

Exploring Activism

Unit and Lesson Outline

Unit Summary:

Members of the League of Women Voters are everyday citizens who choose to be activists in the fight for good government. League members actively lobby for voting rights, congressional and state redistricting reform, individual rights, child welfare, affordable housing, comprehensive and reliable public transit, and clean air and water. They also study ballot issues and educate voters about these issues by organizing open meetings and public forums where all sides are represented. In keeping with the League's tradition of citizen activists who fight for good government and work to educate and inform voters, this unit will provide students with an opportunity to explore activism and its effect in bringing about change.

Unit Purpose:

After having completed this unit, students will learn how activism brings about change by describing what activism is; examining the lives and times of historical figures who were prominent activists; synthesizing data from interviews with League members to create a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change; evaluating a cause or group to determine how that cause or group is bringing about change.

Unit Learning Goals and Learning Objectives:

1. **Goal:** Describe what activism is
 - **Objective:** Given an activism discussion guide, the student will be able to describe what activism is by defining in their own words what it looks like and what it sounds like in a facilitated small group dialogue format
2. **Goal:** Examine the lives and times of a historical figure who was prominent activist
 - **Objective:** Given a list of historical figures who were prominent activists to choose from, the student will be able to examine how their chosen activist affected change by reporting on their lives, times, cause, and accomplishments
3. **Goal:** Synthesize data from interviews with League members to create a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change
 - **Objective:** Given scheduled time to interview League members in a small group round robin format, the student will be able to synthesize the data they gather to create a road map which outlines purpose, the desired outcome, and the process for how citizen activists can bring about change
4. **Goal:** Evaluate an advocacy group to determine how that group is bringing about change
 - **Objective:** Given a list of advocacy groups, the student will be able to evaluate how that group is bringing about change by monitoring a public meeting sponsored by that group, interviewing persons involved with that group, or meeting with a local government official working with that group

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High Level Plan with Essential Questions and Materials

<p>Lesson #1 Concepts of Activism (40 min.)</p>	<p>1. Goal: Describe what activism is</p> <p>Objective: Given an activism discussion guide, the student will be able to describe what activism is by defining in their own words what it looks like and what it sounds like in a facilitated small group dialogue format</p>	<p>Essential Questions: What is activism? Why does activism happen? Who are some activists?</p> <p>Materials: Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism Worksheet #1: "Activism" White board or smart board or flip chart Markers</p>
<p>Lesson #2 Activists in Action (40 min.)</p>	<p>2. Goal: Examine the lives and times of a historical figure who was prominent activist</p> <p>Objective: Given a list of historical figures who were prominent activists to choose from, the student will be able to examine how their chosen activist affected change by reporting on their lives, times, cause, and accomplishments</p>	<p>Essential Questions: Can social change occur without activism? How does one become an activist? What are ways activists use to express themselves?</p> <p>Materials: Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism "Activists in Action Instructions" Exploring Activism Worksheet #2: "Activists in Action" Space in the classroom for creating an art gallery style exhibit</p>
<p>Lesson #3 Citizen Activists (40 min.)</p>	<p>3. Goal: Synthesize data from interviews with League members to create a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change</p> <p>Objective: Given scheduled time to interview League members in a small group round robin format, the student will be able to synthesize the data they gather to create a road map which outlines purpose, the desired outcome, and the process for how citizen activists can bring about change</p>	<p>Essential Questions: Who or what determines the need for activism? How does that play a role in predicting the success of the activism?</p> <p>Materials: Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism Worksheet #3: "How Activists Bring About Change"</p>
<p>Lesson #4 Activism and You (40 min.)</p>	<p>4. Goal: Evaluate an advocacy group to determine how that group is bringing about change</p> <p>Objective: Given a list of advocacy groups, the student will be able to evaluate how that group is bringing about change by monitoring a public meeting sponsored by that group, interviewing persons involved with that group, or meeting with a local government official working with that group</p>	<p>Essential Questions: How can you be involved as an activist in your own community?</p> <p>Materials: Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism "Activism and You Instructions" Exploring Activism Worksheet #4: "Activism and You"</p>

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Exploring Activism Lesson #1: Concepts of Activism		
Goal: Describe what activism is		
Objective: Given an activism discussion guide, the student will be able to describe what activism is by defining in their own words what it looks like and what it sounds like in a facilitated small group dialogue format		
Minutes	Topic and Teaching Point	Process/Materials
40 Total 5	<p>Start-Up</p> <p>Welcome the students to class</p> <p>Divide the students up into small groups of three or four persons each</p> <p>Hand out Exploring Activism Worksheet #1: "Activism"</p>	
2	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Say: Today will be the first installment of a four lesson unit about activism called Exploring Activism. In this unit we will learn how activism brings about change by studying activists throughout history, interviewing local activists, and examining the influence of activist groups.</p> <p>Before we get to those topics however, we must understand the concept of activism.</p>	
33	<p>Exploring Activism Worksheet #1: "Activism"</p> <p>Say: Please look at the worksheet that I handed out at the beginning of class and take a few moments and in your own words respond to the first question: <i>"What is Activism?"</i></p> <p>Do: After giving the students a few moments to answer the question, <i>"What is activism?"</i> invite them to confer with the other students in their group to compare responses.</p> <p>Once the students have had an opportunity to compare responses, ask for volunteers to share their responses with the class</p> <p>Write key words on the whiteboard, smart board, or flip chart. After an acceptable number of responses have been given, note what has been written on the whiteboard smart board, or flip chart and identify similar themes or phrases and from those themes and phrases have the class draft an a definition of activism.</p> <p>As a point of comparison, evaluate the similarities between the class definition of activism and the definition of activism presented in the Merriam Webster Dictionary: <i>"a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue."</i></p> <p>Continue to work though the remaining questions on the worksheet (Looks Like, Sounds Like, <i>Why does activism happen? Who are some activists?</i>) in a similar fashion allowing students to respond to the questions on their own, in conference with members of their small groups, as a large group/class, or a combination of the three.</p>	<p>Brief lecture, small group discussion, large group discussion/ Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism Worksheet #1: "Activism" White board or smart board or flip chart Markers</p>

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	<p>When all of the questions on the worksheet have been answered, briefly review the answers to the questions <i>What is activism? Why does activism happen? Who are some activists?</i> that class has agreed upon.</p> <p>Explain that the concepts of activism that they learned about in this lesson will serve as foundation for examining activists, their causes, and accomplishments.</p>	
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Exploring Activism Lesson #2: Activists in Action		
Goal: Examine the lives and times of a historical figure who was prominent activist		
Objective: Given a list of historical figures who were prominent activists to choose from, the student will be able to examine how their chosen activist affected change by reporting on their lives, times, cause, and accomplishments		
Minutes	Topic and Teaching Point	Process/Materials
40 Total 5	<p>Start-Up Welcome the students to class Divide the students up into small groups of three or four persons each Hand out Exploring Activism: “Activists in Action Instructions”</p>	
2	<p>Introduction Say: Today we continue with the second installment of our four lesson unit about activism called Activists in Action. In this lesson you and the members of your group will have the opportunity to choose a prominent activist and examine how they affected change by reporting on their life and times, the cause or causes they supported, and their accomplishments.</p>	
33 (At least two class periods will be needed for this lesson: the first for students to brainstorm and conduct initial research; the second for presenting and discussing their findings)	<p>Exploring Activism: “Activists in Action Instructions” Do: Review the instructions for “Activists in Action.” Explain to the students that they will have one class period to brainstorm and do some initial research on their chosen activist.</p> <p>At the discretion of the teacher, the students can be given class time to complete the remainder of their research and put together their presentation, or they can be asked to complete the remainder of their research and put together their presentation outside of class, or some combination of the two.</p> <p>Exploring Activism Worksheet #2: “Activists in Action” Say: Now that all of you had an opportunity to research an activist and examine how they affected change, it is time to share your findings with your classmates. For the next 15 to 20 minutes you will have the chance to view the work of your peers art gallery style.</p> <p>Do: Rather than have each small group speak to the class about their chosen activist, the students will get up and roam the classroom art gallery style viewing at least three posters, collages, or presentations that interest them. As they do so, they will make note of who, what, where, when, and why for each poster, collage, or presentation that they view (at least three) and record their observations on the Exploring Activism Worksheet #2: “Activists in Action.”</p> <p>Once the gallery viewing has concluded, the students will have time to reflect on what they have learned by answering the following questions (also on the Exploring Activism Worksheet #2: “Activists in Action”):</p>	<p>Small group research and reporting, class art gallery, large group discussion/ Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism “Activists in Action Instructions” Exploring Activism Worksheet #2: “Activists in Action” Space in the classroom for creating an art gallery style exhibit</p>

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	<p><i>Can social change occur without activism?</i> <i>How does one become an activist?</i> <i>What are ways activists use to express themselves?</i></p> <p>After the students have had an opportunity to reflect on and answer the aforementioned questions, the teacher will lead the class in whole class large group discussion in which the students will share their responses to the questions above.</p> <p>When all of the responses on have been shared, the teacher will briefly review the answers to the questions <i>Can social change occur without activism? How does one become an activist? What are ways activists use to express themselves?</i> which class has agreed upon.</p> <p>Explain to the students that after having learned about prominent activists from history, they will now learn about the role of local activists in bringing about change on the local level by interviewing citizen activists and creating a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change.</p>	
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Exploring Activism Lesson #3: Citizen Activists		
<p>Goal: Synthesize data from interviews with League members to create a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change</p> <p>Objective: Given scheduled time to interview League members in a small group round robin format, the student will be able to synthesize the data they gather to create a road map which outlines the purpose, the desired outcome, and the process for how citizen activists can bring about change</p>		
Minutes	Topic and Teaching Point	Process/Materials
40 Total 5	<p>Start-Up Welcome the students to class Divide the students up into small groups of three or four persons each Hand out Exploring Activism Worksheet #3: “How Activists Bring About Change”</p>	
2	<p>Introduction Say: Today we continue with the third installment of our four lesson unit about activism called Citizen Activists. In this lesson you and the members of your group will have the opportunity to interview citizen activists from the League of Women Voters and learn how they affected change in our government at the local level.</p> <p>The League of Women Voters is an all-volunteer grassroots non-partisan not for profit advocacy organization that fights for good government. League members actively lobby for voting rights, congressional and state redistricting reform, individual rights, child welfare, affordable housing, comprehensive and reliable public transit, and clean air and water. They also study ballot issues and educate voters about these issues by organizing open meetings and public forums where all sides are represented.</p>	
33 (At least one and a half class periods will be needed for this lesson: the first for students to conduct interviews with League members; the second	<p>Do: Depending on the small group to League member ratio, assign one group but no more than two groups to every League member. Using the Exploring Activism Worksheet #3: “How Activists Bring About Change” as a guide, the small groups of students will have ten minutes to interview each League member round robin style about a cause which they advocated or are advocating for.</p> <p>The small groups of students will seek to understand the purpose (why is change needed), outcome (what is the desired change), and process (how to get the desired change) for how the cause that the League member advocated for brought about change.</p> <p>For the first round of interviews, half of the students in each group will ask questions while the other half of the students in each group will record answers. For the second round of interviews, those students who asked questions during the first round will record answers and those students who recorded answers during the first round will ask the questions.</p>	<p>Small group interviews with League of Women Voters members: recruit between three and five members from your local League to participate in the interviews/ Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism Worksheet #3: “How Activists Bring About Change”</p>

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<p>for sharing what they have learned)</p>	<p>After the initial ten minutes has expired, the above process will be repeated one to two more times. To execute the round robin structure, make sure that for each round of interviews each small group of students is interviewing a different League member than from previous rounds.</p> <p>Once two to three rounds of interviews have been completed, the students will have time to reflect on what they have learned by answering the following questions (also on the Exploring Activism Worksheet #3: “how Activists Bring About Change”):</p> <p><i>What did you hear today?</i></p> <p><i>What is your reaction to the stories that were told and shared?</i></p> <p><i>How does today’s discussion shape your self-image as an activist or potential activist?</i></p> <p><i>Who or what determines the need for activism?</i></p> <p><i>How does that play a role in predicting the success of the activism?</i></p> <p>After the students have had an opportunity to reflect on and answer the aforementioned questions, the teacher will lead the class in whole class large group discussion in which the students will share their responses to the questions above.</p> <p>When all of the responses on have been shared, the teacher will briefly review the answers to the questions <i>Who or what determines the need for activism? How does that play a role in predicting the success of the activism?</i> which class has agreed upon.</p> <p>Explain to the students that after having interviewed citizen activists from the League of Women Voters, they will have the opportunity to evaluate an advocacy group to learn how that group is bringing about change in their community.</p>	
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Exploring Activism Lesson #4: Activism and You		
Goal: Evaluate an advocacy group to determine how that group is bringing about change		
Objective: Given a list of advocacy groups, the student will be able to evaluate how that group is bringing about change by monitoring a public meeting sponsored by that group, interviewing persons involved with that group, or meeting with a local government official working with that group		
Minutes	Topic and Teaching Point	Process/Materials
40 Total 5	<p>Start-Up Welcome the students to class Divide the students up into small groups of three or four persons each Hand out Exploring Activism Worksheet #4: “Activism and You”</p>	
2	<p>Introduction Say: Today we conclude our four lesson unit about activism with the final installment, Activism and You. In this lesson you and the members of your group will have the opportunity to choose an advocacy group and examine how it is bringing about change and making a difference in your community.</p>	
33 (At least two class periods will be needed for this lesson: the first for students to choose an advocacy group to examine and a method by which to conduct such an examination; the second for a debrief of their findings)	<p>Exploring Activism: “Activism and You Instructions” Do: Review the instructions for “Activism and You.” Explain to the students that they will have one class period to choose an advocacy group to examine and a method by which to conduct such an examination: monitor a public meeting sponsored by that group, interview persons involved with that group, meet with a local government official working with that group.</p> <p>At the discretion of the teacher, the students can be given class time to complete the remainder of their examination and put together their findings, or they can be asked to complete the remainder of their examination and put together their findings outside of class, or some combination of the two.</p> <p>Exploring Activism Worksheet #4: “Activism and You” Say: Before you choose an advocacy group, let us review some of the methodologies that you can use to examine your chosen group. The methodologies that we will review are familiar to you all. You used them when you researched the lives and times of a historical figure who was prominent activist and when you synthesized data from interviews with League of Women Voters members to create a roadmap for how citizen activists can bring about change.</p>	Monitoring, interviewing, or meeting, large group discussion/ Exploring Activism PPT Exploring Activism “Activism and You” Exploring Activism Worksheet #4: “Activism and You”

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	<p>Do: Review with the students the Who? What? Where? When? Why? Significance? and Process-Outcome-Purpose methodologies used in the prior lessons of this unit.</p> <p>Say: One methodology that we have not used that may be helpful to you in is a review of strategies for speaking with a government official.</p> <p>Do: Review strategies for speaking with a government official. These include but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing oneself• Brief statement about what you would like to talk about• Concerns you have about what you would like to talk about• Personal story about why what you are talking about matters to you• Inquire what is being done about what you are talking about• Inquire how you can best help the government official work on what you are talking about• Thank the government official for their time <p>Following the review of methodologies, give the student groups time to work through Exploring Activism Worksheet #4: "Activism and You" making sure to check on the progress of each group and help students craft their interview guides</p> <p>As the student groups complete their interview guides, it might be prudent to have a discussion about the appropriate etiquette and conduct required for reaching out to an advocacy group.</p> <p>Give the student groups time to monitor a public meeting sponsored by their chosen advocacy group, interview persons involved with their chosen advocacy group, meet with a local government official working with that advocacy group.</p> <p>Debrief</p> <p>Do: After the student groups have had the time to monitor a public meeting sponsored by their chosen advocacy group, interview persons involved with their chosen advocacy group, meet with a local government official working with that advocacy group engage the whole class in a large group discussion.</p> <p>Ask the students the following debrief questions: <i>How do you feel about the examination that you conducted?</i></p>	
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	<p><i>What did you learn that was new?</i> <i>What did you learn that surprised you?</i> <i>How can you be involved as an activist in your own community?</i></p> <p>After the students have had an opportunity to debrief and answer the aforementioned questions, the teacher will provide closure to the unit Exploring Activism that reflects the learnings of the students and how to use what they have learned moving forward.</p>	
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