

All About Our



By Amy Bloom

Communities

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About the Author

Amy Bloom has been the History/Social Studies consultant for Oakland Schools since 2001 where she provides educational services in social studies to local school districts for grades kindergarten through high school. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Center of the Study of Citizenship at Wayne State University.

Prior to her current position, Amy taught high school social studies, served as a teacher consultant to Street Law, worked for Senator Carl Levin, and clerked for the Massachusetts Superior and Appellate Courts, as well as the Honorable Patti B. Saris of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. She was awarded the Spirit of Detroit Award for her contributions to the city's teen court program in 1999. Bloom earned a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate from the University of Michigan and a law degree from Suffolk University Law School in Boston.

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Teacher Note: To introduce students to the idea of a community, show the video, "What is a Community?" by Anna Dooley at: <http://vimeo.com/29075222> .

Chapter 1: What is a community?

A **community** is a group of people who share something in common. A group of people living in the same area (such as a town or neighborhood) is a community.



Figure 1: People enjoying themselves in a community shopping area.

Local communities are places where people live, work, and play together. Communities help families meet their **basic needs**.

People live in communities for food, clothing, and shelter (homes).



Figure 2: A community in Greece.

Types of Communities

Communities come in all different shapes and sizes. Some communities may have lots of people living in them. Other communities may have only a few people living in them. A city, a suburban community, and a small town are different kinds of communities.



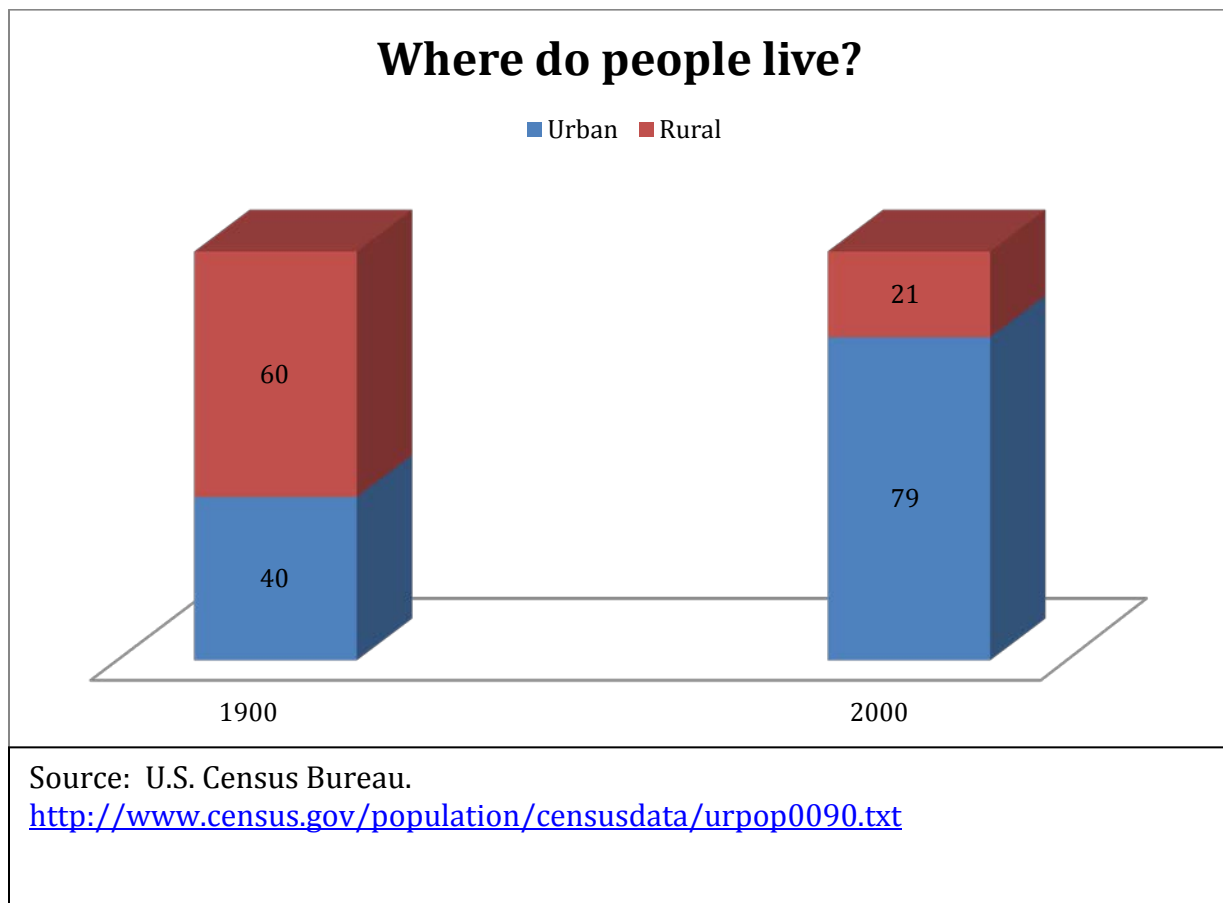
Figure 3: Detroit is an urban community.

Figure 4: A rural community is also known as in the country.



Figure 5: A picture of homes in a suburban community.

Many years ago, more Americans lived in rural places than urban areas. Today, more people live in urban areas in the United States.



Common Traits of Communities

Local communities share some common **traits**.

They all have natural features, human features, a location, places for people to live or to work or play, and a way for people to work together.

Natural features are features of a place that were not made by humans. Natural features are a part of the environment. Some communities have natural features like a river or a lake. Other communities have natural features like mountains or hills.



Figure 6: The Grand Canyon has many beautiful natural features.

All communities
also have **human
features**. These are
parts of the community
that were made by



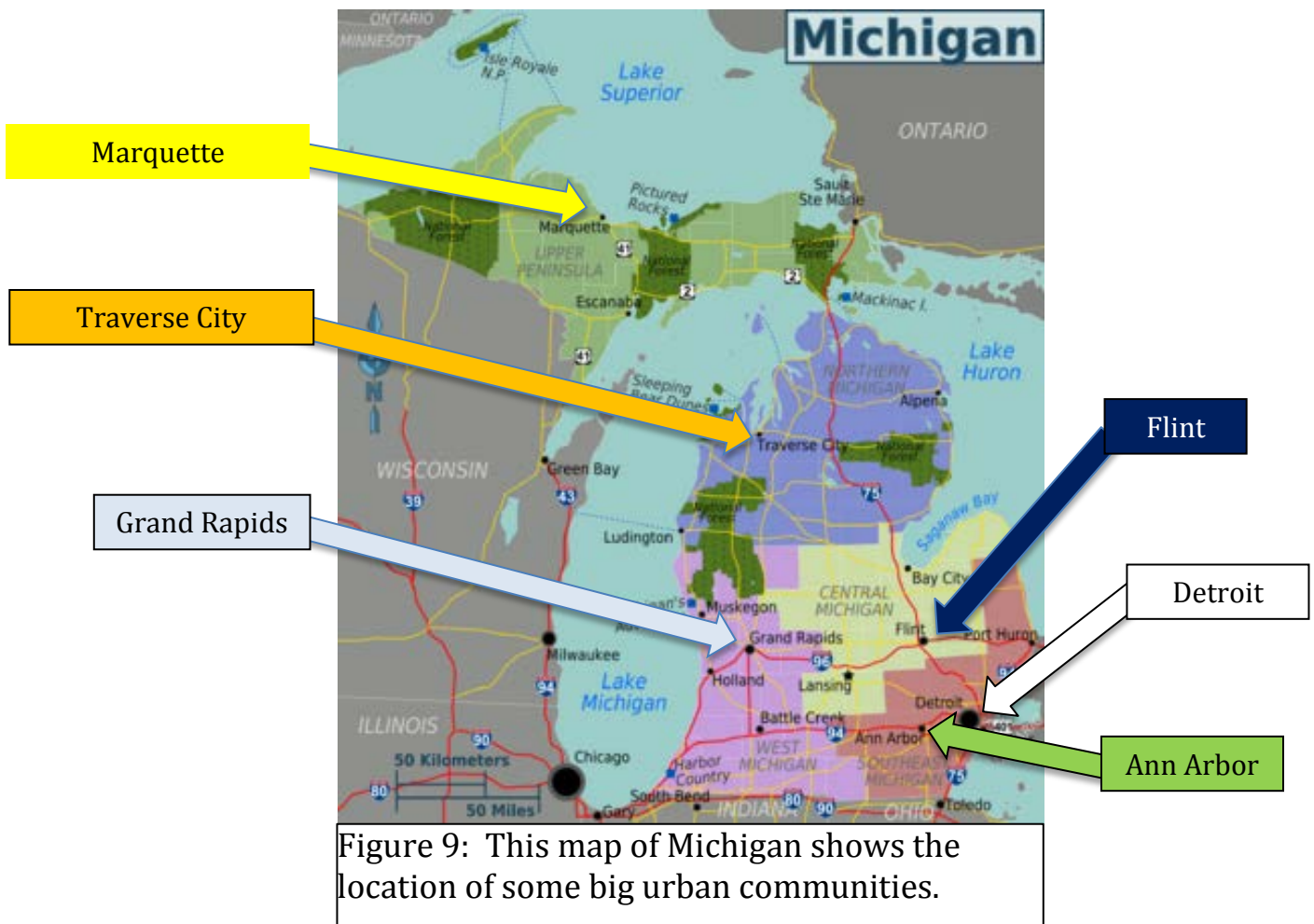
Figure 7: The road and the tunnel are human features.


people. Businesses, houses, and transportation
routes are some human features found in
communities.



Figure 8: This picture shows the Detroit International Riverfront. The buildings are human features.

Communities have a location too. This means you can find the community on a map. The map below shows several communities in Michigan. Can you find the location of two different communities on this map?





People live in a community for many reasons. Communities are places where people can live, work, or play. Police and fire fighters work in communities. These workers also help to keep the people in the community safe. Businesses in the community also help people meet their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.

When people live together in communities, they form a **government**. Governments help by making and enforcing rules or laws for people in the community.

Chapter 2: Geography - Where is my community and what is it like there?

Where is your community? What is it like there?

By exploring the geography of your community, you can answer these two questions.

Location

So, where is your community? All communities have a **location**. People use maps to answer this question. They also use direction words like “near,” “close,” and “far from” to describe where a community is located. Can you use direction words and the map

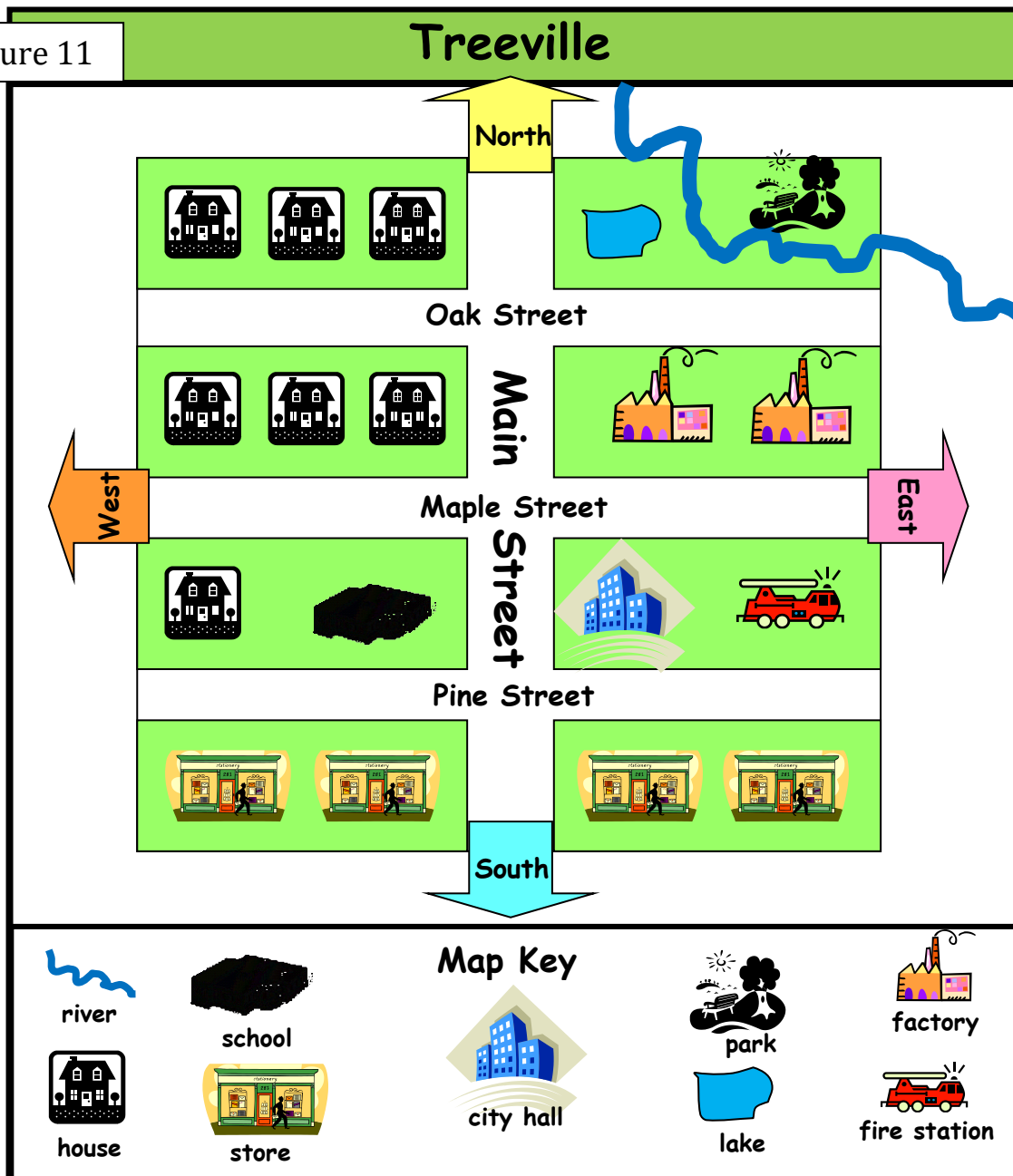
below to answer the question, Where is your community?"



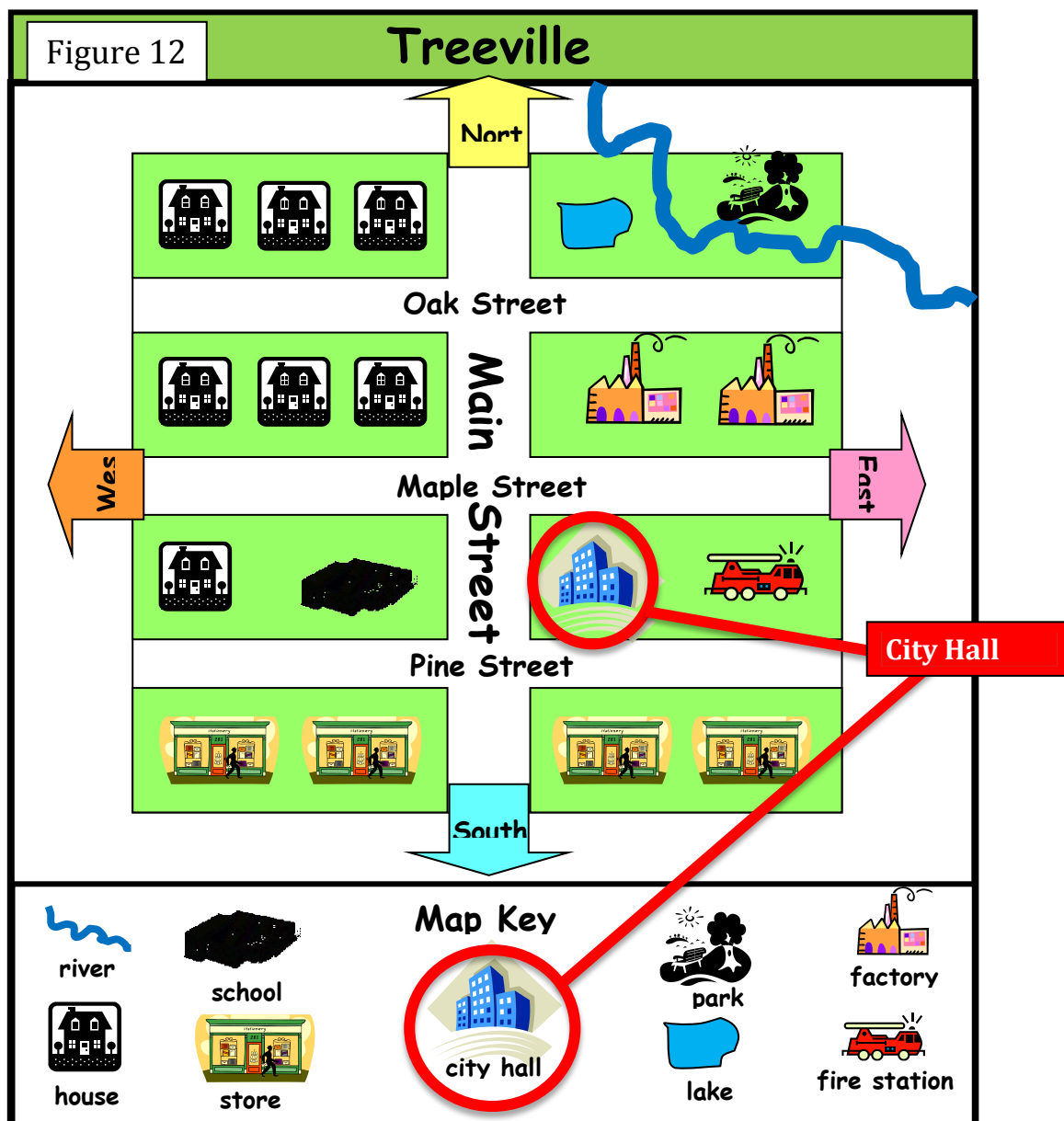
Exploring a Community Map

Let's explore a map of a community. Look at the map of Treeville. There are human and natural features on the map. Can you name one of each?

Figure 11



The **river** and the **lake** are two natural features or characteristics of Treeville. The houses, stores, fire station, and factories are human features of Treeville. Can you find city hall on the map? City hall is the building for the community government.

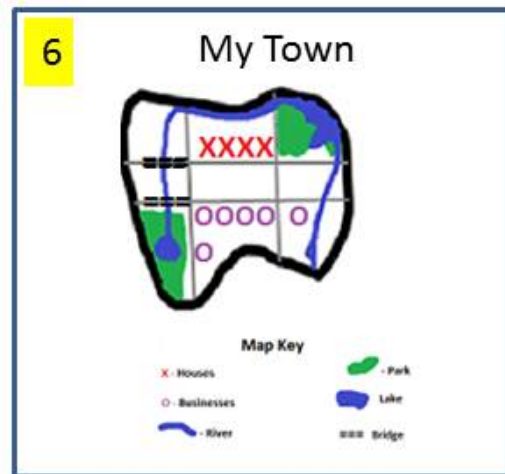
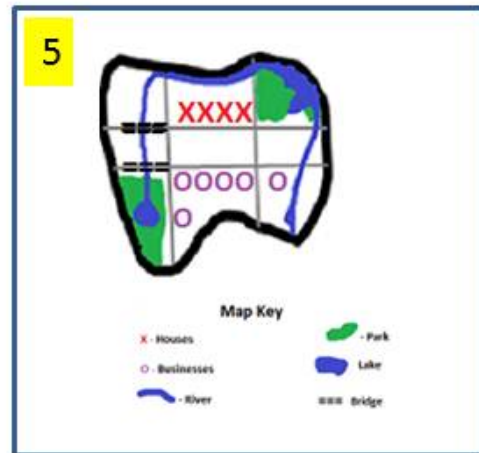
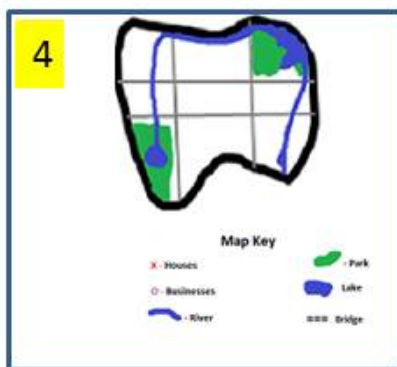
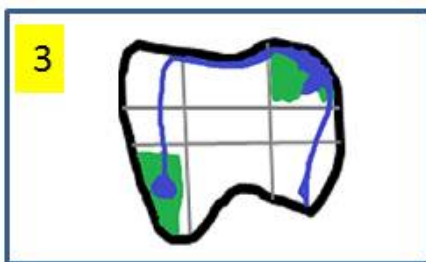
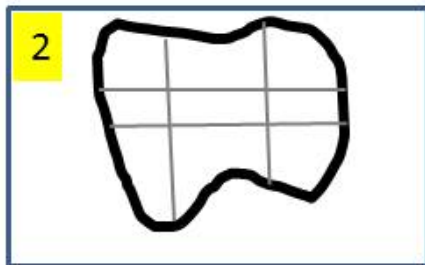
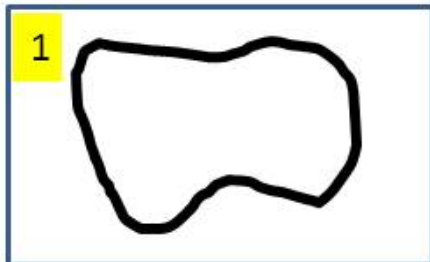


Making a Map of Your Community

1. Make an outline of the shape of your community.
2. Add the important roads.
3. Add important natural features of your community.
4. Make a key of your map. A map key uses symbols to show important natural and human features.
5. Place the map symbols on the where they are found in the local community.
6. Add a title to your map.

Figure 13: Directions for making a map of your community.

Figure 14: Steps in Making a Community Map



Transportation



Figure 15: Busses provide transportation to people who work, live, or play in the city.

Communities have different places within them.

There are places where people live and places where people can shop. There are also places where people work and places where people play. Roads and walkways help people move from place to place.



Figure 16: People use the road and bike lane for transportation.



Figure 17: Cars and bicycles share the road.

Transportation is important in a community. It helps people and goods get to different places in a community. Transportation such as cars, trucks, trains, and bicycles move people and goods from one place to another.



Figure 18: Trucks help move goods.



Figure 19: Trains move people and goods.

Natural Features

Natural features or characteristics of a community include both landforms and bodies of water.

Landforms are different kinds of land found on Earth.

Mountains, hills, plains, and valleys are landforms.



Figure 20: Landforms are natural features in a community.

Bodies of water are different kinds of water found on Earth. Oceans, lakes, ponds, and rivers are bodies of water on Earth. Communities are sometimes different because they have different landforms and different types of bodies of water.

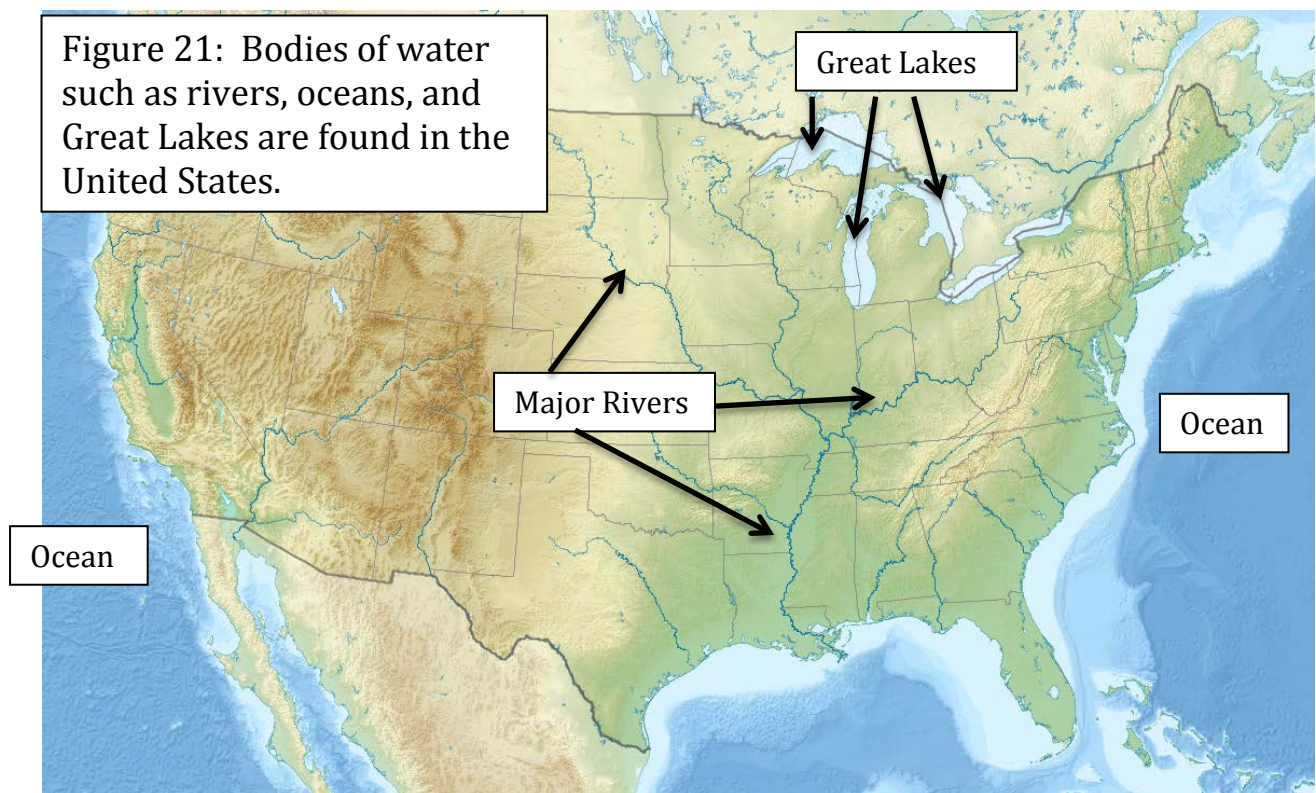


Figure 22: A pond is a small body of water.



Human Features

Every community has **human features** as well. Your house, school, and the roads you travel on are all different human features of your community.

Communities can differ in the types of buildings and structures they have. Some communities have different types of homes because they have different natural features.

Figure 23: House in New York built in the 1940s.

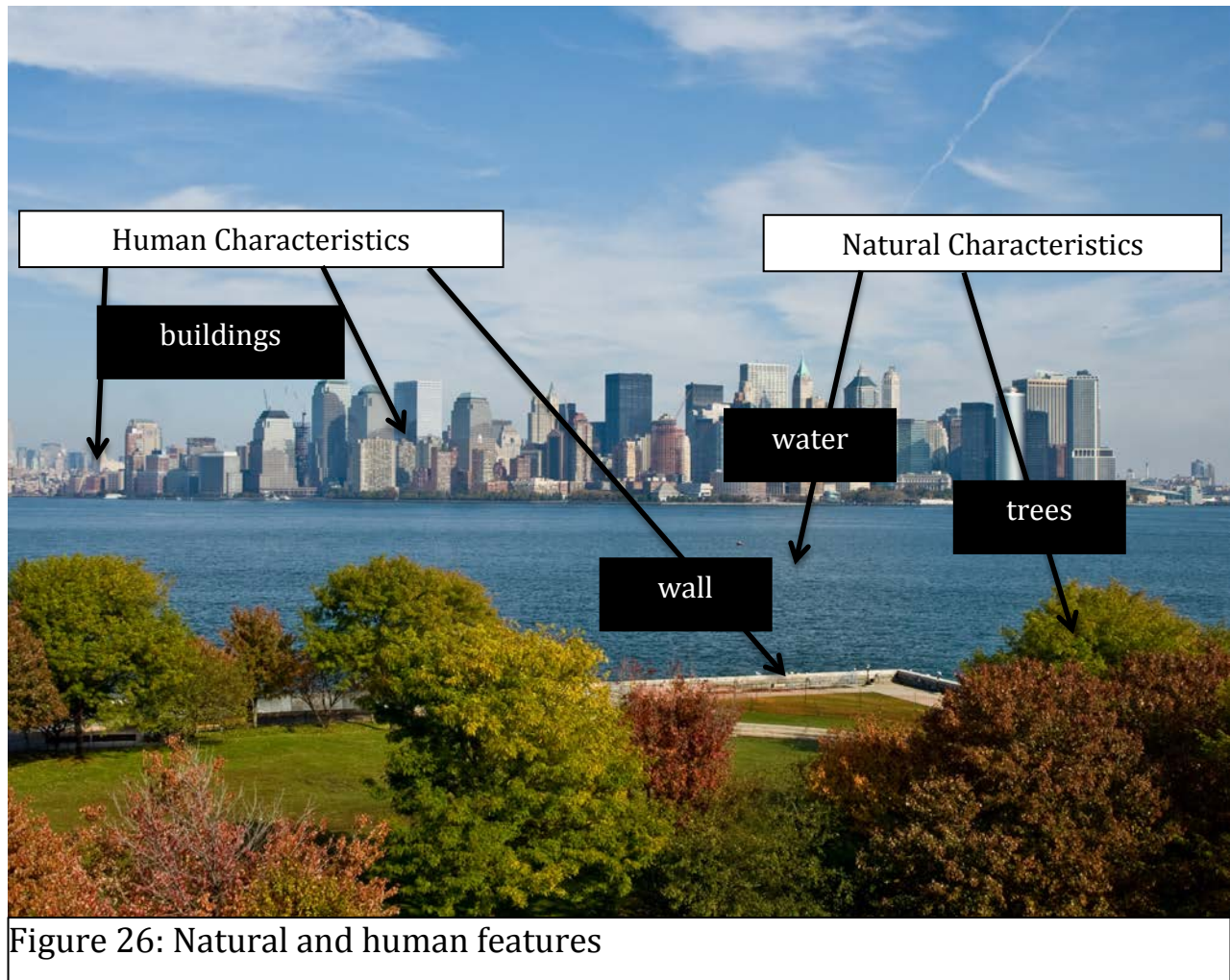


Figure 24: English Farmhouse



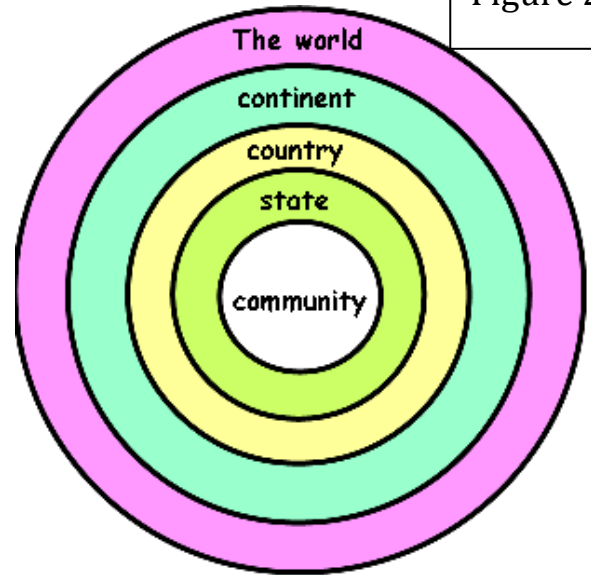
Figure 25: Stilt house in Italy.

Identifying Natural and Human Features



Community and Regions

Figure 27



Our community is part
of many bigger places.

Our community is part of
the **state** of Michigan.

The state of Michigan is
part of the **country** of the United States of America.

Our community is also part of the **continent**, North
America. Our community belongs to many different
regions.



Figure 28: Michigan is part of the
Great Lakes region.



Figure 29: Michigan and
the United States are part
of North America.

Chapter 3: Civics - How people get along in a community?

Communities have natural characteristics, buildings, businesses, transportation, places to have fun, and a government. Most communities have

diversity. Diversity means differences among people and groups of people. Differences include foods, languages, religions, and traditions.

Diversity is a strength in a community.



Figure 30: The diversity of students contributes to learning.

Why do people form governments?



Figure 31: A group of community members work to solve a community problem.

A group of people who make decisions and laws for all the people in a community, state or country is called a **government**. People form governments for many reasons. One reason people form a government is because they want to be safe.



Figure 32: Students cross the street at a crosswalk following traffic laws.

Governments make and enforce **laws** in the community. Governments also provide **services** to people in the community. Community laws and services help keep people safe.



Figure 33: Firefighters help keep people safe.



Figure 34: Paramedics respond to medical emergencies.



Figure 35: Communities provide police services to help keep people safe.

Governments also help people solve problems.



Figure 36: Community members work to solve common problems.

Communities Need Laws



People create governments because they want to stay safe. **Laws** help keep people safe. Laws also help to solve problems. One of the most important jobs of a government is to make laws.

The Organization of Local Governments

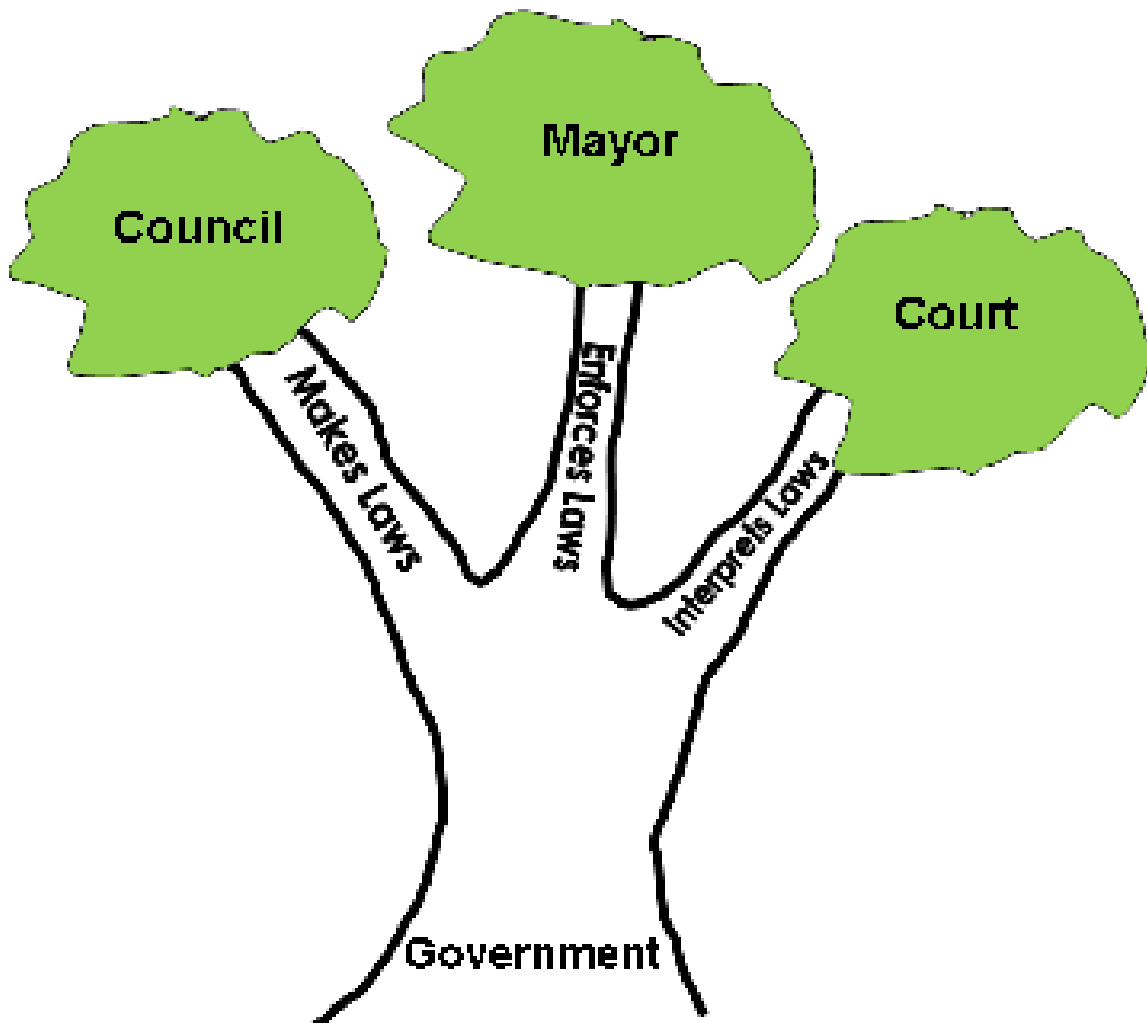


Figure 37: The three branches of government.

Local or community governments are divided into three parts. These three parts are called **branches of government**.

One branch **makes** the laws. In some communities, this branch is known as a **council** or a **township board**. It is made up of several people from the community.



Figure 38: A Lansing city council meeting.

Another branch of government **enforces** the laws. Some communities have a leader in the community to enforce the laws. This person is known as **mayor**.



The third branch of government in local communities helps people resolve conflict. It is made up of **courts**. People who work in this branch are called **judges** or **referees**. People who have disputes

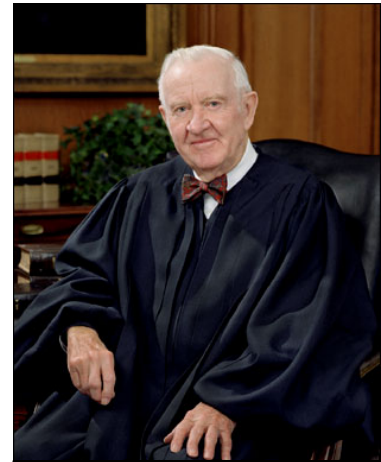


Figure 39: United States Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens.

or break the law go to court. Judges work in the court and decide the types of punishment for people who break the laws. Judges also help people solve problems. Judges **interpret the law** or explain what the law means.



Figure 40: The judicial branch consists of judges and the courts.



All branches of our local government work with laws. The council makes the laws. The mayor enforces the laws. The courts interpret the laws. All three branches of the local government work to keep people safe.



Figure 41: City hall is the building for local government offices.



Figure 42: The scales of justice, gavel, and law book are symbols of the courts.

Local Governments Provide Services

Local governments provide many **services**.

They provide police and fire protection to keep people safe. Local governments also provide services that people in the community want.

They create and keep parks clean.

In some places, local governments also create and run libraries.



Figure 43: Local communities may provide library services.

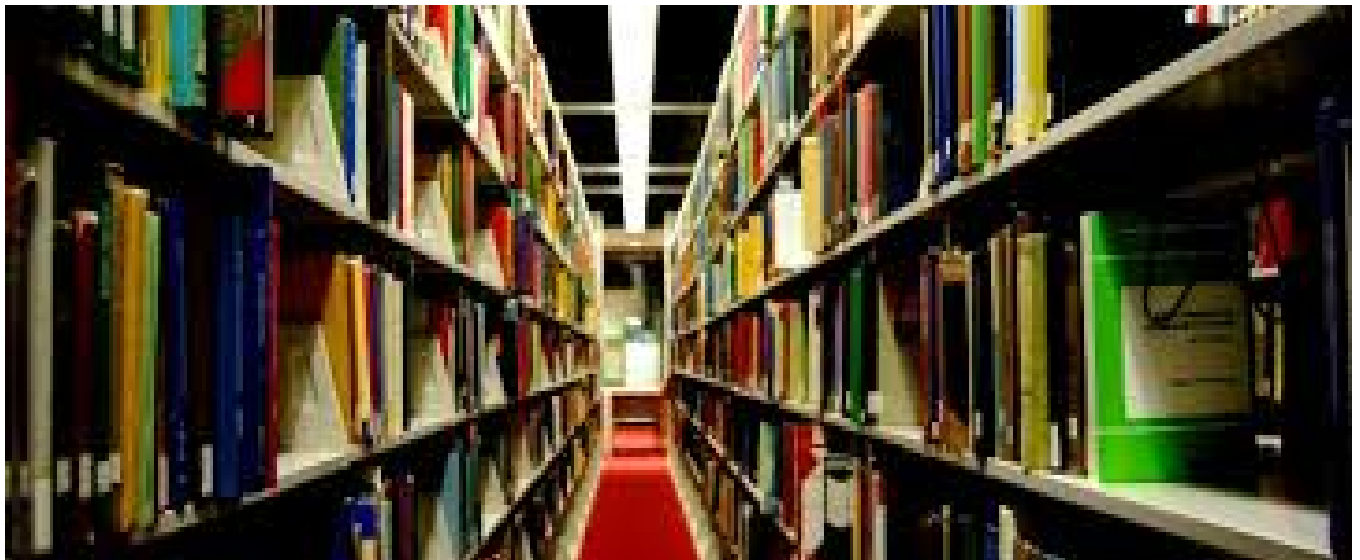
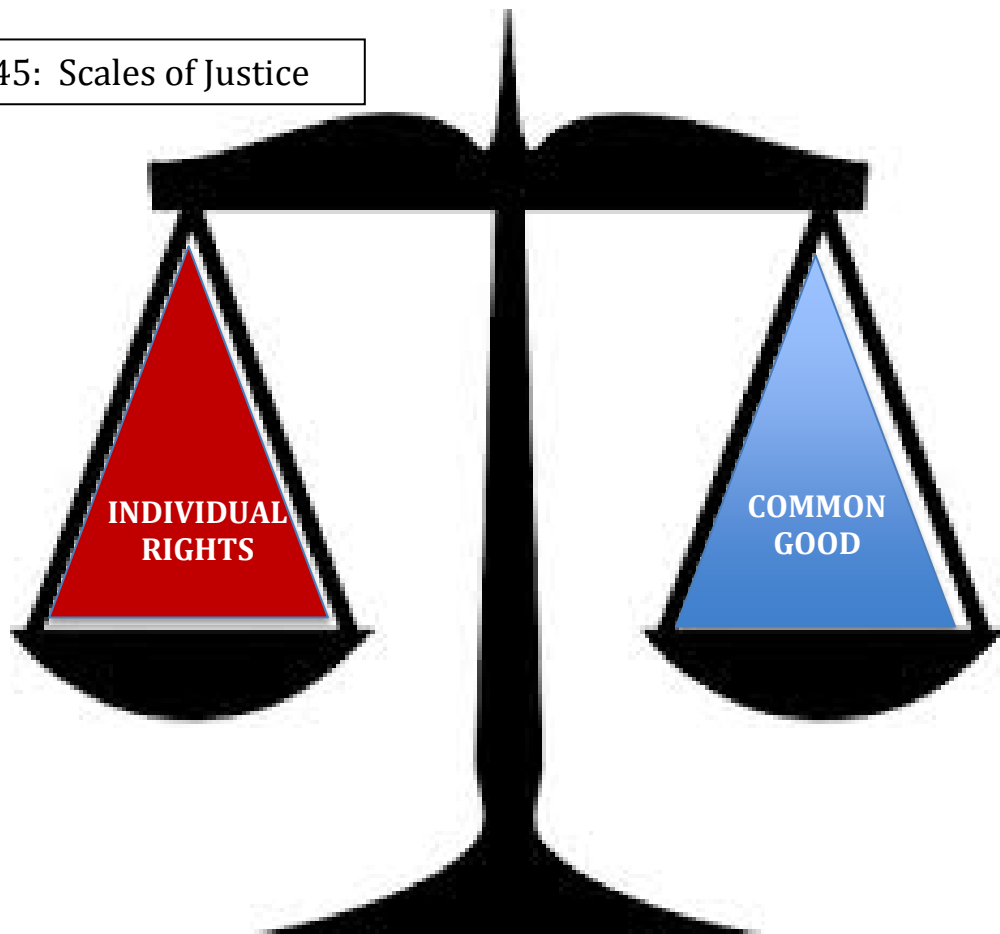


Figure 44: Libraries have books that people can borrow to read.

Local governments protect important ideas or **values** to people in the community. Two important values in the United States are **individual freedom** or rights and the **common good**. To meet the diverse needs of people living in a community, local governments balance individual rights with the common good.

Figure 45: Scales of Justice



Individual rights include the freedom to think, work and act in a way that does not hurt others. Individual rights are things that a person is entitled to have or to do. Owning property and freedom of religion are two individual rights communities value.

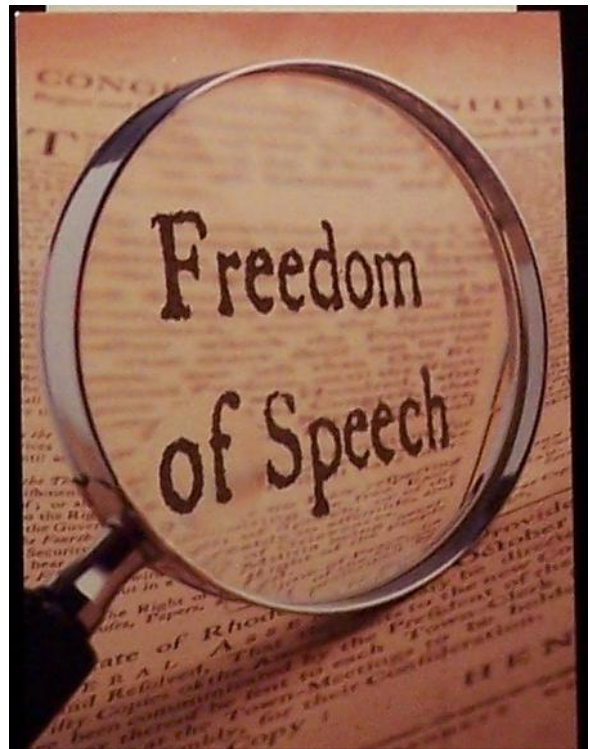


Figure 46: Freedom of speech is an individual right.



Figure 47: Freedom of religion is another individual right of citizens in the United States.

A **common good** is a good that is shared by members of the community. Common goods benefit all or most of all members of the community. Local communities help the common good of the community by building roads, running schools, and providing police and fire protection.



Figure 48: Repairing roads benefit the common good.



Figure 49: Police provide services for the common good.

When there is a problem in the community, local governments try to resolve them by balancing **individual rights** and the **common good**.



Figure 50: A township council meeting addresses community problems.

Role of Citizens

In our country, we get to choose the people in our government. We choose people by **voting**. These

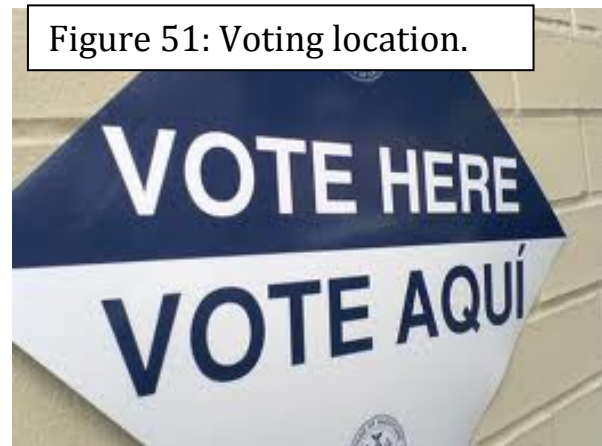


Figure 51: Voting location.

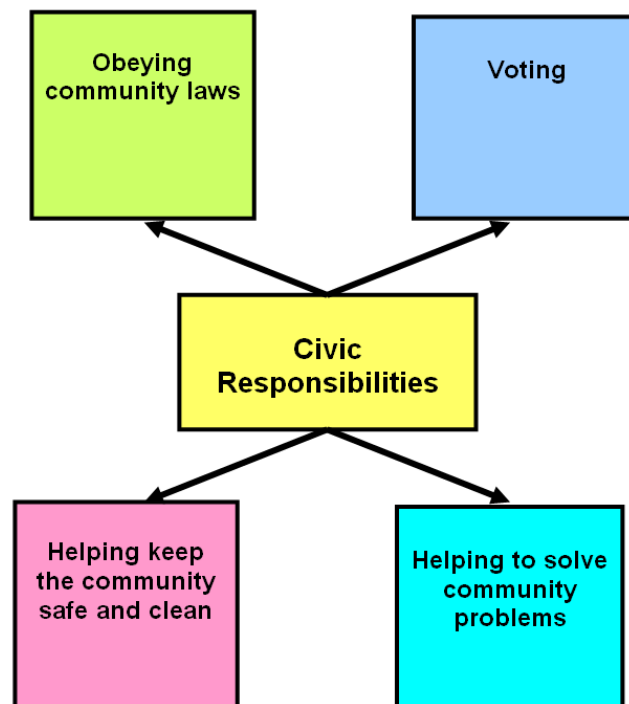
government workers help to make and carry out the rules for the community. These rules also help keep people in the community safe.

Every **citizen** has important roles in his or her community. As citizens, people have the civic responsibilities. Civic responsibilities are things that members of a community are supposed to do. One civic responsibility community members have is to obey the laws. Citizens also have the responsibility to **vote**.



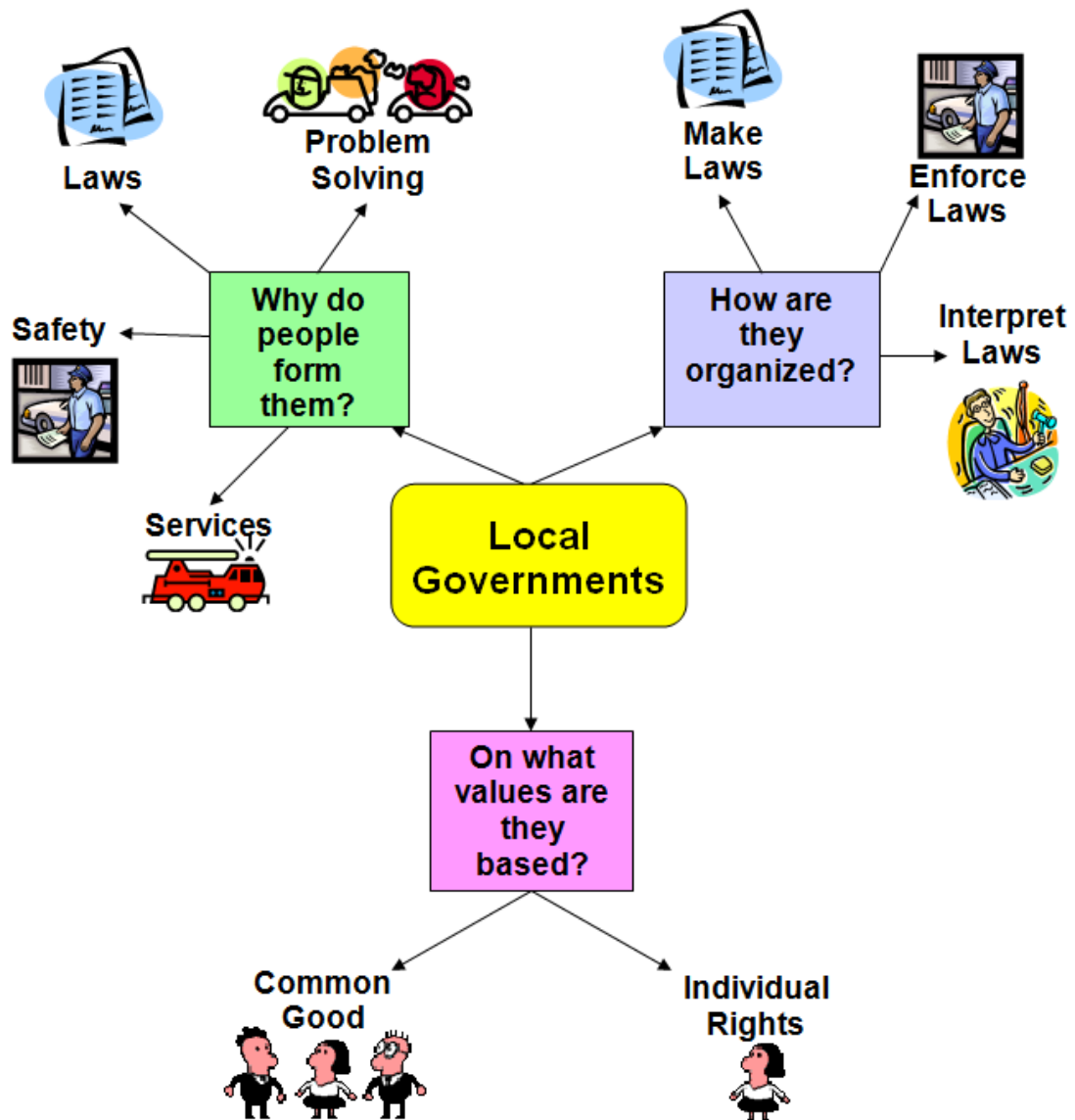
Figure 52: Citizens voting in an election.

Figure 53:
Civic
Responsibilities



Exploring Local Government

Figure 54: Local Government



The Pledge of Allegiance



Figure 55

What values are identified in the Pledge of Allegiance?

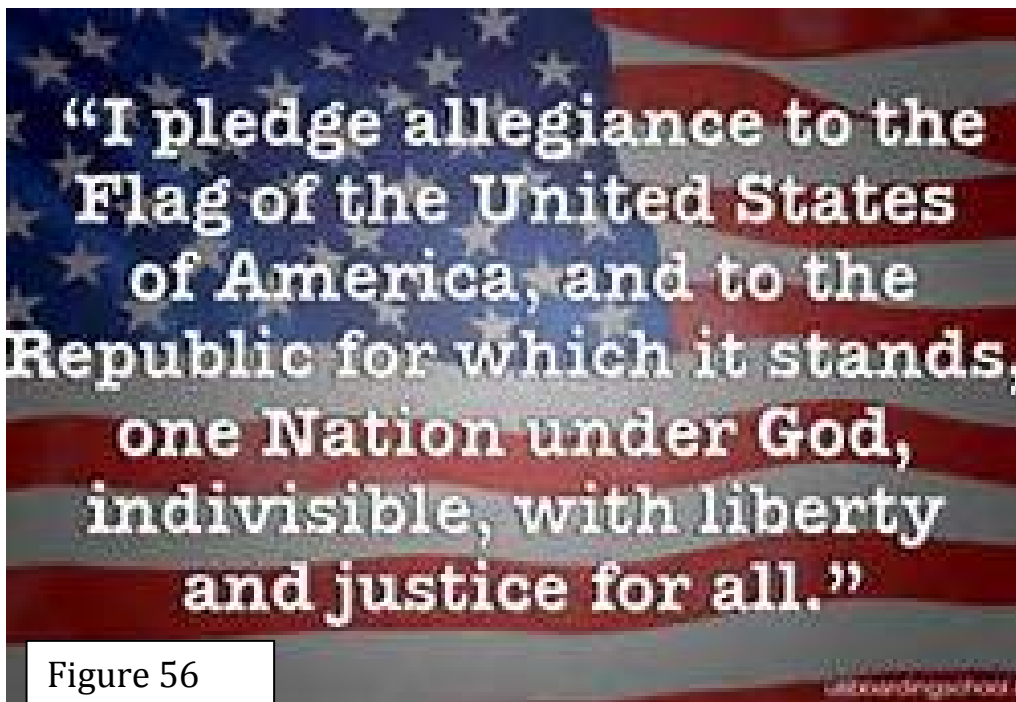


Figure 56



Figure 57 A-C

Chapter 4: Economics – How do people get what they want in a community?

Figure 58



What is economics?

Economics is about **choices**. Why do people have to make choices?

People have to make choices because **scarcity**. **Scarcity** is when you do not have enough of what you want.

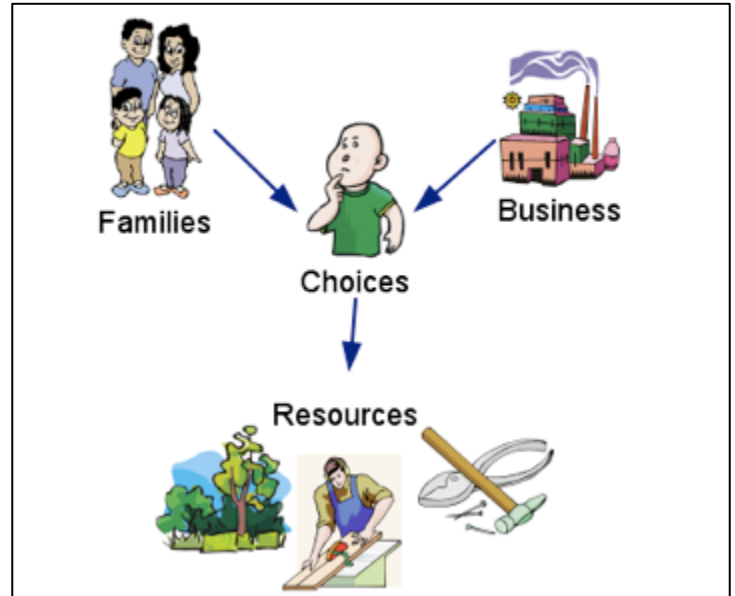


Figure 59: Families and businesses make choices because resources are limited.

People have *unlimited* **economic wants**.

Economic wants are desires that can be satisfied by a **good** or a **service**. But goods and services are limited by the **resources** we have on Earth. Scarcity results because people's wants are unlimited but resources are limited. As a result, people cannot

have everything they want. They have to make choices.

Figure 60

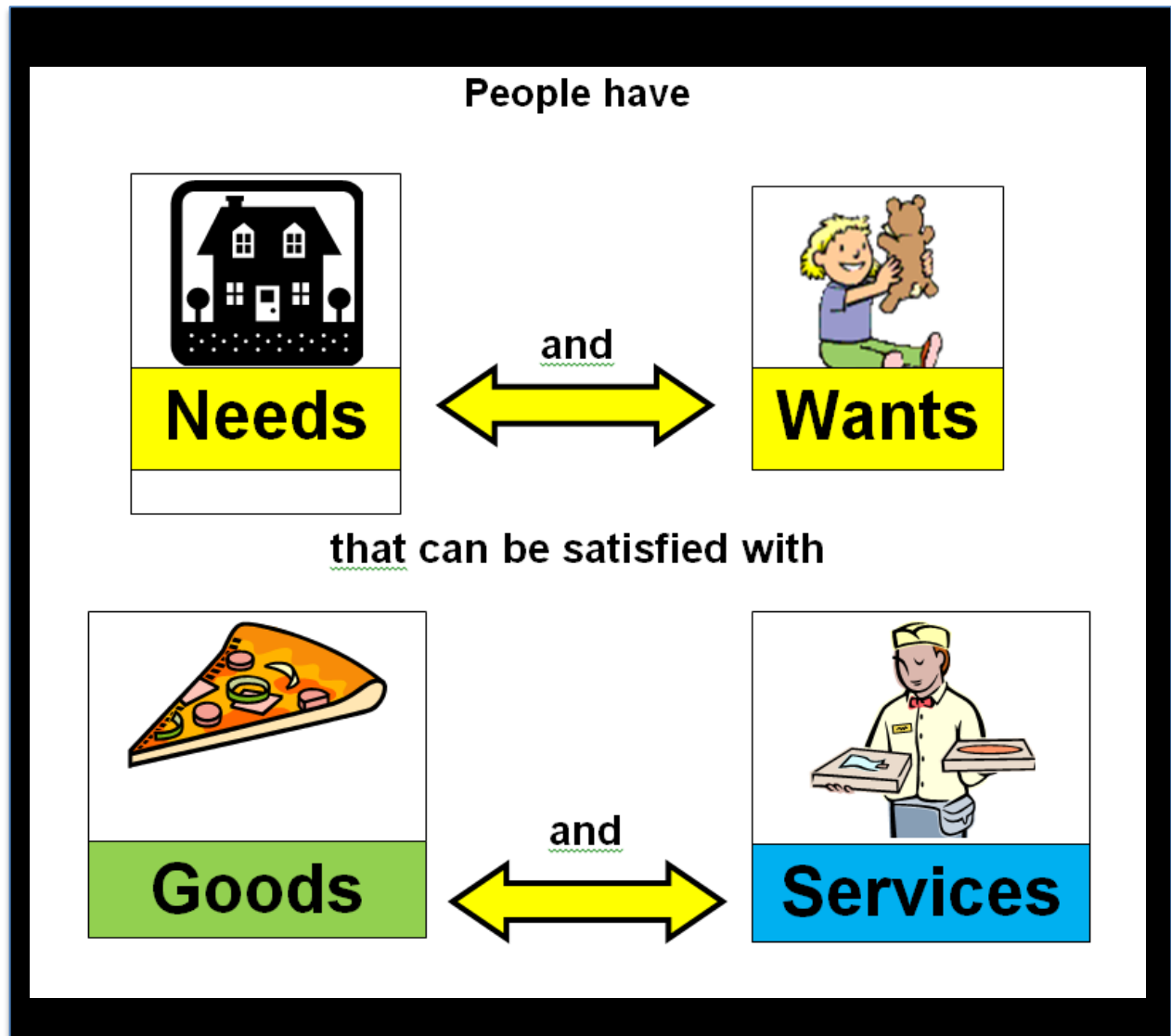
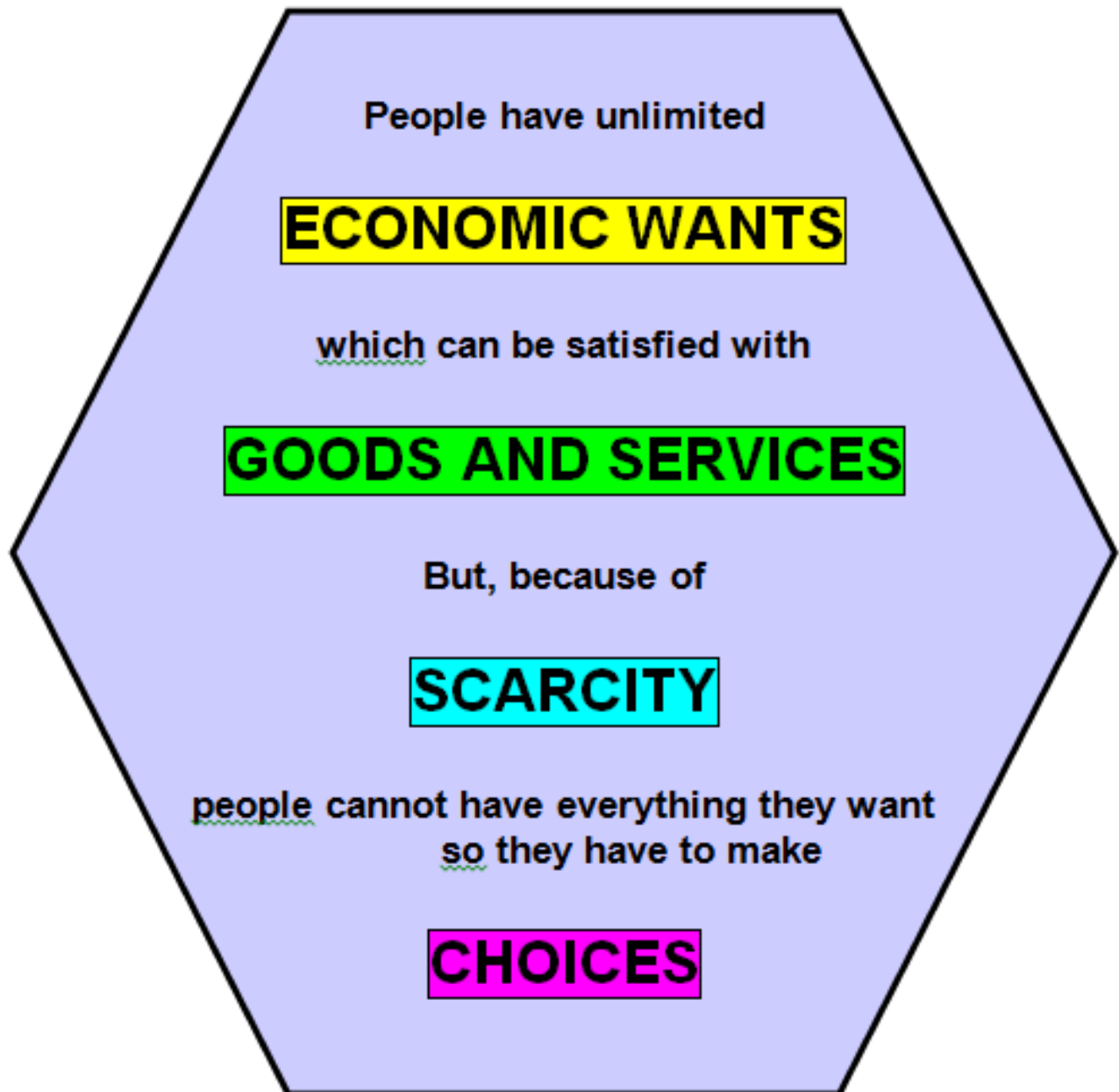


Figure 61



The Cost of Making a Choice

When people face **scarcity**, they have to make **choices**. When a person makes a choice, he or she must give up something else that the person wanted. What they gave up is called an **opportunity cost**. An **opportunity cost** is the cost of passing up the next best choice when making a decision.

Let's consider an example. It is lunchtime at school. The choices for lunch are pizza or a hot dog.



Figure 62



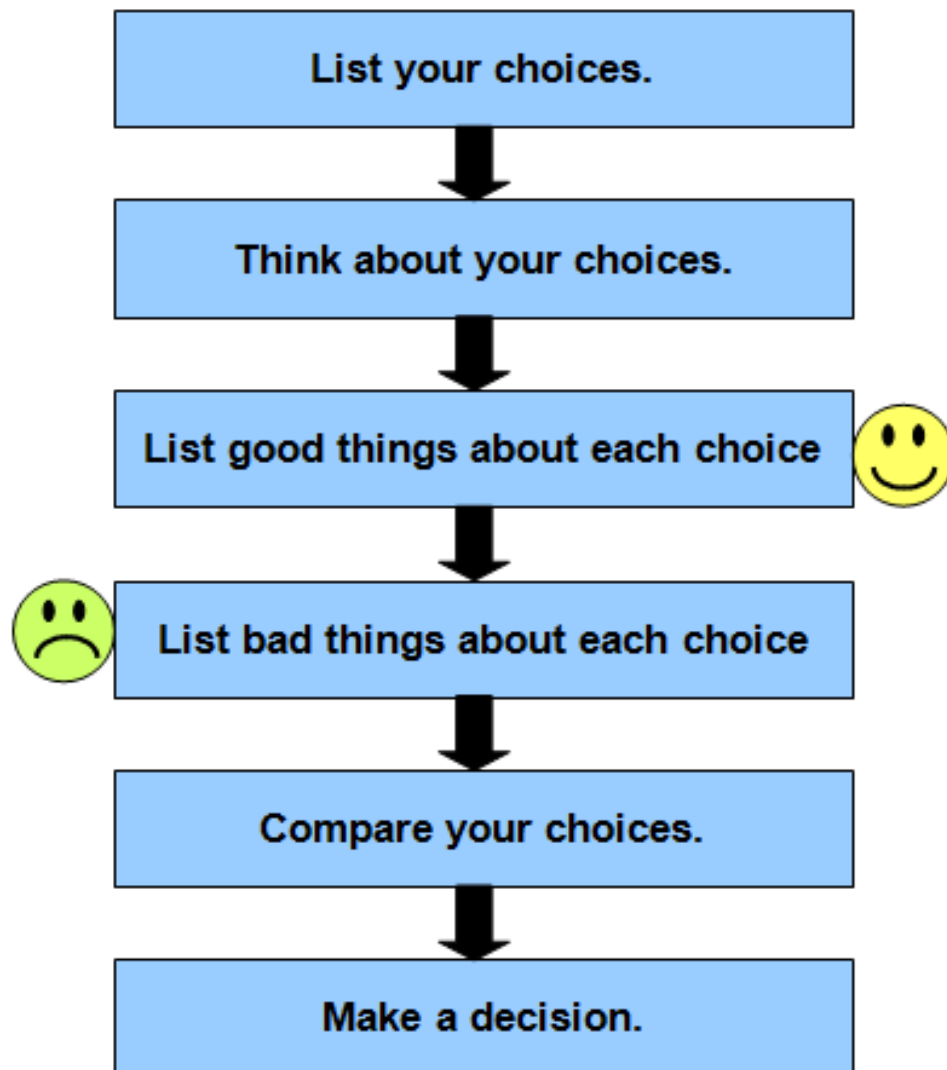
Figure 63

Since Sally cannot eat both, she will have to choose. Sally chooses to have pizza instead of a hot dog.

What did Sally give up by having the pizza? Sally gave up eating a hot dog for lunch. Sally's opportunity cost of having pizza is the hot dog.

Figure 64

How to Make an Economic Decision



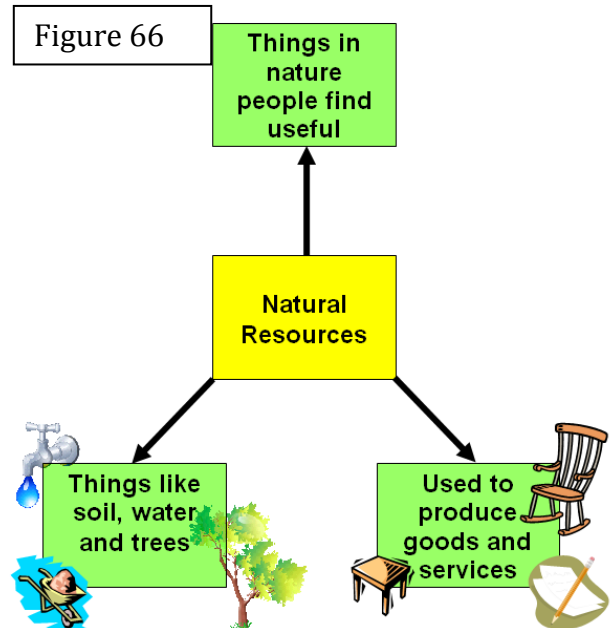
Economic Decision Making in Communities

There are three different kinds of **resources** that people and businesses use in a community. Natural, human, and capital resources are used together to produce goods and services.

Figure 65



All communities have **natural resources**. Natural resources are things in nature that people find useful. Trees, soil, and water are important natural resources. People use natural resources to produce goods and services.



Human resources are people doing work. People who work in a community or in a business are human resources.



Figure 67: This scientist is a human resource.



Figure 68: Farmers selling their goods. The farmers and the people that work for them are the human resources in farming.

Capital resources are objects made by people that are used to produce other goods and services. Tools, machines, and buildings are capital resources.



Figure 69
A, B, and C

Businesses in the Local Community

Economic wants can be met by goods and services. **Businesses** in the local community help people meet their **economic wants**. Often, people buy **goods** and **services** from businesses nearby. Businesses make and sell goods and services using

limited resources. Just like people, businesses also face the problem of **scarcity**.

What kind of businesses are in your local community? Most communities have stores that sell **goods** and **services** that people need. Some

examples of businesses that sell goods include grocery stores, drug stores, and clothing shops. Other businesses provide



Figure 70: Watch the video at <http://vimeo.com/63625678> to see some of the businesses in the City of Royal Oak.

services to people in the community. For example, some businesses provide heating and cooling services for homes or repair services for cars.

Can you name three businesses in your local community? Do they provide a good or a service to the people who shop there?

Why Do People and Businesses Trade?

“Do what you do best; then trade for all the rest.”

By focusing on what you do best, means you will have to **exchange** or **trade** goods and services to get other things you want. People and businesses **specialize**. People specialize in the jobs they do. A doctor specializes in understanding the human body. A teacher specializes in helping children learn. Farmers specialize in growing crops.

Let's explore how **specialization** and trade work together. Suppose the doctor spends most of her

time helping people feel better. She might not have time to teach her children if she is at work all day. She also might not have time to grow and farm food to eat. Because the doctor specializes, she must trade to get the things she does not make.



Figure 71: The doctor checks ears.



Figure 72: The students learn from the teacher.

Figure 73: The family buys goods from the farmer.

Businesses specialize too. There are businesses that specialize in making cars. Some businesses specialize in selling a certain type of product. Can you identify what each of the businesses below specializes in?

Figure 74

A



B



C





Figure 75: This grocery store specializes in selling food.



Figure 76: Movie theatres provide a service. They specialize in entertaining people.



Figure 77: Airline companies specialize in providing a service. They transport people and goods from one place to another.

When people specialize, they do not produce everything they want. How do they get the goods or services they don't make or provide? The answer is simple: they **trade**.

People trade with others to get the goods and services they want but do not **produce**. **Money** allows people to trade. Money is a way to exchange goods and services. People use money to pay for the goods and services they want, but don't produce. The seller can then take that money and trade it for the goods or services he or she wants.




Figure 78: Money in the United States.

Chapter 5: History – How do we learn about a community's past?



Figure 79

Now that we have look at what your community is like, how did it change over time. **History** is the study of **events** of the **past**. People who study the past are called **historians**. Historians are just like detectives.

Historians look for **evidence** or clues about the past. They use these clues to try to figure out what happened and why.

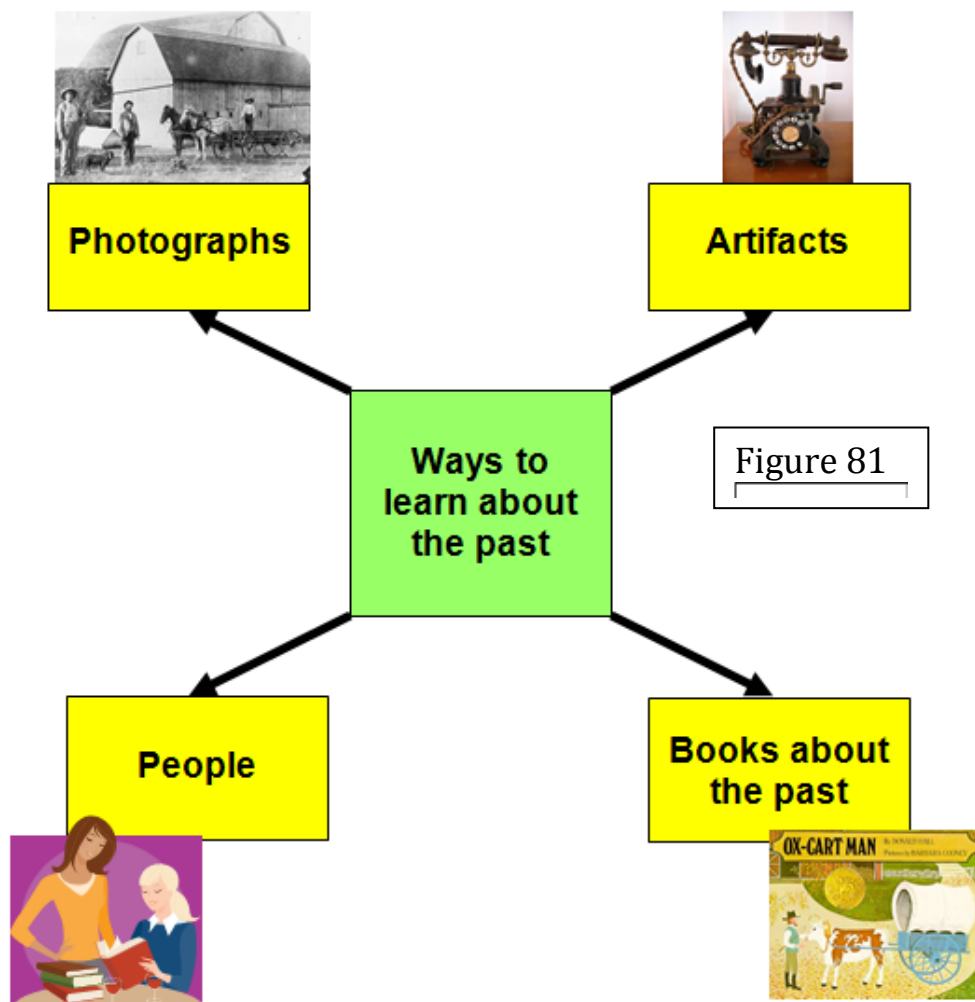


Figure 80

Ways to Learn About the Past

There are many ways to learn about the past.

Like historians, we can study old **photographs** and **artifacts** to learn about the past. We can interview people about the past. We can read books about the past.



Time and Chronology

Historians use **timelines** to organize information about the past. A timeline is a

diagram that shows the order in which things happened. It is important to understand the order in which events happened.

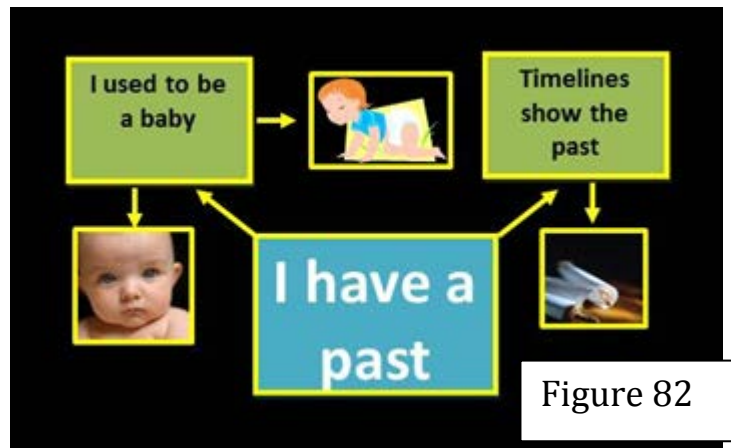
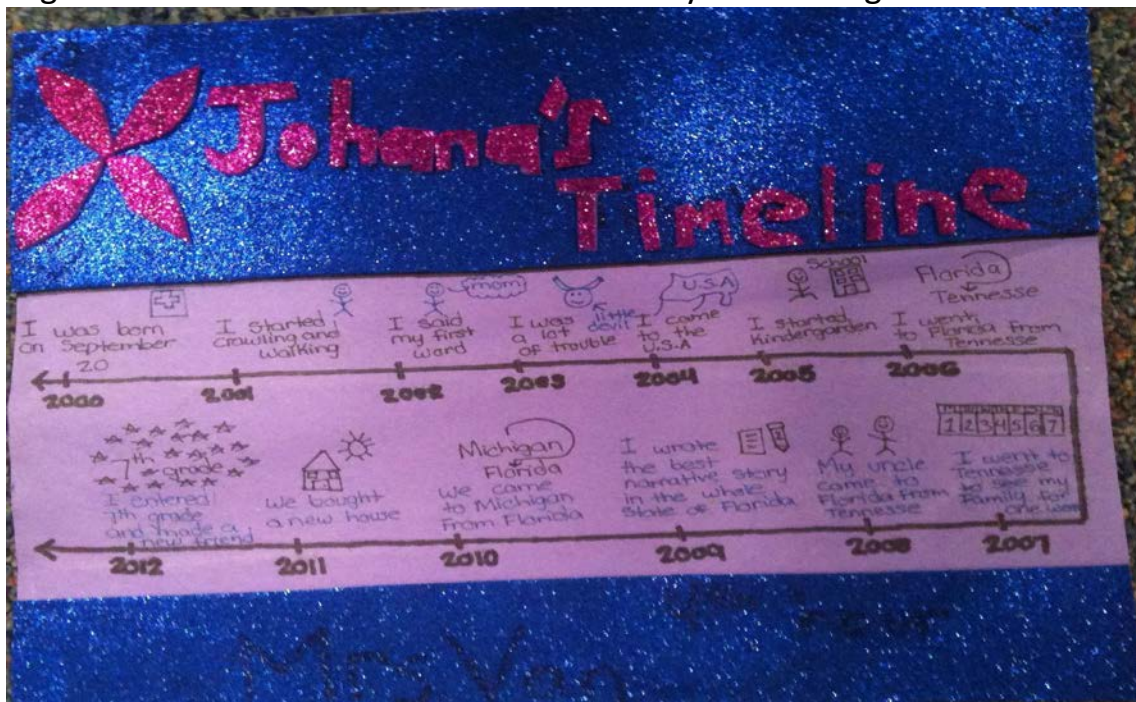


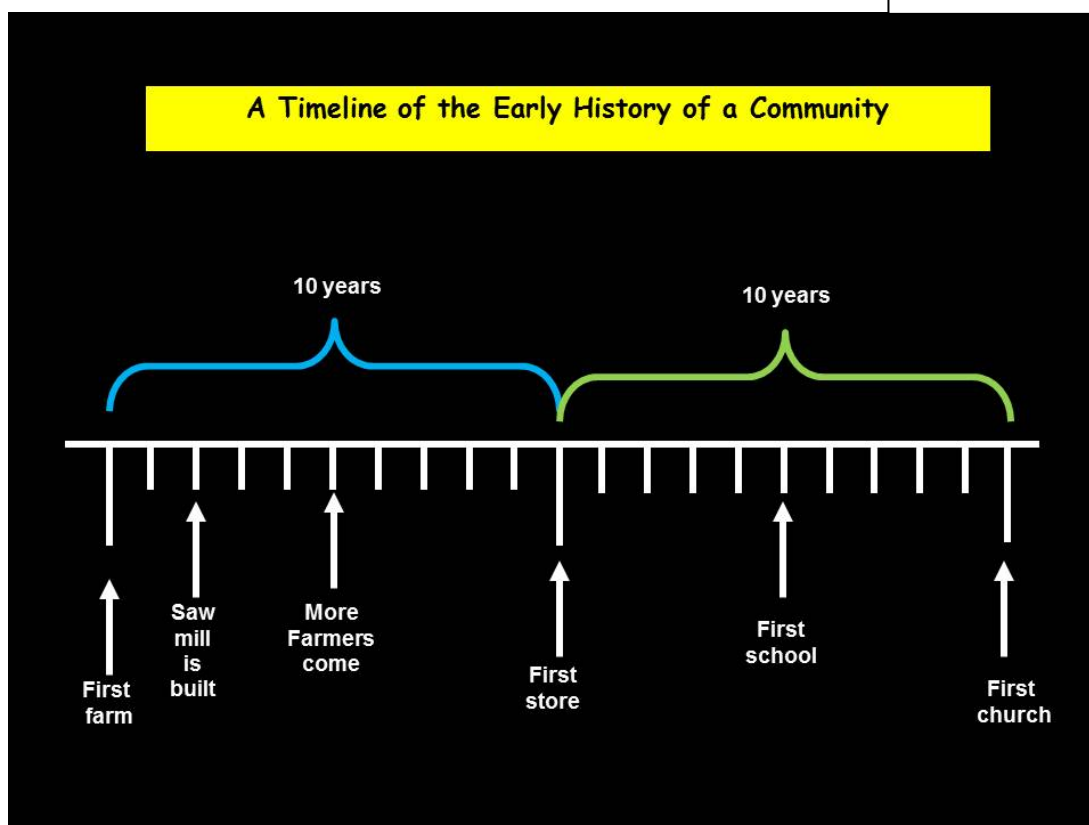
Figure 82

Figure 83: The timeline below was created by a seventh grade student.



By placing events in order, we can begin to make connections between events. Events can be connected by **causes** and **effects**. Timelines help us understand why an event happened or what caused an event. Timelines can also help understand the effects of an event. Timelines help us see how events led to other events. By placing events in **chronological order**, timelines help us organize information about the past.

Figure 84



How Communities Change

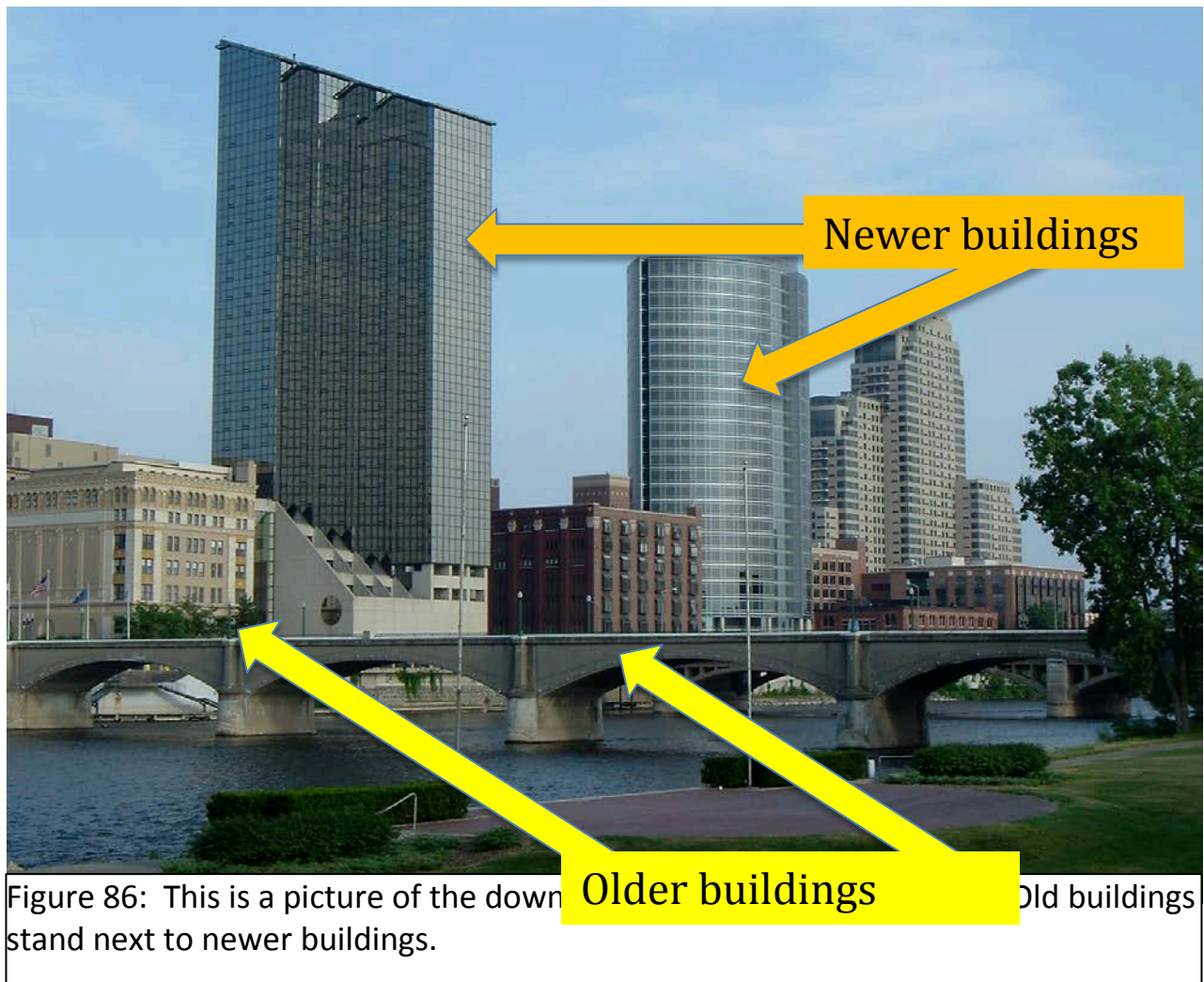
Exploring the history of a community helps us understand how the community has changed over time. The way people use land in and around a community changes over time. The buildings in a community change over time.



Figure 85



Both of these buildings are located in the City of Detroit. Can you tell which is older? How do you know? What clues in the pictures gave you that idea?



The businesses in a community change over time. Transportation – the way that goods and people move from one place to another – also changes as time moves on.

Look at the pictures below. They show how transportation in a community changed over time.

Figure 87



How has your community changed over time?

How did people use the land in and around your community 50 years ago? How do they use it today?

Are there old buildings in your community as well as new ones? A hundred years ago, most people traveled by foot or by horse and carriage. How do people in your community travel today?

Figure 88

Comparing the Past and Present


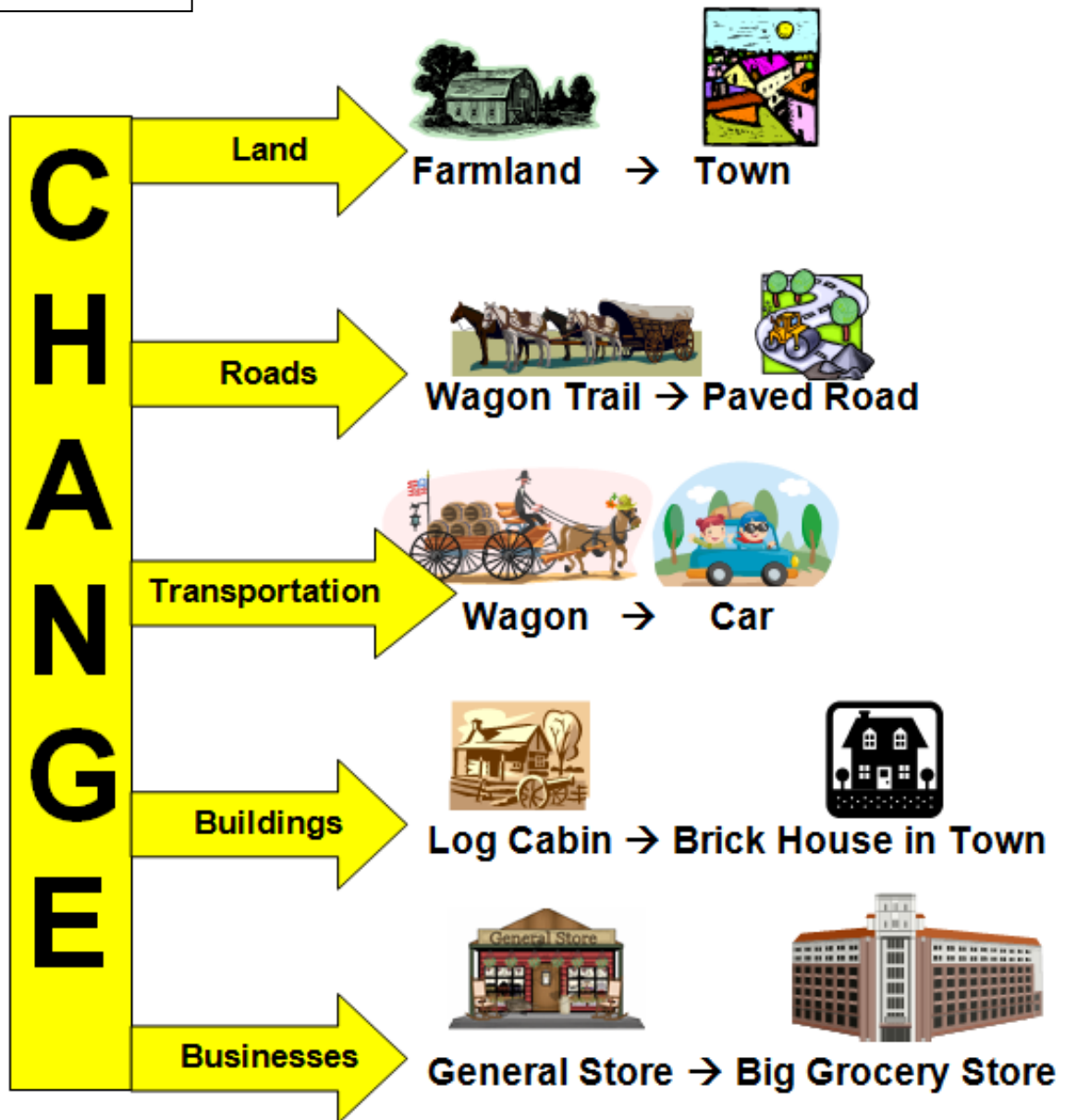
Past	Present
oil lamp 	electric light 
water pump 	faucet 
outhouse 	bathroom 
wood stove 	electric stove 

Figure 89



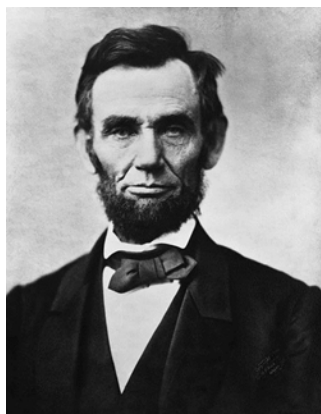
Individuals in History



Figure 903: George Washington was the first president of the United States.

People are important in studying the history of a place. People shape history by the actions they take. One person can affect history in a very big way. People like our presidents helped shape the history of our country.

Figure 91: Abraham Lincoln was a great president. He was president during the American Civil War.



People like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks took action that changed how people treated each other.



People have also shaped the history of our own community. Sometimes, we name our community or our buildings or roads after people who made our community a better place to live.

Below is a sketch of Augustus Woodward. He was a judge in Michigan. A famous road, Woodward Avenue, is named after him. Are there buildings or roads in your community named after people?



Figure 94:
Augustus
Woodward



Figure 95: Woodward
Avenue heading toward
Detroit.

Solving Problems

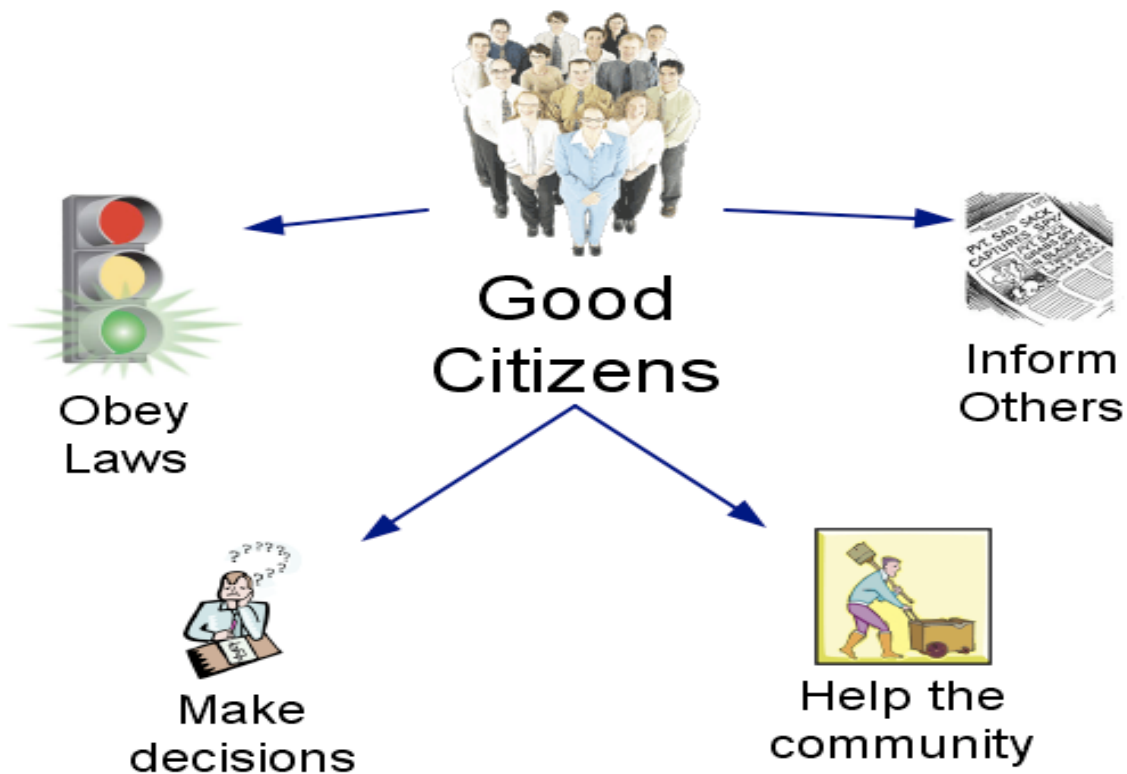
Most communities have had problems in the past. People created ways to solve these problems. Learning about how communities solved past problems helps us understand the history of a community. Since communities are made up of different people, they may have different points of view about a community problem. Different people may describe the same community problem in different ways.

Figure 96



Your Role as a Citizen in a Community

It is important to understanding the geography, government, economics, and history of your local community. This knowledge will help you be a good citizen and make your community a better place to live.



Glossary

A

artifacts - objects from the past that help us understand how people lived

B

basic needs – the minimum of resources needed for humans to survive, usually seen as food, clothing, and

board (township board or city council) - a group of people who make the laws in a community

bodies of water - the parts of the earth's surface that is covered with water

branches of government - three parts of the government, each with separate powers

businesses - places where people produce goods or services

C

capital resources - goods that are used to produce other goods and services

cause - an action that makes something else happen

choice - a decision between two or more options

chronological order - the order of events in which a story or experience occurs

citizen - a person in a school, town, or country that has rights and responsibilities as a member of that group

city hall – the building where local city government official business is done

civic responsibility - a duty or task that members of a community are required or expected to do

community - a place where people live, work and play together

common good - when most people of a group benefit from a shared decision or action

conflict - when people disagree, fight, or in opposition

continent - one way people group and name large areas of land on the surface of the earth; a large landmass on Earth

council - a group of people who make the laws in a community

country - a part of the world with its own name and laws

courts - places where legal cases are heard and judicial decisions are made; the branch of

government that interprets laws and decides the punishment for breaking laws

D

diversity - differences in people or things

E

economic wants – desires that can be satisfied by consuming a good or

economics – the study of how people use resources to produce and consume goods and services

effects - something that results from something else happening; a result or consequence

enforce – to bring about by force or carry out effectively

environment – a person's surroundings

event – an outcome or result

evidence - Objects, artifacts, and documents that help to prove something about the past

exchange – to give up for something else

F

freedom - the right to make choices and have your own ideas

freedom of religion - the right to have any religious beliefs you want or no religious beliefs at all

freedom of speech - the right to say what you want and to talk about your beliefs, ideas, and feelings

G

geography - the study of places

goods - something you can buy, touch, or hold

government - a group of citizens chosen to make and carry out the rules in a community

H

hill – a rounded height of land that is lower than a mountain

historian - a person who studies the past and writes history

history - the study of the past, or a description of past events

houses - places where families live, eat, and play together

human features – geographic features in a place that are made by people

human resources - workers and their skills

I

individual freedom or rights - things an individual person is entitled to have or be able to do; liberty

interpret – explain the meaning of something

J

judge - the person who is in charge of the court

L

lake – large inland body of water; larger than a pond

landforms - a natural feature (such as a mountain or valley) on the Earth's surface

laws - rules in a community, state, or country

libraries – a place in a community that loans or shares digital and print media

limited resources - there are only certain amounts of resources; limited amount of land, labor, capital or time

local government - the government of a community

location - where a place is found

M

map - a birds-eye or overhead diagram that shows a certain place

map key - an explanation of symbols on a map

mayor - the leader in a community who enforces the laws

money – an object of common value people use to trade
for many items

mountain - a steep, tall landform with peaks

N

natural features - traits of a place that were not made by
humans but that are a part of the
environment

natural resources – parts of nature that people find useful
such as trees, ground water, or minerals

needs - things or items people must have to live (food,
clothing, shelter, water)

neighborhood - a group of people who live near one
another or in a particular area

O

ocean - one of the five large areas of salt water that cover
much of the Earth's surface

opportunity cost - when you make a choice, it is the
second thing you wanted most

outline – a drawing that shows only the shape of the
object

P

past - something that has already happened or ended

photographs - pictures that show an event or person from the past

plains – a large, low-lying stretch of flat or gently rolling land

Pledge of Allegiance – an expression of loyalty to the country

pond – a body of water smaller than a lake

R

region - places that are grouped together because they have common characteristics

river - a long body of water that flows through the land

rules – a statement that tells us what we should do or not do to keep us safe

rural – living in the country

S

scarcity - when there is not enough of something for everyone who wants it

service – work performed by others for you

shelter - a place or structure such as a house that provides protection from wind, rain, hot and cold;
another word for a house or home

specialization - when people produce certain kinds of goods or services

state - one of the 50 parts of our country

suburban - an area that contains houses and businesses that are more spread out than an urban area but closer together than a rural area, usually located near a larger city

symbol - tiny pictures that represent specific places or items on a map; something that stands for something else

T

timeline - diagram that shows the order in which events happened in the past; a tool used by historians

township – a form of local government

township board – an elected group of individuals that run the local government

township supervisor – the elected person who runs the township board meetings and serves on the township board

trade - to exchange one good or service for another

trait - a way to describe something

transportation - different ways to move people and goods
from one place to another

tunnel – an underground road

U

unlimited wants - there is no end to the number of things
people want and need

urban – a city area

V

valley - a low piece of land between two hills or mountain
ranges

values - important ideas that people believe in

vote - a process of allowing everyone to choose what
result they would like to have happen; the
way our leaders are chosen in our country

W

wants – goods or services that people do not need, but
would like to have

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