*Civics Career Academy Support Lesson*

**Public Service Communication**

What are the most significant factors influencing civic health in the United States?

*A Lesson for Civics Career Academy Course ‘Public Service Communication’*

***Course***

**Public Service Communication**

***Benchmark***

| SS.912.CG.3.15 | Explain how citizens are affected by the local, state and national governments. |
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| S.912.CG.2.7 | Analyze the impact of civic engagement as a means of preserving or reforming institutions |
| 11.02 | Critique civic associations and interest groups, the power they hold, and the ways in which they may enhance or detract from the interests of individuals. |
| 11.01 | Explain how public opinion shapes personal opinion and how civic participation can influence election outcomes. |
| 09.02 | Illustrate the ability to advocate for individual, peer, school, family, and community health using public service communication techniques within traditional media outlets and social media platforms. |

***Course Unit***Unit 2: Civic and Community Health Advocacy

***Lesson Foci***

Analyze the factors that contribute to civic health in the United States.

***Activity Documents, Materials, and Handouts***

* Article: Civic Deserts: [America’s Civic Health Challenge](https://www.ncoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017CHIUpdate-FINAL-small.pdf)
* Computers
* Survey Platform
* Paper

***Activity Vocabulary***

| ***Word*** | ***Definition*** |
| --- | --- |
| Civic Health | the way that communities are organized to define and address public problems. Communities with strong indicators of civic health have higher employment rates, stronger schools, better physical health, and more responsive governments |
| Civic Engagement | working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. |
| Public Issues | a problem or concern that affects a significant number of people. It is an issue that is open to debate and can be addressed through public policy. Public issues can be local, national, or international in scope. |
| Political Participation | includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives. |
| Democracy | a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. |
| Voter Registration | the requirement of citizens to become registered in order to vote |
| Community Service | voluntary work intended to help people in a particular area |

***Teacher Note***

This lesson is a big lesson. It will really have students diving into the meaning of public health and how it impacts the community.

This lesson will be broken down into three 50-minute class periods or two 90-minute class periods. The timing in the lesson follows 50-minute class periods.

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***Lesson Steps***

Day 1:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):
	1. Introduce the lesson objective: "Today, we will explore the factors that contribute to civic health in the United States and read an article to gain insights into this topic."
2. Warm-up (10 minutes):
	1. Ask students to brainstorm various aspects that might contribute to civic health, such as voter turnout, community involvement, and awareness of public issues.
3. Instructional Period (10 minutes):
	1. Begin by discussing the concept of civic health and its importance in a democratic society.
	2. Review the vocabulary provided in this lesson plan.
	3. Divide students into groups of two to three.
	4. Provide each student with a section of the selected article.
	5. Assign each group one of the following sections of the selected article.
		1. Civics & American History Education in the United States
		2. Connection to Religion
		3. The Changing Landscape of News Consumption & Confidence
		4. Trust and Confidence in Government
		5. Participation in Civic Engagement Activities & Groups
		6. Political Participation & Engagement
		7. The Role of the Internet in Civic Life
		8. Americans Trust in One Another
		9. The Rise in American Isolation Paths Forward to a Civic Renewal
4. Article Reading (30 minutes):
	1. Ask students to read the article individually or in pairs.
	2. Students should take notes on the main points and factors discussed in the article.
	3. Student groups should highlight examples of civic health, civic engagement, and challenges related to civic health.
	4. Groups will have three to four slide presentation to share their key takeaways from the article.
5. Closing (5 minutes):
	1. Have students share out one thing they learned from their section of the article.

Day 2:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):
	1. Remind students about the important aspects that might contribute to civic health, such as voter turnout, community involvement, and awareness of public issues.
2. Opening (15 minutes):
	1. Have students share their presentations with the class.
3. Activity (30 minutes):
	1. Let students know they will be conducting a brief survey to assess civic health within their school.
	2. Students are to create a set of survey questions that address various aspects of civic engagement, such as voter registration, participation in community service, and interest in local issues. Students can use an online survey tool available in your school district or they can go paper base.
	3. Instruct students that once the survey is completed to share with each other.
4. Closing/Homework
	1. Have students administer the survey to their classmates during the remainder of the school day.

Day 3:

1. Opening (5 minutes):
	1. Remind students about the meaning of Civic Health
2. Discussion and Survey Analysis (30 minutes):
	1. Divide students into groups of four or five. Have groups share their findings from the survey.
	2. Ask students to share and chart their findings on the board, computer, or other means you have available in the classroom.
3. Closing (15 minutes):
	1. Have students summarize the key factors that contribute to civic health in the school based on the survey results.
	2. Encourage students to reflect on their own civic engagement and consider ways they can actively contribute to improving civic health in their communities.

**Enrichment Suggestion** **#1** – Assign students to write a short essay reflecting on their own level of civic engagement and proposing ideas for fostering civic health in their community.

**Teacher Background Information**

The term "Civic Health" generally refers to the overall well-being and functioning of a community or society in terms of its social, political, and economic engagement. It encompasses various factors that contribute to the strength and resilience of a community, including civic participation, community involvement, social cohesion, and democratic values.

Key components of civic health may include:

1. Civic Participation: The level of involvement of individuals in community activities, such as voting, volunteering, attending public meetings, and participating in advocacy or civic organizations.

2. Social Capital: The trust, cooperation, and networks among individuals and groups within a community, which can foster a sense of solidarity and collective action.

3. Political Engagement: The extent to which citizens are informed about political issues, engaged in political discussions, and actively participate in the political process.

4. Community Involvement: The level of engagement in local projects, events, and initiatives that promote the common good and improve the quality of life in the community.

5. Trust in Institutions: The degree of confidence citizens have in their government, public institutions, and other organizations that play a crucial role in society.

6. Inclusivity and Diversity: The degree to which a community embraces and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusivity, allowing all members to participate in decision-making processes.

7. Philanthropy and Charitable Giving: The level of financial support and donations provided by individuals and organizations to support community initiatives and address social issues.

Civic health is important because it affects the overall well-being and prosperity of a society. Communities with strong civic health tend to be more resilient, have higher levels of social cohesion, and can better address and resolve challenges and disparities. Moreover, civic engagement and participation are essential for a functioning democracy, as they ensure that the voices and concerns of citizens are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

Efforts to improve civic health may involve educational initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of civic rights and responsibilities, promoting inclusive and accessible public spaces for dialogue and community engagement, and fostering collaborations between different community stakeholders, such as governments, nonprofits, businesses, and citizens.