

## Program 6

## CITY COUNCIL

*Topic:* Community government, civic participation

*Level of students:* Grades 3-5

*Skills/knowledge addressed:*

- City council form of government
- Meeting etiquette (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order)
- Public speaking
- Citizen participation in a democracy
- Problem solving

*Social Studies TEKS:*

3.9ABC: The student is expected to describe the basic structure of government in the local community; identify services commonly provided by local governments; identify local government officials and explain how they are chosen;

3.18AB: The student is expected to use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences and take action to implement a decision

4.24AB: The student is expected to use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences and take action to implement a decision;

5.27AB: The student is expected to use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences and take action to implement a decision

*Description:* Students learn first-hand how a city council functions and how local citizens affect the council's decisions. Prior to the museum visit, the classroom teacher will lead a discussion of the mayor/city council form of community government. After the study, the students will have a mayoral/council election (six council members and one mayor). After the election, the teacher will assign other positions to students who weren't elected: city clerk, city manager, zoo director, zoo keeper, veterinarian, police chief, three Civic League members, two Hunt Club members, two people from "Animals are People Too," a director of the Tourism Board, two newspaper reporters, and the appropriate number of concerned citizens.

Once students are in the Museum Classroom, a city council meeting will convene. At this time the council will be presented with a problem to solve: Leo the Lion has escaped from the city zoo. Students will be given time to formulate plans for Leo's capture. The council will listen to

all sides of the issue as each citizen presents their concerns and suggestions for removing Leo from the streets and returning him to the zoo. During the discussion, the council will listen to all participants.

After all participants have presented and summarized their views, the council will vote on the matter. It will be left to the council as to how Leo will be captured and returned to the zoo.

*Post-Museum Activity:* Invite the mayor or a city council member to speak to the class. Encourage students to attend a city council meeting, allowing them to substitute the visit for a homework assignment. Discuss how the council members were swayed by winning arguments; lead the discussion towards key elements of persuasive speaking and writing. Then give students a persuasive writing assignment.

## *CITY COUNCIL*

### **COUNCILMAN OR COUNCILWOMAN**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You have been elected to the city council of Americus.

As a member of the city council, your job is to pass city laws and to decide what the city does. You are also responsible for managing the city's money.

In order to do a good job, you must do what is best for the entire city.

The city council holds regular meetings. At these meetings, all of the council members and the mayor listen to the citizens of the community. The citizens tell the council and mayor what concerns them, and what they think the council should do about it.

After listening to the people, it is up to the council to make decisions about the city. All of the council members and the mayor vote on what should be done in the city.

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

### **MAYOR**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You have been elected mayor.

As mayor, it is your job to lead the city council meetings and supervise the daily activities of the city. You also attend special ceremonies, such as the opening of a new library.

In order to do a good job, you must do what is best for the entire city.

The city council holds regular meetings. At these meetings, all of the council members and the mayor listen to the citizens of the community. The citizens tell the council and mayor what concerns them, and what they think the council should do about it.

After listening to the people, it is up to the council to make decisions about the city. All of the council members and the mayor vote on what should be done in the city.

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

## **CITY CLERK**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You have been appointed the city clerk.

Your job is to keep a record of what happens in the city government. You attend all city council meetings and take notes of what is said and done. Sometimes, the mayor or a council member may ask you to look in the records and find what happened on a certain date.

In council meetings, you will write down anything on which the council votes. You will also write down how the council members vote.

Your job is very important. You keep the history of the city. You must be very careful to make sure that your records are correct and complete.

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

## **CITY MANAGER**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You have been appointed the city manager.

Your job is to make sure that the city's business is done every day. You make the city budget, and hire and fire city workers. Once the city council has decided what the city should do, you make sure it gets done. In other words, the city council makes a plan and you carry it out.

You attend the city council meetings, but you do not vote.

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

## **ZOO DIRECTOR**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are the Director of the City Zoo.

Your job is to run the zoo. You plan what animals to have and how to get them. You hire and fire zoo workers. You manage the zoo's money. You decide what special events the zoo will have. You also give reports on the zoo to the city council.

Because you are the boss, you are responsible for what happens at the zoo.

## ZOO DIRECTOR

### TALKING POINTS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

1. (Introduce myself)
2. I am sorry that this has happened.
  - ◆ Naturally, I am concerned for citizens' safety.
  - ◆ But I am also very concerned for Leo's safety.
3. Leo the lion is expensive. The zoo spent a lot of money to get Leo, and to build his home at the zoo. He must be recaptured without being harmed in any way. Otherwise, all of this money will have been wasted.
4. Leo is one of our stars at the zoo. We are the only zoo within 500 miles to have an adult male lion. People come from far away to see Leo. Schools bring students to see Leo. We must make sure that Leo is safely returned to the zoo.
5. As Zoo Director, I believe that the zoo should be responsible for planning Leo's capture.



***CITY COUNCIL***

**ZOO KEEPER**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are the Zoo Keeper.

Your job is to take care of all the animals at the zoo. You make sure they are fed, watered and get medicine if they are sick. You make sure their homes are clean and safe.

# ZOO KEEPER

## TALKING POINTS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

1. (Introduce myself)
2. I am also sorry that Leo escaped. We are very careful to close and lock all gates, but somehow Leo got loose. We cannot change that now. Now we must plan on how to return Leo to the zoo.
3. Please remember that Leo is also scared. He does not know where he is, or where to go.
4. Most lions will not attack humans unless the humans make them feel scared. However, Leo is getting hungry and he might attack and eat small animals in the city. He might even eat loose pets.
5. It is easy to see that we must get Leo back soon.
6. I have a plan.
  - ◆ We will establish search teams. Each team will search part of the city, looking for Leo.
  - ◆ When Leo is found, the team will call me. I will go to where Leo is and safely give him something so that he will go to sleep.
  - ◆ Then we can take him back to the zoo.
  - ◆ My plan will make sure that Leo is kept safe, but is returned to the zoo.
7. I do not think that Leo should be hunted and killed. He has done nothing wrong, and if we find him soon, he will not do anything wrong. We will find him soon and return him to the zoo. Both Leo and the people will be safe.
8. Finally, please listen. No one other than a zoo worker should attempt to capture Leo. They could hurt Leo or themselves.

***CITY COUNCIL***

**VET**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are a vet.

Your job is to care for people's pets – cats, dogs, birds, snakes, hamsters, and all sorts of other animals.

## VET

### TALKING POINTS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

1. (Introduce myself)
2. I am concerned that Leo has escaped.
3. Leo is a wild animal. I am worried that Leo will hurt someone.
4. I am also worried that someone who doesn't know what they are doing will hurt Leo.
5. I believe that we can safely capture Leo and return him to the zoo where he belongs. We do not need to kill Leo.
6. I have a plan.
  - ◆ We should round Leo up, just like cowboys round up cows.
  - ◆ At the edge of town, we will build a huge cage.
  - ◆ We will go through the city, shouting and yelling. This will scare Leo and force him to run ahead of us, toward the cage.
  - ◆ When he gets near the cage, a vet can give him medicine to make him go to sleep.
  - ◆ Then we will put him in the cage and take him back to the zoo.

*CITY COUNCIL*

**POLICE CHIEF**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are the police chief.

Your job is to protect the people of Americus and make sure the city is a safe place to live.

## **POLICE CHIEF**

### **TALKING POINTS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

1. (Introduce myself)
2. I am responsible for the safety of all the people who live in this city. I think a lion running around the city is a big danger to the people who live here.
3. I must tell you that I don't really care if Leo is caught unharmed, or if we have to shoot him. I just want to get him before he hurts somebody.
4. I think we should let the Zookeeper or the Vet go ahead with their plans. But I think the police and the people of the town should be able to shoot and kill Leo if they see him.
5. This way, we are sure to get him one way or another.

## *CITY COUNCIL*

### **CIVIC LEAGUE MEMBER**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are a member of the Civic League.

The Civic League is a group of people who want to make Americus a better place to live. Your job is to make sure people think that Americus is a safe place to live, with happy people and fun things to do. When bad things happen in Americus, you want them fixed as soon as possible.

## *CITY COUNCIL*

### **HUNT CLUB**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are a member of the Hunt Club.

Members of the Hunt Club like to hunt animals. They all own guns. Every year they get together and go hunting. Sometimes they hunt deer. Sometimes they quail. They usually bring the meat home to eat.

Members of the hunt club have always dreamed of hunting "big game" animals, such as bears, elk or tigers.



***CITY COUNCIL***

**MEMBER OF *ANIMALS ARE PEOPLE TOO***

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are a member of the group called Animals are People Too.

Members of Animals Are People Too believe that all animals should have the same rights as people. They believe animals should be treated as nicely as humans. They work to make sure that people are not mean or cruel to animals.

## *CITY COUNCIL*

### **DIRECTOR OF THE TOURISM BOARD**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are the Director of the Tourism Board.

Your job is to get people to visit Americus. You let people know about all of the fun things to do in Americus, like visit the city zoo. Leo the Lion is very popular at the zoo. Because your job is to get people to visit Americus for their vacation, you do not want them to hear anything bad about Americus. You also want to make sure that there are always fun things to do here.

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

### **NEWSPAPER REPORTERS**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You are a reporter for *The American*, which is the town newspaper.

Your job is to report what happens in the city. For each of your newspaper stories, you always want to have the facts – what, where, when, why and who. And, you want to know what will happen in the city because of the story. You also report how much new projects will cost and who is in charge of the projects.

## *CITY COUNCIL*

### **CONCERNED CITIZEN**

You live in the city of Americus, Texas.

You like to keep up with what is going on in your city. To keep up, you attend the city council meetings. You ask a lot of questions at the meetings, to make sure you understand what is happening. You also go to the meetings to make sure the council knows how citizens feel about what happens in the city.