

Truth/ Free Inquiry

Lesson Plan

It is essential to maintaining a democratic society that the public business be conducted in an open and public manner. In Germany and the United States, citizens can observe the performance of public officials and attend and listen to the deliberations and decisions that go into the making of public policy. Citizens give their governments a lot of power and money because they trust their honesty and because everything a public official does is open to the scrutiny of the people. The people must be able to remain informed if they are to retain control over those who are their public servants. The commitment by public officials to be truthful, and the ability of citizens to freely inquire into their actions is the only climate under which the society will prosper and enable the governmental process to operate for the benefit of those who created it.

Key Concept for Elementary Students: Truth is necessary for a democracy to work. Truth is necessary for trust to exist. Free Inquiry into the records of people working for the government is necessary to maintain trust.

Materials: One printout of the Truth coloring sheet for each student, and crayons or markers.

Procedure:

1. Write each vocabulary word on the board. Ask students to help define each word and write a simple definition after each word. Ask students to copy each NEW word onto their master vocabulary list and then copy the definitions.

Vocabulary

City Hall - a building where government workers and the Mayor have their offices and work

Citizen - someone who is a legal member of a group or country

Democratic Society - a group in which every citizen is free and has full equality of rights

Emergency - a sudden and un-planned-for need

Government - people paid by voters to do jobs like plan for new roads and school, fight fires, and teach children

Investigate - to look into or search in order to find out something

Mayor - a person elected by voters and paid to run the business of the city

Right - freedom or privilege to do something

Truth - to be honest and not tell lies

Vote - when a person makes a choice to decide something

2. Project the animated cartoon called Truth/Free Inquiry. Discuss each frame after it has played. Ask students to react to the cartoon when completed. Why was the Raccoon upset? What right did the Raccoon say the citizens had? What reason did the Mayor give for ignoring the wishes of the voters?

3. Pass out the Truth/Free Inquiry coloring sheet and ask students to draw a picture that shows why truth is important.

Assessment:

A review of each student's drawing will help you assess whether each student has grasped the concept of Truth/Free Inquiry. Consider reviewing the animation with students who did not depict an appropriate image on their coloring sheet.

Practice how majority rules works in your classroom by voting on issues periodically. For example, why would people want to look into the records of public employees like the principal of the school? What might happen if policemen and judges didn't tell the truth?

