Introduction to Civics

Government Rights and Community Responsibility

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Date _____

Grades 6–12 Interdisciplinary Research Simulation Task

Essential Question

How can people use constitutional principles and reliable evidence to improve their communities?

NJSLS Social Studies

Grades 6–8 connections include 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b on constitutional principles and 6.3.8.CivicsPI.3 on perspectives and civic action. Grades 9–12 connect to 6.3.12.CivicsPD.1 through a proposal for government accountability. This packet develops a plan rather than requiring students to send it.

NJSLS English Language Arts

RI.CR.6.1 and W.AW.6.1 establish evidence and argument foundations. RI.CR.9–10.1, W.AW.9–10.1, RI.CR.11–12.1 and W.AW.11–12.1 extend analysis and argument. Use the enrolled grade expectations for grades 7 and 8.

CCLS Literacy Connections

RH.6–8.1 and RH.6–8.2 address evidence and central ideas. RH.9–10.1 and RH.11–12.1 deepen source analysis. WHST.6–8.1, WHST.9–10.1 and WHST.11–12.1 support arguments.

Interdisciplinary and Amistad Alignment

Social Studies examines power and African American struggles for rights. ELA develops arguments. Geography examines access to services. Mathematics evaluates survey data. Science literacy distinguishes observation from causal claims.

Day 1 What Is Civics

Do Now

Who should help decide how a shared space is used? Explain.

Source A Civic Life and Public Decisions

Civics is the study of government, rights, responsibilities, and participation in public life. A government makes and carries out public decisions through institutions. A community includes people connected by a place, relationship, or shared concern. Public policy is a government's chosen approach to a problem. A rule about park hours, for example, can affect recreation, work schedules, and nearby residents.

People disagree about public decisions because they have different experiences, needs, and values. Civic reasoning asks who has authority, who is affected, and what evidence supports a proposal. A popular claim is not automatically accurate. People should examine records, listen to affected groups, and explain how a solution could work.

Legal citizenship is membership in a nation. Civic participation is broader. Young people and residents who cannot vote can still research problems, volunteer, speak at appropriate public meetings, and communicate concerns. Not every community activity is a government action. A neighborhood cleanup is civic participation even when residents organize it themselves. [1, 3]

Quick Write

Explain how a student who cannot vote could influence a public decision. Use one detail from Source A.