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Activities Overview

**Brainstorming Vacant Lots**
Ages 6 – 8 years
Time Allotted: 45 minutes to 1 hour

**SUMMARY**
This activity uses drawing and imagery to act as an introduction to expose the realities of public vacant land and the way it affects communities. Students will draw a vacant lot in their community, then discuss as a class the similarities and differences between their lots. Then students form pairs and use a worksheet with questions to interview each other about the lot they have drawn. The pairs then work together to draw a new illustration of what could be created inside either of their lots, and discuss the differences between their new drawing and their previous individual ones. This activity also allows students to creatively brainstorm alternative uses for public land that are beneficial, as well as realize the potential that is created when teaming up with others.

**MATERIALS**
Copies of the You’ve Found the Lot in Your Life Worksheet (one per student)
Colored Pencils or Pens
Copies of the Brainstorming Vacant Lots Questions (one per student)
Copies of the Now What? Worksheet (one per two students)

**NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS**
The Arts
- **Standard 2:** Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
- **Standard 3:** Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

English Language Arts
- **Standard 1:** Language for Information and Understanding
- **Standard 3:** Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
- **Standard 4:** Language for Social Interaction

**Strengths of Your Group**
Ages 8+ years
Time Allotted: 45 minutes to 1 hour

**MATERIALS**
Pens or Pencils
Copies of the Strengths of a Group Example Sheet (one per student group)
Copies of the Strengths of Your Group Worksheet (one per student group)

**SUMMARY**
This interactive activity helps students learn about the foundation of forming groups and addressing how individual strengths can benefit those groups toward transforming a vacant lot into a community space. The activity begins with a
discussion about when students have worked in groups in the past and is followed with a discussion about what makes a group successful. Students are then divided into groups where they discuss their general areas of strength and practical skills, what they enjoy doing, and what they can improve upon. Students will use an example sheet of group strengths to then fill in their own worksheet and share with the rest of the class.

NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS
Career Development and Occupational Studies
Standard 2: Integrated Learning

English Language Arts
Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education
Standard 1: Analysis, Inquiry, and Design
Standard 7: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving

Social Studies
Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Flyer Making 101
Ages 10 – 14 years
Time Allotted: 30 to 45 minutes

MATERIALS
Copies of the Flyer Making Example Sheets 1 (one per student)
Copies of the Flyer Making Example Sheets 2 (one per student)
Paper (one sheet per student)
Pens or Pencils
Crayons, Colored Pencils or Markers
Scissors, Colored Paper, Glue (optional)

SUMMARY
Students begin by comparing and contrasting two example flyers with each other and discussing their key words and essential information. Students then create their own mock flyers for a meeting using the examples as inspiration as well as including their own ideas.

NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS
The Arts
Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Brainstorming Vacant Lots

This activity uses drawing and imagery to act as an introduction to expose the realities of public vacant land and the way it affects communities. It also allows students to creatively brainstorm alternative uses for public land that are beneficial, as well as realize the potential that is created when teaming up with others.

Materials:
Copies of the You’ve Found the Lot in Your Life Worksheet (one per student)
Colored Pencils or Pens
Copies of the Brainstorming Vacant Lots Questions Worksheet (one per student)
Copy of the Now What? Worksheet (one per two students)

What to Do:

1. Ask students to think about a vacant lot or building that they’ve passed near where they live. Have them draw an image of what the lot looks like on the You’ve Found the Lot in Your Life Worksheet. Talk about the similarities of the students’ drawings, as well as the differences.
2. Have students break off into partners. Using the Brainstorming Vacant Lots Interview Questions, have each student interview their partner and fill in their partners answers. Discuss the questions as a group as well so students can hear what others answer.

Questions from Brainstorming Vacant Lots Interview Worksheet
- WHERE HAVE YOU SPOTTED VACANT SPACES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
- WHAT IS SURROUNDING THESE LOTS? BUSINESSES, HOMES, OR SCHOOLS?
- WHAT IS INSIDE THESE LOTS?
- HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU PASS THESE VACANT LOTS?
- HOW DO THEY POSITIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY? HOW DO THEY NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY?
- WHAT COULD THE LOT BE USED FOR INSTEAD THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY?
- WHAT KINDS OF THINGS COULD BE CREATED IN THIS LOT?

3. Have the partner groups then move on to the Now What? Worksheet to draw together the potential that they see could be achieved in either of their lots – and this can be anything from gardens, an arts center, a dog park, or even community movie viewing space. Have students share and discuss what they imagine their lots for.
4. Have students look at their individual lot drawings and compare them to the drawings they did with a partner for the potential in the lots. Discuss the question below as a group:

- WHAT IS THE MOST NOTICABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR TWO DRAWINGS?
- WHAT DID YOU PARTNER ADD INTO THE DRAWING THAT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE? HOW DID THIS IMPROVE THE DRAWING OR IDEA?
- WHICH DRAWING IS MORE APPEALING OR BENEFICIAL TO THE COMMUNITY?
Ask your partner the following questions and write their answers in the space provided.

WHERE HAVE YOU SPOTTED VACANT SPACES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT IS SURROUNDING THESE LOTS? ARE THERE BUSINESSES, HOMES, OR SCHOOLS?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT IS INSIDE THESE LOTS?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU PASS THESE VACANT LOTS?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

HOW DO THEY POSITIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY? HOW DO THEY NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT COULD THE LOT BE USED FOR THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS COULD BE CREATED IN THIS LOT?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
Think about a vacant lot in your neighborhood that you have passed. Draw a picture below of the lot and what is inside of it.
In the space below draw a picture of what your lot could be used for instead. This could include a garden, a public meeting spot, or even a park to watch movies.
Strengths of Your Group Activity

This interactive activity helps students learn about the foundation of forming groups and working together within those groups to take steps toward transforming a vacant lot.

Materials:
Pens or Pencils
Copies of the Strengths of a Group Example Sheet (one per student group)
Copies of the Strengths of Your Group Worksheet (one per student group)

What to do:
1. Begin a discussion about working in groups. Use the questions below:
   - HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN A GROUP? WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
   - WHAT GOAL WERE YOU TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?
   - WHAT WERE THINGS THAT WENT WRONG? WHAT WENT RIGHT?
   - WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY THE NEXT TIME YOU NEEDED TO WORK WITHIN A GROUP?

2. Begin a discussion about what makes a group successful. The following words should come up:
   - Teamwork
   - Communication
   - Participation

3. Divide students into groups of 4 or 6. Instruct the groups to discuss amongst themselves their strengths. Have the students go around within themselves and talk about what they are good at, and what practical skills they have. Also, address what they like doing that they can improve upon.

4. Pass out a copy of the Strengths of a Group Example Sheet and as a class look at an example group’s strengths and how they are organized and applied to creating a community garden. The boxes on the left hand size are to fill in the name or names of people in each group that may have strengths in that area. In the boxes to the right students can fill in how these different skill areas can benefit the process of turning a vacant lot into community space. There can be more than one name in each box, and the same names can be in several different boxes.

5. Pass out a Strengths of Your Group Worksheet to each group to complete, using the Example sheet as a guide.

6. Have the groups fill in the empty Strengths Worksheet and share them with the rest of the class.
Group Sheet:

- Find a skill you like:
  - Gardening
  - Chores
  - Arts and crafts
  - Notes

- Find the person:
  - Write a skill or skill needed

- Group members:
  - Write the name of the person below your name,
  - Meet the group:
    - Establish a time and place
    - Have a meeting

- Plan the next meeting:
  - Meet for at least 3 people
  - Follow the steps:
    1. Present your idea
    2. Discuss and plan
    3. Start the meeting

- Keep the minutes:
  - Record the meeting.

- Pictures:
  - Show what we are doing.
Flyer Making 101

Here students can create their own mock flyers for a meeting and use the example flyer sheets. This is also a discussion on how to successfully create a flyer that will bring others to your cause.

Materials:
Copies of the Flyer Making Example Sheets 1 (one per student)
Copies of the Flyer Making Example Sheets 2 (one per student)
Paper (one sheet per student)
Pens or Pencils
Crayons, Colored Pencils or Markers
Scissors, Colored Paper, Glue (optional)

What to do:

7. Pass out the Flyer Making Example Sheets 1 & 2. Discuss the following questions as a group:

- WHAT DID YOU SEE IN THE EXAMPLE FLYERS THAT SEEMED ESSENTIAL? WHAT ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FLYERS?
- WHAT KEY WORDS DID THE FLYERS SHARE?
- WHAT MESSAGE ARE THE FLYERS TRYING TO EXPRESS TO THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS?

8. Have the students use crafting supplies to make their own flyers, using the examples as inspiration. Then discuss the following questions:

- WHAT IMPORTANT IDEAS DID YOU TAKE FROM THE EXAMPLE FLYERS?
- IS THERE SOMETHING NEW YOU ADDED THAT WAS NOT ON ONE OF THE EXAMPLE FLYERS?
- WHAT MESSAGE IS YOUR FLYER TRYING TO EXPRESS TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?
Hi Neighbors!

We're looking to turn the vacant lot at 100 Quincy into a potential community garden that can benefit everyone in the neighborhood.

If you would like to be involved in a community project, would like to give your input, or are just curious about the possibilities of this space, join us for a meeting:

**Sunday, August 12th**

11 AM

100 Quincy St.
(near Franklin Ave.)
COME TO GARDEN DAY & LEARN MORE!

A COMMUNITY GARDEN!
WE HAVE A POTENTIAL SPACE FOR
HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!
FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND HERBS?
GROW YOUR OWN FLOWERS,
HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO
ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO LOVES ALL THINGS GREEN?