

Dealing With Community Issues

TOPIC SUMMARY

Public policy concerns the way a government's actions and decisions affect the community. Political parties, interest groups, and the media all contribute to public policy. Local governments must decide how to make the best use of their resources, determining their priorities and setting goals. A planning commission makes decisions about a community's future, explaining the community's goals in a document called a master plan. If the government accepts this plan, it becomes public policy. Public policy also affects education. Community leaders also must concern themselves with environmental issues, such as the treatment of solid waste and the prevention of pollution.

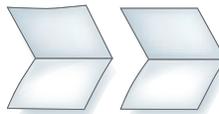
FOLDABLES™
Study Organizer

Comparing Foldable *This Foldable will help students compare the different educational, social, and environmental issues faced by communities.*

Step 1 *Fold a sheet of paper in half from top to bottom. Cut the paper in half across the middle fold line.*



Step 2 *Fold the two papers in half from top to bottom.*



Step 3 *Tape the edges of pieces together as shown (overlapping the edges slightly) to make an accordionlike paper line. Label each chapter section as shown.*



Reading and Writing

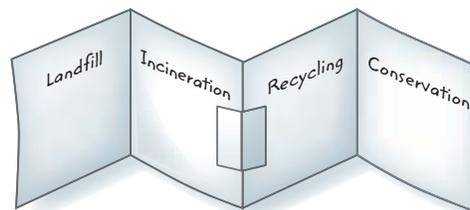
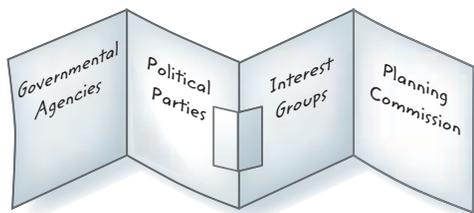
Make notes on the back of each corresponding section about the issues faced by communities. Compare the details for each issue to identify common problems.

TOPIC ACTIVITY IDEAL

Have students use the completed Foldable activity above to identify and propose solutions to problems facing their own community. Organize small groups, assigning each group one community issue. Have students review the information in the Foldable and then make two lists. The first list should explore the problem as it relates to their community. The second list should explore solutions that the local government may have found for this issue. If local government leaders have not found solutions, ask students to brainstorm solutions. Challenge them to consider planning a discussion with a local leader to discuss the issue.

ANALYZING

Have students use this Foldable to analyze the factors that shape public policy. First, have students brainstorm four agencies or groups that affect public policy. Ask students to write the names of these groups on the panels of the Foldable. Then have students list activities or strategies that each group might employ to influence public policy. When students have finished this task, discuss a local policy decision as a class. Tell students to use the information from the Foldable to determine which groups influenced the policy.



ADVISING

Have students write the names of important topics related to environmentalism, such as landfills or conservation, on the Foldable. Tell students to use the information from the text and their own prior knowledge to develop suggestions for public policy on this issue. Have students write at least one idea for action on each section of the Foldable. In addition, challenge students to think of strategies for putting this policy into action. Have students share their ideas and strategies with the class.

Student Study Tip

Remind students that making connections with their own experiences is a useful strategy for remembering difficult topics. Encourage students to make the connection between information in a text and personal experience that relates to that information. Remind students that they may already be familiar with an idea or a concept that the textbook calls by a different name.