

Activate

a game guide for teachers

Activate is a fun and interactive way for students to learn about being an active citizen. Students work their way from taking individual action to running a national campaign for change. They choose one of four issues, then dive into action carrying out tasks to increase awareness, raise money, influence leaders, and more. In the process, they must manage both resources and volunteers, as well as track campaign effectiveness.



Learning Objectives

- Simulate the individual's and organizer's roles taking action to resolve issues at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Demonstrate virtually ways that individuals and groups can influence government and society
- Infer the value and effect of various civic engagement activities

Prerequisites

None—students will learn the material just by learning to play the game successfully. That said, students will get more out of the game if they already have some background knowledge of citizen participation. We suggest teaching the iCivics lesson "Students Engage!" the day before your class plays the game. You can find that and all of our lesson plans at www.iCivics.org/teachers.

HOW TO START THE GAME:

1. Select an avatar.

Your avatar represents you throughout the game.



2. Choose an issue.

The issue you choose at the beginning is the issue you build your campaign around for the entire game. There are four issues to choose from. At first, the issues are framed in terms of local action. But your campaign will grow to a national scale!

Help your family



Clean up your local park



Stop bullying at your school



Help out at the shelter



3. Take personal action!

The game begins with you, by yourself, at home in your room. What can you do to support your cause? The game already has a task set up for you, and you'll see it in the upper part of the screen alongside your objective. This is the Personal level of the game. Click on your character to begin your volunteer task.

In *Activate*, volunteer tasks are fun, interactive mini-games that you complete. Each issue has different tasks at the Personal level:

HELP AN ANIMAL SHELTER

At the animal shelter, there are four dogs that require attention. The dogs have three needs: water, food, and a clean shelter. Pick up the hose, food scoop, and broom to take care of the dogs as quickly as possible as their needs arise!



STOP BULLYING

Hang anti-bullying posters at your school to help spread your message. The walls are your canvas, and you have posters with a variety of sizes and messages (and point values). Place as many posters as you can before you reach the end of the hallway!



HELP YOUR FAMILY

It's time to help out around the house. Leaves are everywhere! Use your leaf blower to clear off the sidewalk in front of your house. But watch your fuel gauge—you need to blow all the leaves away before you run out of gas!



PICK UP LITTER

As you walk along, you'll see trash on the ground. Stab it with your trash pick and drop it into your litter bag. Your speed will increase as you go, so stay alert—if you miss any pieces of litter, this mini-game will end!



You will have to complete the mini-game more than once to generate enough support for your issue to move to the next level.

Keep an eye on the progress bar at the top of the screen, and keep volunteering until you've enacted change!



4. Take local action!

Your friends have noticed your actions and have decided to join your movement. Now you'll meet them in your living room to take steps at the Local level of the game. When the Daily Prestige runs an article that relates to your movement, you'll take action in response. At the local level, your activities will include the same task you did at the Personal level, plus three new "local" tasks. But now you're not alone! You must train your friends, direct them to an activity, and be sure to keep them busy so they don't leave.

The local tasks are the same no matter which issue you choose at the start of the game:



BAKE SALE

As customers ask for items, you must click and hold on an item and then release it in that customer's direction. A few seconds later the customer will throw money back and you must be ready to catch it.



MEET LEADERS

You must determine which local leader is most likely to support your cause, then you must track the correct leader down on the next screen by clicking the dots to navigate the map. Be careful not to run into the wrong leader!



OPINION EDITORIAL

You must select a claim, then must choose three pieces of evidence that BEST support that claim. You can click on items to add or remove them from the page.

5. Take state action!

Now that you've grown your movement at the local level, your issue has attracted more support and it's time to work at the State level. You'll unlock a new set of task options—and move to an office, where you're in charge of some enthusiastic volunteers. Just like you did with your friends, you'll train and manage your volunteers to keep them busy working for change while you're completing your own tasks.

The state tasks are the same no matter which issue you choose at the start of the game:



RADIO AD

Construct a radio ad by selecting an opener, middle and conclusion from a page of notes. Radio ads should be upbeat and thoughtful to convince listeners to support your cause.



CHARITY WALK

Lead a group of marchers to cover as many blocks as possible before time runs out! But be careful to pass by the lemonade stands, because your marchers will get thirsty.



WRITE A LETTER

Organize a letter whose parts are completely out of order. Move the parts around until you've got a correctly written letter supporting your issue!

TIP: Keep the volunteers busy with tasks—then you will be able to reach your goal more quickly. Have the volunteers learn new tasks as well as keep on using their old tasks.

TIP: Make sure to put some volunteers on tasks that raise money. That way the campaign won't run out of money.



6. Take national action!

Finally, you'll move to the national level. Now you'll have even more volunteers to manage, and you'll unlock the final set of tasks.

The national tasks are the same no matter which issue you choose at the start of the game:



NATIONAL MARCH

Lead marchers through Washington, D.C. to the nation's capitol! Pick up as many people as you can and get to the capitol before time runs out.



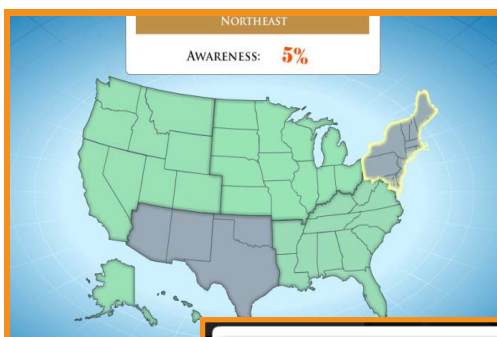
SWAG SALE

People want to buy stuff supporting your cause, but can you remember which cubby each item is stored in? When customers ask, you'll need to know where to look.



MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Reach the widest possible audience by carefully balancing forms of media, considering the tastes of target listeners and the forms of media each demographic uses most.



ENDING THE GAME

At the national level, before taking action, you choose a region of the U.S. in which your activity will take place. Your goal is to raise awareness in all regions to 100% by holding events in that region.

You will see an option to end the game after 30 minutes even if you're not finished. You can choose to print a summary of your game play, keep playing, or just quit. Alternatively, play ends when the progress bars for all your agenda items are filled you have completed all your tasks. At this point you are considered to have enacted change on a national level!

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION STARTERS

Pre-Game Questions

You can use these questions to lead into playing *Activate* in the classroom:

- What are some problems in your community?
- What can you do to solve the problems?
- Who can you get to help you solve the problem? What can you do to get them to help you solve the problem?



Post-Game Questions

Use these questions as a way to debrief the individual experiences of playing *Activate*:

- What did you do first in the game to solve the problem? How did this help solve the problem?
- What steps did you do later in the game to solve the problem? Why do you think the game wouldn't let you start with these steps? What are the advantages of doing the personal tasks before you got volunteers to help you?
- How can kids, who aren't old enough to vote, solve problems in their communities?

Activity

For each situation, pick a solution that you can do to solve the problem. Then explain why the solution will be effective.

Solutions:

- A. Write a letter to the President of the United States
 - B. Hold a carwash to raise money
 - C. Volunteer in order to help solve the problem
 - D. Complain to your friends and parents about the problem
 - E. Ask to meet with your principal to explain the situation and suggest solutions
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1. The local food bank is running low on food. Soon they will have no food left to help needy families. Solution: _____
 2. The city library had to reduce its hours because they don't have enough time to reshelv the books during the day when the visitors are there. Solution: _____
 3. The hallways at school are full of trash because there are not enough trash cans in the hallways. Solution: _____