



Exploring Needs in My Neighborhood Community

This lesson leads students to explore and identify neighborhood community needs while connecting what they learned in previous units.

Essential Question

How can I apply the things I’ve learned to make a difference in my community?

Guiding Question

What are the main features of our neighborhood? What am I learning about our neighborhood community’s needs?

Objectives

- Students will identify and map defining features of their neighborhood community.
- Students will begin to brainstorm about community needs they’ve identified.
- Students will learn about ways that young people can make a difference in their communities.

Advance preparation

- Be familiar enough with the neighborhood and its features to work with students in mapping it
- Prepare student handouts

Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 5.2 (adapt as needed)
- Poster paper or whiteboard to create neighborhood map
- Large sticky notes and markers

Student Materials

- “What are my neighborhood community’s needs?” handout

Vocabulary

- No new vocabulary

Do Now2 min.

Slide 1: Discuss with one or two partners what you think is the most important school community need you have identified and why it is most important.

Introduction (Framing/Overview)3 min.

NOTE TO TEACHER: This lesson focuses on the local “neighborhood community”, but students may not live the same neighborhood or attend the school located closest to their home. Depending on your context, please redefine “community” to a larger circle of concern, such as town or city, to fit your needs.

1. Remind students about the Circles of Concern concept discussed in the previous lesson. Using the PowerPoint (slide 3), explain that today we will **expand our circle of concern beyond our school to the surrounding neighborhood** (or students’ neighborhoods or town/city). Share the day’s agenda with students (slide 4).

Activity 1: Mapping Our Neighborhood and Its Features10 min.

2. Slide 5: Work together as a whole class to sketch out a map of the neighborhood surrounding the school. Work with students to decide what street or natural boundaries to use to define the neighborhood for the purpose of considering community needs. **Whole Class Discussion**
3. Ask students to identify some of the important buildings, community spaces or parks, organizations or groups, and other things that make up the neighborhood. What are its defining characteristics? How is it different from other neighborhoods nearby? What is special about it? What issues come to mind as they begin to plot things out on the map? (Note: the map may be roughly geographical, or if you prefer, can be more of a “mind map” of the neighborhood’s defining features. It does not have to be a precise representation.)

Activity 2: Identifying Neighborhood Community Needs15 min.

4. Slide 6: Tell students that all communities have needs, some of which might not be readily seen on a map. Have students work in teams (slide 7) to brainstorm the neighborhood community’s needs. (Note that different students may be aware of different needs.) Each student individually completes Column A and B in the “What are the needs of my neighborhood community?” sheet. Explain that they will get to the other columns (Columns C-E)-about how to address those needs in a later lesson. **Team Discussion/ Cooperative Learning**
5. Slide 8: Ask students to share identified needs (Column A) and discuss who is affected by each one (Column B) in a class-wide discussion. **Whole Class Discussion**

6. Encourage students to write their ideas on large post-its, add them to the WALL OF NEEDS that was started in the previous lesson and present them orally to the class as they post them. Ask if there are other ideas that have not been shared but should be included. (You can write and post these.)

Activity 3: Learning More About Community Needs

10 min.

7. Slide 9: In a class-wide discussion, ask students to share any steps they have taken since the last class session to gather information about their school or neighborhood community needs (i.e., begun to complete the Community Observation Report). What have they learned? How has additional information gathering helped them to better understand the needs?
8. Help the other students make plans about how they could gather more information in a neighborhood walk or interview. Suggest things like taking photos, making videos, or summarizing their observations.
9. Show slide 10. Ask students to share about how they may have talked with lifelines and advisors to get guidance or support as they seek to identify and understand community needs.

**Whole
Class
Discussion**

Closure

5 min.

10. Encourage students to complete their community observation walk or interview(s) if not yet completed. Remind them that in the next class session they will share their findings and begin to brainstorm about ways to meet the needs they have identified. Show slide 11: Introduce the closing video, “Young Changemakers,” and ask students to think about ways they can use their skills to change their community or world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=eyS8Uiq1Ej4>

Remind students to complete the “Neighborhood Community Observation Report” before the coming lessons. Students will share their findings in the next class.

Exit ticket – ask students to hand in their “What are the needs of my school community?” sheet (to be returned to them in a subsequent lesson).

What are the needs of my neighborhood community?

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E
Needs I have identified in my neighborhood (or town/city) community.	How big (or small) is this issue? Who does it affect?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue now?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue in the future?	What skills will I need to address this issue?*

***Note: Skills might include any of the following: stress management, mindfulness, growth mindset, time management, note-taking, active listening, working together and building consensus, and empathy.**

Name _____