
CITIZENSHIP

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Shameless Idealists

This activity is part of the **Junior World Changers kit**, created to give teachers of Grades 4, 5 and 6 a fun and practical resource to introduce younger students to social justice issues and to inspire them to stay involved in their local and global communities throughout their lives. To request your copy of the Junior World Changers kit, email youth@freethechildren.com.

Purpose: In this activity, students will learn about what it means to be a world-changer by engaging with a leading example of an active citizen.

Materials:

- Computers and internet
- Projector and screen
- Paper and writing utensils

Activity

Step 1: Meet a World-Changer

Purpose: The purpose of this step is to get students thinking about the qualities of a citizen and how they impact their local and global communities.

- Write “Citizen” in the center of the board and ask students, “What does it mean to be a citizen?”
- Write their answers on the board, creating a word web.
- Explain to students that they will now learn about someone who is an exemplary active citizen.
- Visit the Shameless Idealist section on www.weday.com to view videos of the following world changers:
 - Jacob Hoggard: The lead singer for the rock band Hedley tells about travelling to Kenya and learning the meaning of community and appreciating what we have.
 - K’naan: Somali-Canadian rapper K’naan tells stories from his childhood, immigrating to Canada, and using music to spread a positive message.
 - Cherie Blair: Barrister and wife of former UK Prime Minister, Cherie Blair speaks about women’s empowerment and the pursuit of global social justice.
 - Betty Williams: A Nobel Peace Prize Laureate tells her story of going from a simple Irish housewife and mother to becoming an international peace activist.
 - Al Gore: Former US Vice President tells personal stories about his life engaged in peace, climate change and how young people can get involved in social issues.
 - Jesse Jackson: Civil rights activist and politician Reverend Jesse L. Jackson shows from personal experience how much a society can change in just one lifetime.

- Martin Sheen: Acclaimed actor Martin Sheen shares stories over a lifetime of being an engaged and passionate activist.
- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf: President of Liberia and Africa's first female elected head of state talks about motherhood, female leaders and the future of Africa.
- Select one episode of Shameless Idealists to watch as a class.
Teacher Note: to extend this activity, students could also be divided into groups and assigned one of the videos to watch together depending on technological resources available. They can then present their findings to the class, providing the students with a broad perspective on citizenship.
- Write the following questions on the board and as students are watching the video, ask them to think about these questions:
 - What issue does this person care about?
 - What inspired this person to get involved in the issue?
 - What did this person do about it?
 - Who was affected by what this person did?
- When the video is complete, answer these questions as a class.
- Return to what is written on the board around the word "Citizen," and ask students, "What makes this person a good citizen?"
- Before the conclusion of this activity, review citizenship and explain to students that a citizen is:
 - involved in their community, whether that is local or global.
 - cares about the people around them.
 - knows what is going on in their community.
 - shares their opinions and helps to make their community better.

Step 2: Interview with an Active Citizen

Purpose: The purpose of this step is for students to use the knowledge gained from the Shameless Idealists video to interview one of their peers about what it means to be an active citizen.

- Now that students have an understanding of citizenship, explain that they are now going to model the Shameless Idealists interview by interviewing one of their peers about what it means to be an active citizen.
- Explain to students that it is the interviewer's job to pursue in-depth information around a topic, getting the story behind a participant's experiences and opinions.
- Today, they are going to perform a standardized, open-ended interview where the same questions will be asked to all interviewees and all questions will be open-ended, allowing the respondents freedom to choose how to answer the questions.
- Divide the class into pairs.
- Pairs will take turns being the respondent and the interviewer.
- Explain that the interviewers will follow the interview steps and questions (identified below) and record their respondent's answers as they go.
- Write the following interview steps and questions on the board, allowing students to follow along:
 - Introduce yourself and identify the purpose of the interview (e.g. "I'm interested in your opinion on what it means to be an active citizen").
 - Begin with the facts:
 - What is citizenship?
 - What does it mean to be an active citizen?

- What qualities does an active citizen possess?
- Learn their opinions and values:
 - Why is it important to practice citizenship in your life?
 - What actions does a person have to take to show they are an active citizen?
 - Who in your life represents the qualities of an active citizen? How?
- Get personal:
 - How have you demonstrated citizenship in your life?
 - What were the effects of these actions on you personally and on the people around you?
 - What is an issue in your community that is important to you?
 - What is an issue in the global community that is important to you?
 - As an active citizen, how can you contribute to making these situations better?
- Steps for the future:
 - What are some ways you can improve as a citizen?
 - How are you going to demonstrate citizenship moving forward? What actions are you going to take?
- Final thoughts: Ask any outstanding questions and clarify any information you are unsure of.
- Conclusion: Thank the respondent for their time.
- After each pair has had a chance playing each role, bring the class back together and hold a discussion around their interviews.
- For additional exploration, encourage students to go home that night and interview an active citizen in their family or their community, bringing the results of their interview back into class for further discussion.