

Action And Voice: Active or Passive?

Trustees: Barbara Brown, Charles Clymer, and Amy Wong Mok

Title: Action & Voice: Active or Passive?

Subject: Civic Education, Government

Topic: Civic Responsibility

Grade Level: 10-12

Time: 65 minutes

[View how this fits state standards](#)

Materials:

- Computer with internet access, external speakers, and a LCD projector OR access to a computer lab with Internet access and headphones for each student
- Updated Media Player recommended.
- Students Worksheets ([MS Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Transparency ([MS Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Download Lesson Plan: ([MS Word](#), [PDF](#))

NOTE: This lesson is planned for technology rich environment. In case you do not have enough computers or rooms for students to watch videos individually, you may consider selecting one video only and watching it as a whole class. If this option is chosen, you will need to redesign previewing activities and the follow up discussion.

Learning Objectives:

Students will

1. analyze the concept and forms of political participation;
2. review websites and search for specific information; and
3. write a summary of class discussion.

PREVIEWING (5 minutes)

At the beginning of the class, project the quote from the **TRANSPARENCY**, read it aloud (or ask a volunteer to read) and ask the students if anything else beside "will" helps people to deal with social problems. You may need to discuss what is meant by "will."

VIEWING AND DISCUSSION (20 minutes)

1. Briefly discuss students' ideas and introduce the videos (Barbara Brown, Amy Wong Mok, Charles Clymer). Divide the class into three groups of an equal number of students and assign one video per group.

NOTE: If it is possible for each student to listen to video clips using individual earphones, then it is not necessary to bring the groups close together. However, if each group will watch their video using one computer only, make sure the sound of one video does not carry around to interfere with other videos.

As students get ready to watch their videos, give out **WORKSHEET 1** that will assist them in taking notes.

2. After the students have finished watching, rearrange the class into groups of three and ask students to share the stories of their trustees. Allow 10-15 minutes for sharing.

After all stories have been shared, ask the following questions:

- Can the trustees be called good citizens?
- What makes them such?

In the process of discussing the questions, consider eliciting adjectives that best describe good citizens.

*NOTE: For example, answers might include: **aware** (of their rights and responsible as citizens), **informed** (about the social and political world); **concerned** (about the welfare of others); **articulate** (in their opinions and arguments); **capable** (of having an influence on the world); **active** (in their communities); **responsible** (in how they act as citizens).*

APPLICATION (45 minutes)

1. Ask students what being engaged in political participation means to them. Allow as many students as possible to express their opinions.
2. Give out **WORKSHEET 2** (or project it from an overhead projector). Ask students to discuss which activities they think lead to active citizens' participation and which one do not provide real participation. Ask students to rank order the list.
3. As the class compares the results of ranking, ask students if the activities can be grouped together into a broader units.
4. Send students to website with **WORKSHEET 3** to investigate the following sites and learn about more way to participate. Let students choose from the list of sites and instruct them to learn as much as they can in 10 minutes. Maintain the time limit.

Sites to explore:

<http://www.serve.gov/>

<http://www.servenet.org>

<http://www.idealists.org>

<http://www.mercycorps.org>

<http://www.youthnoise.com>

<http://www.dosomething.org>

<http://www.mtv.com/onair/ffyr/protect>

<http://www.studentpirgs.org>

(or other similar sites)

5. Listen to students' reports on various ways of being active citizens. When they have finished, ask the following question and monitor the discussion:

Is doing nothing a form of political activism?

NOTE: A less obvious form of political activism is to be politically inactive. Some people feel that they can remain separate and aloof from politics either because they dislike or feel alienated from it, or because they don't believe their participation will make a difference. This is a misconception. Doing nothing is doing something because it has political consequences for democracy leaving decisions and influence to others. For every instance in which Americans do nothing politically, American democracy becomes less democratic and therefore less legitimate. (from Practicing American Politics: An Introduction to Government (1998), by Edwards & Lippucci, p.210)

6. Ask students to write a minute paper summarizing the class discussion and stating what they have learned from the class.

NOTE: A Minute Paper requires students to write on a particular topic for one minute.

7. If appropriate, consider assigning for homework the following:
 - Create a poster representing "How to be an Effective Citizen"
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ASSESSMENT

The students may be assessed on:

1. completion of **WORKSHEETS 1-3**;
2. classroom discussion and participation; and
3. writing skills.