

Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support
Elementary History-Social Science and
Elementary Science Divisions

Day 1

FOCUS QUESTION: Should the United States fund the space colony project?
Provide evidence to support your answer.

Objectives

- Students will understand that in making a major policy decision, the United States' government must weigh many factors and listen to many significant points of view.
- Students will read and analyze informational text to identify varying opinions.
- Students will summarize informational text.
- Students will define a point of view and orally present and defend that point of view to classmates.

Quick Look

- **Summary:** In this introduction the teacher will show a video detailing the problems with the continued use of fossil fuels as an energy source. Students will form six groups representing different groups of U.S. citizens. After reading different opinions, students will participate in a town hall meeting and vote on whether the United States should fund a space colony project.
- Teachers will create 6 student groups:
 - Taxpayers
 - Historians
 - Business Community
 - Medical Community
 - Scientists
 - The MilitaryThese groups will take on the role of specific groups of United States citizens who would have an interest or an opinion about building a colony in space.
- Students will do a close reading of an informational text (Citizen Group Card, Student Handouts 1.1 – 1.6) that provides reasons to oppose or support developing a space colony. They will take notes on this reading. Using Research Note, Student Handout 1.7. After synthesizing the information in the text, each group will decide whether they support or oppose developing a space colony.
- Each group will fill in the provided Town Hall Meeting Presentation Guide (Student Handout 1.8) in preparation for speaking at the Class Town Hall Meeting. The teacher

will facilitate this meeting during which each group will share their reasons for supporting or opposing a space colony.

- At the end of the lesson, the class will vote whether or not they as a group support space colonization.
- Time: Approximately 3 ½ - 4 hours
- History Content Standards:
 - [5.4](#) Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.
 - [5.4.7](#) Explain the early democratic ideas and practices that emerged during the colonial period, including the significance of representative assemblies and town meetings.
- Science Content Standards:
[ES5.5b](#) Students know the solar system includes the planet Earth, the Moon, the Sun, eight other planets and their satellites, and smaller objects such as asteroids and comets.
- *Common Core State Standards:
Writing Grade 5: [1](#), [8](#), [9b](#)
Reading Informational Texts Grade 5: [1](#), [2](#), [4](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#)
Speaking & Listening: Grade 5: [1](#), [2](#)
* See Appendix A
- Student Products:
 - Research Notes Organizer (Student Handout 1.7)
 - Town Hall Meeting Presentation Guide (Student Handout 1.8)
 - Journal Entry
 - Project Criteria Chart
 - Project Team Contract (Student Handout 1.11)

BACKGROUND

Since the early days of this country citizens have gathered together at town hall meetings to discuss and vote on important social and political issues. Politicians running for office still use town hall meetings to interact with the public and gather information about citizens' values and ideas. Town hall meetings are held in a public location and typically are open to anyone who wants to attend. Participants are free to ask questions and voice opinions. Though today it is rare for votes to be taken at a town hall meeting, this was not an uncommon practice during the colonial period. In the early days of our country, issues important to a local community were often discussed and decided upon during such a meeting. The mock town hall meeting held during this lesson is to discuss the feasibility of building a colony in space. Though a vote is held at this meeting, the teacher should emphasize that on a matter of this importance, numerous town hall meetings would be held across the country to allow citizens a voice in making the decision.

In order for the students to understand why the United States might be interested in building a space colony, they must first understand the motivation to explore colonizing beyond the earth's surface. This lesson begins with a video detailing the problems with continued reliance on fossil fuels to provide energy in the United States. This unit's premise is that the earth is running out of fossil fuels and the U.S. is concerned that life here on Earth may not continue to be as we have known it.

Vocabulary

Preview vocabulary on Citizen Group Cards to determine if there is a need to pre-teach vocabulary for English Language Learners.

Materials

The following are materials needed for this lesson:

- Video link Earth's Natural Resources:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1KSVMR7apg>
- Citizen Group Opinion Cards (Student Handouts 1.1 – 1.6) representing one citizen group for each of the six groups
- One Research Note Organizer sheet for each student (Student Handout 1.7)
- One copy for each student of the Town Hall Presentation Guide (Student Handout 1.8)
- One copy for each group (half of a sheet) of How To Conduct A Town Hall Meeting (Student Handout 1.9)
- One large graphic organizer for the front of the classroom
- Opening Congressional Letter (Teacher Resource 1.1)
- Discussion Questions Following the Congressional Letter (Student Handout 1.10)
- Space Colonization Application (Teacher Resource 1.2, pp.1 and 2)
- Project Team Contract (Student Handout 1.11)

PART I LOOKING BACK

Engage/Introduction

- Teacher shows the provided video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1KSVMR7apg>
This video explains our reliance on and shortening supply of fossil fuels.

Explore/Analysis Activity

- Teacher explains that without fossil fuels, the U.S. government is concerned that life here on Earth may not continue to be possible as we have known it.
- Brainstorm with the class a list of ways life would change if we ran out of fossil fuels.
[Responses may include effects on transportation, technology, sources of energy, environment, etc.]

Explain/Conclusion




- Teacher explains that in the United States there are many ways a citizen can have a voice in determining the future of their country. One way to have a voice is to participate in a town hall meeting. Explain that since the colonial days participating in a town hall meeting was a way in which citizens could express opinions and could ask questions of their leaders.

PART II LOOKING FORWARD

Engage/Introduction

- Tell the students they will be participating in a role-playing simulation. This simulation is based on the following scenario: The Earth is running out of fossil fuels and the United States is concerned that life here on Earth may not continue to be possible for us as it has been in the past. Also, there is the potential that alternative forms of energy might be found through exploration of space. For these reasons, the U.S. Government is considering building a space colony on another planet. The government is holding town hall meetings across the country to determine if there is support for such a colony. Today, your class will be holding one of these town hall meetings to discuss the issues and vote for or against establishing a space colony.

Explore/Analysis Activity

- Divide students into six groups, creating heterogeneous reading groups. Each student group will represent a group of U.S. citizens who have opinions they wish to express about the building of a space colony.
 *Teacher may preview the passages prior to the group meeting.*
- Pass out one Citizen Group Opinion Card (Student Handout 1.1-1.6) to each group. Discuss with the whole class the different types of groups represented on the Opinion Cards. Tell the students that they will take on the role of the group represented on their Opinion Card and that they will need to be prepared to participate in a discussion about the information provided on the cards. Allow students time to read the card a first time.
 *Choose one student to read the passage aloud to the group first.*
- Pass out one Research Note Organizer (Student Handout 1.7) for each student. Read over this note-taking sheet with the whole group. Ask the groups to re-read the Opinion Card and take notes in each of the appropriate sections of the Research Note Organizer. Before students begin work on note taking, make sure they understand that they are looking for supporting and opposing opinions on the building of a space colony.
 *During this time the teacher should circulate throughout the classroom stopping at each group to check for understanding and to answer questions. Teacher should note what the students are annotating and provide support where needed.*
- After students have completed their note taking, ask the groups to come to consensus on whether or not their group would support building a space colony. Remind the students that once they have made their decision, they will need to present their views

to the whole class. They will need to support their decision with evidence presented in the information on their Opinion Card.

- Tell students they need to prepare what they will say during the Class Town Hall Meeting. Pass out the Town Hall Meeting Presentation Guide (Student Handout 1.8) to every student. Explain to students that because each person in a group is expected to speak at the Class Town Hall Meeting, each student needs to fill out the Presentation Guide. Tell students that their group will be given two minutes to make their presentation. Remind students that they have taken on the role of whatever citizen group they were assigned, therefore, information on the Presentation Guide should come only from evidence they have gathered from the Opinion Card and should not include their own personal ideas about a space colony.

 *This is an opportunity for students to apply oral communication skills.*

- The teacher may choose to be the leader of the Class Town Hall Meeting or may choose a student. The leader of the meeting has to call the meeting to order, choose the order in which the citizen groups present, and be the official counter during the voting process.
- Have the leader of the Class Town Hall Meeting call the meeting to order. The leader should pass out one copy of the sheet entitled How to Conduct a Town Hall Meeting (Student Handout 1.9) to each group. The class will then read over the process so they can know what to expect.
- The leader will focus the participants by reviewing why the Class Town Hall Meeting is being held. He or she will call citizen groups up one-by-one to present their opinion on the space colony and will use their Presentation Guide to provide a rationale for their point of view.
- Teacher will provide a large classroom graphic organizer and ask students from the audience to summarize what was stated in each presentation.
- After each group has presented, the leader will call for a vote. The voting can be anonymous using a ballot or can be done by having a show of hands. The leader will tally the votes in a public space such as the white board or a piece of chart paper.

Explain/Conclusion

- After the process has concluded, the teacher will debrief by leading a discussion about the process:

Teacher will ask:

- *How did it feel to take on the role of another person?*
- *Were the students satisfied with the outcome of the vote?*
- *Did the students vote the way their group decided to vote or did they vote their own conscience?*
- *What did they learn from this process?*

- After the vote, the teacher will tell the students that on an issue of this importance the United States' government would hold town hall meetings all across the country to get citizens' input on this issue. Their vote would be tabulated with results from across the country to make a final decision as to whether to go forward with this issue.

PART III **Bringing It All Together**

- **Group Discussion**

- Allow time for groups to discuss their answers before participating in a class discussion.


Teacher will ask:

- “*Should the United States fund a space colony project?*” Students should provide evidence to support their answers.

Teacher will say:

- “*Today you voted on whether or not the United States should start a space colony on another planet or the Moon.*”
- *Write a journal entry telling the reader how your group voted.*
- *Explain why you voted the way you did supporting your answer with details from the text.”*

- **Journal Entry**

- Have students write a journal entry answering the focus question:
Should the United States fund the space colony project? Provide evidence to support your answer.
 *Journal entries provide an opportunity for students to develop organizational skills in writing after having experienced oral practice with other students and the teacher.*

- Students will use information from their Class Town Hall Meeting Presentation Guide and what they learned from the Class Town Hall Meeting today to explain what factors influenced their vote.


Part IV **THE LETTER**

Engage/Introduction

- Show students the Congressional Letter, Teacher Resource 1.1. (*Act surprised and open dramatically.*) Read the letter aloud to students.

Explore/Analysis Activity

- Students will work in groups to discuss the letter using the discussion questions provided in Student Handout Day 1.10.
- Review questions in a whole class discussion. Create a class criteria chart for the project including all the components mentioned in the letter.

- Review the Space Colonization Application (Teacher Resource 1.2) with the students. Explain that sections of this proposal will be completed throughout the project.
- Divide the class into project work groups. Arrange students in eight heterogeneous groups of four. (These students will work together, ***called Space Colony Teams***, to design their space colony for the rest of the unit). Explain different group roles such as dealing with materials, reporting and facilitating. These roles may be rotated throughout the project.
 *Consider grouping students in a way that all members can participate.*
- Have each group review the Project Team Contract Project Team Contract (Student Handout 1.11) and discuss. Groups may add additional norms if needed. Each member should sign the Contract.

Explain/Conclusion

Teacher will say:

- Over the next ten days you will be learning about all the things that need to be considered to develop a space colony. Over the next month, each ***Space Colony Team*** will complete their Space Colonization Application and develop a presentation the Congressional Sub-Committee.