Lesson 4: The Government of San Diego

Focus Questions:

What form of government does San Diego have? Who are our elected officials? How can we help solve a problem at our school or in our community?

Activity # 1 What's in a City's Name?

Ask students, "Do you know how you got your name?" If students don't know, encourage them to ask their parents how they got their name.

After discussing family names, investigate the names of streets, parks, schools, or buildings in San Diego. Have students work in groups to examine a local map with a magnifying glass to find places named for people in the community or county. Are any of the locations named for people who played an important role in California or American history? Why do you think these names were chosen?

Ask students, "How did San Diego get its name?" Review the bio-sketches of Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo and Sebastian Vizcaino found in the curriculum guide for Standard 3.3.

1542	**Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo**, an explorer for Spain, discovers what is now California and gives the name of San Miguel to San Diego Bay.
1602	**Sebastian Vizcaino**, a Spanish explorer, changes the name San Miguel to San Diego.

Activity # 2 Our City

As you discuss this section, have students complete *Our City* (Handout # 4.1).

City Incorporation: Ask students: "What was the date of incorporation for San Diego?" Review the following information from Unit #3. This incorporation date is referred to as the date the city was *chartered*.

1833	San Diego, whose population has grown to 432, is given pueblo (town) status.
1837	San Diego looses pueblo status after the town's population drops to 150 due to water shortages and Indian raids on the ranchos.
1850	San Diego is incorporated as a city.

Have students predict reasons why their city chose to become an incorporated city.

Teacher Information about incorporation:
1. A community need not become a city. It is a choice which local residents must make.
2. All areas of the state are within a county and under its law-making authority.
3. A community may choose to gain some independence from country rule by incorporating as a municipality (city).
4. There are different reasons for becoming incorporated: to gain more control over land use, to improve services (parks, trash removal, police), and to maintain a separate identity from a neighboring city or from the county.
5. It is not an easy choice to incorporate. It can mean having to pay more for the improved local services (street maintenance, fire, police).

City Seal: Display a copy of the city seal for San Diego. Explain that seals exemplify the ideals and beliefs of our government. Discuss the different components of the seal and the meaning of each section.

The official seal of the City of San Diego was adopted by the City Council on April 14, 1914, and superseded a design that had been in use since January 5, 1888.
- The pillars of Hercules are used as supporters to recall the ancient territorial jurisdiction of Spain.
- The winged wheel represents manufacturing and transportation.
- The two connected dolphins symbolize the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, inseparably united by the Panama Canal.
- The motto, "Semper Vigilans," means "ever vigilant."
- The orange tree represents agriculture
- The Spanish caravel represents the exploration and settlement by the Spanish.
- The blue wavy band below it represents the city's position on the sea.
- The mission or carmelite belfry suggests early settlement by the mission fathers.
- In 1997, a blue bar was added behind the seal and the words "The City of San Diego" included below the seal. This is now the City's official corporate identity.

http://www.sandiego.gov/publicmediaaffairs/facts/seal.shtml - Information on the symbolism in the San Diego City Seal. Compare the city seal to the county, state, and national seals (available online).

City Motto: The Official Motto for the City of San Diego is Semper Vigilans (Ever Vigilant). Discuss the significance of the city motto.

City Slogan: Review the bio-sketch for Pete Wilson where he says, "I coined the slogan for San Diego, which is still widely used today: *San Diego: America's finest city*." Discuss the significance of the city slogan.

City Flag: The official flag of the City of San Diego was adopted by the City Council on Oct. 16, 1934, when a sample banner was submitted by Albert V. Mayrhofer, on behalf of the California Historical Association, Native Sons of the Golden West, Native Daughters of the Golden West, and The San Diegans.
The flag is composed of three vertical bars, from left to right, red, white and gold. In the center white field is the official seal of the city and beneath it the date "1542," the year explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first entered San Diego Bay and claimed the area for Spain. The use of the three vertical bars is reminiscent of the colors of the flag of Spain, which flew over Cabrillo's ship.
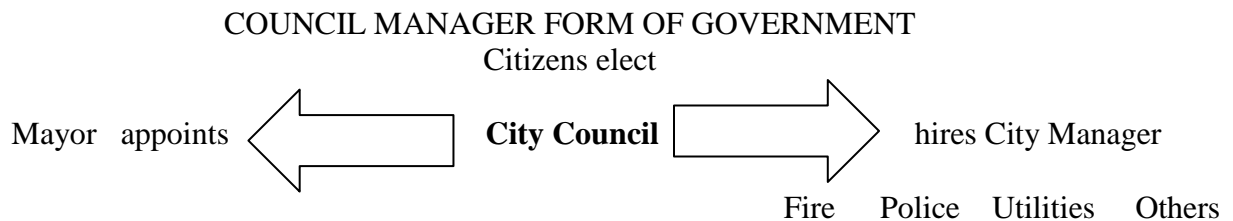
Official Urban Tree: Jacaranda
Official Native Tree: Torrey Pine
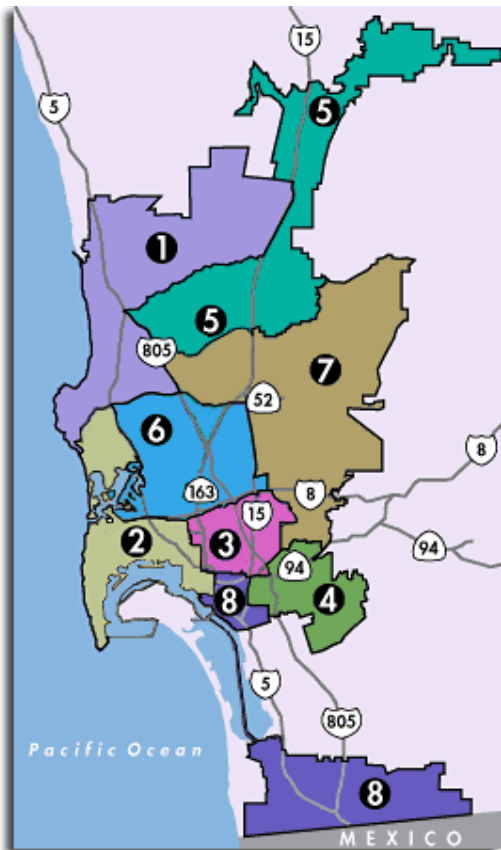**Official Flower**: Carnation

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Form of City Government: Explain to students that there are two kinds of local government: county government and city or town government. Cities or towns have two different forms of government, the Council- Manager or the Mayor-Council.

Most cities in California have the **council-manager** form of government. A council is a group of people that makes laws. In the council manager form of government, voters elect a city council. The city council chooses one of its members as mayor and also hires a city manager to help run the city. In some cities, the mayor is elected directly by the people.

COUNCIL MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT
Citizens elect

Mayor   appoints   ⇦   **City Council**   ⇨   hires City Manager

Fire   Police   Utilities   Others

San Diego has a **Mayor-Council** form of government. Effective January 1, 2006, Mayor Jerry Sanders became responsible for the day to day operations of City government under the new strong mayor form of government. Note: In San Diego, the mayor assumes the role of the city manager. He is assisted by the Chief of Staff and the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Financial Officer oversees the finances of the city.

For a copy of San Diego's Structure of City Government chart, refer to http://www.sandiego.gov/orgchart/pdf/allcity.pdf

Using a document camera, display San Diego's Structure of City Government chart or make a copy on a large sheet of butcher paper. Discuss the duties and responsibilities of each position. Using the City Government Description Cards from the Lesson 3, have students place the Description Cards in their proper position. Add the names of the key people who fill these positions in San Diego.

San Diego is divided into 8 districts. Refer to the map at the left. For a list of elected members of the San Diego City Council for each district, go to: http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/

Activity # 3 City Council Person Guest Speaker

Invite a local City Council person to visit the classroom to talk about his/her position within the local government. Formulate appropriate questions to ask such as:

1. What is your job? How did you get your position?
2. What are the qualifications for a person with this position?
3. What laws or rules do you help make?
4. How does your job affect the community?
5. What can we do to make our community a better place?

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Activity # 4 Forming a Government in our Classroom?

Materials needed: Harcourt *Reflections* "Roles of Citizens," pages 302-305, or any state-adopted social studies textbook. Supplies to conduct an election in your classroom, i.e., ballot box, election ballots, voting booth.

Step 1: What is a citizen? Write the word ***citizen*** on the board. Explain to students that being a citizen of a democracy means you have certain *rights*. One is the right to vote. Another is the right to speak freely and share your thoughts with other people. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution lists the rights of all citizens of the United States.

In a democracy, citizens also have *responsibilities*. For example, the right to vote is a responsibility. If you care about the way your country or town is governed, you have a responsibility to vote. Citizens must obey the laws of the land. They must pay taxes. They must serve in the armed forces, if needed. They must also respect the rights of others.

Step 2: Citizens Vote. Ask students what they know about the election process. Explain that in elections, citizens vote, the votes are counted, and the person with the most votes wins.

Read Harcourt *Reflections: Our Communities*, "Roles of Citizens," pages 302-305.

Step 3: The Mayor of San Diego. Ask students the name of the current mayor of San Diego. Write the full name of the mayor on the board. If available, display a photograph of the mayor.

Refer to the chart, ***Who Makes the Rules*** (Handout #1.1) completed in Lesson 1 of this unit. Explain to students that the mayor comes under the "Executive" branch of local government. Ask, "Where does the mayor work?" Write the words "City Hall" on the board. If available, display a photo of San Diego City Hall.

Step 4: Elect a Class Mayor. Ask students what qualifications they think a mayor of their class should have. Sample qualifications are:
- a third grade student
- resident of room ____ for at least one month
- at least 8 years old

Brainstorm a list of **qualities** of a good leader. These may include:
- honest
- smart
- hardworking

- responsible
- follows classroom rules

(Note: Check your report card for other qualities that might be included.)

Create a list of duties for your Class Mayor.

Nominations
To simulate a primary election, explain that any student who meets the qualifications may run for Class Mayor. Ask who would like to be a candidate. Type up a ballot with all interested names and have the students vote. Select the top three to be the final candidates.

The Campaign
Candidates may select a campaign manager and make posters urging students to vote for him or her. Each of the three mayoral candidates prepares a campaign speech telling why he/she wants the job, what his/her qualifications are, and why he/she will make a good class mayor.

If desired, provide sentence frames to assist with speech preparation:
- My name is _____
- I am running for Class Mayor.
- I think I will make a good Class Mayor because…….

Discuss the qualities of a good campaign speech:
- maintain a clear focus
- speak clearly at an understandable pace
- be convincing

Explain to the students who will be voting that they should listen to the speeches to make a decision about which candidate to vote for.

Class Election
Conduct an election for the Class Mayor. If possible, provide an area in the classroom with voting booths (study carrels). In advance, prepare a ballot listing the full name of each candidate. Discuss how to mark the ballot accurately with an "X."

Students should register (sign-in) at the polling place. Provide a class list and designate a place for students to sign beside their name. Students then enter the voting booth and "secretly" vote for the candidate of their choice. If desired, provide students with stickers to show that they have voted.

At the designated closing time, open the ballot box and have two students open and read the ballots. Have a third student record the votes on a tally sheet. Two poll watchers observe to see that the votes are counted and recorded correctly. After the votes are counted, the recorder and watcher sign the sheet verifying the correct record of the vote.

Discuss questions about the election such as "Do you have to tell who you vote for or can you keep it a secret?" "Why might some persons want to tell and others keep it a secret?"

Step #5 Election of City Council Members. Explain to students that the class is going to elect city council members who will introduce "bills" and make the laws of the classroom.

Note: It is best to keep the laws focused on the classroom because you will have control over enforcement of the laws. Avoid laws for the playground and lunchroom. If you have established classroom rules that you do not wish to change, you may select one specific topic for the new laws. Examples include use of the classroom library; completion of class assignments and homework; use of the class computer or centers in the classroom, housekeeping rules, etc.

Arrange the students into cooperative learning groups of 4. Each group will elect a City Council member. Determine the **qualifications** a city councilman should have in order to "run for office."

Create a list of the **duties** of City Council members.

Brainstorm a list of **qualities** of a member of the city council members based upon the duties the council members will have to perform. These may include:
- fair
- responsible
- follows classroom rules
- listens to the ideas of other people

(Note: Check your report card for other qualities that might be included.)

Selection of City Council Members
Rather than having a full election process, it is recommended students work in their groups (districts) to select the person they would like to be the city council representative of their group (district). For simplicity, only one representative per group will be selected.

Step #6 Making Laws. Explain to the students that they are going to propose bills to become a law (rule) for the classroom.

First, have students meet with the city council representative of their group to brainstorm some ideas for a "law" to create a new class law (rule). The representative in each group should write down the proposed bill. During this time, it is recommended that the teacher rotate around to the groups to review their proposed bills and help students word their bills in a positive format, such as "Walk in the classroom" rather than the negative "Don't run in the classroom."

Once the proposed laws have been reviewed, hold a session of the City Council to discuss the proposed laws. Each city council member can select a law that he/she would like to propose to the City Council. Members of class can sit in the "gallery" while the laws are presented and debated on the "floor" of the City Council Chambers. "Citizens" of the class may come forward and address the city council regarding any of the laws. Each "citizen" must state his/her name and is limited to 2 minutes. After arguments for each law have been heard, the members of City Council vote on each bill.

Activity # 5 Important People in San Diego's Government

Materials needed: Harcourt's Reflections. Lesson 3 *Citizens Who Serve* pages 308-313.

To help students identify some ways citizens participate in their local community, read Harcourt's Reflections. Lesson 3 *Citizens Who Serve* pages 308-313. Describe some of the qualities that make a good community leader and describe ways citizens can participate in their local community

Research one or more people from San Diego's city government and write a bio-sketch for each person. Print out a copy of the bio-sketch for students to read. Select a student to play the part of the person and make an event card to add to the "Time Line of San Diego." Add the bio-sketch to the "Cavalcade of Local Heroes" chart created in Unit 3.3.

Activity # 6 How Can I Participate in my Community? – A Service Learning Project

Materials needed: a copy for each group of the **Service Learning Planning Sheet** (Handout #4.2)

Step 1: Brainstorm a list of ideas for each of the following questions:

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What are some problems that need help at our school or in our community?
How might we participate in a service learning project to solve a local school or community problem?

Some examples of service learning projects may include:
- Adopt an historic landmark in your community that needs restoration.
- Beautify your school or community by cleaning-up trash or by creating a "pick-up patrol" for your school or community; write public service announcements to encourage people to keep the area liter-free; send copies to the local newspaper, radio, and television stations.
- Begin a **"Harvesting for Hungar"** program by planting, tending and harvesting food for a local food bank; locate a large plot of land, collect gardening materials, invite a horticulturist to talk with your students about preparing soil, germinating seeds, transplanting seedlings, fertilizing, watering, weeding, and composting; select a crop to grow that can best be used by a local food bank; divide the class into teams to determine responsibilities.
- Organize a school-wide brown paper bag drive; decorate the bags (optional) and donate them to a local food pantry.
- Create a recycling program and donate the proceeds to a local charity.
- Create a water conservation checklist with two columns on the checklist – label one "try" and the other "did." Have students follow the plan for one month.
- Collect shoes or eyeglasses or other items for a local homeless shelter.
- Volunteer to help at a local preschool, day care center, or senior center.
- Help adult immigrants with the English language.
- Provide support to an elderly person or couple who needs assistance with routine and special activities.
- Adopt a police officer or fireman in your community; write letters to him or her; arrange for him/her to visit your classroom or for a class trip to the station; make a list of the department's needs (specific equipment, more fire fighters or policemen) and create an action plan to raise funds for the project.
- To encourage use of the school or community library, have students write literary reviews of books they have read and post them in the library to encourage other kids to read; once a month, have students care for, clean, and alphabetize their shelves; paint characters from their favorite books and hang them in the children's section of the public library; volunteer to read to students in younger classes.
- Organize a pet food canned drive for cats and dogs; donate the food to a local pet shelter; make posters to encourage people to adopt rescue pets.
- Conduct a book drive and donate the books collected to a homeless shelter.
- Create care packages for American troops who are stationed in war zones; ask other students, family members, community members and local businesses for donations; establish military pen pals.
- Raise money through a penny collecting campaign to raise money to plant one or more trees at the school or in the local community; include a plaque to recognize the donors.
- Develop a **"Welcome to San Diego"** kit or a **"Welcome to Our School"** kit that includes interesting facts and information about people and events important to students or adults new to the area.

Step 2: Let the students in each group select a service learning project they would like the class to undertake that will make their school or community a better place to live.

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Distribute a copy of the **Service Learning Planning Sheet** (Handout #4.2) to each group. Have students in each group select one of the service learning projects and complete the planning sheet in their group.

Step 3: Have students in each group propose their service learning project idea to the class mayor and city council. Have the students in the group pretend that they are members of a special-interest group and ask them to come up with arguments to support their position.

After each group presents their arguments to the members of the class's City Council, the council should vote to select <u>one</u> service learning project based on the arguments presented by each group.

Step 4: Once the service learning project has been determined, elicit ideas from the total class and complete develop an Action Plan for the service learning project. Complete the project, and evaluate the results.

Assessment
- Complete the *Our City* (Handout # 4.1) worksheet.
- Participate in an interview of a local City Council person (Activity 3).
- Participate and vote in the class election for mayor and for the selection of the member of the city council who represents each group.
- Participate in identifying a local problem and creating a service learning project to address the problem. Complete a **Service learning Planning Sheet** (Handout #4.2), hold a Class City Council meeting with hearings on the different proposals; develop an action plan, and participate in the project.

Our City

City Name:_____

How San Diego got its name: _____

_____

The incorporation date for the city of San Diego: _____

Three objects found on the city seal and the reasons why they are there:

_____

_____

_____

City Motto:_____

Form of Local Government: _____

Mayor's Name:_____

Interesting information about San Diego:

Name:_____ Date:_____

Service Learning Planning Sheet

A. What is the Problem?

B. Why is it a problem?

C. Who is responsible?

D. What are some possible solutions to the problem?