

Understanding Civics

Chapter 1 Additional Activities

Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 1 (L.4.4, RI.4.4)

30 MIN

Activity Page



AP 1.1

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 1 (AP 1.1)

Distribute Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 1 (AP 1.1), and direct students to write the letter of the correct definition for each vocabulary term.

This activity may be assigned for homework.

Chapter 2 Additional Activities

People of the Revolution (RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3)

45 MIN

Materials Needed: Internet access; sufficient copies of lesson handouts

Note: Before conducting this activity, download and review the lesson plan and handouts for this activity from the Museum of the American Revolution's [Mini Lesson Plans](#). Adapt as needed for your students.

Review what students read about the American colonists' pursuit of independence. Explain that not all colonists shared the same beliefs about independence. Some people supported it; some opposed it; others had a complicated relationship with the idea. In this activity, students will explore some of those different perspectives.

Follow the procedures outlined in the [People of the Revolution lesson plan](#), adapting as needed based on your review of the materials.



Conclude the activity with a class discussion centered on these EAD driving questions:

- Why did some colonists support independence from Great Britain while other colonists opposed it?
- How did different groups of people react to the fight for independence? Think about enslaved people, Indigenous peoples, the British monarchy, French settlers, Quakers, and Anglicans.



TALK IT OVER: How do we evaluate and reflect on the actions of people in the past? (SL.4.1)

45 MIN

Note: Before introducing this activity, you may wish to download and review Learning for Justice's *A Quick Reference Guide to Teaching Hard History*.



This activity addresses the following EAD driving questions:

- How do we engage with hard histories, such as slavery?
- How do we evaluate and reflect on the actions of people in the past?
- How do we acknowledge failures and accomplishments of people and leaders while respecting their humanity?

Review what students read about slavery in the colonies and the Founders' ideas about Africans, slavery, and freedom. Explain that American slavery is "hard history." It is a topic that many people do not like to talk or think about, and it can be uncomfortable to learn about.

Ask students to consider and then discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important to learn about "hard history" such as slavery?
- By what standards should we judge or evaluate the actions of the Founders?

Debrief by explaining that there are no easy answers. Historians continue to ask themselves and each other questions like these as they study "hard history." It is okay for students to have mixed feelings in response. Historians often do, too.

Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 2 (L.4.4, RI.4.4)

30 MIN

Activity Page



AP 2.1

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 2 (AP 2.1)

Distribute Domain Vocabulary: Chapter 2 (AP 2.1), and direct students to write the letter of the correct definition for each vocabulary term.

This activity may be assigned for homework.

Chapter 3 Additional Activities

Effecting Change (RI.4.4, RI.4.5, RI.4.7, SL.4.1)

55 MIN

Materials Needed: Internet access; sufficient copies of lesson handouts

Note: This is a two-part activity. Before beginning this activity, download and review the lesson plan and handouts for this activity from the *Activism Online* lesson from Learning for Justice. Adapt as needed for your students and your available time.

In this activity, students will explore ways to achieve positive social change. After reviewing what students read about the civic responsibilities of citizens, explain that voting is just one way citizens can help bring about social change. Remind students

that different levels of government have different responsibilities and provide different services and that one might choose to work at one level or another depending on the change one wants to bring about.

Part I



TURN AND TALK—Have students turn to a partner and share their responses to these EAD driving questions:

- Why might we want to make changes at local, state, or national levels?
- How can we promote change in an effective way?
- What kinds of challenges arise when people decide to take action to try to solve problems?
- How can we work with others (even those who disagree with us) to help make change in society?

After students have had time to discuss the questions, wrap up Part I by inviting volunteers to share their thoughts.

Part II

Follow the procedures outlined in the [Activism Online](#) lesson from Learning for Justice, adapting as needed based on your review of the materials.

A Seat at the Table (RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.5, RI.4.6, SL.4.1)

UP TO 3 CLASS PERIODS

Materials Needed: Internet access; sufficient copies of lesson worksheets/handouts; art supplies as described in the lesson plan

Note: Before implementing this activity, download and review the lesson plan, suggested materials, and handouts from the [A Seat at the Table](#) civic art project. Completion of all activities in the lesson plan takes three class periods. You may wish to review the activities and choose which ones are best suited for your students and your available time. For example, you may wish to only conduct a class discussion using the questions on page 10 of the lesson plan.



This activity addresses the following EAD driving question:

- Why and how do people take action in order to solve problems that affect them and others?

Review what students read about citizen participation. Explain that Shirley Chisholm was the first Black congresswoman, the first Black American to run for president, and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. Her career emphasizes the importance of diverse representation in government—in other words, the importance of giving all groups “a seat at the table.”

In this activity, students will think about why people from all backgrounds need to participate in government.

Follow the procedures for the activities you've chosen in the [A Seat at the Table](#) civic art project lesson plan.

Ask students to consider and then discuss the following questions:

- What groups are you part of?
- Why is it important for your groups to be at the table?

Considering Leadership (RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.5, RI.4.6, SL.4.1) UP TO 2 CLASS PERIODS

Materials Needed: Internet access; sufficient copies of lesson worksheets/handouts; art supplies as described in the lesson plan

Note: Before implementing this activity, download and review the lesson plan, suggested materials, and handouts from the Considering Leadership civic art project. Completion of all activities in the lesson plan takes two class periods. You may wish to review the activities and choose which ones are best suited for your students and your available time. For example, you may wish to only conduct Lesson 1: Qualities of Leadership.

In this activity, students will think about the personal characteristics that make someone a good leader. Review with students the importance of voting. Ask students to brainstorm some reasons people might vote for one candidate over another. Lead a brief discussion about the qualities of effective leadership and how voters are attracted to candidates who they believe have good leadership skills.

Follow the procedures in the activities you've chosen from the Considering Leadership civic art project lesson plan.



Conclude the activity with a class discussion centered on this EAD driving question:

- How can we assess whether someone is a good leader? How can we challenge leaders when we see the need for social or political change?

Chapter 4 Additional Activities

Baseball and American National Identity (RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.5, RI.4.6, RI.4.7, SL.4.1, W.4.1, W.4.7, W.4.8)

UP TO 5 CLASS PERIODS

Materials Needed: Internet access; capability to display Internet in the classroom; sufficient copies of lesson handouts and primary/secondary sources mentioned in the lesson plan

Note: Before implementing this activity, download and review the lesson plan, suggested materials, and handouts from the Baseball, Race and Ethnicity: Rounding the Bases lesson plan. Completion of all activities in the lesson plan takes five class periods. You may wish to review the activities and choose which ones are best suited for your students and your available time.



This activity addresses the following EAD driving question:

- How have different groups (e.g., religious, racial, ethnic) shaped our society?

Review with students the concept of national identity. Remind students that *identity* is all of the things for which something is known. Clarify that different people may have different ideas about a group's identity. Over time, the United States has developed an identity that is a mix of the histories and cultures of the many groups that have contributed to its story.

To many Americans, baseball is an important part of America's identity. Tell students that baseball has often been called "America's pastime." Introduce the saying "Mom, baseball, and apple pie" as a phrase people sometimes use to represent the core values of the American people. The expression became popular during World War II. When a U.S. soldier was asked what he was fighting for, he would often reply, "Mom, baseball, and apple pie."

In this activity, students will study the game of baseball to explore the development of Americans' ideas about race and ethnicity.

Follow the procedures for the activities you've chosen in the [Baseball, Race and Ethnicity: Rounding the Bases](#) lesson plan.

The Little Rock Nine (SL.4.1)

55 MIN

Materials Needed: Internet access; capability to display Internet in the classroom

Note: Before implementing this activity, familiarize yourself with the *Life* magazine image gallery of the [Little Rock Nine](#). (To launch the gallery, click View Gallery under the article title.) In this lesson, you will share the photos in the gallery with students.

Review what students read about how government policies have not always protected the rights of people of color. To provide context for what students are going to see, briefly explain to them the concept of segregation and the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

- The *Brown v. Board of Education* case concerned segregation in U.S. public schools. *Segregation* is the keeping of people of different races separate. This case dealt with the segregation of public schools. In many places, Black children were not allowed to attend the same schools as white children.
- In the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, the Supreme Court legalized racial segregation, creating the "separate but equal" doctrine. Segregation meant that Black Americans were prohibited from using public parks, restaurants, movie theaters, schools, and even drinking fountains that were reserved for white people. Often, the facilities that Black Americans were allowed to use were inferior to those that white people used. In the North and in the South, laws and customs kept neighborhoods racially segregated.
- The *Brown* case overturned the earlier *Plessy* decision. In *Brown*, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was illegal. This ruling upset many people, some of whom protested when Black students attempted to attend formerly all-white schools. Sometimes, as in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, these protests turned violent.

Display the *Life* magazine article about the [Little Rock Nine](#). Read the introductory text aloud, or invite volunteers to do so.

Display the image gallery associated with the article. As you move through the images in the gallery, ask students to consider the following questions as they examine each photo:

- What do you see in this image?
- What do you think about this image?
- What does this image make you wonder?

Use these questions as starters for class discussions about the photos and what they can tell us about diversity and acceptance in the United States.



Conclude the activity with a class discussion centered on this EAD driving question:

- How have some Americans resisted or reacted to the expansion of rights and citizenship claims?

Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 3–4 (L.4.4, RI.4.4)

30 MIN

Activity Page



AP 4.1

Materials Needed: sufficient copies of Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 3–4 (AP 4.1)

Distribute Domain Vocabulary: Chapters 3–4 (AP 4.1), and direct students to fill in the blanks using the vocabulary terms in the word bank.

This activity may be assigned for homework.