

UNIT TITLE: Good Citizens All!

Writer/Management:

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Audience:

Upper primary/ Lower secondary

Purpose:

To explore what it means to be a good citizen in a local context

Links to Curriculum:

SOSE

Discovering Democracy links

- Sections of the *Discovering Democracy* materials that describe particular citizens past and present: *People Power; Stories of People and Rulers; We Remember; Joining In; Should the People Rule?; Men and Women in Political Life*

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Author: Nigel Brown and SOSE Associations, Tasmania

The unit: Students will explore the meaning of good citizenship through discussion and research based on the *Discovering Democracy* materials and other resources. This will include dimensions such as: values, attitudes and dispositions; knowledge and understandings; and actions.



ACTIVITIES

1. “The Good Citizen” – survey findings, discussion and role play
2. Good Citizens all – a community study and action project

1. “The Good Citizen” – survey findings, discussion and role play

Brainstorm with the students – “Citizen” – what does it mean?

Handout the ‘Good Citizen’ survey sheet – student to individually read these characteristics.

Students select what they think are the *5 Essential Characteristics* and highlight these.

Form a group of 4-5 and share lists – students should try to come up with an agreed list.

Students may refine, combine or add to the lists at this point.

As a whole group, students reach some consensus about the ‘key features’ of being a good citizen.

Refine the discussion based on student responses – areas to focus on may include:

- What does a good citizen *need to know*? Can you be a good citizen without *knowing* some key things about Australia?
- Does a good citizen need to obey the law? In what circumstances might a good citizen do the opposite?
- How many of these are action based?
- How do you judge a good citizen...? – By their actions, values?

For each of the key essential characteristics, students describe the actions that would flow from these – role play these for the class – could show both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizenship.

Adopt an “if...then” approach.

Example: If being a good citizen involves being honest, then a good citizen would...(List an appropriate action – such as “handing in lost property, not keeping it”).

Student could research the following tasks in groups and present information to the class:

- Prepare a good citizenship guide for the school
- Citizenship research – look at the meaning of citizenship (dictionary, visit www.immi.gov.au, <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy>, talk to older people and citizens from other countries)
- Conduct a lesson with younger students in the school – What good citizenship means to us
- Using the *Discovering Democracy* materials, choose five good citizens (from past, present, local to global contexts) – briefly tell their stories to the class.

2. Good Citizens all – a community study and action project

Using the *Good Citizens* section in *Discovering Democracy Through Research* as a loose guide, students investigate the meaning of good citizenship in their local context – this could operate at a school or community level.

Elements could include:

- Developing class consensus on what good citizenship means
- Dividing the research and presentation tasks into student workgroups
- Working with community groups such as Red Cross, Landcare, Volunteering Tasmania (local equivalent), Local Councils in active, real citizenship projects
- An environmental, enterprise or social justice focus
- Profiling school and community good citizens in a broad sense
- Class presentations of findings via survey, interview, speakers’ programs, excursions off-site
- Inclusive investigations (e.g. intergenerational studies, Aboriginal and TSI perspectives, disability awareness issues)
- Historical investigations of good citizenship in the past (e.g. use activities in *People Power*, *Stories of the People and Rulers, We Remember*, *Joining In*, *Should the People Rule? Men and Women in Political Life*)
- Understanding and/or profiling ‘citizenship tensions’ including good citizens who need to break or work outside the law / system
- Involving people who are not always included.

Aim for a *Good Citizens all Citizenship Celebration* – a focus event for the investigations.

This could occur through –

- Regular presentations at school assemblies (introducing good citizenship candidates);
- A specific focus – ‘Citizenship Week’ during Celebrating Democracy Week;
- A community based event (e.g. at the School Fair or Fete)
- A display (local council chambers for example).
- Implementing a ‘Citizenship Award’ for students or community members (if one does not yet exist) or refocus attention where it does.

The 'good citizen' worksheet

The following information comes from a survey of Year 7 and Year 11 students.

- What does it mean to be a 'good citizen'?
- Read the list of characteristics below
- Discuss these in your group

Select the 5 characteristics you think are essential – you may add to or refine the list

For each of them, describe some of the actions a good citizen would take – e.g. "If a good citizen is honest, then they would hand in, not keep, lost property"

1. Respects the rights of others
2. Respects the property of others
3. Treats people equally regardless of their gender
4. Is honest
5. Treats people equally regardless of disabilities
6. Treats people equally regardless of race
7. Drives and rides safely
8. Acts to protect the environment
9. Treats people equally regardless of their age
10. Treats people equally regardless of their religion
11. Obeys the community's laws and rules
12. Meets their responsibilities towards their family
13. Is prepared to help neighbours
14. Works hard
15. Respects the Australian flag
16. Buys Australian-made goods where possible
17. Contributes to charity organisations
18. Is patriotic about Australia's rules
19. Keeps fit and healthy
20. Is well-informed about Australia's history
21. Is committed to their religion or faith
22. Knows all words of Australia's national anthem
23. Is well-informed about Australia's Constitution
24. Is well-informed about Australia's political system
25. Is successful in their career

