



COMPLAINTS AND SOLUTIONS

(40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students simulate the important task of answering complaint mail as mayors. They troubleshoot areas of conflict in communities, with an emphasis on human rights issues.

MATERIALS

Office of the Mayor Letter Form handout;
Complaint Scenarios handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the letter form for each student.
- ✓ Make several copies of the *Complaint Scenarios* handout and cut apart scenarios so that each student will have a scenario.
- ✓ To customize this activity, create a *Complaint Scenarios* handout with real-life situations from your town.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *There are many areas of conflict among members of a community. One of the mayor's most important jobs is to respond to complaints of citizens against one another and against the city. We are going to let you try to perform this delicate task as "mayors."*
- ✓ Review some civil rights laws that affect city administrations around the U.S.: Equal Opportunity Employment, Affirmative Action for Federal Contracts, Fair Housing Laws, Americans with Disabilities Act requiring access in public facilities, Nuisance Codes, etc.

- ✓ Assign a scenario to each student. Students should respond to the scenario as though they were mayor.
- ✓ After letters are written, pair students to discuss their problems and solutions.
- ✓ Ask students to call or e-mail city agencies to check their solutions with official policies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which qualities of an effective city leader did you need to address the problems?*
- ★ *Was there a specific way that you provided your response? What was that?*
- ★ *What can a young citizen do to share his or her opinion with his/her community and with his/her government?*

MORE!

Assign research projects on the civil rights laws cited in this activity. Pose these situations to candidates invited to visit your classroom.

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COMPLAINT SCENARIOS

1. A man thinks he was denied rental of an apartment because he has young children.

2. A woman complains that her neighbor plays loud music.

3. A family wants additional refuse pickup in their neighborhood.

4. A man thinks he was not given a job in the town library because of his age.

5. A minority construction firm requests bids for city work.

6. A family needs daycare at their school, but none is provided at that campus.

7. A citizen complains that there is no wheelchair access to the city park's restrooms.

8. A citizen demands more police protection in a high crime neighborhood.
