

Citizen Me

Time Needed: One class period

Materials Needed:

Student worksheets

Power Point w/ projector (*optional*)

Copy Instructions:

Citizenship Pyramid (*1 page; class set*)

Instructional Reading (*2 pages; class set*)

Story Activity (*2 pages; class set*)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:

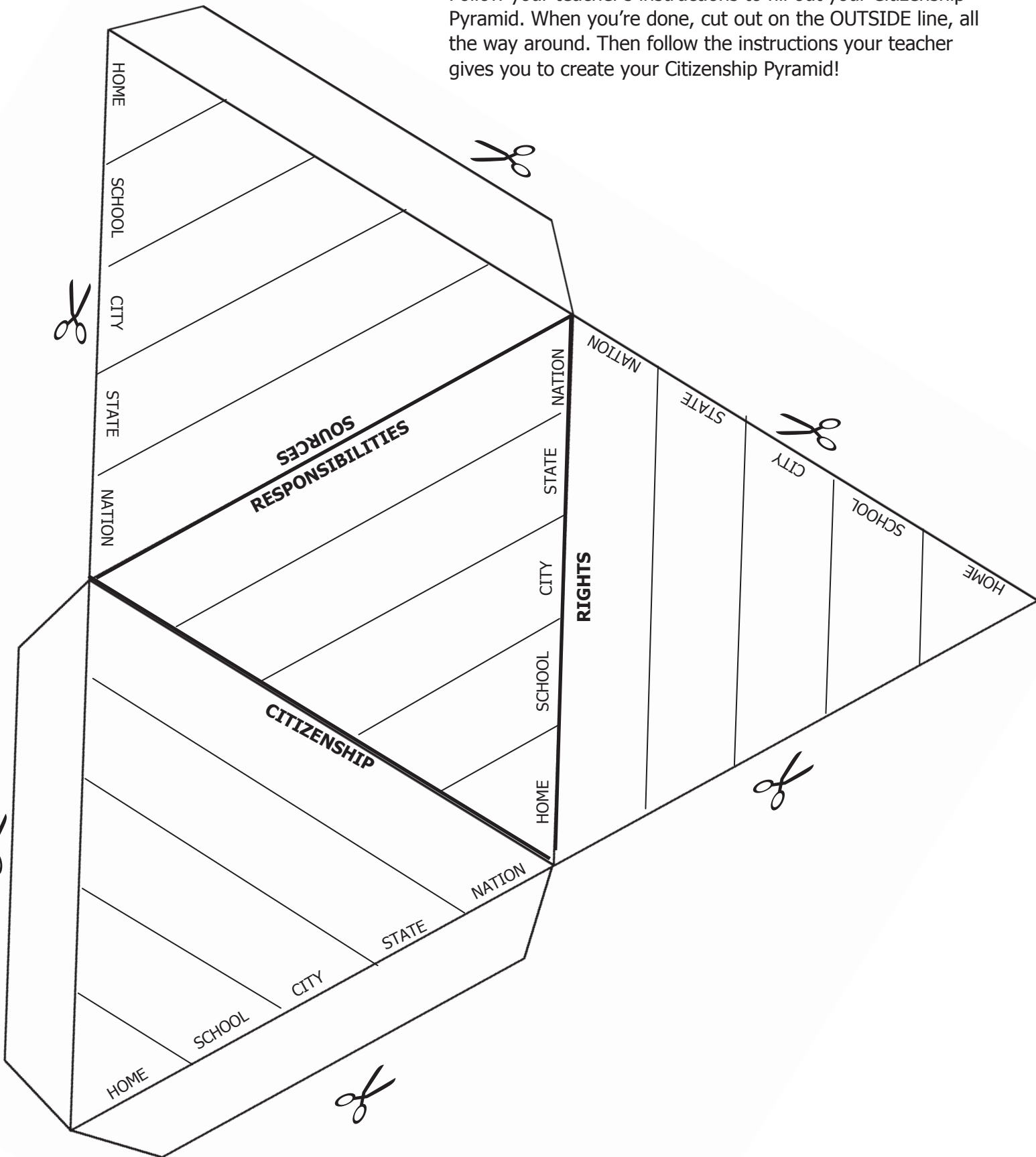
- Define citizenship on five levels (home, school, city, state, nation)
- Describe key rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Identify the source of rights and responsibilities at each level of citizenship
- Recognize conflict between rights and responsibilities
- Suggest examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in their own lives

STEP BY STEP

- ANTICIPATE** the lesson by asking students what they think it means to be a citizen. Do citizens have any rights? Do they have responsibilities? If so, where do those come from?
- DISTRIBUTE** the Citizen Me pyramid guided notes. If you are doing the paper-only version, also distribute the reading page.
- TELL** students that they will be building a Citizenship Pyramid. They will be adding notes to each side during the lesson.
- RUN** the Citizen Me PowerPoint presentation, pausing to discuss each slide and help students fill in their Citizenship Pyramids.
- OR -
- READ** the reading page with the class. Pause to have them fill in the examples on each side of their Citizenship Pyramids. Use your Teacher's Guide to help you.
- DISTRIBUTE** scissors and tape or glue so that students can cut out and assemble their pyramids. Help students see where to cut and fold correctly.
- DISTRIBUTE** the "Bob's Big Day of Citizenship" story.
- READ** the story with the class. You may want to challenge the class to raise their hands every time they spot a right or responsibility Bob is exercising/fulfilling.
- INSTRUCT** students to use their pyramids to help them fill out the chart at the end of the story. Students should identify two rights or responsibilities (or one of each) for each level of citizenship. They should write what Bob did, then put a check mark to indicate whether that action was a right or responsibility.
- CLOSE** by asking students to silently think of one right or responsibility they will carry out before they go to bed tonight and what level of citizenship it falls under.

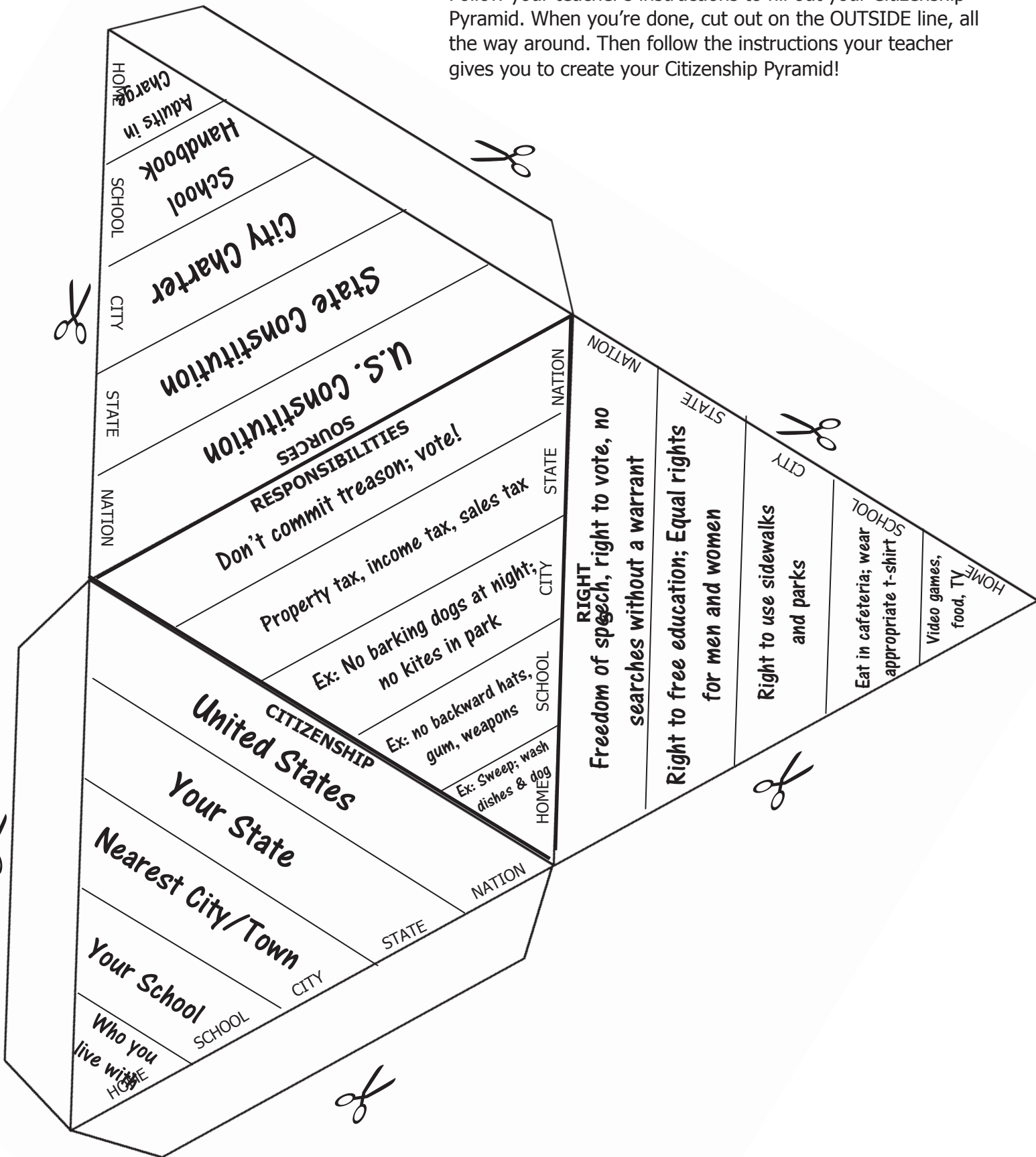
Citizenship Pyramid

Follow your teacher's instructions to fill out your Citizenship Pyramid. When you're done, cut out on the OUTSIDE line, all the way around. Then follow the instructions your teacher gives you to create your Citizenship Pyramid!



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You Are a Citizen

You may not go around thinking of yourself as a citizen, but you are one. A **citizen** is a member of a community who has rights and responsibilities. A **community** is a group of people who share an environment. Every day, you are part of several different layers of community. That means you have many different levels of citizenship! At each level, you have rights and responsibilities.



Levels of Citizenship

Think about where you live and where you go each day. If someone asked you where you live, would you give the name of your town? Your state? Your country? Or maybe you would give the street address of your home.

The people you live with at home make up the smallest “community” you belong to. Your school or workplace is a community, too. These are the people you interact with outside our homes every day. You are also a citizen of the city in which you live. (If you don’t live in a city, you are still a citizen of the county in which you live. City-dwellers also live in counties.) Our nation is made up of 50 states (and a district, too). You are a citizen of the state where you live. Finally, you are a citizen of your country!

⇒ Can you think of any other levels of citizenship that you have?

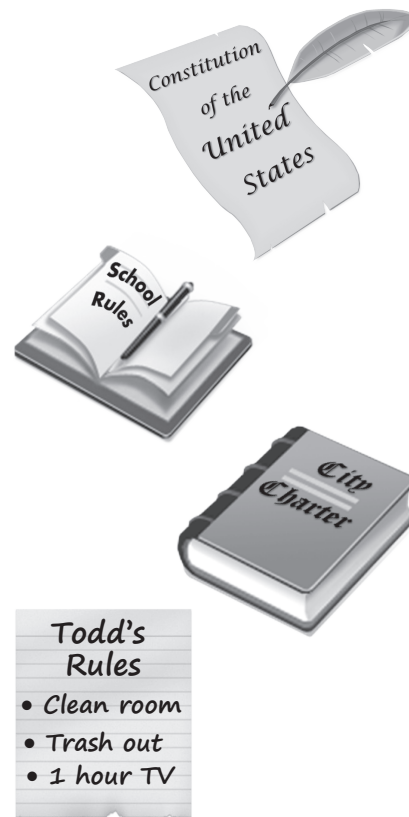
Sources of Rights and Responsibilities

If being a citizen means having rights and responsibilities, where do those rights and responsibilities come from? The answer is, it depends on the level of citizenship you’re talking about.

At most levels of citizenship, your rights and responsibilities are written down. In the United States, at the national level we are guaranteed a list of rights in our **Constitution**. The Constitution was written when our nation was born, and it sets the rules for how our nation will run. Each state also has its own constitution that tells how the state will run. State constitutions also guarantee rights to that state’s citizens. Cities usually have a **city charter** that tells how the city will run. It usually includes some rights and responsibilities of city citizens.

Most schools have a school handbook that lists the students’ rights and responsibilities. (Workplaces usually have an employee handbook.) At home, the adults in charge decide what your rights and responsibilities will be. Maybe you have a written list of your responsibilities and what you are allowed to do, or maybe your rights and responsibilities at home are discussed verbally.

⇒ Can you think of any other sources of rights and responsibilities?



Rights

A **right** is a privilege or a claim to something. You would need a pyramid the size of the ones in Egypt to list all the rights citizens have at each level, but here are just a few:

At the national level, the U.S. Constitution guarantees really big rights such as freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the right not to have the government search your stuff without a warrant. Each state also has its own constitution. State constitutions repeat many of the guarantees in the U.S. Constitution, but they often add more. Your state constitution might guarantee the right to a free education or equal rights for men and women. A city charter gives you the right to services your city provides, such as sidewalks or parks.



⇒ *Would it be a problem if the U.S. Constitution talked about sidewalks?*



Maybe it seems like your school handbook contains a lot of things kids aren't supposed to do, and very few "rights." But look closer... Sometimes rights are the flip side of responsibilities. If the handbook says you can't do something, it is silently giving you the right to do something else. In that way, school handbooks are the opposite of the U.S. Constitution. For example, the handbook might say not to throw food in the cafeteria. That is silently saying you have the right to eat in the cafeteria! If the handbook says "No inappropriate t-shirts," it is silently saying you have the right to wear appropriate t-shirts. At home, you probably don't have a handbook of rights. Even so, the adults in charge may give you the right to eat the food they buy or the right to watch TV and play video games.

⇒ *What rights do you have at your school? At your home?*

Responsibilities

Responsibilities are duties to other people, the government, or society. At home, you are responsible for doing what the adults in charge ask you to do. You might have to sweep the floor, wash the dishes, or even wash the dog! At school, you are responsible for following the rules. You're probably not supposed to throw paper airplanes, chew bubble gum, wear your hat backwards, or carry weapons.

City charters often contain rules, kind of like a school handbook. Laws that apply only within a city are called **ordinances**. If a city ordinance tells you not to do something, you know you have a responsibility not to do that thing. For example, an ordinance may say you can't have loud, barking dogs at night. If an ordinance says, "There is a \$50 fine for flying a kite in the park," you know you've got a responsibility not to fly your kite there.

Paying taxes is one of the biggest responsibilities you'll find in a state constitution. Your state might have taxes on property you own, income you earn, and even on the stuff you buy at the store. The U.S. Constitution does not have a list of responsibilities, but that doesn't mean there aren't any. The Constitution creates a government that can't work if people don't participate. Could you have a jury trial if everyone refused to do jury duty? What if nobody showed up to vote? Or what if they voted without understanding the issues? Jury duty, voting, and staying informed are responsibilities we have to society and the government.



Rights vs. Responsibilities

Did you know it's illegal to yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater? Responsibility for public safety comes before the right to free speech!



⇒ *What do you think your state uses tax money for?*

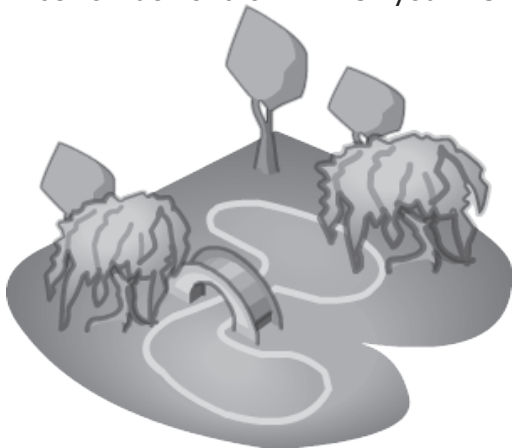
Ted's Big Day of Rights and Responsibilities



Rrrring! Ted bolted up in bed. His eyes shot to the clock. Oh, no—late again! Shoving the covers aside, he raced for the shower, pulled on the first shirt and jeans he could find, and thundered downstairs for a quick bowl of that sugar cereal Grandma had bought him “just this once.” Chocolate Crisp-O, the box said. He wolfed down the cereal and washed his bowl and spoon the way Grandma expected. Half way out the door, he remembered to grab his model rocket. Today after school he would finally test it out at the park.

Heading out the door, Ted jogged down the steps and onto the city sidewalk. He practically ran the four blocks north to Freedom Middle School, but some things were too important to skip, so he stopped for 30 seconds to buy his usual candy bar. It cost \$0.85, but with sales tax it came to \$0.93—practically a whole dollar.

The school day started out fine, but things got a little crazy at lunch when some kids started a food fight in the cafeteria. A peanut butter sandwich hit him in the head and left a nasty glob in his hair. Ted wasn't about to get involved—and he sure wasn't going to go hungry—so he wiped it off with a napkin and finished eating. After school, the model rocket had to wait because Ted forgot there was a home basketball game. He watched the game for a while with some friends, but skipped out after the home team surged forty points ahead of the visitors. It wasn't much of a thrill when you knew who was going to win.



By the time Ted got to the park, he was really thirsty. While slurping water from the fountain, he noticed the sign posted above the drinking fountain: **PARK RULES**. The writing was tiny, but it was a good thing he read it. There was a \$100 fine for shooting off model rockets in the park! At this rate, his model rocket would never see the sky.

Bummed—and keeping his rocket safely out of sight in his backpack—Ted wandered around the park looking for something to do. Some weird guy sitting under a tree asked Ted if he wanted to start a war against the United States.

Just as Ted was telling him “no thanks,” a big commotion started on the other side of the park. A huge crowd of people was coming down the street holding signs. He left the guy under the tree and went to check out the crowd. *Tell the President—Votes for Kids!* one sign read.

“They may be young, but they're not dumb!” the crowd chanted.





A kid who looked about sixteen pointed right at Ted. "Hey, you!" he shouted. "What do you think? Should kids have the right to vote?"

Ted thought for a second. "Why not?"

"Come on," another kid called. "Grab a sign and join us!"

Speaking his mind may not have been quite as fun as shooting off a model rocket, but it was pretty close. By the time he finally got home, Grandma only scolded him a little bit for being late.

"May I still watch my hour of TV?" Ted asked.

"Well, all right," she said. "But only one hour."

"Okay, Grandma." Ted flipped on the cartoons, checked the clock, and settled in to relax after his busy day.

What rights or responsibilities did Ted exercise in his role as a:	Is this action a:	
	Right	Responsibility
United States Citizen?		
State Citizen?		
City Citizen?		
School Citizen?		
Citizen of his Home?		



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Note: There may be other possible answers in addition to the ones below.

What rights or responsibilities did Bob exercise in his role as a:	Is this action a:	
	Right	Responsibility
United States Citizen?		
<i>Did not commit treason</i>		X
<i>Exercised freedom of speech</i>	X	
State Citizen?		
<i>Received free public education</i>	X	
<i>Paid sales tax</i>		X
City Citizen?		
<i>Walked on sidewalk</i>	X	
<i>Followed park rules</i>		X
School Citizen?		
<i>Did not participate in food fight (Or, ate in lunch room, which is a right)</i>		X
<i>Attended basketball game</i>	X	
Citizen of his Home?		
<i>Ate cereal / Watched TV (accept either answer)</i>	X	
<i>Washed Dishes / Limited TV to one hour (accept either answer)</i>		X