

Life Skills Literacy

Things to Know About Community Resources

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To the Teacher



Things to Know About Community Resources is another title in the growing *Life Skills Literacy* series from J. Weston Walch, Publisher. *Things to Know* books are reproducible, thematic compilations of information aimed at youth and adult English language learners, including ESL students new to American or Canadian culture. These books are intended to help build vocabulary, expand culturally based knowledge, and develop real-life and survival skills. *Things to Know* books include interactive, authentic, cooperative, and idiomatic materials and activities. The books lead to success with language and success in the classroom, the family, and the community.

The *Life Skills Literacy* series is appropriate for ESL learners at intermediate levels and for native learners reading at the fourth-grade level and higher. Each book in the series contains vocabulary lists with nearly 400 words and phrases; in this volume, most words are specifically related to community resources. Illustrative and contextual clues offer assistance with lexical development. Verb forms are generally simple, and the use of passive voice is limited.

The activities in *Things to Know About Community Resources* and its companion books can help individual students build reading and writing proficiencies. They can help full classes and small groups of students develop speaking and listening competencies as well. They can help all learners understand community issues and explore related subjects like government structure and civic responsibility.

Their brevity and focus make *Things to Know* titles excellent resources for tutors working with individual students, whether or not the books are also used in the classroom. Their basic level makes *Things to Know* suitable for a wide

range of circumstances and student abilities. Their controlled language and high-interest topics give them appeal for students as well as teachers.

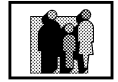
Like other books in the series, this one devotes three pages to each of 24 lessons. The first page of each lesson is for teachers. It provides information and suggestions ranging from general concept considerations to specific Internet sites you and your students might visit. The second and third pages of each lesson are reproducible, for student use. The second page presents topic information and a dialogue, story, or student challenge relating to the information. The third page includes a word list, plus writing and discussion activities for individual, small group, and full-class use.

This book cannot cover all the vocabulary and topics related to community issues students might face. Nor can it be designed to be exactly at the level of each and every student. But it can be—and is—very flexible, covering the basics at a consistently low reading level and then offering numerous ideas for moving beyond. It also provides extension activities to meet a wide range of classroom and personal needs. General ideas for use and adaptation of the materials appear on the following page of Teaching Suggestions. More specific suggestions can be found on the teacher page provided with each lesson.

We believe you will find the Walch *Life Skills Literacy* series and its individual *Things to Know* titles useful with many different students in many different settings. We'll be pleased to hear how well it works for you, to know what other titles you think should be added, and—as always—to learn what more this company can do to serve you and your students.

—J. Weston Walch, Publisher

Teaching Suggestions



You can use *Things to Know About Community Resources* basically as is, having learners work through the two reproducible pages of each lesson in one or two class sessions. Or you can make this book the core of a broader approach to community issues by following the many suggestions in the topical teacher pages and expanding each lesson to cover several sessions.

The first step in deciding how to use these pages is, of course, assessing the needs, interests, and abilities of your learners. The second step is considering the characteristics of your own students and community. Wherever you teach, you'll find that your classes benefit most when knowledge of personal needs and local conditions is added to the *Things to Know* mix.

The "Preparation possibilities" on the teacher pages provide some ideas of what you might wish to do in advance to enrich your classes, particularly if you are presenting a topic over several class sessions. But these pages are designed for immediate use, and you need not spend hours preparing for their presentation. If you think local information will be helpful to your groups, follow the suggestions of the teacher pages and assign students to do the research. They will become true learners—and enjoy themselves as well—when they discover the practical value of outside projects. Or invite outsiders to join the class and talk about such complex matters as the court system.

Some of the "Technology resources" listed on the teacher pages assume an Internet connection and use of a search engine like Yahoo!® to look for information and suggested Web pages. Use the topics suggested as your search terms to yield the best results.

The word lists on the third page of each lesson contain between 12 and 15 terms each. Terms referring to resources like the Internet avoid the highly technical and should interest all learners, whatever their backgrounds and concerns. The more general terms are all important to the passages in which they occur. They have been selected with reference to readability levels and vocabulary frequency-use studies. In some cases, you may want to adjust the lists to help meet the needs and interests of your own students. You can underline the words you wish to stress, tape over those you don't want, and add others you find useful. However, be careful not to eliminate terms required for the fill-in sentences that follow.

The idioms and slang and the "fascinating facts" given in the teacher pages are presented as fun and informative extras for some classes. If you use the idioms and slang, consider asking students to try them in sentences and to share other terms they know. You can treat the word lists in the same way, if you like, asking students to build sentences around them and to supply related vocabulary that interests them.

All materials on the activity pages have been prepared with references to varied thinking skills, learning styles, and the several intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner and others. But no mix can be perfect for every class, and these also can—and should—be adjusted to meet the needs of your own groups. The role-plays based on dialogues, stories, and challenges are useful examples. Some students with very limited language skills will benefit from working in pairs and reading dialogues aloud to each other. More advanced students will enjoy and benefit from more creative approaches in which they make up their own parts and decide what might happen next to the characters in the story.

Lesson 13: Emergency Resources



Themes:

- Emergency resources
- Volunteer emergency workers

Background notes: Emergency resources are numerous in the United States and Canada. They need to be. In the United States alone, two million fires are reported each year. And the United States suffers one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world, with 80 percent of the deaths occurring in home fires. These pages introduce learners to emergency resources in general, and give special attention to volunteer fire departments. Discussion and other extension activities lead students to consider the resources and needs of their own communities.

Preparation possibilities:

- **Think about:** The need for volunteer emergency workers in your community
- **Bring to class:** Information about fire prevention and volunteering for local emergency services

Technology resources:

- Search topics: *Fire protection, fire departments, volunteer fire departments*
- Web pages to try: International Association of Firefighters, Fire Department Training Network, U.S. Fire Administration

Student pages:

- Page 38 includes: An introduction to general emergency services; a dialog about recruitment for a volunteer fire department
- Page 39 includes: A word list you may adjust for your class, and student activities

Especially for ESL: Ask: What kinds of emergency resources does your first country have? Does it use volunteer firefighters, or professionals?

Extra idioms and slang to introduce:

- *Like a house on fire:* fast and strong
- *Burned, burned up:* very angry

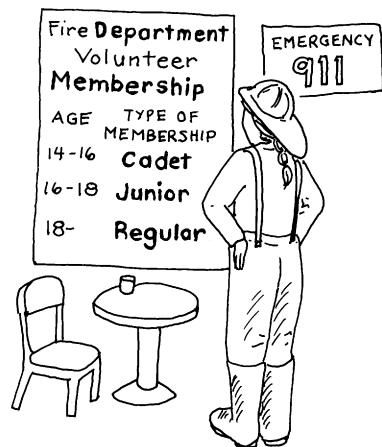
Thoughts to share with learners: Emergencies are everybody's business. Professional firefighters and others can deal with most of them. But all of us can work at preventing some types of emergencies and helping each other when trouble strikes. The 911 emergency number is not yet available everywhere. Some people need to remember different emergency numbers in their communities.

Questions to ask learners: Who in the class does volunteer emergency work? Who wants to be an emergency worker? What kind of person makes a good emergency worker? Does your town or city have all the emergency resources it needs?

Projects to assign learners: Visit an emergency resource in your area. Find out what it does, and ask if it uses volunteers. Look for news stories about emergencies. What resources are used? Share what you find with your classmates.

A fascinating fact to share: In 24 B.C., the Emperor Augustus appointed the first firefighters in ancient Rome. Then, and for centuries after, the best fire-fighting tools were buckets filled with water.

Lesson 13: Emergency Resources



Who helps in emergencies? Governments do. In big **disasters**, like **floods**, help comes from the national level. In forest fires, states do a lot. Towns and cities take care of smaller problems. They use **police** and fire departments for that. Private groups also help. The Red Cross may be the best known group. It helps many people in trouble. The rest of us can help, too. Most of us try to help when we see problems. But many people do more. Some volunteer to fight fires. Some work with the police. Why? They care about people. They like **excitement**, too.



Dialogue: The fire department

Firefighter: You're new in town, aren't you?

Newcomer: Yes, I am.

FF: I'm in the volunteer fire department. Can I interest you in **joining**?

N: I don't think that's for me.

FF: But we need people. You can save people's lives. And you get to drive a fire truck. Imagine racing down the road with the **sirens** in your ear. That's exciting.

N: I'm sure it is. But it might be too much for me.

FF: It doesn't happen very often, of course. But when it does, it's like WOW!

N: What kind of **commitment** is it?

FF: We have training once a month. Sometimes it's indoors, in a class. And sometimes we burn down buildings to **practice** on them.

N: That would be a problem for me. You see . . .

FF: But it's fun. And the other thing we do is educate people in the community. We tell them how to **prevent** fires. And we teach them about calling for emergency help.

N: Isn't that pretty simple? Don't you just dial 911?

FF: Yes, if you have a real emergency. But some people don't understand that. They call for the wrong reasons. They call because their cat is up a tree. Or they call to talk to a member of the department. Or they call to ask where the fire is when they hear a siren. That's really bad. So we need to teach people what to do.

N: Preventing fires and putting them out are very important. I think your department does wonderful work.

FF: Thank you. So do I. Now, will you join us?

N: I'm afraid I can't.

FF: Can't or won't?

N: Can't. That's what I've been trying to tell you. I'm **allergic** to smoke. It makes me sick. You don't want me anywhere near a fire.



Lesson 13: Emergency Resources



Word List

department	junior	flood(s)	join(ing)	practice
membership	regular	police	siren(s)	prevent
cadet	disaster(s)	excitement	commitment	allergic

Increasing Your Understanding

1. Look at the word list in the box above. If you don't know a word, find out what it means. Try to figure it out from the way it is used on page 38. Or look it up in a dictionary.
2. Supply the missing word in each of the sentences below. Use the word list above.
 - (a) The sign on page 38 says _____ members are aged 14 to 16.
 - (b) Adult volunteers are called _____ members.
 - (c) Some volunteers like _____, according to the paragraph at the top of page 38.
 - (d) In big _____ like floods, help comes from the national level.
 - (e) In the story on page 38, the newcomer is _____ to smoke.

Questions to Discuss

1. Do you think the firefighter in the story on page 38 is a good one?
2. What might cadets do in a volunteer fire department? What about junior members?
3. What can happen if somebody calls 911 when there's no emergency?

Things to Write About

1. What emergencies have you seen? Write a paragraph about one of them.
2. Imagine that you have a small fire in your house. The fire department puts it out. Write a letter saying thank you. Make up any facts you want to.

Things to Do

1. With a partner, act out the story on page 38. Use your own names and words if you want. Talk about how it might feel to fight fires.
2. When should you call 911? List five things that might make you call.
3. How can you prevent house fires? Work with two or three classmates. Create a television ad showing people something they should do. Act out your ad for the class.
4. What emergency resources are near you? Look around and tell your class what you find.



Lesson 14: City Hall Resources



Themes:

- Local government resources
- City and town halls

Background notes: City and town halls are mysterious places to some people. They seldom or never visit—or if they do, they go straight to a single department, do their business, and leave. These pages introduce learners to the idea of city hall as something useful to them, and, through extension activities, suggest a visit and tour. They assume the presence of a city or town hall in students' communities. If that is not the case for your classes, you might consider making adjustments in your presentation. In any event, you might consider arranging a class tour of a local government facility. But note that some city halls are more accessible than others; check yours before making plans. (See also Number 4 under "Things to Do" on page 42.)

Preparation possibilities:

- **Think about:** The structure of your own local government
- **Bring to class:** Information about local government structure and resources

Technology resources:

- Search topics: *City government, town government, local government, term limits*
- Web pages to try: National City Government Resource Center, Official City Site

Student pages:

- Page 41 includes: An introduction to local governments; a story about a candidate running for mayor
- Page 42 includes: A word list you may adjust for your class, and student activities

Especially for ESL: Ask: How do local governments operate in your first country? Do they have city or town halls?

Extra idioms and slang to introduce:

- *Dirty pool:* an unfair act
- *Bum steer:* bad information

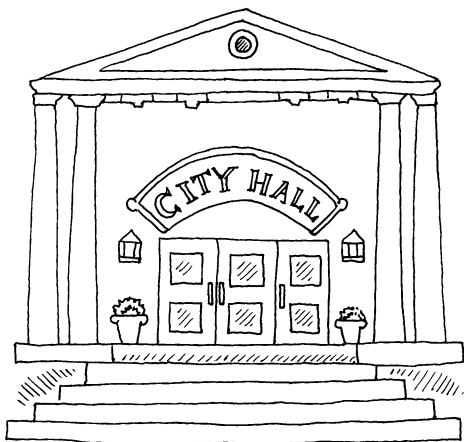
Thoughts to share with learners: Some people are nervous about going to government offices. They shouldn't be. Government offices really are supposed to help people. Many people think it's not good for one person to stay in the same elected office for a long time. That's why some states and towns have term limits. U.S. presidents have term limits, too. They can only serve two full terms.

Questions to ask learners: Who in the class has used city hall? Do you want to tell the story? Was your experience good? Were the workers at city hall helpful? How can your own local government be better? Does it have a town or city council? A mayor? If not, what is the government like?

Projects to assign learners: Ask some friends and family members what they think of your local government. Share what you learn with your class. List some of the buildings run by your city or town government. Then list some local buildings run by other levels of government, like the state or county.

A fascinating fact to share: Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland. It has some unusual resources—underground hot springs that heat the entire city.

Lesson 14: City Hall Resources



“You can’t fight city hall.” That’s a **common** saying. But usually you don’t have to fight city hall. It’s the center of **local** government. It has resources for everybody, and it should work for everybody. You can use city hall, instead of fighting it. But to use resources, people need to know about them. They can find out about their own city hall in the phone book. Or they can visit it. That’s usually their right. City hall is like other parts of the government. It belongs to the people.



Story: The candidate

Sue Ann Lu was walking when a man asked for a minute of her time. “Are you registered to **vote** in this city?” he asked.

Sue Ann said she was.

“I’m Dan Schwartz,” he said. “I’m a candidate for **mayor**.”

“I’ve seen your picture in the news,” she told him.

“I hope you think I’m good news. I will be if I win, because I want to **reform** our city government.”

“So I hear,” said Sue Ann. “May I ask why?”

“In the first place,” Dan said, “city hall should be **accessible** to everybody.”

“Can’t everybody use it now?”

“Not easily. The health clinic isn’t even open in the evenings. And that’s when people need it.”

Sue Ann knew the clinic was open two nights a week, and told him so.

“I’ll have to check,” said Dan. “Another thing is police **brutality**. Every day the news talks about another case.”

“Really? The last one I remember was two months ago.”

“Well, I’ll have to **admit** that this is an unusually quiet **period**. But that won’t continue if we leave this city in the hands of **politicians**.”

“But aren’t you a politician?”

“In a way. But not a **career** politician like my opponent. She’s the **incumbent**, you know, and she’s been in office a long time. When people stay in office too long, that’s when **corruption** begins.”

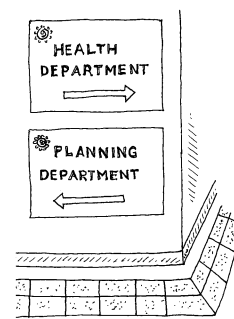
“Are you saying your opponent is corrupt?” Sue Ann wasn’t looking happy.

“I hate to ask, but who knows where she gets all that money she spends on ads?”

“There was a story about that in last week’s paper.”

“You’re very well **informed**, aren’t you?” asked the candidate. “I could use somebody like you to help in my campaign. Interested?”

“Not a chance,” said Sue Ann. “Your opponent happens to be my mother. And I happen to know she’s not corrupt.”



Lesson 14: City Hall Resources



Word List

common	mayor	brutality	politician(s)	corruption
local	reform	admit	career	inform(ed)
vote	accessible	period	incumbent	

Increasing Your Understanding

1. Look at the word list in the box above. If you don't know a word, find out what it means. Try to figure it out from the way it is used on page 41. Or look it up in a dictionary.
2. Supply the missing word in each of the sentences below. Use the word list above.
 - (a) In the story on page 41, Dan Schwartz says Sue Ann Lu is very well _____.
 - (b) "I want to _____ our city government," the candidate says.
 - (c) He thinks there is a problem with police _____ in the city.
 - (d) City hall is the center of _____ government, says the paragraph at the top of page 41.
 - (e) According to a _____ saying, "You can't fight city hall."

Questions to Discuss

1. What do you think of the candidate in the story on page 41? Would you vote for him?
2. What does it mean to say you can't fight city hall? Why do people say that?
3. How do you feel about career politicians? Are they good for government, or not?

Things to Write About

1. What would you do if you were a mayor? Imagine that you have been elected in your town or city. How can you help your community? Write your ideas in a paragraph.
2. Write a letter to a mayor. Use any name you want. Tell the mayor why public health clinics need to be open at night.

Things to Do

1. Act out the story on page 41 with a partner. Use your own names and words if you want. Decide what you think will happen next.
2. What resources do most town and city governments offer? List at least seven things. Share them with your classmates.
3. How can you get elected to your town government? Imagine that you are helping a friend campaign. What will you do? Work with two or three other students and decide. Share your ideas with the class.
4. Visit your town or city hall. See what resources it offers. Share what you find with your class.

