



### OVERVIEW

Students will learn what it means to be part of a community through class discussion and analysis of two children's books, "The Lorax," and "Stone Soup." Students will then demonstrate how to be a good citizen in their community by identifying and carrying out a volunteer project that addresses a community need.

### Learning Targets

- Students will define a community as a group of people with common interests which includes the places that they go to school, work and play.
- Students will evaluate how even a single person can make a difference in making our community a better place to live.
- It is up to everyone in our local community to take responsibility and action to make our community a beautiful place. Even students can help to make our community cleaner and more beautiful.

### GLEs

See attachment

### Materials Needed

- Sticky notes
- 5" x 9" cards for activity
- "The Lorax" book, by Dr. Seuss
- "Stone Soup" book, by Marcia Brown
- Internet access
- 8" x 11" paper
- Colored pencils, crayons and/or markers

### Background Information

A community is a group of people with common interests and likes. Living and working in communities requires sharing, trust, caring, interdependence and common resources. When community members work together they can solve large problems. Students are an important part of a community, and it is important they are involved in it. Every member in a community is in part responsible to help keep its environment clean and beautiful, even students.

Public spaces in our community are owned by the city, parish or state, which actually means that they are owned by every one of us who lives there. Therefore, we are all required to keep our public spaces clean, just like we would keep our own front yards clean. Being a good citizen means that we do what is best for our community.

Volunteering is one way to be a good community member. When we volunteer we are able to share our talents and energy for the good of the community. School-aged children may be reluctant to volunteer because they don't think that their efforts will make a difference, or that their voices will be heard. As adults, it is important to empower students with opportunities to volunteer and make a difference in their communities.

### ACTIVITY

#### Part I (Suggested for grades K to 5)

1. Teacher is to write the word "community" on the board, along with its definition: a group of people with common interests and likes. The teacher draws the following large shapes on the board: A circle, a heart, a triangle, a pentagon and a diamond. Each shape represents a community characteristic

The following five community characteristics are represented by shapes:

**Sharing - Circle** - dividing or distributing portions

**Caring - Heart** - showing interest or concern

**Trust - Triangle** - confidence or faith in a person or thing

**Interdependence - Pentagon** - depending on one another; mutual dependence

**Common resources - Diamond** - resources that are not owned, but left open for free use by all.

2. For lower elementary (K to 2) students, their sense of community may be home, neighborhood and/or school. While for upper elementary (3 to 5) students their sense of community may be school, church, rec center, city, or state. Give each student a sticky note and ask them to make a quick drawing showing what they might see, hear, or feel in a community. Students will then explain the drawing and place the sticky note on the board inside one of the following community characteristic shapes. For example: "I will place this picture of me picking up litter in the heart shape because it shows that I care about animals and want them to live in a clean place.

If some of the community characteristic shapes have no sticky notes placed in them, lead a class discussion until the class collectively comes up with ideas for all five community characteristics. Students in grades 3 to 5 may use the data represented in this activity for basic spreadsheet programming.

3. (Suggested for grades 3 to 5) Write a paragraph explaining how the five community characteristics, illustrated and categorized above, are the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship. RAFT writing strategies may be used as a guide. RAFT assignments encourage students to uncover their own voice for presenting their ideas and to think about various perspectives:

**R**ole of the Writer: Who are you as the writer?

**A**udience: To whom are you writing?

**F**ormat: In what format are you writing?

**T**opic: What are you writing about?

<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-raft-writing-strategy-30625.html>

4. Read "Stone Soup" either as a class or in groups.

Questions to consider while reading and discussing "Stone Soup":

- a. Why do you think some villagers were at first unlikely to share their own ingredients?
- b. How does this compare to us?
- c. What do they think life was like in the village before making the stone soup? After?
- d. Have you ever been in a position to help someone in need?
  - i. Describe the situation.
  - ii. What was the outcome?
  - iii. How did you feel when it was over?

After reading the book, ask students what they think the major ideas of the story are. Use this discussion time to build on the idea of community that students have been exploring. To guide the discussion, use the "Civics Analysis of Children's Literature Card" included at the back of this lesson plan.

### Part II (Suggested for grades K to 5)

1. Read "The Lorax," either as a class or in groups. As an alternative, you may watch the original movie at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V06Z0Quo0k>  
Also explore "The Lorax Project" [www.theloraxproject.com](http://www.theloraxproject.com)
2. After reading the book, ask students what they think the major ideas of the story are. To guide the discussion, use the "Civics Analysis of Children's Literature Card" included at the back of this lesson plan.
3. Have students think about and answer the following questions:
  - a. Why do you think the Once-ler did not listen to the Lorax?
  - b. What was the environment like before the Once-ler started making "Thneeds"? What was it like after?
  - c. How can the Truffula tree make a comeback?
  - d. Could the Once-ler have produced Thneeds without hurting the environment? If so, how?
  - e. What was the author's message concerning what one person can do to save or destroy the environment?
  - f. What connections do students see between this and being a good citizen?
4. Have students prepare a sequence for the key events in "The Lorax". Use a diagram or flow chart to show the comparison and/or contrast between characters in the story (Swomee-Swans, Bar-bar-loots, the Lorax) and the natural resources (Truffula trees, clean air, clean water). Discuss with the students.
5. Either alone or in small groups, have students write and illustrate a sequel to "The Lorax". The sequel might explain how the Truffula tree made a comeback through replanting and proper care. Do any new characters or natural resources emerge in the sequel? If so, how do they affect the outcome of the original story? Your students' sequels do not have to have a positive outcome.

### Part III (Suggested for grades 3 to 5)

1. Tell students that you would like them to look around and think of needs at the school and in the community, that could be addressed by a group volunteer project or "Call to Action Plans". This could be done as a class or individually. Some examples of volunteer activities may be playground beautification, landscaping, tree planting, classroom recycling or litter cleanups. Generate a visual list of ideas.
2. The students, individually or as a class, are to select a project, have them execute the project by completing the following "Call to Action Plan" tasks:
  - a. Create a survey to identify the need
  - b. Identify the desired outcome
  - c. Create a plan with action steps
  - d. Develop a timeline for completion
  - e. Contact local businesses or organizations to solicit support
  - f. Design posters and brochures to publicize the event
  - g. Contact media for coverage and publicity
  - h. Write thank you letters to community members, businesses or organizations that participated in the projectNote: Teachers may apply for KLB Healthy Communities Grants to help fund student's Call to Action Plans. Application period is open from January to April. Go to <https://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/grants/>
3. Once the project is completed, have students complete a self-reflection on their volunteer experience by writing and/or drawing about their service.

### CALL TO ACTION

1. Contact your local garden club, master gardeners, Keep Louisiana Beautiful affiliate ([www.keeplouisianabeautiful.org](http://www.keeplouisianabeautiful.org)), Louisiana Environmental Education Commission, or Louisiana Green Schools Program ([www.wlf.louisiana.gov/green-schools](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/green-schools)) to assist with volunteer efforts such as tree planting, waterway cleanups, school litter cleanups and recycling programs.
2. Write a letter to your mayor, asking how your class can get involved with clean city initiatives in your community.
3. Start a Green Club in your school.
4. Organize school campus cleanup and beautification days.
5. Lots of families receive a large amount of advertisements and other junk mail that they do not want. You can stop the mailings and reduce waste by writing to the following address and requesting that they take your name off of their distribution list:

**Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service**  
**P.O. Box 900**  
**Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008**

### OTHER RESOURCES

- **Keep Louisiana Beautiful** <http://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/>
- **Keep America Beautiful** <https://www.kab.org/>
- **Marine Debris Arts Curriculum** <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/curricula/washed-ashore-integrated-arts-marine-debris-curriculum>
- **Planting Trees for Kids** <https://education.usgs.gov/kids/plantatree.html>
- **For Free Trees** <https://www.arborday.org>
- **Louisiana Native Tree Guide**  
<http://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/a/2/a/0/a2a0a80bf0e57596aba37a227ccab5bb/forestry-leaf-guide.pdf>

- **Lorax Classroom Activity Packet:**  
<http://www.seussville.com/activities/9780394823379.pdf>  
[http://www.seussville.com/Educators/lorax\\_classroom/educatorlorax\\_discuss.php](http://www.seussville.com/Educators/lorax_classroom/educatorlorax_discuss.php)  
<http://www.seussville.com/loraxproject/>  
<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/search-results/?ts=The+Lorax>  
<http://www.seussville.com/theloraxgrant/>
- **Project Learning Tree's "Who Speaks for the Trees"**  
[https://www.plt.org/stuff/contentmgr/files/1/a6111bc3ec321c8cd2997198d9bd3c89/misc/plt\\_activities\\_with\\_the\\_lorax.pdf](https://www.plt.org/stuff/contentmgr/files/1/a6111bc3ec321c8cd2997198d9bd3c89/misc/plt_activities_with_the_lorax.pdf)
- **Recycling and Trash Signs for your classroom:**  
[http://www.seussville.com/activities/Lorax14\\_EarthDayEduKit\\_Signs\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.seussville.com/activities/Lorax14_EarthDayEduKit_Signs_WEB.pdf)
- **Literacy Strategies:**
  - Writing-** <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/raft>  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/guided-writing-30685.html>
  - Story Maps-** <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/story-30008.html>
  - STEM-** [http://www.readingrockets.org/extras/stem\\_series](http://www.readingrockets.org/extras/stem_series)

### Civics Analysis of Children's Literature Card

Title of Book in center circle.

1. Identify individuals/characters in authority
2. Identify the roles, rights, and responsibilities of being a good citizen presented in this story
3. Identify conflict(s) in the story
4. How did/will the conflict(s) resolve

The graphic organizer consists of a central circle and four rectangular boxes arranged around it. The boxes are labeled with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, corresponding to the numbered list of questions. The central circle is intended for the title of the book.