



## Global Voices Information Sheet

### Responsible business leadership



An Occupy protestor in New York (photo by: Amy Sussman/Corbis)

#### Background Info

- The Occupy movement is an ongoing series of demonstrations that started with Occupy Wall Street on September 17, 2011, in New York's Zuccotti Park. The city erected a fence near the New York Stock Exchange, which prevented the protestors from reaching their target on Wall Street.
- The protestors call themselves "the 99 percent," a reference to the narrow distribution of wealth in America. One percent of the U.S. population owns 40 percent of the nation's wealth.
- Protestors say they want to "end corporate greed." Critics say this is too vague, and that the protestors have not formed manageable political goals.
- The Occupy movement has spread to other cities around the world, including some in Canada: Toronto and Vancouver.
- Some media critics have compared the Occupy protest to the Tea Party movement, which is an American populist movement calling for less government and lower taxes.
- In 2001, Enron, an American energy company, went bankrupt after it was revealed the company was recording false profits in one of the biggest corporate fraud scandals in American history, which led to growing public mistrust of big corporations.
- In 2008, the global economy sharply declined. There was a financial crisis, meaning large financial institutions collapsed and the U.S. government "bailed out" or gave loans to banks to prevent them from failing. The Occupy protestors are also upset by this government bailout.

#### Key terms

- **Populist/populism**—the principle of any political party that claims to support the power of the lower ranks, or "the people" over the privileged.
- **Disenfranchised**—those people deprived of a franchise, a legal right or some privilege.
- **Foreclosure**—the reclaiming of property by the lender (i.e. bank) when the owner defaults on payments (mortgage payments in the case of a home). Usually involves a forced sale of the property with proceeds going to pay off mortgage debt (i.e. back to the bank).
- **Recession**—a significant decline in economic activity lasting longer than a few months.
- **Alma mater**—a Latin phrase referring to any school, college or university at which one has studied, and usually from which one has graduated.

## 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

- Themes: protest, ethics, Wall Street, the Occupy movement, business leaders, moral character.
- Course Connections: Language, Social Studies.

### Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Global Voices column
- Computers and internet

### 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.

### Reading Comprehension

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 from the column.
    - 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, giving each students 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.

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
  - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
    - i. What is the message in this column?
    - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
    - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
    - iv. What is a protest?
    - v. What is Wall Street?
    - vi. What is the Occupy movement, as explained in the Global Voices column.
    - vii. What is being protested?
    - viii. How does the column compare the Occupy movement to the Tea Party?
    - ix. What do they mean by the disenfranchised masses?
    - x. What are ethics?
    - xi. What is presented as a better strategy to protesting?
    - xii. What is meant by socially responsible leadership curriculum? What would this look like in schools?
  - b. Conclude this discussion by clarifying any additional questions students have on the column.

### Thinking

1. Ethics Wondering (Estimated Time: 15 minutes)
  - a. Conduct a “wondering” session around ethics.
  - b. Begin by asking students to define the term ethics.
  - c. Explain to students that ethics is the study of moral values of human actions as well as the goodness and badness of the motives of actions.
  - d. Ask students to explain what is being protested on Wall Street.
  - e. Explain to students that this week’s Global Voices column focuses on ethics, particularly business ethics. Without providing students with any information, encourage them to freely voice anything that they are “wondering” about ethics and business ethics based on what they have read in the column.
  - f. As the students voice their “wonderings” record them on chart paper in a continuous paragraph formation. (For example: “I wonder what business ethics is? I wonder what actions show poor ethics? etc).
  - g. Once this is complete, display the wonderings somewhere in the room.
  - h. As the lesson continues, whenever these wonderings are answered, cross them off the chart paper.

### Communication

1. Protest (estimated time: 20 minutes)
  - a. Ask students to explain the goals of a protest.
  - b. Ask students if there are any current global or local issues they feel strongly about that they would like to protest for or against.

- c. Once they have discussed these issues, ask students to describe how they would protest for or against this issue.
- d. Divide the class into groups of four.
- e. Ask each group to select one issue and plan a protest around this issue. In their plan students must include:
  - i. The issue they are focusing on.
  - ii. What they are protesting.
  - iii. How they are going to protest.
  - iv. How they are going to further spread the message.
  - v. Who they would like to hear their message.
  - vi. The goals of their protest.
- f. When students have completed their plan, discuss their protests as a class.
- g. Before concluding this discussion, ensure students have a firm understanding of what makes a successful protest.

### Application

1. Protests in the News (estimated time 30 minutes)
  - a. Divide the class into pairs and distribute a variety of newspapers around the room (if available, encourage students to search newspaper articles on the internet).
  - b. Ask pairs to search through the newspaper to find other current examples of protests happening around the world.
  - c. Once they have found an example of a current protest, ask students to answer the following questions:
    - i. Where did I find this article?
    - ii. Who is the author?
    - iii. Where does this article take place?
    - iv. Who are the protestors?
    - v. What are they protesting?
    - vi. What are the goals of the protestors?
    - vii. How have they chosen to protest?
    - viii. What are the protesters hoping will result from their actions?
    - ix. Have the protestors been successful?
    - x. What is your opinion of this protest?
  - d. When pairs have completed the above questions, bring the class back together and discuss student findings.

### 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:

Free The Children – [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com)

We Day Teach - <http://www.weday.com/teach>