

## Lesson Plan: The Meaning of Community



### Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the word *community* and apply it to Fairfax County
- Identify the qualities needed to create a sense of community
- Assess the quality of life in Fairfax County



### Time Needed

- 1-2 class periods



### Procedures

**Bellringer:** Ask students to write a response to the following: They are on a holiday trip to Orlando, Florida. They meet someone who asks “Hey, where do you live?” How would they respond to that question? Students write and wait to be recognized. Give students a few minutes and ask for responses. Make a list on the board or on newsprint for the class to see. Use students to record the responses. Discuss.

1. In a large group, have students brainstorm the meaning of the word community. Write their responses on the board or an overhead. Ask students to get into small groups and to develop a definition of community that they agree on. Have a member of each group share their definition with the class. Look for similarities. Try to reach a class consensus of what a community is. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Fairfax County meeting the definition of community.
2. Have students research the opinions of family members and neighbors. Tell them to compare responses of people who are native to the County or have lived here a long time to those who have been here less than three years.



### Assessment

Assign students to summarize their thinking in a two-page essay entitled “What Makes Fairfax County a Community.”



## Extensions

1. Invite County officials to speak to the class on the topic of community.
2. Have the class make a video with a wide variety of citizen interviews (“person-in-the-street style”) on the topic of community.
3. Survey various local media formats (Channel 8, cable channels, local newspapers) to determine what is getting mentioned and shown about the community. Note both positive and negative coverage. This could be assigned to each student as an extended activity, perhaps two to four weeks. Have students prepare portfolio of various examples of what’s in the news about the community.
4. Invite a local newsperson (print and/or electronic) to speak to your class on the topic of community news—what is covered and what isn’t.