

Intended for Grades: 7-12 **Estimated Time:** 90-120 Min.

Lesson Title: *WHAT IS WITH THIS PLACE?*

Lesson Purpose: Students will:

- * Explore, learn, and share about the place that is their community
- * Create and facilitate a one-word reaction poll to assess how others view their community
- * Give a short presentation about people's reactions and their own thoughts about this poll

Materials & Preparation:

Prepare an example of the assignment and the process to share with students.

Background Information:

Many people believe they know what others think or feel about their own community, but most people never really take the time to ask. They may talk about issues or gossip, but never really ask point blank what others think.

This activity will do a few things: It can show students the current temperature of their community; it may possibly surprise students and show where certain individuals stand; and it can help the students decide if a change needs to be made.

Learning about their own community will give participants an increased sense of connection and appreciation to the place they call home.

Steps:

1. As a group, discuss (or revisit) the students' understandings about "place" and "community". Have students share what having a strong "sense of place" or "sense of community" means to individuals. Talk about what the students think others feel about certain places. Give examples, like New York, Texas, Middle East, North Korea, etc.
2. Talk about the purpose of this assignment: To create a simple poll to find out what people think about their community. Discuss that this can help everyone understand and support his or her community more effectively.
3. Explain the assignment:
 - Help students come up with a specific question they want answered. Explain they will elicit a one-word* answer/reaction from others in their community. Some question examples are, "*What character trait best serves or helps teenagers today?*" or "*What can make our school even better?*", etc. Figure out what is most important for students to research, trying to focus on something positive (versus asking to identify problems). Have students develop a way to record their answers.
 - Then have students poll others (peers, family, faculty, community members, team members, etc.) The question should be clear and exactly the same for all who are polled.
 - In addition, before the question is asked it should be explained:
 - All answers should be a one word reaction (**Option: do 1-3 word responses*)
 - How this information will be used (*at the school*)
 - People polled will remain anonymous

- Students can create a script for all of this. Some avenues to reach the people being polled are through social media (I.e. Facebook), teams, clubs, other classes, family gatherings, etc.

4. Facilitate student sharing of findings:

- Ask students to:
 - a. Present all of their findings/responses
 - b. Conclude with what they think about the reactions and how they would personally answer the question.
- Let students know the different formats they can use for their presentations (from cell phones or computers to handwritten notes or charts).

5. Decide if the group wants to take any actions motivated by the information they collected. They may want to share information with others or do a project or activity motivated by the data.

Reflection Questions:

What did you learn?

How did various reactions from people make you feel?

Were you able to predict possible reactions?

Did responses or reactions make you want to do something? How can you use this information to help you do something to make a positive difference?