



Global Voices Information Sheet

The Peace Corps



What is Peace Corps?

- Shortly following John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961, he signed an executive order establishing the Peace Corps, an independent government agency designed to send American volunteers to the developing world to promote world peace and friendship.
- The Peace Corps has three goals:
 - Helping nations meet their need for trained men and women
 - Promoting a better understanding of Americans around the world
 - Promoting a better understanding of the world to Americans
- In the last 50 years, about 200,000 volunteers have worked as part of the Peace Corps.
- Volunteers commit to a 27 month placement in a foreign nation working in various fields including education, health, HIV/AIDS and business development.
- In exchange, volunteers receive language and skills training, a monthly stipend and health insurance. Some are even eligible to have their student loans deferred or even partially cancelled.
- Currently, Peace Corps has 8,655 active volunteers and trainees who have an average age of 28 and are currently serving in 77 countries.

Key Terms

- **animosity** - a feeling of strong dislike, ill will, or enmity that tends to display itself in action.
- **Cold War** – a rivalry after World War II between the Soviet Union and its satellites and the democratic countries of the Western world, under the leadership of the United States.
- **democracy** – government by the people or their elected representatives.
- **globalization** – the process by which a company expands to operate internationally.
- **soft power** – the ability to achieve one's goals without force, especially by diplomacy or persuasion.
- **volunteer** – a person who performs a service willingly and without pay.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Volunteerism, community, communication, helping others and experience.
- Course Connections: Language and Social Studies.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Blackboard
- Computers and internet
- Newspapers
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Community Service (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Write the words “community service” on the board.
 - b. Divide students into small groups and distribute chart paper to each group.
 - c. Ask students to write community service in the center of their paper and to create a word web by recording words they associate with community service around it.
 - d. When groups have completed their word webs, bring the class back together and ask each group to summarize their discussions and create a clear and concise definition of the term community service.

- e. After each group has presented, ask students to list off ways they can volunteer in their community. Write suggestions on the board.
- f. Ask students to share any personal stories of volunteer experiences or any desires for future volunteer opportunities.
- g. When the discussion is complete, ask each student to write a reflection about a personal volunteer experience, talking about the benefits of the experience. (Teacher note: if students do not yet have any volunteer experience, ask them to write about a future volunteering goal).

Thinking:

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary: aid, volunteerism, placement, democracy, globalization, commitment, stipend, Peace Corps, diversity.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone has a turn to read.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
 - d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. On a piece of paper ask each student to write the title of the column at the top of the page. Underneath the heading, have them create a chart with two columns across and five rows down.
 - b. In the first column, have them write the following questions:
 - i. What is the title of this column?
 - ii. Who is the author?
 - iii. What is the purpose of the column?
 - iv. What statistics or facts are listed in the column?
 - v. Are there biases or obvious points of view?
 - c. Have the students revisit the Global Voices column and fill in the chart answering the above questions.
 - d. Discuss the students' charts as a class. Address the reasons why it is important to understand the source and potential bias of a website or print resource offering news information. Explain that just because a source has a bias doesn't mean it has no value. One of the traditional purposes of publications is to express opinions and attempt to convince readers of their validity. Explain that this is why it's important for each of them to form their own opinion while reading publications instead of agreeing with everything.

Communication

1. Volunteering in the Peace Corps (estimated time: 20 minutes)

- a. Ask students to think back to what they learned about the Peace Corps in the Global Voices column.
- b. Explain to students that they will be learning about the work of a Peace Corps volunteer named Kristen Mallory who volunteered her time in rural Ecuador.
- c. Read the following story to the students:
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=1081>
- d. After reading the story ask students the following suggested questions:
 - i. What happened to Kristen on this volunteer experience?
 - ii. What attitudes or actions helped Kristen have a successful experience in the host country?
 - iii. What did she learn from this experience?
 - iv. What were the benefits of this experience on her personal life?
 - v. What were the benefits for the community she was working in?
 - vi. What was your initial impression of volunteerism? Did this change after reading this story?
- e. When this discussion is complete, ask students to turn to a partner and discuss why volunteer opportunities, such as those the Peace Corps offers, are important.

Application

1. Future Volunteer Opportunities (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to think about what issues they would like to address in their community through service (e.g.: education, environment, social issues, etc.). List issues on the board.
 - b. Next, think about nonprofit charitable organizations that work to put a stop to the issues listed on the board. List these organizations on the board as they relate to these different issues.
 - c. Distribute newspapers and allow students to access computers. Ask them to search for articles and advertisements about these organizations that they listed, or any other organizations in their community that may be looking for volunteers. Request that students collect these documents.
 - d. When this research is complete, bring all information together, creating a class volunteering scrapbook.
 - e. Using this scrapbook, select a cause in the community to contribute to as a class.
 - f. Organize a field trip so students can spend a day volunteering.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Peace Corps <http://www.peacecorps.gov/>