

## Teacher Notes



# You Can Get There From Here: The Interstate Highway System and Its Impact on America

## Activity 3 Pleasantville Gets an Interchange: A Simulation

### Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** Social Studies
- ◆ **Subject Area:** U. S. History
- ◆ **Category:** Postwar America
- ◆ **Topic:** The Rise of Suburbia
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 9 - 11
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** Students should be familiar with the history of the Interstate Highway System, and have a working knowledge of its positive and negative impacts on the American economy and culture.
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 100 minutes. Two class periods of 50 minutes should be adequate for the simulation. Day one will consist of preparation. Day two is for presentation.

### Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus
- ◆ LearningCheck™ App
- ◆ **Activity3** edc resource file: **Group Debriefing**
- ◆ Student Data Sheet: **Pleasantville Gets An Interchange: Background Information and Instructions**
- ◆ Role Description Sheets
- ◆ TI External Keyboard
- ◆ Set of markers for each group
- ◆ Newsprint and old magazines to create visual
- ◆ Poster board or flip charts
- ◆ Glue and/or tape
- ◆ Scissors

## ***Activity Overview***

In this activity students will be asked to engage in a role play activity. The scenario is as follows: It has been proposed that an Interstate interchange be constructed to connect the mythical town of Pleasantville, FL, with Interstate 75. Students will be asked to take the parts of individuals who are either for or against the construction. They will be asked to testify before a board of students representing the Florida Department of Transportation. The board will be asked to render a decision to either approve or turn down this proposed construction.

This is a two-day activity. On the first day, the student groups will prepare for the presentation to the board. Each group will have the part of one individual from Pleasantville, and will work together to develop an effective presentation of that person's viewpoint on the issue. On the second day, each group will make their presentation to the board. Based on the effectiveness of the presentations, the board will render a decision on whether or not to approve the construction of the interchange. Afterward, the class will participate in a debriefing discussion.

## ***Activity Objectives***

Students will:

- ◆ gain an appreciation of the economic impact of road building and construction.
- ◆ gain an appreciation of the environmental impact of road building and construction.
- ◆ exercise critical thinking skills in order to make an informed decision.
- ◆ work collectively to present information on a position and communicate that information effectively.
- ◆ understand the far-reaching impact of growth and its impact on individual communities.

## ***Directions***

### ***Before the Activity Begins***

Make copies of the Student Data Sheet, **Pleasantville Gets An Interchange – Background Information and Instructions**, as well as each of the individual role data sheets.

Divide the class into heterogeneously mixed groups of four. Distribute a copy of the Student Data Sheet to each group along with one Role sheet.

Note that the four students assigned to act as members of the Florida Department of Transportation Board will not have specified roles within the group. Their purpose is to hear the positions of the various groups and render a decision. It is suggested that student volunteers from other classes, teachers, or

students who were absent during the initial stages of the activity take on this role.

Instruct the students in each group to read the background information and instructions on the data sheet as well as their the role card. Within each group are four individual assignment roles, one for each member of the group. Remind the class that every member of the group should be prepared to present their group's point of view, not just the primary spokesperson for the group.

Have the following resource materials available for each group to use:

- ◆ Set of markers
- ◆ Newsprint and old magazines to use in creating visuals for the presentation
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Poster board or flip charts
- ◆ Glue or tape

### ***During the Activity***

Be sure that each student in each group has a different role and is accomplishing the tasks assigned to that role. Answer any questions students have as they prepare their presentations.

### ***After the Activity***

On the second day while the board is deliberating their decision, conduct an informal discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of each group's presentation.

After the board reaches a decision about constructing the interchange, lead a class discussion about the activity using follow-up questions found in the **Activity3** edc resource file.

## ***Student Data Sheet***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Pleasantville Gets an Interchange – Background Information and Instructions***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This exercise will use two class periods of 50 minutes. During the first class period, each group will define their person's position and then create a presentation to support this position. During the second class period, this presentation will be made to the board (and entire class.)

Your teacher will have the following supplies available for your use:

- ◆ Set of markers for each group
- ◆ Newsprint and old magazines to use in creating a visual to support your group's position
- ◆ Poster board or flip charts
- ◆ Glue or tape
- ◆ Scissors

### ***General Directions***

Each group of four students has been assigned a role card. Each member of the group should select one assignment from the following list. If your group contains less than four people, then you may have to double up on these assignments.

#### Intragroup Roles

- ◆ **Facilitator:** assigned the job of seeing that the group remains on task. Coordinates development of group's position on building of the interchange. Assists all other group members.
- ◆ **Primary Spokesperson:** responsible for presenting the group's position on the building of the interchange. This person is key to developing the presentation.
- ◆ **Legal Consultant/Researcher:** responsible for assisting the spokesperson with developing and presenting the group's position. Conducts research on the other groups, and develops information to either support or attack these groups.
- ◆ **Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer:** responsible for developing an appropriate visual representing the group's position on construction of the interchange. Also will develop a "catchy" slogan that states the group's position. For

example, "If you build it they will come." (This slogan cannot be used in any presentation.)

### Group Role Summaries

When taking a stand on a public issue, it is always helpful to know who has similar interests to yours and who will hold opposing viewpoints. The following is a list of the individuals who will make presentations before the board along with a brief description of their viewpoint on the issue.

- ◆ **Donna (Don) Development:** A local real estate developer who hopes to build 200 new homes near the proposed interchange and attract buyers from the nearby city of Major City, FL.
- ◆ **Billie (Bill) Birdwatcher:** An environmental activist who fears that the construction of an interchange will damage a nearby bird refuge.
- ◆ **Bob (Bobbie) Businessperson:** President of the Pleasantville Chamber of Commerce who hopes that the interchange will attract new businesses and new jobs to the area.
- ◆ **Paul (Paula) Preservationist:** President of the Pleasantville Preservation Society who fears new growth will spoil the "country charm" of the town.
- ◆ **Matt (Mattie) Mayor:** Mayor of Pleasantville who understands the need for growth and wants to encourage business development but fears not being re-elected if their position on this issue angers environmental and preservationist groups.

The New Interchange Construction Board of the Florida Department of Transportation: this group is tasked with hearing citizen arguments for/against the construction of the new interchange and rendering a decision.

### ***Information about Pleasantville, Florida***

The small rural community of Pleasantville, Florida (population 10,000) is the county seat of Sunshine County. Located in west central Florida, the town is 50 miles north of Major City, Florida (population 1 million) and many Pleasantvillians (as they call themselves) commute to jobs in this city daily. Pleasantville is connected to Major City by State Highway 123, a two-lane road.

Pleasantville could best be described as a slow-paced, rural community. Most people work in jobs at the local citrus processing plant or the lumber mill; unemployment in Sunshine County is higher than the state average. There is no major employment outside these two businesses and many young people leave to move to Major City to seek employment or higher education after graduating from Pleasantville High School. While there are several quaint hotels and small restaurants in Pleasantville, there are no major franchise businesses or large chain stores located in the community. Pleasantville is best known for its annual "Tangerine Festival."

It has been recently proposed that Pleasantville be connected to nearby Interstate 75 by a new interchange. The suggestion has divided the community. On one side is a group which wishes to maintain Pleasantville's rural charm. On the other side is a group of businesspeople who are anxious to see the community grow economically, and incidentally, profit from the growth.

***Role Card for the Construction Board of the Florida Department of Transportation***

You and your fellow group members make up the New Interchange Construction Board of the Florida Department of Transportation. This group is made up of citizens from the region and staff of the FDOT. They are tasked with determining the locations of new interchanges connecting communities to the interstate. They are an impartial board, and will render an impartial decision after hearing citizen testimony. No one on the board resides in Pleasantville or Sunshine County.

## ***Role Card for Donna (Don) Development***

### ***Background***

Donna grew up in Pleasantville. Her father is a cattle rancher and owns several thousand acres of land near the proposed interchange at I-75. Donna does not want to be a rancher herself and plans to sell off much of this land and build 200 new homes on it. She believes that citizens of Major City, FL would be willing to buy the homes. They would be cheaper, less crowded, and subject to lower taxes than similar homes in Major City. Pleasantville is only an hour's commute away from Major City.

### ***Group Roles***

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Consultant/Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Role Card for Billie (Bill) Birdwatcher****Background**

Billie just moved to Pleasantville from Major City, FL. She and her small family were fleeing the crowded conditions, noise, pollution, and crime of the big city for the quiet country of Pleasantville. She was horrified to discover that there was a proposal to build an interchange connecting Pleasantville with I-75. She fears that this will cause her new community to suffer all the problems of Major City. In addition, she is an avid birdwatcher and environmental activist. The road connecting Pleasantville to I-75 passes beside the Withlakoochi Bird Refuge.

**Group Roles**

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Consultant/Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Role Card for Bob (Bobbie) Businessperson***

### ***Background***

Bob moved to Pleasantville from up north several years ago. He was recently elected president of the Chamber of Commerce on a platform of bringing new business and more jobs to the community. He is excited over the prospect of the new interchange. He has contacted Wal-Mart, Holiday Inn, and McDonald's about locating in the community and has a commitment from Donna Development to sell land at a fair price to these businesses.

### ***Group Roles***

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Consultant/Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

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***Role Card for Paula (Paul) Preservationist***

***Background***

Paula is president of the Pleasantville Preservation Society and is committed to maintaining the country charm and quiet way of life that characterizes the town. She owns a small bed and breakfast inn in town and fears the competition that major retail businesses could bring. She is chairwoman of the annual Tangerine Festival and an influential and highly respected member of the community.

***Group Roles***

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Consultant/Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Role Card for Matt (Mattie) Mayor***

### ***Background***

Matt was educated at the University of Major City. He believes that Pleasantville needs growth and new jobs, but he fears that too rapid growth will strain the city budget. He also wants to maintain Pleasantville's small town atmosphere. He has children in the public schools and worries that there is not enough tax revenue to provide them with a quality education. Matt is running for re-election in 2 years.

### ***Group Roles***

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Consultant/Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Artist/Slogan Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Notes***