

National 4-H Curriculum  
BU-08154



# Public Adventures

# Guide's Handbook



An Active  
Citizenship  
Curriculum  
for Youth





## An active citizenship curriculum for youth

Through Public Adventures youth will contribute to the public good and develop a life-long commitment to active citizenship.

### Acknowledgments

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#### Special thanks to:

- the Earth Force curriculum developers and the Public Achievement students at St. Bernard's School in St. Paul, MN, for helping us to rethink the format of our curriculum,
- our many dedicated pilot testers and reviewers, without whom these materials wouldn't come close to fulfilling their promise, and
- the University of Wisconsin-Extension Service, the University of Minnesota-Extension Service, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota, National 4-H Curriculum, and the Kellogg Foundation for making this project possible.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following programs and materials to the Public Adventures curriculum.

- Active Citizenship Today Field Guide. Charles Degelman and Bill Hayes, Close Up Foundation, Alexandria, VA, and Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, 1995.
- Building Citizens. Margo Shea and Kevin Mattson, The Walt Whitman Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 1998.
- Building Worlds, Transforming Lives, Making History. Bridget Erlanson and Robert Hildreth, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Minneapolis, MN, 1997.
- By the People. Melissa Bass, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Minneapolis, MN, 1995.
- The Center for Democracy and Citizenship. University of Minnesota, 130 Humphrey Center, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455.
- The Close Up Foundation. 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314.
- The Constitutional Rights Foundation. 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005.
- Earth Force. 1908 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301.
- Earth Force CAPS, Field Test Edition. Jennifer Clarke, Earth Force, Alexandria, VA, 1997.
- 4-H. *Contact your local county Extension office.*
- Making the Rules. Melissa Bass, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Minneapolis, MN, 1994.
- The Walt Whitman Center. Rutgers University, 89 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.
- Youth Venture. 1700 North Moore Street, Suite 1920, Arlington, VA 22209.

For information on other organizations involved in citizenship, service and civic education, see the Public Adventures web site.



[www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship](http://www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship)

This web site also includes additional activities, more in-depth "postcard tips" and "how to's," a resource library, a "kids to kids" exchange and an extensive guides' resource and training section.

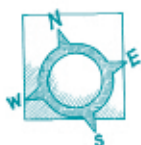
# Citizenship— Public Adventures Guide's Handbook Table of Contents

Look for the companion piece in this Citizenship set.



*Public Adventures  
Adventure Kit  
BU-08153*

*Includes a  
passport, postcards  
and travel log.*



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# Preparing for Your Group's Adventure

## Objectives of Public Adventures

**P**ublic Adventures is an active citizenship curriculum designed to help youth contribute to the world around them and develop a life-long commitment to civic engagement. It is designed for youth in grades six through eight, but can be modified for use by both younger and older youth.

Through Public Adventures youth will:

- ▶ find out about issues that are important to them and others,
- ▶ gain new skills so they can make positive things happen,
- ▶ discover new ideas to help them make sense of what they're doing, and
- ▶ most importantly, take what they are learning and put it into action.

The heart of Public Adventures is a project the youth plan that creates, changes, or improves something that is valuable to many people. Then they do it! This is what being an **active citizen** in a **democracy** is all about.

Public Adventures isn't just about one project. Democracy needs the on-going involvement of active citizens. Public Adventures is designed to engage youth in changing a piece of the public world, discovering the possibilities of democratic citizenship and building a commitment to taking action in new and exciting ways well into the future.

By focusing on active citizenship youth will:

- ▶ Develop skills in decision-making, critical thinking, contributing to group effort, cooperating, planning and organizing.
- ▶ Develop a personal commitment to the community in which they live and to the larger public world.
- ▶ Increase their confidence in their ability to participate in and contribute to public life.
- ▶ Understand the concepts associated with citizenship.
- ▶ Become creators, producers and owners within their communities and the larger public world.



The **bolded** words are defined in the Citizenship Adventure Kit Phrase Book.

# What is Active Citizenship?

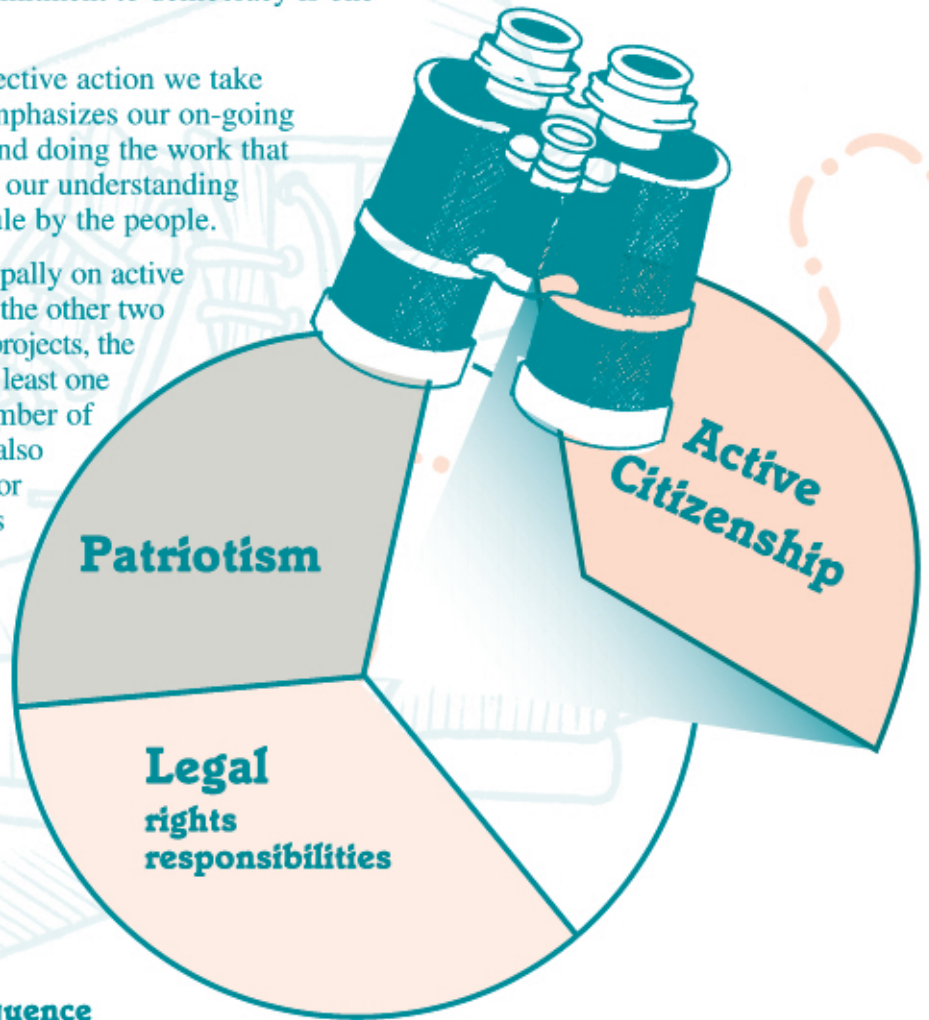
**C**itizenship is an important and contested idea. It can be thought of as who or what we are, as what we believe, or as what we do.

**Legal citizenship** focuses on citizens' government-guaranteed rights and responsibilities, like voting, following the law and qualifying for benefits. Legal citizenship offers us important freedoms, protections and responsibilities.

**Patriotic citizenship** is based on a belief that American citizens share a common core set of values. Our commitment to democracy is one of these values.

**Active citizenship** focuses on the collective action we take to address our common concerns. It emphasizes our on-going involvement in making the decisions and doing the work that creates the world around us. It focuses our understanding of democracy on its literal meaning: rule by the people.

While Public Adventures focuses principally on active citizenship, it also includes elements of the other two perspectives. In doing their citizenship projects, the youth will typically have to work with at least one authoritative body, whether a PTA, chamber of commerce or town council. They will also have to learn about regulations, policies or laws as they relate to their project. Civics isn't absent from this curriculum, but is taught in the context of the youth's work. In addition, the youth are asked to respect and work within our democratic system. In some cases this means that the youth will be using the system to solve a problem they see within it.



## Scope and Sequence

	Life Skill	Content Skill	Success Indicator	National Standard*
Step 1	Decision Making	Methods of group decision making	Set ground rules	V.A.1; V.E.2
Step 2	Critical Thinking	Mapping	Drew community map	II. D.2
Step 3	Contributing to a Group Effort	Goal setting	Wrote mission statement	V. E. 1
Step 4	Cooperating	Information gathering	Charted stakeholders	III.F.4
Step 5	Planning and Organizing	Planning and Organizing	Created an action plan	V.D.1
Step 6	Contributing to a Group Effort	Accountability	Put plan into action	V.E.3
Step 7	Critical Thinking	Reflection	Shared experience with others	V.E.5; V.D.1

\*National Standards for Civics and Government. From the Center for Civic Education.

## Using this Handbook and the Citizenship Adventure Kit

The Citizenship Guide's Handbook and the Citizenship Adventure Kit work together. As a guide, you will need both. The youth will need a Citizenship Adventure Kit, plus specific pages of the Citizenship Guide's Handbook that you will need to copy for them. While it is possible for youth to guide themselves using both pieces, having an older or more experienced guide is encouraged.

The Public Adventures' process is divided into seven steps. The Citizenship Adventure Kit is organized around these steps, as are the chapters in this handbook. In the handbook, there is one chapter per step. In the handbook chapters, you will find:

- ▶ **Explanations** of concepts and suggestions on how to introduce and discuss them with youth.
- ▶ **Activities.** The activities help illustrate concepts or move youth forward with their work. The activities labeled essential are central to the program. Other activities are labeled recommended or extra. You can choose to use them or not, depending on your group.
- ▶ **“What if’s.”** The “what if’s” provide ideas, advice, and suggested activities to address common problems that group leaders experience.
- ▶ **References** to the Citizenship Adventure Kit postcards. These postcards provide valuable tips for you and the youth to help them master the skills they will need in Public Adventures and in other settings.
- ▶ **Travel Log Ideas.** The Travel Log ideas offer suggestions for what youth can include in their notebooks/record books. They include questions that lead youth through the experiential learning cycle and focus on the life skill identified for each step.

### In the Citizenship Adventure Kit, you will find:

- ▶ **A passport.** On the Citizenship Project Online home page ([www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship](http://www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship)) you will see a passport icon. If youth click on this icon they will be prompted to create a personal project passport. As they complete each step towards their goal, the passport will be stamped. Each passport stamp contains one letter of the password required for your group to upload a group photo when your project is completed!
- ▶ **Postcards.** The postcards have tips to help youth master the skills they'll need for their project. For more novelty they can be delivered step by step as needed by the guide.
- ▶ **Travel log divider pages.** These pages include activities, postcard references, travel log ideas and questions.
- ▶ **A phrase book.** The phrase book is a glossary of concepts bolded on the divider pages and raised in discussion.

Projects online  
Public  
Adventures

[www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship](http://www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship)

## Your Role as a Guide

### What if . . .

. . . the youth won't focus or pay attention?

- Provide more structure and a greater variety of activities to the meetings.
- Explain that this is their group and it's up to them what they get accomplished.
- Review the group's work to date. Is everyone still committed to the group's issue, goal, and project? If not, what do they want to do about it?
- Ask them what it will take for the group to move forward. Maybe they need a change of pace—a short-term project, field trip, or even a game day to get rejuvenated.

**G**uiding a group of youth is both an art and a science. Each group and each guide is unique and will operate differently however there are many roles all guides will likely play. As a guide you will be called upon to:

- **Provide structure.** Know when and where your group will meet—make the arrangements if necessary. Know what your group needs to do at each meeting. Have questions in mind and activities, including a back-up plan. Keep the group on track.
- **Facilitate.** Keep the discussion and work flowing. Encourage everyone to participate. Ask questions and create opportunities for youth to learn and act on their own.
- **Encourage.** Be positive. Public work is serious, hard work. There will likely be set-backs along the way and it's even possible that your group will not reach their goal. Be both optimistic and realistic. Focus on what the group accomplishes and learns. Be enthusiastic—it's contagious!
- **Challenge.** Ask questions to help the youth consider the consequences of their decisions and actions and explore alternatives. On occasion, the youth will need a “push” to see things in a new light or to act in innovative ways.
- **Educate.** Place the group's work in a larger context. Find the “teachable moments” to connect the group's work to the concepts of active citizenship and democracy. Get them to see and articulate what they are learning.
- **Inform.** Act as a resource. As an older youth or adult, you know things that can contribute to the group's work. Offer answers to their questions and suggestions for what they may want to do, but don't use your knowledge to dictate their choices.
- **Create a positive working environment.** Support and value the contributions of everyone in your group. Ensure that everyone is treated with respect and that work and learning take place. As much as possible, discipline should be enforced by the group. Be clear about your expectations and make yourself a presence in the meetings. Be respectful of the youth, and let them know that you are there to help them achieve their goals.

## Remember



This is the youth's adventure. They decide the issue, set the goal and determine the project. It's your job to help your group make thoughtful decisions.

They need to do the work. It's your job to help them recognize and develop their capacity to do it.



# Step 1

## Rules of the Road

### Introducing Citizenship

This chapter provides you with information to help you:

- ▶ introduce youth to citizenship, and
- ▶ assist the youth in working together as a group.

**Life Skill:** Group decision making

**Content Skill:** Methods of group decision making

**National Standards:** V.A.1: The meaning of citizenship; and V.E.3: Forms of political participation

To get your group thinking about citizenship and ready to start their Public Adventure, try these activities.

### ✖ Essential activity: Discovering Citizenship

This activity will help your group think about the ideas associated with citizenship and democracy.

- Have the youth turn to their Step One divider page. There are 17 jumbled pictures that are related to the ideas of citizenship and democracy. Ask the youth to find and identify the pictures. Write them on a large sheet of paper or on a blackboard.
- Ask the youth, “What is important about each picture? What does it have to do with citizenship or democracy?”
- These pictures don’t cover all of the ways to think about citizenship and democracy. So next ask, “What other words come to mind when you think about citizenship and democracy? Why are they important?” A few suggestions that the youth might miss: working together, making a difference, making the laws and following the laws, diversity, and community.
- Stress that while there are many ways to think about citizenship and all are important, Public Adventures focuses on active citizenship. Have them look up “active citizen” in their Phrase Book. Do they agree with the definition? Why or why not?



#### Cover Key:






- **Flag and American Eagle:** National symbols of our country.
- **White House and Capitol:** The places where the president and Congress—our elected representatives—work to make our national laws.
- **Washington Monument:** Honors the first U.S. president, George Washington.
- **Lincoln Memorial:** Honors Abraham Lincoln, who was president during the Civil War. It is a symbol of civil rights and national unity.
- **Liberty Bell:** Located in Philadelphia, this bell was rung on July 8, 1776, to gather citizens to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.
- **Statue of Liberty:** Located on Ellis Island, New York, where millions of immigrants landed when they came to America. It is a symbol of our multi-cultural heritage.
- **The Constitution:** The document that set up our national government, adopted in 1789.
- **Scales of Justice:** Symbolizes the weighing of both sides in a court case with the goal of achieving fairness in our judicial system.
- **Ballot and Ballot Box:** Symbolizes voting, an important right and responsibility of citizens.
- **Elephant and Donkey:** Symbolizes America’s two main political parties—the Republicans and Democrats, respectively. Historically, political parties have been a major way citizens have become involved in making decisions about their communities and the country.
- **Uncle Sam:** This picture has been used on posters recruiting people into the U.S. military. Joining the military is one of many important ways to serve the country.
- **Rake and Leaves:** Shows another way that citizens can serve and contribute to the well-being of their community and country.
- **School House:** Education has always been seen as essential for preparing people to be informed, active citizens.



## Decision-making

**M**aking decisions as a group is important for democracy and important for your group. This activity introduces three strategies for making group decisions—voting, compromise, and consensus. This activity uses **Postcard #2** and the **Adventure Kit Step 1 Divider Page**.

### “Fist of Five” Method of Consensus

-  = you will champion the decision
-  = you strongly support the decision
-  = you support the decision
-  = you will grudgingly support the decision
-  = you do not support and may refuse to cooperate with the decision.

If any members respond with a “1,” further discussion is needed. If not, consensus has been reached.

## ✖ Essential activity:

### Where Do We Stop for Lunch?

Ask your group to imagine that they have been on an adventure all morning, and it’s time to chip in and get some lunch. Have everyone contribute a dollar to a lunch fund, and try to reach a decision about how, or where, to spend it.

#### Preparation:

- Have each group member bring a dollar.
- Review **Postcard #2** and discuss the differences between majority rule, compromise and consensus.
- Establish a time limit for the group discussion (about 1 minute/member)
- Choose a time keeper and a record keeper.

#### Activity:

- Have the youth turn to the back of the **Step One Divider Page** and find the decision-making grid.
- Open a timed discussion of how the collected dollars should be spent. At the end of the time limit, conduct a simple vote for every suggestion that was made. (Suggestions should be recorded.) The largest majority vote wins.
- Have the youth fill out the “Majority Rule” section of their **Step One Divider Page** grid.
- Next, guide the youth to a point of compromise, where the majority of the group agree they are getting some of what they want.
- When they have made their decision have them chart their response on the divider page.
- Lead the group to a point of consensus as defined on **Postcard #2**. You can use the “Fist of Five” method to identify and prompt discussion.
- Have the youth complete their divider page grid and then discuss the different methods of decision making.



There are many different strategies or ways for groups to make a decision. Here are three:

- ▶ **Voting:** Making a decision by counting the number of people who support or don't support an idea or action. *Advantage:* Good for making decisions quickly and fairly. *Disadvantage:* Some people get what they want and the others don't.
- ▶ **Compromise:** Making a decision by having people on each side give up something they want in exchange for getting something else they want. *Advantage:* There are no winners or losers. *Disadvantage:* Everyone ends up unhappy.
- ▶ **Consensus:** Everyone agrees on a decision by listening to everyone's feelings and using a fair approach. *Advantage:* Find the best decision that everyone can accept. *Disadvantage:* It takes both time and good communication skills to work.

Tips for  
**MAKING  
GROUP  
DECISIONS**

2

Refer to  
**Postcard 2**

# Ground Rules

Setting ground rules is important because . . .

- ▶ Ground rules help the group function.
- ▶ Having the group decide and enforce their own rules is an important exercise in group decision-making and collective self-government.
- ▶ The process creates a teachable moment—the group can discuss why we have rules in groups and in society, and you can explain that in a democracy citizens make the rules by which they live.

## **✖ Essential activity:** **Making the Rules**

As a group, have the youth decide what ground rules they all agree to follow. Write them down on a large sheet of paper or posterboard and have everyone sign the agreement. Post the rules at your meetings so that everyone will remember them.

**Here are a few ground rule examples:**

- Speak up when you have an idea.
- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Listen carefully.
- Work hard.
- Be respectful.

**Remember:**

- These are just examples. The group should come up with their own.
- The ground rules they decide on should be simple, understandable, and easy to follow, and the list should be short.
- Let the youth know that they can revise their ground rules later if something needs to be changed or added.
- Keep this activity short so the group doesn't get bored or frustrated. The important thing is to have something to work off of later.

**Discussion ideas:**

- With your group, discuss your role around the ground rules. Should you, the guide, have an equal voice in determining the rules as a member of the group, or should you simply offer advice? Should you have to follow them?
- Discuss how the rules will be enforced. While you will have a role in keeping your group in line, emphasize that everyone is responsible for enforcing the rules.
- You may want to discuss what will happen if the rules are broken, or this can wait until rule-breaking becomes a problem. Stress that the group will work together to decide consequences.

## **What if . . .**

**no one follows the rules?**

- Ask, "Are we following our ground rules?" Sometimes this little reminder is all that's needed to get the group back on track.
- Try the following activity. Tell your group that, except for refraining from violence and insults, for the next five minutes they should break all of the group's rules. Let chaos reign. After five minutes, get the group to settle down and discuss the following questions:
  1. What happened when all the rules were broken? How did group members feel?
  2. How did this turn of events affect their ability to get things done?
  3. What does it mean to have rules that no one follows?
  4. What do they think they should do to make sure the rules are followed?
- If particular members are being uncooperative, talk to them after the meeting.
- If rule-breaking continues to be a problem, the group as a whole should decide the consequences. Keep discussions focused on the impact of people's behavior on the group's work and on what needs to change so the group can move forward.

# Agendas

Writing an agenda will help your group make the most of their time together.

Here is one approach for setting meeting agendas: End each meeting by asking the group to list what they will need to do at the next meeting. You can then take this list and write an agenda on a flipchart or blackboard before the start of the next meeting.

Agenda elements include:

**Purpose:** State the goals for the meeting.

**Roles:** Assign or have youth volunteer to be the meeting's facilitator, notetaker, and timekeeper.  
See **Postcard #1**.

**Report:** Share any news or work that has been done since the last meeting.

**To Do's:** Tasks or activities (with time limits) for the meeting.

**Evaluation:** Restate the meeting's purpose and identify what worked about the meeting and what didn't.  
See **Postcard #4**.

**Next Steps:** Plan what the group needs to accomplish before the next meeting, assign tasks, and discuss what needs to happen at the next meeting.

## What if . . . everyone talks at the same time?

- Choose an object, like a ruler or a ball, deem it "special," and state that only the person holding the object may speak. Note: you may want to exempt yourself or the group's facilitator to keep the meeting flowing.

## What if . . . one or more youth don't participate in the meetings?

- Go around in a circle and have everyone contribute an idea or response.
- Have the youth work in pairs, then present their work to the whole group.
- Give the youth time to write their responses, then share with the whole group.
- Challenge the group to come up with as many responses as they can in one minute.

## Meeting Roles

Facilitators, notetakers, and timekeepers help meetings run smoothly. Consider rotating these roles so everyone get a chance to learn and contribute.

**Facilitators** . . . guide the meeting, making sure everyone gets a chance to speak and that the group sticks to the agenda.

**Notetakers** . . . keep track of what happens during the meeting and records decisions. These notes help keep the group on track and become part of the group's "collective memory."

**Timekeepers** . . . watch the clock. It's easy to run out of time before everything on the agenda gets covered. By reminding the group of how much time they have, the group can decide whether to move on or change their agenda.

## Evaluation

Often, it's tempting to wait until a project is finished before evaluating, or to skip it altogether. However, evaluation is an important "navigational" tool: by reviewing where you've been you can make sure you're headed in the right direction.

Here are some questions for your group to ask when you evaluate:

- ▶ What went well? What didn't?
- ▶ What do we need to do differently?
- ▶ What would make it more interesting?
- ▶ What did we learn?
- ▶ Are we ready to move on to the next step?

Ask the above questions . . .

- ▶ after group meetings,
- ▶ upon completing tasks or steps,
- ▶ when the group gets discouraged or stuck, and
- ▶ when your group has finished its project!

See **Postcard #4**. And don't forget to celebrate your successes each step along the way!

## Travel Log

- Encourage the youth to complete the Travel Log Ideas on their **Step One Divider Page**.
- Throughout their project, suggest that the youth write down memorable moments or quotations in their travel logs.
- Take a picture of your group, or have one of the youth do it. Make copies so that everyone can put a group picture in their passport.

Ask the youth to think about a specific decision that they've made in their group and answer these questions. They can use them to guide a group discussion or their travel log writing.

- Did you use voting, compromise, negotiation, or some other strategy? (See **Postcard #2** for definitions.)
- What worked well in making this decision (e.g., no one made fun of anyone else's ideas)? What didn't work well (e.g., everyone talked at the same time)?
- Why is it important that all group members be able to live with your group's final decision?
- Why is it important that people take part in making decisions that affect their lives?
- The next time your group has to make a decision, what will you do differently?

**Remember**  
...to have  
the youth mark  
their passports!



[www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship](http://www.4-h.org/curriculum/citizenship)