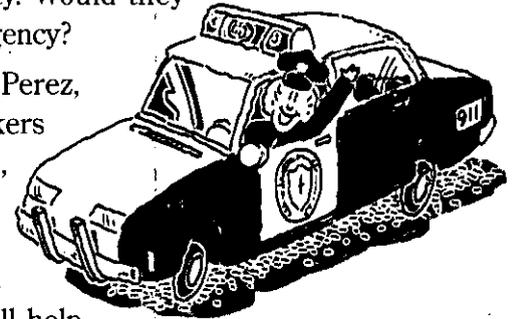
**CHIEF BUSSEY:** Good for you, Mr. Perez.

**MR. PEREZ:** Thank you, Chief, and thanks for the information. Our bus just pulled in, so we'd better be going.

**STUDENTS:** Thank you, thanks a lot.

*(other ad lib remarks.)*

*(Students head for the bus.)*



**MRS. BROWN:** So, was it a good trip? Tell me what you learned.

**IRMA:** We learned that local government provides citizens with quite a few services, like public works, parks and recreation, planning, libraries, waste removal, and police and fire **protection**.

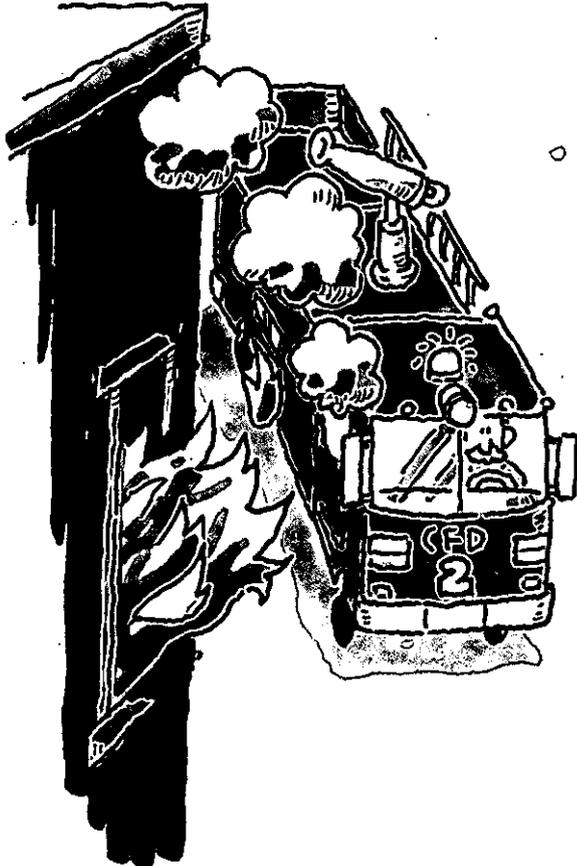
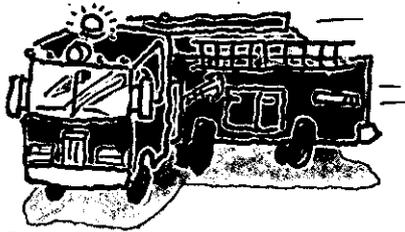
**ARTURO:** That sometimes special districts can be formed to give local services, like the school district, or lighting and landscape or park districts. Isn't that right, Mr. Perez?

**MR. PEREZ:** Yes, you've got it just right, Arturo. Sometimes local governments will contract out for services, like rubbish removal or landfills.

**LINH:** I think it's super that our city has a general plan, so the city can grow in the ways we want it to.

**JULIE:** But we can always change that plan, if things change. Ms. Hall called it amending.

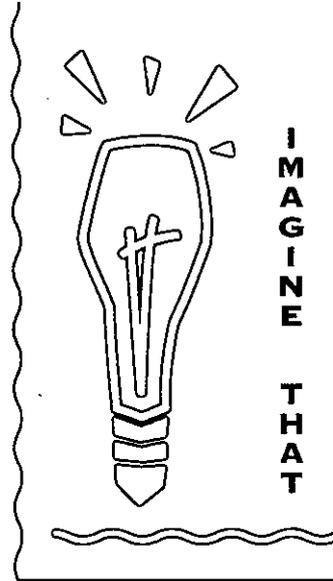
**STEVE:** I learned that I have something to do next Wednesday night. I want to tell the City Council my ideas for that new park!



## New Words:

agenda	finance
amend	general plan
assess	intersection
assessment	landfill
attorney	municipality
branch library	protection
building site	recreation
code	recycled
contract	

# Using What You've Learned



**U**nit Four provided a look at local government services by taking you on an imaginary field trip. You were asked to focus your thinking on the services needed to make a community work. You participated in a reader's theater as a way to experience and discuss various aspects of local government. The activities that follow are designed to enhance your understanding of local government services and apply your new knowledge to some creative tasks.

Imagine that you are a student in Mr. Perez's class, a product developer for a major game company, an editor of a school newspaper or a student author. Work with other students on the activity of your choice to demonstrate the understandings you have gained in this unit.

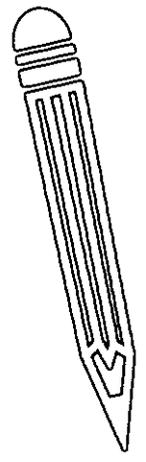
**1. Take the identity of one of Mr. Perez's students on the trip and write a letter.** You might write to the parent helper, the bus driver, the police officer, fire chief, or to one of the people you met at city hall. Letters should include a thank you for the time these people devoted to your class, and also an appreciation for the city services each provides.

**2. You are in the product development department of a major game company. Create a matching card game of local services.** Use unlined index cards to make at least twelve pairs. One card would have a graphic representing a service provided by local government. The matching card would have the name of the department and service. For example, one card might show a woman in a hard hat at a building site, and the matching card would say *Building Inspector - makes sure local building codes are followed.* The games can then be played like CONCENTRATION or GO FISH.

**3. You have been asked by the editor of the school newspaper to do an article on your class field trip.** Write a newspaper article about the class trip to the city hall and the fire station. Include a headline and photo or picture.

**4. In groups of four, read and discuss *The Jolly Postman*, by J. Ahlberg.** Using the book as a model, create a book of letters from community members to various local government employees such as the ones you met in the reader's theater. Share your creation with a class of younger students.





# A Mock City Council Meeting

**D**o you remember the sign about the proposed park that the class passed on its way to city hall in the Reader's Theater in Unit Four? Several different members of the class had different ideas about what should go into that park, and other members of the community might have other ideas.

**1. Think about that park, or a site in your community where a park might be located.** Talk to parents and friends of all ages to find out what ideas they might have for a park at that site.

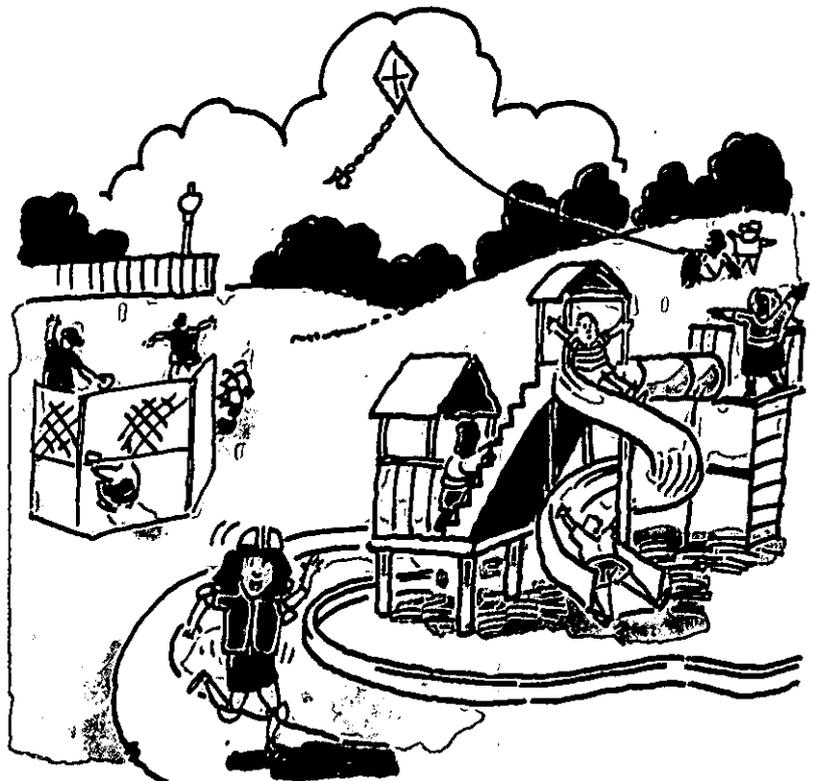
**2. Create a class list of all the ideas you collect.** Don't discount anyone's idea, even though it might be something you wouldn't use or want in a park.

**3. Work with a group of your classmates to design a park for the site.**

**4. Discuss the proposals for the park.** Be sure to consider:

- What type of park is best suited to the size and features of this site? Are there trees or a stream? Is it hilly or flat?
- Who will be affected by the development of a park at this site? Will there be enough parking? Will neighbors object to the noise?

- What groups are likely to use the park you propose? Will enough people use it to justify building it?
- What departments in city government will need to be involved in its construction? Does the park conform to the general plan? Will changes in traffic patterns need to be made? Is there good access for fire trucks and emergency equipment?



*NIMBY: The acronym NIMBY (not in my backyard) was coined to refer to people who know such facilities are needed, but don't want them located in their neighborhood.*

**5. Working in small groups, draw a picture or map of your proposed park.** Consider doing a "bird's eye view" and a cross section. Use a key to show its different features. Put your design on overhead transparencies so they are easy to share with a large group.

**6. Arrange to visit a city council meeting or watch a meeting on tape or Cable TV.** Notice how business is conducted. What rules are followed?

**7. Plan a mock city council meeting to present ideas for the park.** Write an AGENDA for the meeting. Include time for questions or participation from the audience.

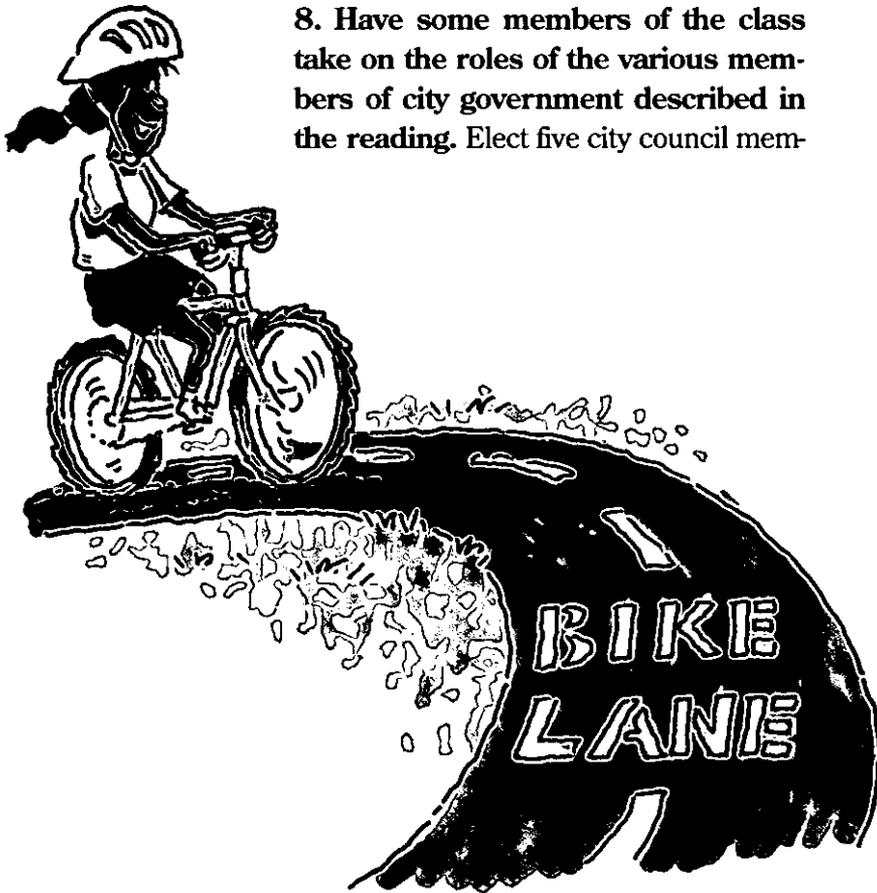
**8. Have some members of the class take on the roles of the various members of city government described in the reading.** Elect five city council mem-

bers, and have the council members select one of their group to be mayor. Other members of the class can present the designs for the park.

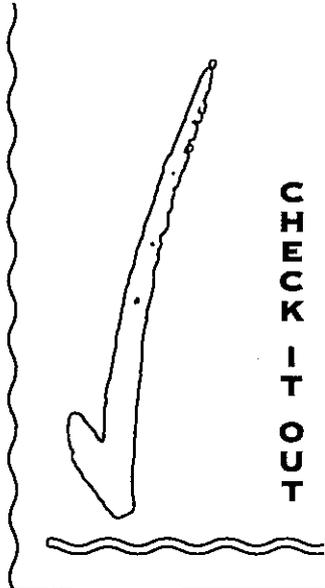
Be sure that the students playing the roles of fire chief, police department and planning department members have time to comment on each design.

**9. Invite another class, parents or the general community to participate as citizens.** After the presentations of the different park designs, encourage the "citizens" to comment. Be sure one or two members of the class take on the roles of newspaper reporter and photographer. Have one report on the meeting for the paper and the other take appropriate pictures.

**10. Have the mock city council vote on the designs.**



# A Day In The Life . . .



**R**ead the descriptions of the three citizens below. Using what you've learned about local government, think about how each of these people will use the community services of your city, county, school district and special districts.

**Mr. Martinez** is 66 years old. He lives with his daughter and her three teenage children. His house is always busy and sometimes noisy. Mr. Martinez likes to read the newspaper each day, especially the stories about baseball, which he also enjoys watching on TV. He has heart problems and can't walk too far, but likes to be outdoors.

**Mrs. Franklin** has two small sons, three and five years old. Her apartment has no outside play areas for her energetic boys. Mrs. Franklin likes to jog, ride a bike and read mystery novels when she gets a chance. She would like to open a book store some day, but right now she is looking forward to moving to a new condominium near downtown.

**Peter Wong** is twelve years old. He likes to roller blade and play basketball. He earns extra money by doing yard clean-ups for his neighbors. Peter is interested in insects. He collects them and does research to find out about their habits. He can't wait for his parents to put the addition on their house that they are planning. That will mean that Peter

will have his own room and won't have to share with his younger brother, Eric.

**1. Divide your paper into fourths and draw a detailed picture in each section.** Show how each of these people might use local government services in their daily lives. Put yourself in the fourth section, or

**2. Divide your paper into four sections and write a daily schedule showing how each of these people might spend an average day.** Place your schedule in the fourth section. Underline the activities that involve local government services.

*Sample Chart:*

DAILY SCHEDULE	
Mr. Martinez	Mrs. Franklin
Peter Wong	Your Name



# How Do We Pay For Government Services?



## COUNTING A TRILLION DOLLARS!

**DEAR ANN:** When a friend of mine told me if I counted a dollar a second, it would take me 32 years to count a billion dollars, I couldn't believe it. Not having a billion dollars to count, I got out my trusty calculator, and sure enough, the figures came out that way.

When I read in your column that it would take 32 years to count a trillion dollars at a rate of one per second, I felt like a fool. How could I have been off by such a large factor? I have an engineering degree and think of myself as fairly proficient in math. So I sat down again at my trusty calculator, and guess what. One of us is wrong and I don't think it is me.

I calculated that it would take 32,000 years to count a trillion dollars at a dollar a second. It may seem a small matter in the scheme of things, but as

they say in Congress, a billion here and a billion there, and pretty soon, you're talking about real money.

*Bruce Aronson In La.*

**DEAR BRUCE:** When the reader in Santa Fe asked me to reprint the column about a trillion, I didn't recall that I had been down that road before. I was flooded with letters telling me I was wrong. Now it has happened again. The following is correct:

A million \$1 bills, if laid end to end, would reach from New York to Philadelphia. A billion \$1 bills would span the earth four times around the equator. A trillion \$1 bills would stretch more than 200 times the distance to the moon and back. Whew!

*Source: Ann Landers column. Permission granted by Ann Landers and Creators Syndicate*

*"It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires great strength to decide on what to do."*

*—Elbert Hubbard*



*"The more alternatives, the more difficult the choice."*

—Abbe d'Allainval  
(1726)

### IT DOESN'T GROW ON TREES!!

**Y**ou probably don't think about money in terms of billions and trillions, but money is a part of everyday life. Have you tried to earn money? Think about some ways that you can. You might offer services to neighbors like lawn mowing or baby-sitting. You could collect cans and other recyclables in your neigh-

borhood and take them to a recycling center. Can you think of other ways that you might be able to earn a regular income?

You can see that money can be hard to come by: Once you have an income, you will want to use your money wisely. It is important to have a plan for what to do with the money you earn. One way to start your plan is to divide your money into thirds: "Quick cash", short-term savings and long-term savings.

Plan how you would use your hard-earned cash. Let's say you earned \$10 a week. Dividing it into thirds, you'd have \$3.33 to use as "quick cash." This is discretionary money that you could spend however you liked. Another \$3.33 would go into "short-term" savings. This is money that you save for something you could have in the near future—like a CD or a concert ticket or a present for someone in your family. Your last \$3.34 would go into "long-term" savings. This might go towards a big purchase like a bike or a skateboard. It might even go into a savings account for a computer or into savings bonds to contribute to your college education fund.

If you had a plan for dividing your resources into categories to meet specific needs, you'd have a **budget**. You'd be looking at your resources and deciding how to divide them to meet your particular needs.

## LIMITED RESOURCES

**V**ery few people have enough resources for everything they want. Most people have to plan the way they spend their money very carefully. Government has to do much the same thing with its resources. Your city government considers all the sources and amounts of income available and the services it must provide to earn that income. It looks at the community's needs and prioritizes what has to be paid for now, in the near future and what long-term needs might be.

Government has the added complication of dealing with debt, which is money owed for goods or services that have been received but not totally paid for. Thinking about a budget plan for yourself may help you prepare for studying and understanding how your community acquires money and plans for its use.

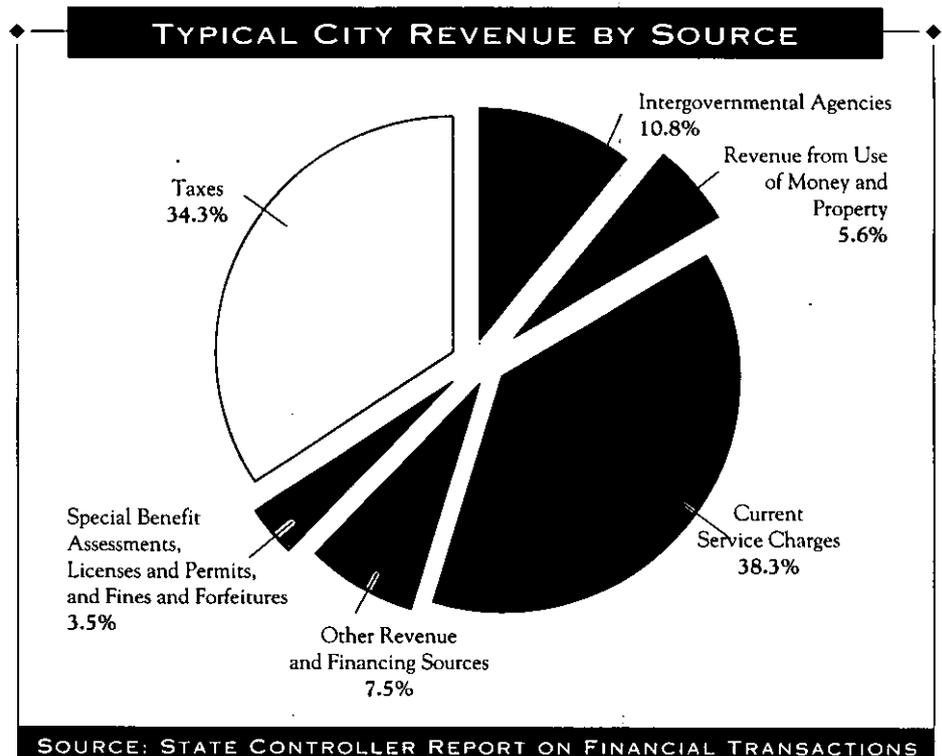
In communities across California, people in state and local government need to make wise money choices. Each level of government faces the problem of managing money to provide what communities need. Local governments collect money in the form of taxes, fees, licenses and special assessments. Each year, the amounts of money that are collected are not always the same. Proposition 13 is an example of how tax change can take place. This initiative, passed by the voters in 1978, greatly reduced the

amount of local property tax paid by homeowners. The new law lowered taxes, but it also made less money available for city and county services and shifted more of the burden to fund local government to the state.

In addition to changes in local income, local governments are also affected by changes in the state budget. Some years, state funding cuts to local governments have been small, but other years the cuts have required major reworking of local government budgets. Some cuts have involved losing some money from a tax (such as property tax or cigarette tax) or from fees that were collected (for example, motor vehicle fees). Other cuts have taken place when the state has required or **mandated** a new, locally-run program, but has not provided local government with any money to pay for it.

*"Responsibility is the price every man must pay for freedom."*

—Edith Hamilton



## BALANCING THE BUDGET

**B**oth state and local governments have a limited amount of money to spend and do not make budget cuts without reason. Balancing

the budget is essential so that money does not run out before the year is through. Living in times when money is tight, people running the government need to be especially careful in deciding how to use available funds. The City Manager works with the various people in City Hall to develop a budget that will allow each department to do the best job possible. The City Manager brings this budget to the City Council for approval.

Final approval is needed before June 30 of each year because the new **fiscal year** begins on July 1.

Cities have various ways of bringing in **revenue**, or income, to pay for the services they provide. Throughout California, the major components of a city budget are similar to those shown on the Typical City Revenue chart on page 61. Cities do not necessarily have the exact percentages shown on the chart. Differences are caused by factors such as the size and location of the city as well as the number of businesses in the city.

Each City Manager needs to know how much money can be expected from each source of revenue in order to develop a budget. Careful calculating is absolutely essential in order to be accurate with figures and to develop a budget that is real-

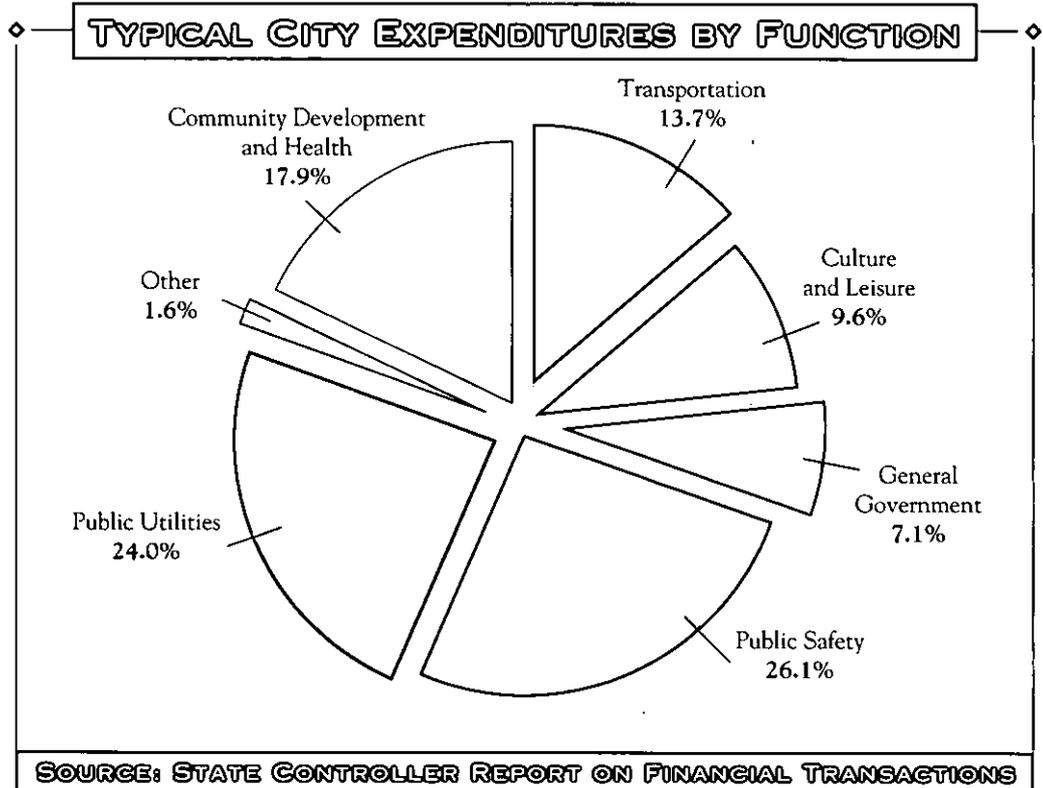
REVENUE COMPONENTS	WHAT IS INCLUDED
Current Service Charges (paid by consumers—users of the services)	electric, water service, sewer service, airport permits, recreation programs, other services
Taxes	sales, property, utility users, business license, transportation
Intergovernmental Agencies	motor vehicle tax, gas tax, federal and state grants
Other Revenue and Financing Sources	moneys from interest and investments
Revenue from Use of Money and Property	moneys from those who rent city buildings, property, etc.
Special Benefit Assessments	street lighting, park maintenance

istic. Take a look at the table on page 62 to determine what is included in each revenue **component** on the graph.

### WISE CHOICES

Cities have many options to consider when making choices concerning financial matters. Each department in city government has to make wise choices. For example, how should a community pay for its recreation programs? Through fees charged to those who use them? Through property taxes? Through sales taxes? Through other taxes? By cutting some other services? City government officials and voters need to make difficult decisions in ways that are fair for all of the people in the community.

Just as city governments have various ways to bring in revenue, there are a variety of ways money is spent. A city's **expenditures** need to match the budget developed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council. This budget should reflect the needs of the people who live and work within the city. In recent years, with reduced funds, decisions have been especially difficult. Some city



councils have chosen to deal with cuts in money by postponing less urgent needs, such as street improvement programs. Other councils have chosen to require heavy cuts in all areas, leaving vacant city jobs unfilled. Look at the "Typical City Expenditures"



**EXPENDITURE COMPONENTS****WHAT IS INCLUDED**

Public Safety

police, fire, emergency medical, etc.

Public Utilities

electric, water, gas, street lighting

Community Development and Health

planning, enforcing building codes, sewer maintenance, garbage pickup

Transportation

streets, highways, storm drains, public transit, airports, ports, harbors

Culture and Leisure

parks, recreation, libraries

General Government

legislative, management, support

*“Every nation has the government that it deserves.”**— Joseph De Maistre*

chart on page 63. Remember that the percentages shown represent an average city, not any one city in particular. Which of these components of the city government’s expenses directly affect you and your family? Look at the table above to help you better determine what is included in each section.

City government departments do not work in isolation from each other. They try to work cooperatively in ways that

will have a positive effect on the budget. Several departments within the city government may collaborate, or work together, on developing approaches to deal effectively with the problems and needs of the community. By collaborating, the various departments can put their heads and funds together in order to get the most from limited funds.

**New Words:**

budget

fiscal year

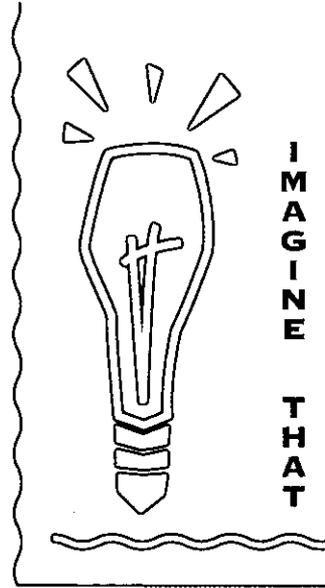
component

mandate

expenditure

revenue

# Who Should Pay For That?



**L**ocal government funds pay for many services. Where should these revenues come from? Is it fair to have people who use a city or county service pay for the entire cost of that service? (For example, is it fair to have the family who has a fire in its home pay for the cost of the firemen and the water used to put out the fire?)

1. Working with three other students, make a chart like the one below. Choose four expenses from the first column. Decide whether or not the people using the service should pay for it. Place your answer in column two. In column three, give the rationale, or reason for your choice.

*Sample Chart:*

Local Government Expenses	FUNDING SOURCES	
	Should Pay: Government, Taxpayers or Users	Rationale
parks		
library		
water		
roads		
police		
recreation		
electricity		
public transit (bus, etc.)		
street lighting		
ambulance		
fire		
garbage pickup		

# PROPERTY TAX STATEMENT

Keep This Portion of the Bill for Your Records

For Fiscal Year 1996-97

Tax Rate Area 001-176  
Assessment No. 45-23-615-4

Caltopia County  
Free Parcel No. 45-754-22-1

Assessment Information	Rate and Amount Levied By Taxing Agencies			
	Full Value	Taxing Agency	Tax Rate	Amount
Land	5,430			
IMPR/Structural		Prop 13 Tax Rate	1.00000	319.28
/Growing		Calt. Rvr Proj-DS	.006000	1.90
/Fixtures		1987 Calt. Dam BDS	.000500	.14
Personal Property		Brown HI Tax Override	.106800	34.08
Gross Taxable		Oakville Fire	.008700	2.76
Value	26,498	Canyon Spr. Wtr PCL	.000000	40.00
Exemptions		Calt. Hosp. B&I	.000000	395.00
Homeowners**		Calt. Fire Prot. Dis	.000000	40.00
Other		Calt. Sewer	.000000	170.50
		Calt. Disposal	.000000	5.00
<small>*Denotes Land Preserve Area **Tax Reduction Attributable to the State Homeowners Tax Relief Program</small>				
<b>Net Taxable Value</b>	<b>31,928</b>	<b>First Installment</b>	<b>Second Installment</b>	<b>Total Taxes Due</b>
		504.33	504.33	1008.66

This Amount Due Nov. 1, 1996

Vol. 42	Block No. 7032	Lot. No. 33	Tax Bill No. 457444	Tax Rate 1.1500%	Location Of Property: Cameron Newbury, 4000 Caltopia Parkway, Caltopia, CA 99999
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**2. Give reasons individuals should or should not pay for each service.** You are responsible for writing the opinion of the group on one of the four expenses you choose.

**3. In a small group, speculate about what property taxes should pay for in your community.** Have one member of the group record your ideas. Have another report your ideas to the class.

**4. Look at the real property tax statement above and compare your ideas with the information on the tax statement.** Is the money generated by property taxes used the way you thought it might be? Discuss what property taxes pay for in your community.

# Where Should The Money Go?



It is typical for local government officials to spend the highest percentage of money to protect people (including police, firefighters, ambulance, and street lighting). In this activity you will find out what people in your community feel are the top funding priorities. Do you think that most people in your community would agree that public safety would be the top funding priority of local government? If not, what other priorities might you expect them to have?

**1. Take a survey of at least 25 adults in your community (parents, relatives, friends, etc.).** Ask each adult the same question:

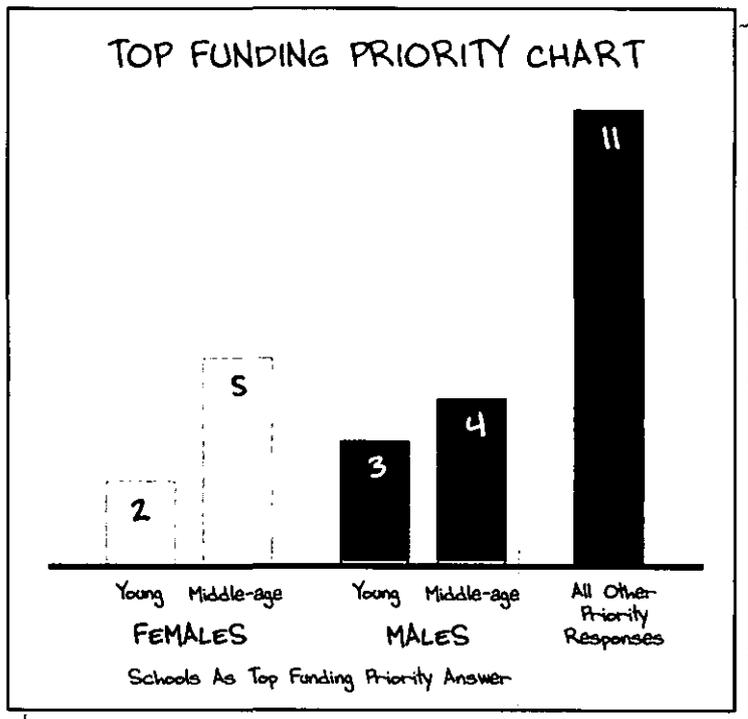
What should be the top funding priority of our local government?

**2. Make a Local Government Funding Priority Survey like the one on page 68.** Write down the following information on each person surveyed: gender, approximate age, and the answer to your question. Your survey recording chart should look similar to the sample.

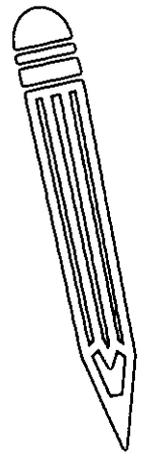
Write down whatever the person says. Make no judgement, but do thank each person who takes the time to answer

your survey. While you are completing your survey, keep some notes on patterns you see emerging.

**3. After you have completed your survey, organize your results and then make a bar graph like the one below to display your findings.** Record any patterns you notice. For example, did most males respond in the same way? Did young adults have different answers than most older adults? Plan to share your findings with your class.







# Developing A Budget

**C**ity Council members need to approve a budget for their city. Your teacher will assign each one of you to the role of a person in charge of one of the departments at City Hall listed below.

## ROLES

**City Manager** – responsible for developing the final budget; will lead and direct the meeting to see that all points-of-view are heard.

**Public Works Official** – responsible for the public utilities (electricity, water, gas) and waste disposal.

**Finance Director** – responsible for keeping the city council within its money limits.

**Parks and Recreation Director** – responsible for the maintenance and construction of parks as well as for recreational activities for youth and senior citizens.

**Police Chief** – responsible for keeping the streets safe.

**Fire Chief** – responsible for taking care of fire hazards and putting out fires.

**Administrative Services Director** – responsible for City Hall support services (purchasing, data processing, answering telephones, as well as helping citizens with questions and appointments).

**Transportation Director** – responsible for road maintenance and the mass transit system(s) in the city.

**1. Take a few minutes to meet with the others in the class who have the same role as yours. Develop an argument to support your need for funds in the coming year.**

**2. Break up into four “City Hall” groups (at least one representative from each department) and together determine the city’s expenditures for the next year by percent (what part of 100% each department will receive). As you meet to discuss the budget, keep in mind the needs of your department as well as the needs of the city as a whole. Make a graph of your budget. Be ready to defend your budget.**

**3. Invite city or county officials, parents and other members of the community to serve as a City Council.**

**4. As a group, present your budget request to the guest “City Council.”**

**5. After the Council hears all four proposals, they will choose one of the budgets to adopt.**

**6. Be sure to write thank you notes to the guests.**

# Getting Your Money's Worth

## OPTION # 1: DESIGN YOUR OWN BUDGET

You, as the city manager, have decided to develop your own budget and then bring it to the other members of the city council for their input.

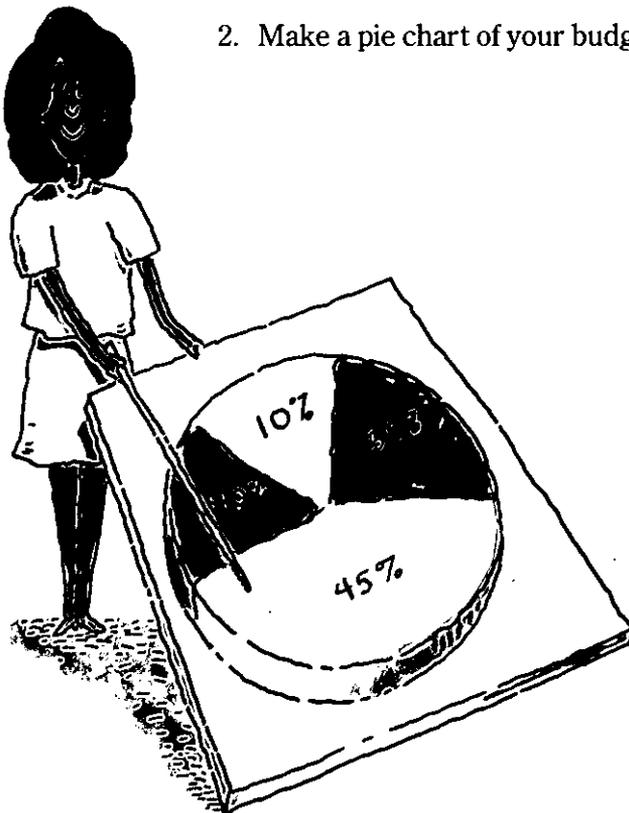
### Steps:

1. Determine what percent of funds will be given to each department. (What part of 100% will each department receive?) Make sure the funds total 100%.
2. Make a pie chart of your budget.

3. Write a paragraph describing reasons for your choices that shows an understanding of the needs of city government.

## OPTION # 2: MORE SERVICE OR LESS MONEY?

As a concerned and informed citizen, prepare a statement that you could present to your city council to voice your opinion on a tax or fee increase or reduction. Your city must choose between additional taxes and fees or budget reductions. You are well aware that your city's financial resources are limited. Be sure your statement shows an understanding of city government finances.



# Our Government: We Make The Choices

## THE GREATEST CITY

*What do you think endures?*

*Do you think the greatest city endures?*

*Or a teeming manufacturing state?*

*or a prepared constitution?*

*or the best built steamship?*

*Or hotels of granite and iron? or any chef-d'oeuvres of engineering,  
forts, armaments?*

*Away! These are not to be cherished for themselves.*

*They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians play for them,*

*The show passes, all does well enough of course,*

*All does very well until one flash of defiance.*

*The greatest city is that which has the greatest men and women,*

*If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in the whole world.*

— By Walt Whitman

## PARTICIPATING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

In his poem "The Greatest City" Walt Whitman felt that cities could only endure if the "greatest men and women" participated in their organization. Throughout history people such as Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy publicly encouraged people to become involved in their neighborhoods, their communities and their local governments. Their actions provided a good example for those around them.

During America's historical past, men and women have worked to establish a democratic nation in which everyone is able to participate. Regardless of your

age, you can become an **activist** and help make your community a special place to be. As a class, talk about

*"Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people."*

—Harry Emerson Fosdick



people and groups who make a difference in your community either through positive participation or negative influences.

Local, state and national governments affect your lives on a daily basis. After the Revolutionary War, the colonists wished to establish a government that represented people not only at a national level, but at the state and local levels as well. Democratic processes were begun in order to assist people in making decisions. Governments became responsible for establishing services such as fire and police protection, utilities, road maintenance and public parks.

During the past few decades as people began moving away from farm life and into cities, they became more interested in community life and governmental decisions concerning their areas. Together, people began forming organizations to improve local decision-making, services and cultural institutions in their communities.

Government became more efficient as people began to take an interest in their schools, neighborhoods and cities. Interest groups who were able to organize large numbers of people to attend local government meetings in support of an idea or project were, and still are, effective in making changes.

People today make a difference in their communities by joining service clubs, local groups and organizations such as youth sports associations and homeowners' groups. Some people volunteer on park and roadway maintenance crews, provide transportation or meals for the elderly or participate at polling places during elections. Participation can be as easy as placing a sign

endorsing a candidate in your front yard, encouraging the adults in your family to vote, writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper or organizing a litter patrol at your school. People can start small to become one of Walt Whitman's "greatest men and women."

### TIME TRAVEL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Y**ou each belong to many types of communities. You are a part of your school community, your neighborhood community and your city or county community. Take some time just to look around you. Everything you see in your surroundings was created, designed, voted on, produced and/or paid for by members of your community. How has your school or neighborhood changed during the last 20 years? What has happened to make those changes and who were the people involved?

### YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

**D**ecisions are made by people who are interested in participating in their communities. You could become an important member in the decision making for your school or neighborhood by becoming an active participant rather than a **complacent** spectator.

You may be asking yourself how you could possibly participate. Well, in the beginning, take small steps. Become an active member in your family community. Think of ways in which you could make your home a special place to be and encourage other family members to become participants. For example, look at jobs around the house that would improve your family life once they were



accomplished. Arrange a meeting with your family to discuss ways you can work together to schedule jobs and activities that would help to improve your home community. Use the chart on page 74 to help guide your discussion.

Home and family provide many of the same services that governmental agencies do, only on a smaller scale. Look at the chart on the next page to compare the similarities between the functions of your family and local government.

Sometimes we see the role of government as being something very different and removed from our own lives. In reality the three levels of government have very similar functions to the roles and jobs you have in your homes.

Once you begin to take an active role at home, the next step is to talk to your

*"Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of the press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution. . ."*

*— Rosa Luxemburg*

## TAKING IT HOME

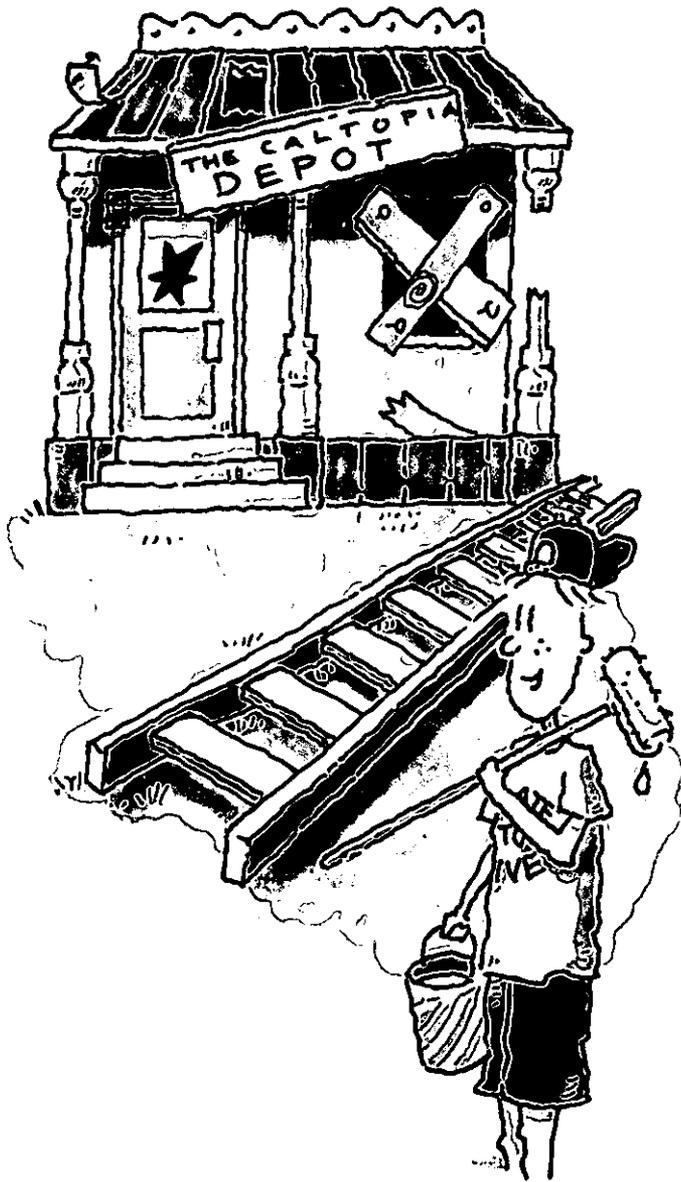
JURISDICTIONS	SAMPLE GOVERNMENT SERVICES	SAMPLE FAMILY ACTIVITIES
<b>NATIONAL LEVEL</b>	set environmental protection policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a family recycling plan</li> <li>• begin a family compost pile</li> </ul>
	print and coin money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a family budget</li> <li>• make a chart to record money earned</li> <li>• make a change jar to save money for a special family event or a charity</li> </ul>
<b>STATE LEVEL</b>	provide funds for public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devise a homework schedule stating where and when homework is completed</li> <li>• read together</li> </ul>
	make state laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write a family constitution which includes house rules</li> <li>• conduct family meetings</li> </ul>
<b>LOCAL LEVEL</b>	provide emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devise a fire and earthquake plan</li> <li>• create an emergency kit</li> <li>• make a first-aid kit</li> </ul>
	community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reorganize for a new brother or sister</li> <li>• remodel or plan expansion of your house</li> </ul>
	provide sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devise a plan for cleaning kitchens and bathrooms</li> <li>• plan a schedule for garbage disposal</li> </ul>
	provide park services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begin a family vegetable garden</li> <li>• discuss drought resistant plants for yards or potted gardens</li> <li>• develop a plan for yard chores</li> </ul>

classmates about ways you could work together to make a difference at school. Your plans might include a litter patrol program, class garden or school beautification project. Discuss how your actions often impact the lives of those around you.

The way schools are organized is also similar to the way governments function. Many of the activities at school relate to services provided by the government. Look at the chart below to see the similarities between local governments and the organization of schools. Which of the activities could your school do?

## SCHOOLS ARE SPECIAL

JURISDICTIONS	SAMPLE GOVERNMENT SERVICES	SAMPLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
<b>NATIONAL LEVEL</b>	print and coin money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devise a class monetary system</li> <li>• organize a class business and use the proceeds for classroom supplies</li> </ul>
	set environmental protection policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organize a school-wide recycling program</li> <li>• conduct a campus clean-up campaign</li> </ul>
<b>STATE LEVEL</b>	make state laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write a class constitution and rules</li> <li>• elect class officers through a voting system</li> </ul>
	provide funds for public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write/contact local businesses to ask for support for school projects</li> <li>• create a teacher/student club to plan goals and activities for your school</li> </ul>
<b>LOCAL LEVEL</b>	provide law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make a set of class rules</li> <li>• design a poster for playground safety rules</li> </ul>
	provide fire protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a fire safety day</li> <li>• have each class devise an emergency plan for its room</li> </ul>
	provide parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begin a school garden club</li> <li>• create a litter patrol</li> </ul>



By practicing participation with your families, classmates and teachers, you can prepare yourself to become an active participant in your neighborhood and local government. Once you've started becoming involved, being a neighborhood participant should be easy. Talk to your friends about ways to improve your neighborhood. Get involved by offering to mow lawns, plant flowers, petition for more stop signs or crosswalks, or organize tree planting parties.

Taking the first step to become involved is always the most difficult. Becoming committed to the **civic welfare**, or common good, is really satisfying. Choose something small to accomplish in the beginning. Record your progress in a journal or photo album. You can make a difference if you just try.

### MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

**T**he crowd rises to its feet and begins wildly cheering as the baseball goes sailing over the fence. On the field, the runner crosses the home plate to be congratulated by his team mates. Working together, the team has won the game.

Government officials work in a similar way to a baseball team. Each member of a government agency has a certain task to complete just as each player on a team has a position to play. The school board, city council or board of supervisors serve as the policy leaders for the team. They oversee the organization, budget, and basic needs of the members.

The players are similar to the government agencies. Each one has a certain function to perform. That function helps the other members of the team to do their jobs more effectively. The players depend on one another to make a strong team.

The crowd and the voters serve basically the same function. Their function is to let the team members know what they think about their job performance. The crowd cheers or jeers at the game while the voters show their approval or disapproval at election times and public meetings. This is how the people who govern know how their constituents feel about them.

It is important to learn about the people who are responsible for running government agencies that affect you. For example, school board members are elected by the public to make decisions about schools. These decisions usually have a direct impact on you as students.

School boards have public meetings to allow interested parents, teachers, and students to participate. Boards of supervisors and city councils also hold public meetings so that county and city residents may attend. This allows citizens and interest groups an opportunity to voice their opinions to the people who represent them.

An interest group is a collection of people who have a common belief about a certain issue. They attend the meetings to inform the governing body of their opinions about the issue. For example, if an amusement park were being constructed near a housing development and elementary school, interest groups for that issue might include land developers, a homeowners' group, and an environmental agency and/or a school board task force. Through these public meetings, citizens can participate in the decision making for their community.

### STUDENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

**M**any of the decisions that affect your life often seem to be made by other people. It is difficult to believe sometimes that individuals can go out into the community and make a change. It may appear that so many people are

involved in any decision-making process that it is difficult to believe people, especially young people, could make a difference. Read the following about a group of students who decided to show that even young people can make a difference in their community.

The students at Caltopia School learned about a very critical environmental issue in their local area - beach erosion. They decided to take action. They organized under the name "Save Our Beaches." They visited affected areas, researched solutions and initiated a campaign to tackle the problem.

Other coastal communities may benefit by considering some of the activities and events implemented by this dedicated group of students, teachers, parents and staff.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."*

— Margaret Mead



*"These Americans are the most peculiar people in the world. In a local community in their country, a citizen may conceive of some need which is not being met. What does he do? He goes across the street and discusses it with a neighbor. Then what happens? A committee begins functioning on behalf of that need. All of this is done by private citizens on their own initiative. The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of function performed by private citizens."*

— Alexis de Tocqueville

You might like to know some of the actions taken. These students:

- Launched a community campaign
- Studied erosion in science class
- Wrote pledges to fight erosion in the computer classes
- Invited a Park Ranger to talk about beach formation
- Invited a representative from the Public Works Department to discuss storm drainage
- Visited erosion sites to learn about beach preservation
- Invited an architect to explain the restoration process for damaged sand dunes
- Heard an expert speak about beach grass and stabilizing sand dunes and beaches
- Planted beach grass
- Spoke at a local university campus to share what they had learned
- Raised money through T-shirt sales, car washes and bake sales
- Began work on a children's book about erosion to remedy lack of available educational information for young readers
- Held a ceremony at the end of the year

The students and school community at Caltopia took an interest in a problem in their neighborhood. Through group planning and a great deal of participation, the students were able to increase their information about the problem and then inform the public of this environmental dilemma.

Using resources such as local experts, the students became educated about the source of the problem and some possible solutions. The students were then able to explore the solutions and share that knowledge with others. They set out to make a difference and they did!

Walt Whitman's "greatest men and women" are people who not only see a need, but actually do something to find a solution. They are the people who overcome **apathy** and say "I care" about what happens in their community and try to make a difference. For a minute, look around the room at your classmates and realize that you are looking at the people who will be in charge tomorrow. Then take that first step and become a participant in your community so you can become one of the "great men and women."

## New Words:

activist

apathy

civic welfare

complacent

jurisdiction

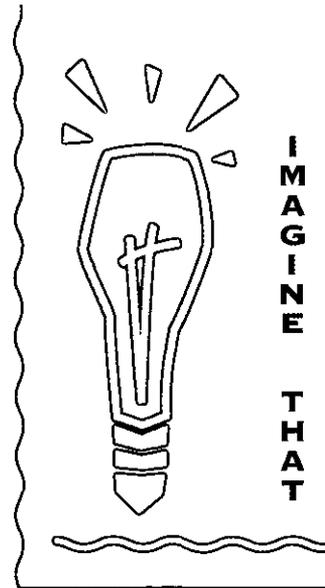
# What Is Citizen Participation?

**Y**ou have spent some time reading and discussing the importance of citizen participation in your community. There are many people who become actively involved in the decision-making for the area in which you live. Children, as well as adults, are able to recognize problems in their communities and develop effective solutions.

In small groups, take a moment to reread Walt Whitman's "The Greatest City" on your own. With your partners, discuss the poem and how it might apply to your life. What was the author's message in this poem?

**1. Using a newspaper, locate and cut out articles about people who are actively involved in local, state or national government. Make a *Contributors in the News* summary sheet as shown on this page. Glue the article onto the information sheet and create a scrap book of people who participate in the decision-making for their communities.**

**2. Make a list of people who actively participate in the decision-making at your school site. Take their photographs or draw their pictures and then write a paragraph about how they participate. Mount the photographs or pictures on posters to display around the school site.**



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**Sample News Summary Sheet:**

**CONTRIBUTORS IN THE NEWS  
SUMMARY SHEET**

ARTICLE TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON IN ARTICLE \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

AFFECT ON COMMUNITY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SOURCE OF ARTICLE \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE FOR ARTICLE HERE

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**3. Re-read the Walt Whitman poem on page 71.** Walt Whitman mentions that “the greatest men and women” make the greatest city. Brainstorm and list qualities these people might possess to become effective citizen participants.

**4. Make an alphabet book of the qualities an effective citizen participant might possess.** Display the book in the school library.

**5. Write about a contribution that you would like to make to your school, neighborhood or town.**

**6. Interview an adult in your family, school or neighborhood.** Ask about a contribution they make to their community. Write an essay about the interview.

**7. Research and report on someone who was, or is, influential in the decision-making for your community.**

*“I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can.”*

— George Bernard Shaw



# Welcome To Our Neighborhood



**M**oving to a new neighborhood can often be a difficult time. There are many changes and adjustments going to a new school or making new friends. Finding local services, businesses or entertainment might be difficult at first.

When people first move into an area, local organizations often come to welcome them to their new home and offer them brochures about local services and/or businesses. In this way, people learn more about their local community. Many times, these welcoming organizations bring information sheets which list emergency services, registration cards to enable adults to vote in their new community and gifts from local businesses.

Imagine yourself moving to a new community. If you have ever moved, you know this can be a very difficult time. However, there are some ways that you can welcome students to your school and community.

**1. Establish a welcoming committee that shows new students around the school and introduces them to their new classmates.** Write a set of guidelines for the committee members to use when they welcome new students. Work

with your teacher and principal to be sure each new student is welcomed.

**2. Create a directory of information and services for your school site to be given to new students.** Information in the directory might include:

- map of the school
- history of the school
- names of the principal, vice-principal, and secretary(s)
- list of teachers (their grade levels and rooms)
- school rules
- school mission statement
- student council members
- school clubs and meeting times
- library times
- services offered at school (home-work lab, computers)
- parent-teacher group information
- suggestions for getting involved in school
- playground and sporting equipment

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**3. Create a directory for your community that lists information that might be important to new residents.**

Moving into a new neighborhood can be difficult not only for the students, but also for their families. The directory will help them adjust. Information could include the following:

- local emergency services  
fire station  
police station  
hospitals
- public utility services
- post office
- newspaper(s)

- special districts
- names of the Board of Supervisors and/or the City Council
- school districts
- libraries
- parks
- voter registration information
- entertainment
- recreation and health facilities
- places of worship

**4. Have the directories translated into other languages that are spoken at your school so that all families are able to use them.**





# Meet Your Community

**M**any people keep up such a hectic pace that they are often unaware of what is going on around them. There may be services available or community events that they don't know about. Many Americans pay taxes for special districts and other services that go unnoticed. Provide an opportunity for your class to introduce people to the services in your community.

Plan a "Meet Your Community Day" at your school site or local park. The objective of the event is to introduce people to the government services and private businesses and associations in their community.

**1. Choose a theme for your event.**

**2. Make a list of the agencies, services and businesses that you would like to participate in the event.** Write letters of invitation to those people explaining the event and asking for their participation. Explain that each participant will set up a display booth about their function in the community.

**Possible guests from the community:**

- Assessor
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Council Member

- City or County Clerk
- Coroner
- County Supervisor
- District Attorney
- Environmental Group
- Fire-fighter
- Girl or Boy Scouts
- League of Women Voters
- Librarian
- Mayor
- Parks Administrator
- Police Officer
- PTA
- Road Maintenance Worker
- Sanitation Worker
- School Board Member
- Service Club
- Sheriff
- Small Business Owner
- Utility Company

**3. Begin making posters and brochures to advertise the event.** Discuss how you can get the information out to the public in an effective way.

**4. Design a logo for the event.** It can be used to create buttons, t-shirts, and/or bumper stickers.

5. Ask guests to create a one-page explanation sheet about the services they provide to the community. Compile the sheets into a community booklet to be given to each family in attendance.

6. Create a flyer that contains suggestions on how people can become active participants in their community and local government.

7. Display posters that demonstrate the make-up of your City Council or Board of Supervisors.

8. Your teacher will assign students in your class to act as guides to the people in attendance. Your teacher will also assign a student to each booth to assist the community person who is located there.

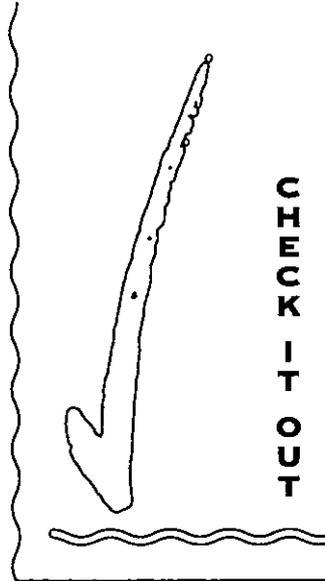
9. Invite the local newspaper to take pictures of the event.

10. Invite other schools to participate in the event and offer to help them start their own Meet Your Community Day.

11. Be sure to write thank you notes to your guests.



# Have You Made A Difference?



In this unit you have learned that citizen participation is essential in creating an effective community. You have created an alphabet book, a school directory and a community directory. In addition, you have planned a Meet Your Community Day so that you can help others become more educated about local government and services provided in your area.

Your assessment for this unit will be based on your ability to share your knowledge with others. Use the following survey to gain feedback from the community on the effectiveness of your directories and/or the Community Day event. Students who attend should complete this form also.

*Sample Checklist:*

**COMMUNITY DAY CHECKLIST**

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate boxes:

I received a school/community directory

I attended Meet Your Community Day

I am a:  student     community member

parent     school board member

teacher     administrator

I heard about the Community Day through \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The highlight(s) of the day for me were \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

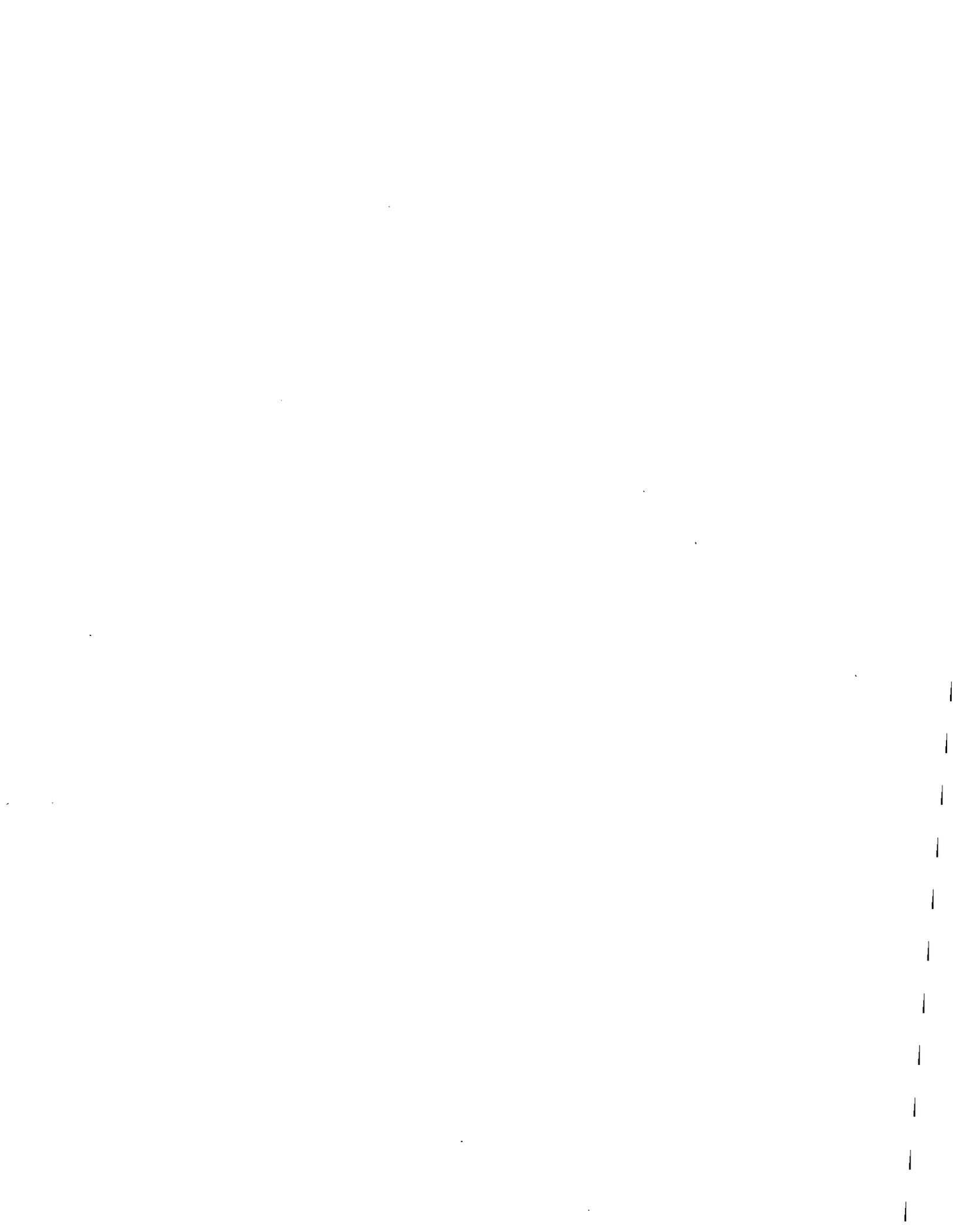
Next year I would like to see \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Has this event encouraged you to become more involved in your community?     YES     NO

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Vocabulary Words

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**activist** – Someone who participates in community or political activities. Any citizen can become an **activist**.

**administrator** – Person who directs the affairs of business, schools or government agencies. Cities have **administrators** who supervise various departments.

**agenda** – A list of items to be brought up at a meeting. The meeting **agenda** called for a discussion on the park.

**alcalde** – An official in a village or town in California in the 1700's and 1800's. An **alcalde** is a combination of mayor and judge.

**amend** – To change or add something which changes the meaning of the original document. We will **amend** the class rules to allow gum chewing on Friday.

**apathy** – Lack of interest or action. **Apathy** can prevent citizens from getting involved in government.

**appoint** – To designate a person for a particular purpose. The committee will **appoint** a chairperson.

**aqueduct** – A channel for carrying water. An **aqueduct** carries water from northern to southern California.

**assess** – To determine the rate or amount of a tax, fee or charge. A county appraiser will **assess** property periodically.

**assessment** – Valuation of property, usually for the purpose of taxation. County **assessments** determine property tax.

**attorney** – A person who is qualified to act in legal cases. The **attorney** for the city checked on the legality of the action.

**boards** – Groups which control and advise educational institutions and government agencies. School districts have **boards** of education.

**branch library** – A smaller library that is part of a larger library system. The branch library ordered the book I wanted from the downtown library.

**budget** – A statement of a financial plan. A city government plans a **budget** to use its money wisely.

**building site** – Location of actual or planned buildings. The new library will be on the **building site** next to the fire station.

**Californios** – Original Spanish colonists of California. Some of California's early residents were called **Californios**.

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**candidate** – A person seeking political office. In a political debate, each **candidate** speaks on many issues.

**citizen** – A member of a state or nation who owes allegiance to it by birth or naturalization and is entitled to full civil rights. There may be **citizens** of a city, a state or a country.

**city** – A local unit of government formed by its residents in order to provide services such as public safety, land use control and recreation. There are many advantages to living in a **city**.

**city council** – A group of people elected by the residents to help in the running of the city. The **city council** makes important decisions for its citizens.

**city manager** – A person appointed by a city council to manage a city. The **city manager** directs the city's work force.

**civic welfare** – The well-being of a city and its residents. All citizens can play a part in promoting **civic welfare**.

**code** – Collection of rules. The **codes** for the various organizations include standards for behavior of members.

**community** – A group of people who live in the same area, share the same government and are concerned about the quality of life in that area. Common interests bring people together in a **community**.

**complacent** – Being satisfied without considering alternatives. **Complacent** people settle for less than they should.

**component** – Essential part of a whole. Most city government budgets have similar parts or **components**.

**constituents** – The people to whom government officials are responsible. Each elected government official has **constituents** to serve.

**Constitutional Convention** – A meeting to organize a state or society. California's constitution was written at a **Constitutional Convention**.

**contract** – Agreement between two or more persons or parties to do or not to do something. The city government has **contracts** with several companies to provide city services.

**county** – A geographical area consisting of cities and towns. A **county** is a subdivision of a state.

**democracy** – A form of government for the people by the will of the majority of the people. The United States is a **democracy**.

**department** – A section of a larger organization. Parks and Recreation is a city government **department**.

**Depression** – A period marked by unemployment and low economic activity. The U.S. experienced a great **Depression** in the 1930's.

**discretionary** – Left to individual judgment. **Discretionary** funds can be spent in a variety of ways.

**Dustbowl** – A region that receives little and inconsistent rainfall. Most **Dustbowl** land receives an average of only 15 inches (38 cm) of rain annually.

**elect** – To select for political office by vote. People vote to **elect** government officials.

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**electorate** – The people of a community (city, county, state, or nation) who are eligible to vote for the government officials who will represent them. In our country, people must be eighteen in order to be eligible to vote; they then become members of the **electorate**.

**expenditure** – An outlay of money. The city has to plan its **expenditures** carefully.

**federal government** – The government that is responsible for the laws that govern all of the states. The President of the United States heads the **federal government**.

**finance** – The system of utilizing money. The **finance** department will look at the proposal to see if there is enough money.

**fiscal year**– Relating to the public treasury or revenues. The **fiscal year** usually begins on July 1st of each year. For the federal government, the fiscal year begins in October.

**general plan** – Overall plan dealing with the growth and development of a city. The **general plan** calls for a new shopping center on that corner.

**governed** – Controlled and directed by agreed-upon authority. A city is **governed** by a city council.

**immigrant** – Person who comes to one geographic region from another. **Immigrants** from many places have come to California.

**incorporated area** – A geographical area which is a separate, self governed entity within a county. Los Angeles and San Francisco are the two largest **incorporated** areas in California.

**initiative** – The right of citizens to put a proposition on the ballot for a vote of the people. Change in government policy can occur through an **initiative**.

**intersection** – A place where two things come together, often streets. That **intersection** is very dangerous because you can't see the oncoming traffic.

**irrigation district** – Organization that regulates the use of water. Farmers in California organized **irrigation districts**.

**jurisdiction** – The limits of a territory in which authority is exercised. The city limits define the city police **jurisdiction**.

**landfill** – Place for disposal of solid waste. The builder took the trash to the **landfill**.

**mandate** – A formal order or command. The city must act on a **mandate** from the state government.

**mayor** – The chief officer of a city. The **mayor** represents the city at many public functions.

**municipality** – A local unit of government formed to provide services to its residents. This **municipality** has its own police department.

- 
- petition** – A formal written document requesting an action from authority. A paper to be signed by registered voters, requesting that a proposition be placed on the ballot. A **petition** requires a large number of signatures to get on the ballot.
- policy** – Statement of procedures and regulations. Governments have **policies** to guide their actions.
- property tax** – Tax paid on land and structures. People who own homes pay **property taxes**.
- protection** – Safeguards keeping someone or something from danger. The fire department's job is to provide **protection** from fire.
- public works department** – The department that is responsible for keeping the city clean. The **public works department** keeps the street clean.
- pueblo** – A town or village founded by Mexican-Spanish settlers in California. An early California town is called a **pueblo**.
- recall** – To remove elected officials from office by vote of the electorate. Citizens can **recall** an elected official.
- recreation** – Any activity for relaxing and/or socializing outside of work. For **recreation** I like to take long hikes.
- recycled** – Returned to a condition in which it can be used again. Many products are made of **recycled** materials.
- referendum** – An action which nullifies a law passed by elected officeholders. The citizens of Mayberry passed a **referendum** repealing higher property taxes passed by the city council.
- resident** – One who lives in a place, not a visitor. The **residents** of a city benefit from local government services.
- resume** – A statement of education and experience used when seeking employment. A good **resume** helps in finding a job.
- revenue** – Income that comes from taxes, fees, and other sources. A city has several sources of **revenue**.
- rural** – Pertaining to the country. Most farms and ranches in California are in **rural** areas.
- slogans** – A brief attention-getting phrase used in advertising. **Slogans** need to be short and interesting.
- special interest groups** – Groups that form to represent particular points of view. **Special interest groups** promote particular citizens' needs or desires.
- special district** – Local government unit often established to provide a single service. The biggest **special district** in the neighborhood provides over 1,000,000 people with water.
- subsidy** – Payments from one group to another for services. **Subsidies** can be paid by governments or other agencies.
- urban** – Pertaining to a city. Most Californians live in **urban** areas.
- welfare** – Money or social services given by government to the needy or disabled. When Tom's mother lost her job, she applied for **welfare**.

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