

## Students, Engage!

**Time Needed:** One Class Period

**Materials Needed:**

Student worksheets

**Copy Instructions:**

Engagement Review (class set, single-sided)

Action Plan p.1-2 (class set, double-sided)

Reflection Activity p.1-2 (class set, double-sided)

**Learning Objectives.** Students will be able to:

- Describe the ways that citizens can engage with their environment to affect political change through a brainstorming activity and the development of an action plan
- Model ways that citizens can engage with their environment to affect change by developing an action plan to solve a local problem and presenting their action plan to the class

## STEP BY STEP

- ANTICIPATE** the lesson by asking "What problems in our school would you like to see changed?" Examples may include poor school lunches, safety issues, boring curriculum, lack of clubs, and early start and end times. Make a list on the board.
  - CREATE** a list of action steps with your students that they can take to solve some of the problems on the board. Examples: letter writing, awareness campaigns, fundraising.
  - DISTRIBUTE** the Engagement Review sheet and allow students to complete. Review orally.
- \*\* If using as a mini lesson to introduce the game Activism, stop here. You may assign the Reflection Sheet without completing the follow steps. \*\*
- DISTRIBUTE** the Action Plan forms to your students. (**Note** that there are TWO versions of this that you can choose to use, depending on the writing abilities of your students).
  - REVIEW** the Action Plan instructions carefully with students and allow students 20 minutes to complete.
  - CALL ON** students to share out their "speeches."
  - DISTRIBUTE** the Reflection Sheet, reviewing the instructions as a class.
  - CLOSE** the class by taking a vote on answers for questions 1-4 on the Reflection Sheet

# Students, Engage!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Solutions!** Look at the lists that you have made on the board of problems and action steps. Write down two problems that are important to you. Write down two action steps that you could use to solve each problem and **explain** how the action step would address the problem.

Problems	Action Steps
1.	1.
2.	2.







**Matching.** For each scenario (number) write **the best solution** (letter) to solve the problem!

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. You've noticed that there are a lot of people in your town that don't have enough to eat, while others are throwing out a lot of food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The park near your house is filled with litter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Students in wheelchairs are not able to get into the school bleachers. This isn't fair!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Your basketball league doesn't have enough money and so it may have to shut down. You love playing basketball!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Drunk driving is a serious problem. People need to know that drinking and driving don't mix!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Your street is dangerous because the speed limit is too fast. The speed limit needs to be lowered as fast as possible!

- A. go before your local governing body to encourage them to create new safety laws
- B. hold a fundraiser like a bake sale or yard sale to raise money for an organization
- C. organize volunteers to lend a hand
- D. start collecting supplies to give to the needy
- E. write a blog post on the issue
- F. write a letter to your principal asking him to fix a problem

# Students, Engage!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Develop a Plan.** Complete each section below to organize your thoughts on problem solving in your community...

Pick an issue from the list on the board...



List two reasons that you picked this problem:

- 1)
- 2)

List one way that life at your school would be improved if the problem is solved...

List two causes of the problem:

If "bad lunches" is your issue, you might say that there is not enough money spent on lunches at your school.

- 1)
- 2)



Describe the first step that you would take to solve the problem you chose...  
If "bad lunches" is your issue, you might say that asking students what they want to eat is a good place to start.



# Students, Engage!

**Presentation Prep.** The next step is to prepare your Action Plan for a presentation. Organizers use speeches and writing to gain support for their issues and movements. Create a presentation about your issue by filling in the blanks. You can use information from the previous page if you choose. Then, draw an illustration that supports your presentation.

Today, I am here to talk about the problem of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. This issue is important to me because  
\_\_\_\_\_.

It should be important to everyone here because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. If we organize to change this issue,  
life will be better because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The causes of \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_.

In order to solve this problem, the first step I will take is to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope you will join me in trying to address the problem of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# Students, Engage!

**Making Change.** Circle the letter of the answer that provides what you think is the best possible step for solving the problem described. Then, explain how the answer you chose would solve the problem.

1) You find out that the bookstore that you love, owned by your very nice neighbors, is going out of business. What can you do?

- A) buy the store from them
- B) put up fliers in your neighborhood to attract business for them
- C) write to City Hall
- D) open your own store



How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) You are just sick of the school lunches. How many days in a row can you eat hotdogs?! What can you do?



- A) write to the President of the United States
- B) create a menu of foods kids like and give them to anyone who will listen
- C) whine about it to your friends
- D) ask the school board to increase the amount of money in the budget for school lunches

How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) Companies are advertising cigarettes right outside your school. You've heard your underage friends talk about smoking because of the advertisements. What can you do?

- A) write letters to the tobacco companies asking them to take their signs down
- B) complain about it to your pet dog
- C) ask your state legislature to pass a law banning advertisements of this type close to schools
- D) make posters against underage smoking



How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Students, Engage!

4) The sidewalk near your house is really dark at night. People have been mugged in the dark there. How are you going to prevent this from happening again?



- A) prepare a report and present it to your city council asking them to install security lights on the sidewalk
- B) start a neighborhood watch to patrol the area at night
- C) ask Congress to pass a law that would make walking around at night illegal
- D) you don't care if it happens again

How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which action step that you talked about today are you most likely to take?

\_\_\_\_\_

How will it change things in your community?

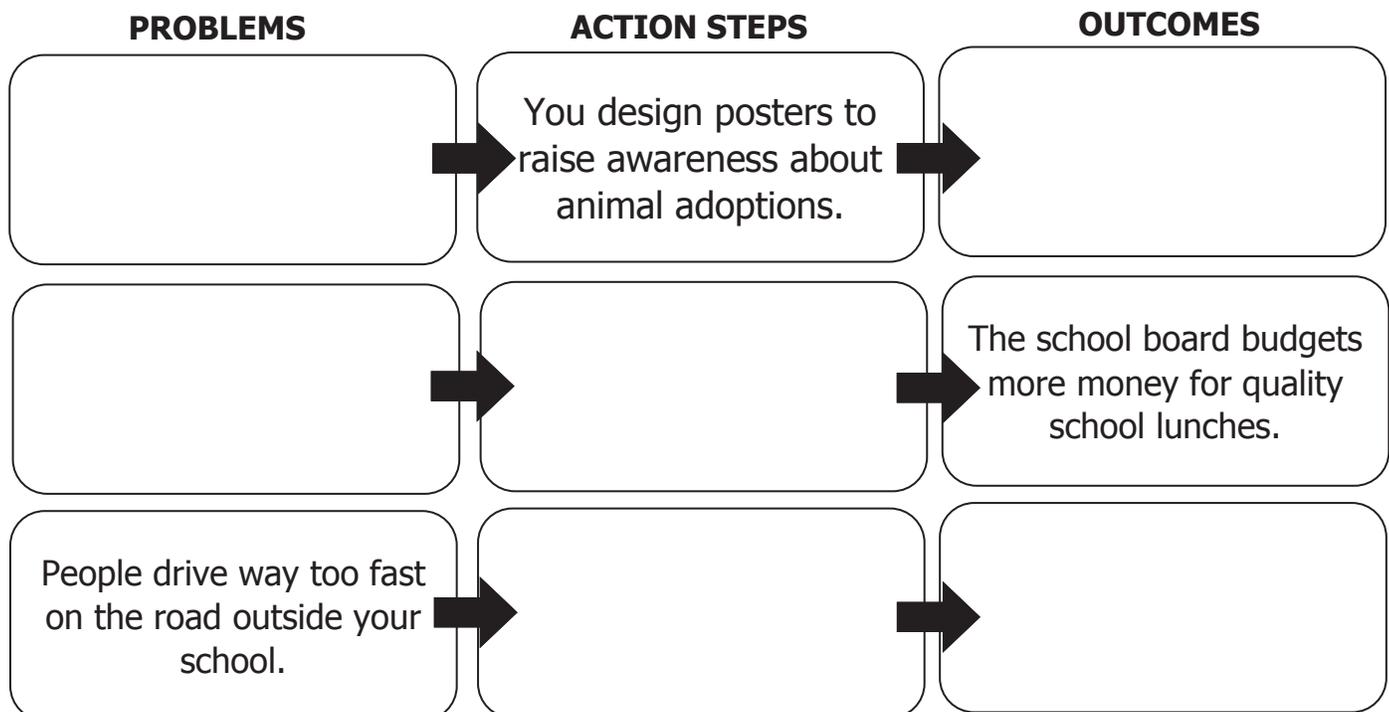
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**Outcomes.** Fill in the chart below of problems, action steps, and outcomes...



**Solutions!** Look at the lists that you have made on the board of problems and action steps. Write down two problems that are important to you. Write down two action steps that you could use to solve each problem and **explain** how the action step would address the problem.

	Problems	Action Steps
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	1. Littering	1. We could prevent littering by putting up posters. If we raise awareness about the importance of keeping things clean and pollution free, people will stop throwing their trash on the ground!
	2. Homelessness	2. To decrease the rate of homelessness in our community we should hold fundraisers. With the money we raise we can help support our local shelter and job training programs!



**Matching.** For each scenario (number) write **the best solution** (letter) to solve the problem!

- D   1. You've noticed that there are a lot of people in your town that don't have enough to eat, while others are throwing out a lot of food.
- C   2. The park near your house is filled with litter.
- F   3. Students in wheelchairs are not able to get into the school bleachers. This isn't fair!
- B   4. Your basketball league doesn't have enough money and so it may have to shut down. You love playing basketball!
- E   5. Drunk driving is a serious problem. People need to know that drinking and driving don't mix!
- A   6. Your street is dangerous because the speed limit is too fast. The speed limit needs to be lowered as fast as possible!

- A. go before your local governing body to encourage them to create new safety laws
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**Making Change.** Circle the letter of the answer that provides what you think is the best possible step for solving the problem described. Then, explain how the answer you chose would solve the problem.

1) You find out that the bookstore that you love, owned by your very nice neighbors, is going out of business. What can you do?

- A) buy the store from them
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- C) write to City Hall
- D) open your own store



How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

The students should identify that this step would help solve the problem by drawing the communities attention to an issue that they can impact.

2) You are just sick of the school lunches. How many days in a row can you eat hotdogs?! What can you do?



- A) write to the President of the United States
- B) create a menu of foods kids like and give them to anyone who will listen
- C) whine about it to your friends
- D) ask the school board to increase the amount of money in the budget for school lunches

How would this step help solve the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

Students should identify that this step would help solve the problem by changing the public policy that has the biggest impact on the issue.

3) Companies are advertising cigarettes right outside your school. You've heard your underage friends talk about smoking because of the advertisements. What can you do?

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\_\_\_\_\_

How will it change things in your community?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Outcomes.** Fill in the chart below of problems, action steps, and outcomes...

