

Local Government and Leaders – Grade Three

Ohio Standards

Connection:

Government

Benchmark A

Identify the responsibilities of the branches of the U.S. government and explain why they are necessary.

Indicator 2

Explain the structure of local governments and identify local leaders (e.g., township trustees, county commissioners, city council members or mayor).

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, the students will learn about their local government and leaders. Throughout the lesson, students will engage in discussions, a visit by an elected local government official and research. In addition, students will learn some basic facts about their local government. Please note that if a classroom visit by an elected official is not possible, there are other lesson activities that can be implemented in order to meet the lesson indicator.

Estimated Duration: *One hour and 30 minutes to two hours and 30 minutes*

Commentary:

This lesson may need some adjustments for the type of government you have in your local community (i.e., township trustees, county commissioners, city council members, or mayor). Before beginning this lesson, decide how you want your class to gather its information about local government and leaders. Several possibilities include:

- Taking a field trip to the government building;
- Having an elected official come to the classroom to speak;
- Conducting research on the Internet if the local government has a Web site;
- Conducting research at the school's library if appropriate materials are available;
- Visiting the local public library to research the information.

For this particular lesson, an elected official will be invited to the classroom to speak and answer questions about the local government. Before the visit, provide the speaker with concepts you would like him/her to address and a list of possible questions that could be asked. One teacher described the impact of this lesson as follows, "The students not only gained knowledge about their local government and state and federal governments, but the lesson opened up discussion about world governments, both present and past. The group interaction opportunity was good, and students enjoyed the guests in the room."



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Pre-Assessment:

This whole-class activity will take one day to complete.

- Before beginning this lesson, place a large chart paper on the board and label the top of the three columns as shown. (Your questions might vary depending on your local government.) An example might be:

<u>What are the types of governments?</u>	<u>Who are the leaders in our local government?</u>	<u>Why do we have a government?</u>
<i>Answer: Local State Federal</i>	<i>Answers will vary.</i>	<i>Answers will vary.</i>

- Give each student three square sticky notes, each a different color. Have students write their answer for each of the three questions on the sticky notes. Provide additional sticky notes as needed.
- On the first colored sticky note, have the students write all the types of government they know. (Post answers in the first column of the chart.) Possible responses could be: federal government, state government, local government, city council, township government, etc. It is very possible that third-grade students may give answers like president, mayor, police or something loosely related to the correct answers.
- On a second colored sticky note (different color from the one in the previous step), have students write who the leaders are in their local government. (Post answers in the second column of the chart.) Responses will vary, depending on where you live. Students may mention titles of leaders such as mayor or city manager or students may write a name of a person or a leader in your community.
- On a third colored sticky note (different color from the previous two steps), ask students to write one idea that explains why we have a government. (Post answers in the third column of the chart.) Possible responses could be: to make laws, to keep people safe, to keep our town clean, etc.
- When students finish writing their answers on the sticky notes, have them place the appropriate colored sticky notes in the correct columns. The teacher should place a blank sticky note under each title to show the students which color goes in each column.
- After the students have placed their sticky notes under the columns, organize the sticky notes under each column into categories based on the students' responses. For example, under the 'type of government' column you could put all the sticky notes that say 'state government' into a group, all the 'city government' sticky notes into a group, etc. Do not remove any that do not make sense or are incorrect; leave these notes where they have been placed. Discuss these notes to decide if they fit in the column or not.
- With the help of the class, finish grouping the other two columns, sharing what was written and regrouping the sticky notes.

Scoring Guidelines:

Observe students' written and oral comments for evidence of prior knowledge and misconceptions. Use the information to guide instruction.

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Post-Assessment:

- Have students complete the post-assessment, Attachment A, that will have the students explain the structure of their local government and list the local leaders and their titles.
- Have students explain why we have a local government and what some of its roles are.

Scoring Guidelines:

Students will complete the post-assessment with 75% accuracy.

Note: Adjustment might be needed on the post-assessment and the scoring based on the structure of your local government.

Instructional Procedures:

Introducing Local Government

1. Review that the local community is a small part of a large community. For example, you can draw the following diagram on the board:

Township or Town → County → Ohio → United States → North America → The Earth (world)

2. With the whole class, have an informal discussion reviewing what a community is. A *community is a place where people live, work and play*. You could draw a graphic organizer on the board that looks similar to the example below and record the students' responses.



3. Have the students name different types of communities and record the responses. Discuss each one and compare how they are different from one another. (For example, rural, urban, suburban.) Have the students agree about the type of community they live in.
4. Explain that every local government has leaders and these leaders help the community make important decisions.
5. Place students in cooperative learning groups. Have each group select a recorder to record responses to the following topics. Have the students discuss:
 - Why having a government is important,
 - What the government is responsible for.
6. As a whole class, have each group share the discussion its members had about the topics. You might want to record the key information you want the students to remember on chart paper and have them take notes or use a graphic organizer to record information.



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Remind students that the focus of this lesson will be the local government and that they are going to learn more about how their local government works and who the local leaders are.

7. Have students write in their social studies journal what they learned about government from the class discussion (this can include the notes and/or graphic organizer they used in the previous step).

Preparing for the Guest Speaker

Instructional Tip:

Before implementing Part B, have the following guiding questions written on a transparency. This will prepare students for discussion and will help students to develop questions to ask their guest speaker. You may also want to take the questions the students developed and have them typed and copied so each student has a copy before the speaker visits the class.

8. The discussion and questions for this step will depend on the students' prior knowledge observed during the pre-assessment activity. Ask students guiding questions, such as:
 - Why do communities need laws? *We need laws and rules to protect and make the community safe, as well as, to make it a better place to live. For example, there are littering laws, noise laws, etc.*
 - Who makes the laws? *Leaders of the communities make the laws. These leaders are part of our local government.*
 - How do people become leaders? *The people vote for (elect) these leaders.*
 - Who are the leaders in our community? *Answers will vary depending on your local government, such as mayor, town council, county commissioners, etc.*
 - How does the local government make sure the community is protected and safe? *Local government leaders work together to provide services, such as recreation opportunities, public work (clearing our streets during a winter storm), collecting taxes and budgeting the city money, social services, etc.*
 - Why should we as third graders learn about our local government? *Our local government is important to us because it has an influence on our everyday lives.*

Speaker's Visit

9. On the day of the speaker's visit, have the class review the questions that they created. Remind them to listen carefully to the questions that the speaker will answer in his/her talk. Record the responses so that students may focus on listening.

After the Speaker's Visit

10. After the speaker leaves, have the students review their questions and the responses given by the speaker.



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Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- On the post-assessment have a graphic organizer that has the names of the government positions and the names of the local leaders in a word box. Have students complete the graphic organizer using the words from the word box.
- Have students play a matching game. Put the names of the positions and local leaders individually on index cards. Then, individually, in pairs or small groups have the students match the positions with the leaders. When students finish the game, verify that the cards are placed correctly and have the students copy the answers onto a chart or list for future use.
- Have advanced learners create a graphic organizer for the post-assessment as a bonus.
- Have advanced learners interview a community leader about his/her experience and write a news article about that leader.

Extensions:

- As a class, write an invitation inviting the official to speak to your class and a thank you letter following the visit.
- Have students write a letter to someone in the local government. This letter could be a thank you for serving the community, an opinion letter about an issue, or a persuasive letter.
- Read aloud literature trade books that are connected with the concept of community government.
- Have students view videos related to local government and communities.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

Have student work with family members to find articles in the local newspaper related to the local, state, or federal government. Share with the class and/or place on a bulletin board that is titled “Our Government.” Correctly place the articles in one of the three columns: local government, state government and federal government.

Materials and Resources:

The inclusion of a specific resource in any lesson formulated by the Ohio Department of Education should not be interpreted as an endorsement of that particular resource, or any of its contents, by the Ohio Department of Education. The Ohio Department of Education does not endorse any particular resource. The Web addresses listed are for a given site’s main page, therefore, it may be necessary to search within that site to find the specific information required for a given lesson. Please note that information published on the Internet changes over time, therefore the links provided may no longer contain the specific information related to a given lesson. Teachers are advised to preview all sites before using them with students.

For the teacher: Chart paper, transparencies, overhead projector.



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For the students: Paper, pencil.

Vocabulary:

- government
- mayor
- city manager
- citizen
- council
- leaders
- laws
- community
- elected official
- election
- democracy
- vote
- commissioners
- national
- state
- local

Technology Connections:

- Town or city Web sites could be accessed to gain information about the local community by the teacher and students. They may also be good resources for finding guest speakers for this lesson.
- An overhead projector or multimedia presentation software could be used before and during the guest speaker's presentation.

Research Connections:

Marzano, R. et al. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

Nonlinguistic representations help students think about and recall knowledge. This includes the following:

- Creating graphic representations (organizers);
- Generating mental pictures;
- Drawing pictures and pictographs;
- Engaging in kinesthetic activity.

Cooperative learning has a powerful effect on student learning. This type of grouping includes the following elements:

- Positive interdependence;
- Face-to-face interaction;



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- Individual and group accountability;
- Interpersonal and small group skills;
- Group processing.

Daniels, H. and M. Bizar, M. *Methods that Matter: Six Structures for Best Practice Classrooms*, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998.

This lesson has the students involved with the local community and its leaders which provides relevant experiences for the students. Authentic experiences help students develop real-world knowledge and skills and apply their learning in ways that prepare them for their careers and lives beyond school.

General Tips:

- Students should already be familiar with urban, suburban and rural environments from the grade two geography Indicator 5.
- Be sure to read aloud the directions on Attachment A to the students.

Attachments:

Attachment A, *Our Local Government and Its Local Leaders*



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Attachment A Our Local Government and Its Local Leaders

Name _____

Date _____

Through several activities, you have learned about our local government. Fill out the graphic organizer and answer the questions in complete sentences. You may use your notes from your journal and question sheet to complete this activity.

In one or two sentences, describe the type of local government we have.

Make a list of the names of the major community officials and their titles.

Official's Name	Title
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

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Explain why we have a local government. What are some of the jobs the local government performs?

Write one way you could be involved in your local government.

For extra credit use the back of this paper to illustrate what you have learned about local government. Write a brief explanation to go with the illustration.