12

Principles of American Democracy Standard 12.3.2.

Teacher's Masters

California Education and the Environment Initiative

Active Voices: Civil Society and the Environment

California Education and the Environment Initiative

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The Education and the Environment Curriculum is a cooperative endeavor of the following entities:

California Environmental Protection Agency
California Natural Resources Agency
Office of the Secretary of Education
California State Board of Education
California Department of Education
California Integrated Waste Management Board

Key Leadership for the Education and Environment Initiative:

Linda Adams, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
Patty Zwarts, Deputy Secretary for Policy and Legislation, California Environmental Protection Agency
Andrea Lewis, Assistant Secretary for Education and Quality Programs, California Environmental Protection Agency
Mark Leary, Executive Director, California Integrated Waste Management Board
Mindy Fox, Director, Office of Education and the Environment, California Integrated Waste Management Board

Key Partners:

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Office of Education and the Environment
1001 I Street • Sacramento, California 95812 • (916) 341-6769
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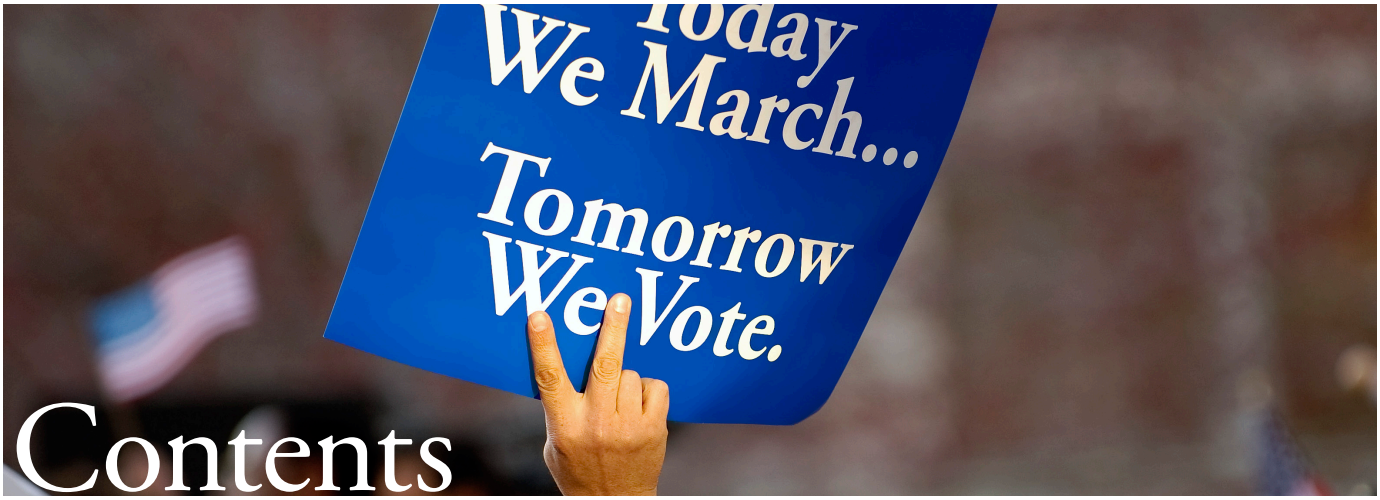

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None required for this lesson.

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None required for this lesson.

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Instructions: Below are a set of facts and opinions about the residents of the Julian Chávez Ravine and their reaction to the city's plan to redevelop the neighborhood. Use this information to plan a presentation for the "press conference," opposing the city's plan to redevelop the area. Your presentation should be three to five minutes in length.

Organize your group into three "task forces." Each "task force" should do one of the following:

- Write a one- to two-minute speech presenting your group's perspective about what to do in Chávez Ravine.
- Select three to four dates/events from the list below and write them on a piece of chart paper. Be prepared to give a brief explanation of their importance to the audience at the "press conference."
- Create a poster that explains the factor in this decision most important to your group. The poster should be shown during your group's presentation at the "press conference."

The Facts

- The neighborhood in Julian Chávez Ravine was originally founded in 1913, when 200 Mexican-American families moved into the area.
- For decades, residents ran their own schools, churches, and grew food on the land.
- By 1949, 1,800 people lived in the community.
- In 1949, the Federal Housing Act provided money for cities to build housing projects. The Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron approved a project to use these federal funds to build 10,000 new housing units, most of which would be in Chávez Ravine.
- In 1950, the Los Angeles Housing Authority used the power of eminent domain to force residents to move. Residents were given compensation for their houses and offered an opportunity to move into the newly built apartment buildings. The residents often did not think that that compensation was adequate or that the tactics used by the city were fair.
- Residents, many of whom felt that they had been cheated, lobbied city government by testifying at local hearings. Five-hundred residents packed a meeting of the City Planning Commission to demand that the Commission deny a building permit to the project. But they were unsuccessful.
- Some residents resisted the Housing Authority's attempt to move them by simply refusing to leave their homes. They wanted to maintain the community life they had enjoyed for decades. They felt it was worth taking part in civil disobedience.
- Residents fought the city's use of eminent domain in court, but their lawsuits failed.
- Residents also went to the newspapers to try and publicize what they saw as unfair treatment by the city, but they failed to gain widespread support to stop the Housing Authority's plans.
- By 1952, virtually all residents had been moved. The city began work clearing houses and land to build the large public housing projects.

Opinions

- Frank De Leon, Julian Chávez Ravine resident and grocer, was one of a number of residents who refused to sell and leave their homes in 1951. He attempted to lobby city government and sued to have the development stopped:

  "Here we are happy in living our own lives our own way. If we are moved there are too many new problems…There are families that have moved into the city and they have come back to us and they have had tears in their eyes. And they say they are not accepted outside."

- Mrs. Agnes Cerda was a leader of the residents who were hoping to hold onto their homes:

  "We built our homes here, not the government. We don't want to live somewhere else. Taking away our homes takes away our incentive to be good American citizens… We should win. Maybe the Court of Appeals will stop them…But so many have moved away. I swear I will never sell and others swear the same. But they see so many move away that they are afraid and they sell and go too."

Instructions: Below are a set of facts and opinions about the plan to build houses and redevelop the area in the Julian Chávez Ravine. Use this information to plan a presentation for the "press conference," supporting the city's plan to redevelop the area. Your presentation should be three to five minutes in length.

Organize your group into three "task forces." Each "task force" should do one of the following:

- Write a one- to two-minute speech presenting your group's perspective about what to do in Chávez Ravine.
- Select three to four dates/events from the list below and write them on a piece of chart paper. Be prepared to give a brief explanation of their importance to the audience at the "press conference."
- Create a poster that explains the factor in this decision most important to your group. The poster should be shown during your group's presentation at the "press conference."

The Facts

- The Housing Authority was part of the Los Angeles city government; it was responsible for overseeing the construction of new homes in the area.
- After World War II, the population of Los Angeles began growing very rapidly. Julian Chávez Ravine was located in the middle of the growing city.
- Many Los Angeles neighborhoods were overcrowded and run down. The Housing Authority was looking for ways to provide new and affordable housing to those who needed it.
- The Housing Authority surveyed the homes in the ravine and designated the area a slum. Homes lacked sanitary facilities and were poorly built.
- In 1949, the Federal Housing Act made money available to city governments to build affordable public housing. The Los Angeles Housing Authority and its supporters believed that by building new and affordable apartments, ravine residents and the city as a whole would benefit.
- Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron supported the Housing Authority's plans to build 10,000 new low-cost housing units with federal funding. Most of these units were to be built in the Chávez Ravine.
- The Housing Authority planned to use $33,000,000 in federal money to build the new housing.
- The Housing Authority used the city's legal powers of eminent domain to require that ravine residents move out of their homes. Residents were paid for their homes and offered the first opportunity to move into the new housing projects.
- Many civic organizations supported the Housing Authority's plan, including the Los Angeles Citizens Housing Committee and the County Coordinating Council of Veterans Organizations.

The Facts (continued)

- Supporters believed that the housing plan would benefit low-income residents, including many veterans of World War II, in need of housing. They also believed it would help eliminate slums which, whether deliberate or not, would also have the effect of making a primarily "brown" neighborhood a "white" one. They spoke out in favor of the plan.
- By 1952, virtually all residents had been moved. The city began work clearing houses and land to build the large public housing projects.

Opinions

- Adrian Mayer believed the project would help provide affordable homes to needy veterans:

> *"70% of the persons living in poor homes are veterans who have had to live under such conditions for five or six years. They want a chance to live in a decent home and be able to raise their families like others do."*

Instructions: Below are a set of facts and opinions about the opposition to the plan to build houses and redevelop the area in the Julian Chávez Ravine. Use this information to plan a presentation for the "press conference," opposing the city's plan to redevelop the area. Your presentation should be three to five minutes in length.

Organize your group into three "task forces." Each "task force" should do one of the following:

- Write a one- to two-minute speech presenting your group's perspective about what to do in Chávez Ravine.
- Select three to four dates/events from the list below and write them on a piece of chart paper. Be prepared to give a brief explanation of their importance to the audience at the "press conference."
- Create a poster that explains the factor in this decision most important to your group. The poster should be shown during your group's presentation at the "press conference."

The Facts

- In 1949, the Federal Housing Act made money available to city governments to build affordable public housing. The Los Angeles Housing Authority and its supporters believed that by building new and affordable apartments, ravine residents and the city as a whole would benefit.
- Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron supported the Housing Authority's plans to build 10,000 new low-cost housing units with federal funding. Most of these units were to be built in the Chávez Ravine.
- The Housing Authority planned to use $33,000,000 in federal money to build the new housing.
- In 1952, a growing number of citizens began to oppose the housing project. They believed that the federal government should not be spending taxpayer dollars to build affordable housing.
- They accused the chairman of the Housing Authority, Frank Wilkinson, of being "un-American," and he was removed from office when he refused to answer allegations that he was a communist.
- The opponents of the city's plan believed that Americans should pay for their own houses and that the federal government should not interfere in people's private lives.
- They were concerned that Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron was creating a bureaucracy that would limit citizens' personal freedoms and waste taxpayer money.
- In 1953, Mayor Bowron was voted out of office.
- The new mayor, Norris Poulson, along with the city council, promised to halt all construction, despite the fact that $13,000,000 had already been spent on the project.

Opinions

- When Norris Poulson ran for mayor, he promised to end "un-American" programs like public housing. The name chosen by a group of opponents, Citizens Against Socialist Housing, suggests the rhetoric used. Here are arguments from a pamphlet circulated by opponents of public housing in another large city:

  "Your home and the homes of your neighbors can be condemned if the land is selected for Federal housing."

  "Public housing opens the door to politically-controlled housing—controlling 25,000 to 30,000 votes."

  "Public housing is wrong because those who work for a living and pay their rightful share of taxes are forced against their will to subsidize others."

Instructions: Below are a set of facts and opinions about the opposition to the plan to build houses in the Julian Chávez Ravine—and to use the land for another purpose altogether—for a Major League Baseball stadium. Use this information to plan a presentation for the "press conference," supporting the idea to use the land for a baseball stadium. Your presentation should be three to five minutes in length.

Organize your group into three "task forces." Each "task force" should do one of the following:

- Write a one- to two-minute speech presenting your group's perspective about what to do in Chávez Ravine.
- Select three to four dates/events from the list below and write them on a piece of chart paper. Be prepared to give a brief explanation of their importance to the audience at the "press conference."
- Create a poster that explains the factor in this decision most important to your group. The poster should be shown during your group's presentation at the "press conference."

The Facts

- During WW II, Los Angeles rapidly became one of America's largest cities. But it did not have a single major league sports team. Supporters believed that having a Major League Baseball team, would enhance Los Angeles' status as a major American city.
- Walter O'Malley owned the Brooklyn Dodgers. For years, he had been concerned that his team was not making enough money in their stadium in Brooklyn, NY. O'Malley also owned a Minor League Baseball franchise located in Hollywood, California.
- The Los Angeles City Council began to look for baseball teams that might be willing to relocate to the city.
- In 1949, the Federal Housing Act made money available to city governments to build affordable public housing. The Los Angeles Housing Authority and its supporters believed that by building new and affordable apartments, ravine residents and the city as a whole would benefit.
- The Housing Authority used the city's legal powers of eminent domain to require that ravine residents move out of their homes. Residents were paid for their homes and offered the first opportunity to move into the new housing projects. This compensation was not always vied as adequate nor were the tactics all viewed as equitable.
- By 1952, virtually all residents had been moved. The city began work clearing houses and land to build the large public housing projects.
- In 1953, Mayor Poulson was elected and halted the redevelopment of the ravine.
- Baseball boosters proposed using Julian Chávez Ravine for a large new Major League Baseball stadium, along with a new city zoo and a golf course. The city approached O'Malley about bringing the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles.

The Facts (continued)

- O'Malley agreed to swap his small, Minor League Baseball stadium for the land in the Chávez Ravine, on which he would be given rights to build a Major League stadium for the LA Dodgers. The city agreed to pay $1,000,000 to help with construction costs.
- During the 1958 city election, Proposition B appeared on the ballot, which would grant O'Malley the land at a very low price if it passed.

Opinions

- Actor Ronald Reagan (future California Governor and U.S. President) said the following about the Chávez Ravine:

> *"Chávez Ravine has been sitting there in the heart of Los Angeles for years and nothing was done with it. Now that a baseball team is to have it, it's worth a lot of money, we are told. Sure, Walter O'Malley got a good deal when he was offered Chávez Ravine as a site for his ballpark. Any deal to be good must be fair to both sides, not just to one. For years we have been watching golf courses and other recreation areas destroyed to make room for subdivisions and factories. Where is a baseball stadium to go, in the suburbs away from freeways?"*

Name: _____

Part 1

Instructions: Select the best answer and circle the correct letter. (2 points each)

1. Which of the following was not a form of protest used by the United Farm Workers?
   a. sit-ins
   b. boycotts
   c. burning fields
   d. marches

2. What did Frank and Frances Robinson first do in their efforts to influence the decisions being made about the Upper Newport Bay?
   a. They borrowed money from a local bank.
   b. They asked the Orange County Board of Supervisors to elect a new chairman.
   c. They proposed the county swap land in another place for land at the bay.
   d. They organized and founded the Friends of Upper Newport Bay.

3. What was one of the major strategies the "baseball boosters" used to get the public to vote for building a baseball stadium in Chávez Ravine?
   a. They put up billboards throughout the city encouraging the stadium.
   b. They used celebrities to promote the building of the stadium.
   c. They paid voters to vote for the stadium.
   d. The promised one night of free baseball every year.

4. What law gives citizens of the United States the right to petition the government and organize with others around a cause?
   a. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution
   b. The Endangered Species Act of 1973
   c. The Declaration of Independence
   d. The Wagner Labor Relations Act of 1970

5. Which is the best definition of "civil disobedience"?
   a. Refusing to follow the law or government directives
   b. Protesting in a polite or civil manner
   c. Using any means of protest
   d. Joining civil society organizations to plan protests

6. Which of the following groups did not use civil disobedience in their efforts to influence decisions?
   a. The Residents of Chávez Ravine
   b. The United Farm Workers
   c. Frank and Francis Robinson
   d. The people of Berkeley who supported People's Park

Name: _____

7. In which case did the stakeholders petition the government by using the court system?
   a. The battle for Upper Newport Bay
   b. United Farm Workers grape boycott
   c. Land use in Chávez Ravine
   d. a and c

8. What is meant by "civil society"?
   a. A democratic government of the people, by the people, and for the people.
   b. The organizations that people form and join voluntarily that are not part of government.
   c. A society in which even people who disagree treat each other in a polite, civil manner.
   d. All of the people and institutions in society that are not part of the military.

9. What is a lobby? (in political terms…not in a building)
   a. A government official who takes position on environmental issues
   b. A civil society organization that discusses issues in a public forum
   c. A group that works to influence decision makers about a specific position on an issue
   d. A group that breaks the law in order to protest an unjust decision or policy

10. Which is true about all four cases examined in this unit?
    a. The stakeholders with the largest group always won.
    b. Boycotts and lawsuits were involved in each one.
    c. The stakeholders used the right to a free press.
    d. Civil disobedience was involved in each one.

Part 2

Instructions: Answer the following questions. (5 points each)

11. We have learned many ways in which people in our society petition the government. List and define three forms of petitioning the government.

_____

_____

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Name: _____

12. Choose one of the examples studied in this unit and describe how people used the right to a free press (the media) to make their voices heard.

13. Discuss three ways people in civil society can influence decisions made about resources and environmental management.

Name: _____

14. Why is the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution vital to people's ability to voice their concerns in this society?

_____

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Name: _____

Instructions: You have a strong opinion about one of the issues below and you would like to influence the decision that will be made about it. Create an action plan to influence the decision so it goes your way, based on what you have learned about civil society, the rights given to individuals in the U.S. Constitution, and the strategies used by stakeholders in various cases that you are now familiar with.

Your action plan must discuss and describe the following:

- The issue you have an opinion about;
- All the stakeholders involved in the action plan and the perspective of each on this issue;
- The forums available to you to voice your opinion and exert influence on the decision-makers dealing with the issue;
- The action(s) you recommend taking to ensure success (to get what you want).

The Issues

Issue #1: Whether or not to set aside land (space) in a new housing development to be a park and wilderness area.

Issue #2: Whether or not to charge shoppers an extra fee for using disposable shopping bags (plastic or paper).

Issue #3: Whether or not to ban cigarette smoking on public beaches.

Your action plan may take one of the following forms: a written report, a multi-media presentation, a display, or a presentation board. Please let the teacher know which method you are considering.

The deadline for this assignment is: _____.

Name: _____

Action Plan Assignment Scoring Tool

Component	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Plan Design	The plan is well designed, easy to understand and engages the reader.	The plan is well designed and easy to understand.	The plan is not fully developed or is difficult to understand.	The plan is not fully developed or is difficult to understand.
Civil Society	The plan addresses all the required elements and demonstrates a clear understanding of civil society.	The plan addresses most of the required elements and demonstrates a clear understanding of civil society.	The plan addresses some of the required elements and mentions civil society, but it is not clear that the student fully understands concept.	The plan addresses at least one of the elements of the question selected but does not mention civil society.
Use of Examples	The plan cites at least three examples from the unit as support.	The plan cites two or more examples from the unit as support, but may contain one or more factual errors.	The plan does not cite any examples from the unit as support.	The plan does not cite any examples from the unit as support.
Writing and Presentation	The text used in the presentation of the plan displays correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	The text used in the presentation of the plan displays correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	The text used in the presentation of the plan contains spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.	The text used in the presentation of the plan contains numerous spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.

Name: _____

Name: _____

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