

Civics/Government

How the Subject Fits

Building/buying a home means you are part of a community—urban, suburban or rural. And that community has codes, regulations and, most likely, some strong opinions about what is acceptable conduct by their fellow residents.

In the program, if students decide to cut down too many trees on a particular lot, neighbors will protest. Students discover they cannot build without a permit, and they really don't want to build if the community has concerns that have not been addressed.

Lesson/Discussion Starters

- Study local codes and zoning. Why are there particular codes? Why are communities “zoned” a certain way?
- Discuss what would happen if there were not any codes and zoning restrictions. How would that affect particular lots in the program? How could that affect your community? If possible, have students attend a local council meeting where codes or zoning issues are being discussed.
- Who owns what? Have students investigate property rights and property lines in your city or town. Who is responsible for the sidewalks in front of the houses, for example?
- Study community activity and activism in your area. What are the key issues relating to home building, the environment and land issues. Study the origins of these issues/concerns, disputes and resolutions. How have outcomes affected/changed the community? If possible, have students attend a meeting where these issues will be discussed or debated.

For additional lesson ideas, see Teaching Opportunities by Game Phase, Sample Lessons and Civics/Government in Content Standards Alignment.

Many of the lesson ideas can easily involve two or three subject areas. See Teaching Strategies for ideas on ways to integrate the program into different teaching environments.

Economics

How the Subject Fits

From the moment students become new builders and receive a bank loan, they will be making decisions and choices. The concept of economic trade-offs is central to the home building process. Choices they make throughout the process will prompt students to conduct cost-benefit analyses as they weigh alternatives. Students will learn how fair market value is assessed and they will see how their earlier choices impact their ability to sell profitably to a qualified buyer.

Lesson/Discussion Starters

- Discuss the concept of trade-offs. See Economic Content Standards. Standard 1 notes that productive resources are limited. People cannot have all the goods and services they want; they must choose some things and give up others. Ask students to describe examples in their own lives of choices they have made. Have them explain their decision-making process and the outcome of the choice.
- Examine the housing market in your community, and or compare it with the market in a neighboring community. What factors are influencing housing prices and availabilities?