

PROBLEM SOLVING

TEACHER'S NOTES

GRADE 6 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Grade 6 Social Studies Skills Outcomes that correspond to this activity:

Communication

- 6-S-400 Listen to others to understand their perspectives.
- 6-S-403 Present information and ideas orally, visually, concretely, or electronically.
- 6-S-404 Elicit and clarify questions and ideas in discussions.
- 6-S-405 Articulate their beliefs and perspectives on issues.

Grade 6 Social Studies Knowledge and Values Outcomes that correspond to this activity:

6.4.2 Government in Canada

- 6-KP-049 Describe the main features of the Canadian government.
- 6-KP-052 Identify the main responsibilities of municipal, provincial, First Nations, and federal governments in Canada.
- 6-KP-053 Identify elected or appointed municipal, provincial, and federal government representatives and describe their main responsibilities.

Most people have to deal with a provincial government department or agency, or a municipal government, to receive a variety of services and benefits. If you have a driver's licence, pay property taxes or income taxes, use electricity, need a building permit, take public transit, camp or cottage in a provincial park, or receive a benefit such as social assistance or a child care subsidy, you deal with government. There are numerous other ways in which we interact with government, too.

Given the frequency of these kinds of interactions, there may be times when you're not satisfied with the services you have received. Perhaps you feel that you have been treated unfairly. Maybe you feel that a government decision that affects you is wrong or unreasonable. Whatever the case, there are options for you when it comes to handling the conflict or disagreement that you are experiencing. **Trying to resolve a problem on your own is often the best first step.**

Review and discuss the problem solving tips in the activity sheet – both telephone and in-person, and in writing (or by email). Most problems that arise with public-sector organizations can be resolved by using a combination of these techniques.

Also review the language of fairness activity in conjunction with this activity. Describing a problem in fairness terms can help to pinpoint what the real issue is – this can be helpful when asking for help to solve a problem.

GRADE 9 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Grade 9 Social Studies Skills Outcomes that correspond to this activity:

Communication Skills

- S-400 Listen to others to understand their perspectives.
- S-401 Use language that is respectful of human diversity.
- S-402 Express informed and reasoned opinions.
- S-404 Elicit, clarify, and respond to questions, ideas, and diverse points of view in discussions.
- S-405 Articulate their perspectives on issues.
- S-406 Debate differing points of view regarding an issue.

Grade 9 Social Studies Knowledge and Values Outcomes that correspond to this activity:

Cluster 2: Democracy and Governance in Canada

Learning Experience 9.2.1: Law, Order, and Good Government

- KC-005 Give examples of ways in which government affects their daily lives.
- KP-044 Describe the division of power and responsibilities of federal, First Nations, provincial, and municipal governments.

Use these ideas to develop a problem solving process for issues that might arise at school. If someone has a concern about how an action or decision affects them, how can they go about resolving the problem?

Also use this lesson in conjunction with What's in a Complaint and Government in our Lives to introduce the topic of the ombudsman as a formal avenue of complaint if someone has a concern with provincial or municipal government.

ABOUT THE OMBUDSMAN

Manitoba Ombudsman is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and is not part of any government department or agency. The office's mission is to promote and foster openness, transparency, fairness, accountability, and respect for privacy in the design and delivery of public services.

The ombudsman conducts independent, impartial, and non-partisan investigations about access to information and privacy matters, the fairness of government actions or decisions, or serious wrongdoings that may have occurred. In Manitoba, four laws establish the ombudsman's authority to conduct investigations -- the Ombudsman Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Personal Health Information Act, and the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act.

In Manitoba, the ombudsman is appointed by all parties of the legislature. The ombudsman is appointed for a term of six years, and may be re-appointed for a second term of six years (but not for more than two terms).

Visit Manitoba Ombudsman's website at <https://www.ombudsman.mb.ca> for more information.

Historically, the first independent parliamentary ombudsman was established in 1809 in Sweden. The word "ombudsman" is Swedish, and is often translated as "citizen's representative" or "representative of the people." After Sweden, ombudsmen were established in Finland (1919), Denmark (1954), Norway (1961) and New Zealand (1962).

In 1970, Manitoba became the fourth province (after Alberta, New Brunswick and Quebec) to establish an ombudsman.