VILLAGE SQUARE



LESSON PLAN, ACTIVITIES & TEACHER'S GUIDE

Target Audience: *Grades 4-8 | Ages 9-14*

Time Needed: Up to 3 class periods for the full lesson

Materials needed

Village Square presentation in the supporting files

Devices with Minecraft Education installed

Interactive Whiteboard (optional)

Handouts

Prompt Cards

Pre-game Activities

While-playing (student activity pages)

Post-game Activities

Learning Objectives

A. Explore how groups make informed decisions through voting and compromise

B. Analyze different sides of an argument to determine the best course of action

C. Evaluate how our actions can impact others in our community

Essential Question:

What happens in a community when people have a say in how things are run?

Introduction

Village Square is a Minecraft Education learning experience designed for educators working with students in Grades 4–8, approximately ages 9–14.

It helps students explore how communities make decisions, how different viewpoints can be heard, and how voting, compromise, fairness, and shared responsibility support the common good.

This guide brings together everything needed to plan and deliver the experience: learning objectives, preparation guidance, a suggested lesson sequence, vocabulary support, pre-game and post-game activities, printable student handouts, discussion prompts, a Class Charter activity, and optional Community Impact Projects with differentiated versions for different learners.

Use the guide flexibly across up to three class periods. Begin with the preparation and starter activities, introduce key vocabulary as needed, and then have students play Village Square while completing the Challenge Notetaker. After gameplay, select the discussion, writing, council, or charter activities that best match your learning goals and available time. The optional extension materials can be used to help students apply the ideas of voice, democracy, and fairness to a real issue in their school or community. Teacher directions and facilitation notes appear first; printable student-facing materials follow and may be used digitally or printed.



Step by Step

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with the game. Then, access the Village Square presentation in the supporting files. It contains all the activities you need, plus teacher notes. You can also print the paper versions from this document.

Starter Activity

Display the **Four Corners (Anticipation Guide)** activity slides. As students read the statements, have them move to the corner that corresponds with their answer. Use this time to introduce or reinforce the idea that community members often see things differently.

Vocabulary building (Optional)

Students will be building conceptual knowledge as they learn new terms. You can assign the Vocabulary activity either before playing as a preview, or after playing to review and synthesize learning. Choose whichever approach best fits your classroom needs. Encourage students to use these new words in both speaking and writing.

Teaching Tip:

"2 for 1 Dice Game": If physical dice are not available, students can use an online dice simulator to roll virtually.

Mini-Lesson

Display the example Prompt card/strip slide. Read through the scenario with the students then reveal the question. Have students use the **Think-Pair-Share** strategy to briefly discuss their answers. Explain that listening to others and knowing how they feel about an issue will be an important part of the game.

Game

Direct students to the Minecraft Education website and have them play the game **Village Square**.
Allow students to play individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Distribute the student activity sheet or sheets. Have students complete the Challenge Notetaker as they encounter villagers, help solve problems, and complete the different scenarios.



Post-Gameplay Activities

Choose 2-3 activities, as time allows. All activities are included in the Extension Pack and as paper handouts in this plan. See the notes in the slides for more ideas.

Discussion Questions:

Strategically group your students. Options include: linguistic ability, home language, etc. Provide sentence starters if needed.

Cube City News:

Instead of writing, give students the option to share their explanation out loud through a quick audio or video recording. You can support your multilingual (ML) learners by providing a simple speaking model to help them structure their thoughts, such as: *In Village Square, we used democracy to solve our problems by having everyone participate. Our main goal was to work together, and by using our voice, we successfully helped our community.*

"Hear Ye, Hear Ye" Village Council:

Arrange students in groups of 3–4; odd-numbered groups are ideal for voting. During the discussion, encourage students to use a "Round Robin" brainstorming technique in which each student shares one thought before anyone speaks twice. You can also provide sentence frames on the board to lower the barrier to entry, such as: "I agree with this decision because..." or "A better solution might be..."

Class Charter Activity:

Group students in teams of 3–4. Have chart paper and plenty of sticky notes ready for each of the three topics (Feelings, Actions, Resilience) around the room. To scaffold this for MLs:

- **Allow Multilingual Notes:** Encourage ML students to write their initial sticky notes in their home language or draw quick sketches/emojis to represent complex emotions and actions.
- **Provide an Emotion Word Bank:** Post a small word bank with visual emojis representing feelings (e.g., *included, proud, calm*) to help students connect terms during the brainstorming phase.

Optional Extension Activity

Impact on the Community Project:

As an extension of the game and the challenge worksheet, have students work in groups to brainstorm challenges that people are facing in the class, at school, or in the community. Students can interview peers, family, and/or community members. Have students work through the process of trying to find a solution. This can be a community impact project.

Teaching Tip

The process is designed around design thinking. Design thinking is a creative way to solve problems by focusing on what people need. Instead of jumping straight to a solution, students focus on understanding the real needs of the people they are helping, brainstorming diverse possibilities, building hands-on models, and refining their ideas through testing and feedback.

Pre-Game Activities

Village Square Anticipation Guide

Read each sentence carefully. Decide how you feel about each one. Check the box that best matches your opinion. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is about your perspective, or how you see things.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If a school rule feels unfair, students should be allowed to ignore it.				
2. In a class discussion, it is better to stay quiet than to share a different opinion.				
3. You can only be friends with someone if you agree on almost everything.				
4. A village works better when the Chief Villager makes all the decisions instead of the villagers making choices together.				
5. If most villagers vote to build a giant statue in the middle of town, the villagers who voted “no” should still help build it.				
6. A village with absolutely no rules would be a happier and safer place for everyone.				
7. Villagers only need to care about what happens inside their own homes. They have no responsibility to help the rest of the village.				
8. A village meeting is only successful if every villager leaves the meeting with the same opinion they had at the start.				
9. Treating everyone with fairness means giving every single person the exact same thing.				
10. It is okay for a villager to break a community agreement if they change their mind.				

Village Square Vocabulary



Key Vocabulary from Game

Citizen – (n.) an active and responsible member of a community, school, or country
Community – (n.) a group of people who live, work, play, or cooperate in the same place
Democracy – (n.) a group or community where everyone has an equal say in making decisions together
Rules – (n.) shared instructions that a community agrees to follow, meant to help things run smoothly for everyone
Voice – (n.) the opportunity for every person to share their ideas and be heard
Vote – (v.) to make a choice as a group after letting each person pick the option they prefer

Additional Vocabulary Terms

Agreement – (n.) a decision or understanding that two or more people share together
Compromise – (n.) an agreement reached by each side giving up something they wanted so they can meet in the middle
Disagreement – (n.) a difference of opinion, or a moment when people do not see eye-to-eye on an issue
Discussion – (n.) a conversation where people talk together to share ideas, solve problems, or learn from each other
Empathy - (n.) being able to understand and share another person's feelings; putting yourself in their place to feel what they feel
Fairness – (n.) treating people in a way that is reasonable, honest, and follows the rules.
Inclusion - (n.) making sure everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued as a part of the group
Opinion – (n.) a personal belief or feeling about something
Respect – (n./v.) Treating others with kindness and valuing their feelings, ideas, and rights

Vocabulary Activities

Word Mapping

Create a word map by starting with the vocabulary word in the center. Then, branch out to include an image, part of speech, definition, related words, examples, and a sentence using the word in context.

Picture

Part of Speech

Examples

Word

Related Words

Sentence

Definitions



Personification Challenge

Personify a vocabulary word as if it were a character. Describe its personality, actions, and write a short story featuring the word character.

Word:

Character Name:

Draw Your Character

Describe Your Character’s Personality:

How Would You Describe Your Character’s Actions?

The 2-for-1 Dice Challenge

Work with a partner. Each person rolls one die. Partner 1 matches their roll to Column A, and Partner 2 matches their roll to Column B.

Together, write one single sentence using both words to describe what you are learning. Add your two numbers together to score your points!



Roll	Column A	Column B
1	Democracy	Rules
2	Citizen	Respect
3	Community	Fairness
4	Vote	Compromise
5	Discussion	Disagreement
6	Voice	Agreement

Example:

You roll a **3** (Community) and your partner rolls a **4** (Compromise).

Your Sentence: *Our **community** had to make a **compromise** to decide where to build the new park.*

Your Score: 3+4= **7 Points**

Turn	Roll A	Roll B	Points for this round
1			
2			
3			

Situation Cards – Village Voices

The following prompts feature a scenario sentence and a discussion question.

Use a discussion strategy like Turn and Talk to partner students in groups of 2-3. Give each student or group a scenario card or strip. Have them share the scenario with a partner. Then have them discuss their answers and reasons.

VILLAGE VOICES 1

SITUATION

You are at a village meeting. Another villager loudly shares an idea about farming. You think the idea is wrong and bad for the village.

DISCUSSION

Do you interrupt them right away to correct them, or do you let them finish speaking? Why? Is it important to listen to ideas we might disagree with? Why or why not?

VILLAGE VOICES 2

SITUATION

The village is voting on whether to ban pets from the village square. Your best friend is voting 'Yes,' but you secretly want to vote 'No.'

DISCUSSION

Should you change your vote just to make your friend happy? Why are some reasons that communities might use secret voting instead of public voting? Are there any downsides?

VILLAGE VOICES 3

SITUATION

A very quiet villager has an amazing map. It could help the village find resources. But, they are too shy to speak at the big council meeting.

DISCUSSION

As a citizen, is it your job to help others share their voices? How can we make sure quiet people get a say?

VILLAGE VOICES 4

SITUATION

You spent weeks saying the village should build a giant rollercoaster in the mines. But after seeing the village budget, you realize the money is needed for iron golems.

DISCUSSION

How can listening to others and hearing different ideas help you make better choices?

VILLAGE VOICES 5

SITUATION

The Village Mayor is caught taking extra emeralds from the public chest to build themselves a bigger house. They say, 'I'm the Mayor, so I can do what I want!'

DISCUSSION

Does the law apply to leaders the same way it applies to regular citizens? What should the village do?

VILLAGE VOICES 6

SITUATION

The main bridge to the village broke. The council says every citizen has to spend two hours gathering cobblestone to fix it.

DISCUSSION

Is it fair for the government to force citizens to do work for the community? Why or why not?

Take Home Table Talk

The following prompt cards are take-home discussion prompts based on the scenarios and student discussion prompts used in class.

TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 1

ASK A PARENT

"What is a time you had to listen to someone you really disagreed with? How did you handle it respectfully?"



TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 2

ASK A PARENT

"Do you think it's hard to stand up for your opinion when your friends disagree with you? How do you handle it?"



TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 3

ASK A PARENT

"How do you make sure your voice is heard at work or in our community when you feel shy?"



TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 4

ASK A PARENT

"Have you ever completely changed your mind about an important issue after getting new information? What changed it?"



TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 5

ASK A PARENT

"Why is it important that our leaders follow the exact same laws as everyone else?"



TAKE-HOME TABLE TALK 6

ASK A PARENT

"What are some responsibilities we have as citizens that we must do, even if we don't want to? (Like paying taxes or jury duty!)"



Village Square Notetaker

As you complete the different challenges in the village, answer the questions and take notes on how you helped solve the problem.

Locating the Villagers	What was the problem? Who did you talk to? How did you help find a solution?
The Emerald Robes	What was the problem? Who did you talk to? How did you help find a solution?
The Iron Mines	What was the problem? Who did you talk to? How did you help find a solution?
The River	What was the problem? Who did you talk to? How did you help find a solution?



Post Game Activities

Discussion Questions

With a partner, discuss these questions. Write your answers.

What is a rule or agreement in our class or school that some people find annoying to follow? Who does the rule help, and is it worth the annoyance? Would you say that this rule protects the common good?

For some, the charter is just words on the village board. What do you think needs to happen to ensure that the people of Village Square actually take these words seriously?

When would having a single decision-maker be more appropriate than having a group make the decision? Explain why.



Cube City News

Thanks to your help, things are improving in Village Square. Your work has gone viral! Neighboring Cube City has been experiencing similar problems and now wants your help.

You have been invited to write an article for the Cube City newspaper explaining how democracy worked for Village Square. Use at least four of your vocabulary words. The Cube City News has only given you a little space in their paper. Plan and write carefully. You only have one paragraph of space to get the message out!

Use this space for your paragraph.

“Hear Ye Hear Ye” Village Council

Congratulations! You have been elected to the village council! Your job is to help decide the best solution to the village’s problems.

Working with your group, read your assigned challenge and write a statement supporting the proposed solution, or propose a new one to present to the villagers. Then, present your finished solution statement to the class for a vote.

Village Council Challenges:

1. The village has enough money to build one thing this year: a playground for the kids OR a garden for the community. The village council believes the playground should be built.
2. The butcher wants the farmer to cut down his biggest apple tree because the roots are ruining his fence and his pigs are escaping. He should be allowed to cut it down.
3. A few village kids keep playing pranks that cause the Iron Golems to break. So, the village council has decided to charge households with kids a two emerald tax per child to pay for fixing the Golems. Since kids caused the damage, only families should have to pay to fix the Iron Golems.
4. To stop the Creepers from entering and destroying the village square at night, the village council wants to build a giant wall to keep them out. However, this wall will block the view of the surrounding sea and prevent villagers from accessing the waterfront. The village should build the wall because safety is more important than how the village looks or having access to the sea.
5. The village council has a surplus of collected tax money. The Librarians and Cartographers want to start a village museum and have asked the village council to use some of the money to purchase rare items from the Wandering Trader. The Butchers and Farmers want the village council to throw a summer festival. The village council uses the money to buy food stuff from the butchers and farmers for the summer festival.

What was your challenge?

Why is (or isn’t) this the proposed solution the best choice?

Write your final statement supporting the proposed solution, or write a new statement suggesting a different solution. Be ready to present this to the villagers (your class) at the next council meeting.

Our Class Charter

In Village Square, the villagers made decisions together as a community. Now, your class is going to create a **Class Charter**. This is a shared agreement on how you will treat one another, learn together, and handle challenges as a community.

Step 1: The Brainstorm

Your teacher will give your group sticky notes. On your own or with a partner, write down words and ideas for these three areas:

Feelings: How do you want to feel when you are in this classroom? *(Examples: safe, included, respected, valued)*

Actions: What do we need to do to make sure everyone feels this way? *(Examples: listening without interrupting, using kind words, helping each other)*

Resilience: What will we do if someone breaks our charter or if we have a conflict? *(Examples: take a brief break, apologize, talk it out calmly)*

Place your sticky notes on the matching chart paper around the room.

Step 2: Sort and Write

With your small group, look at the sticky notes on your assigned topic.

Group similar ideas and words together.

Write 2–3 clear, one-sentence statements that summarize the big ideas on your chart.

Step 3: Present and Vote

Share your group's statements with the rest of the class. Together, the class will vote on the top **3–5 statements** that best represent how you want your classroom community to run.

Reflection Question: Why do you think a charter that we build together as a class is different from a list of rules handed to us? What are the advantages or disadvantages of each?

Optional Extension

Community Impact Project

In this project, you'll become an innovator by using a process called **design thinking**.

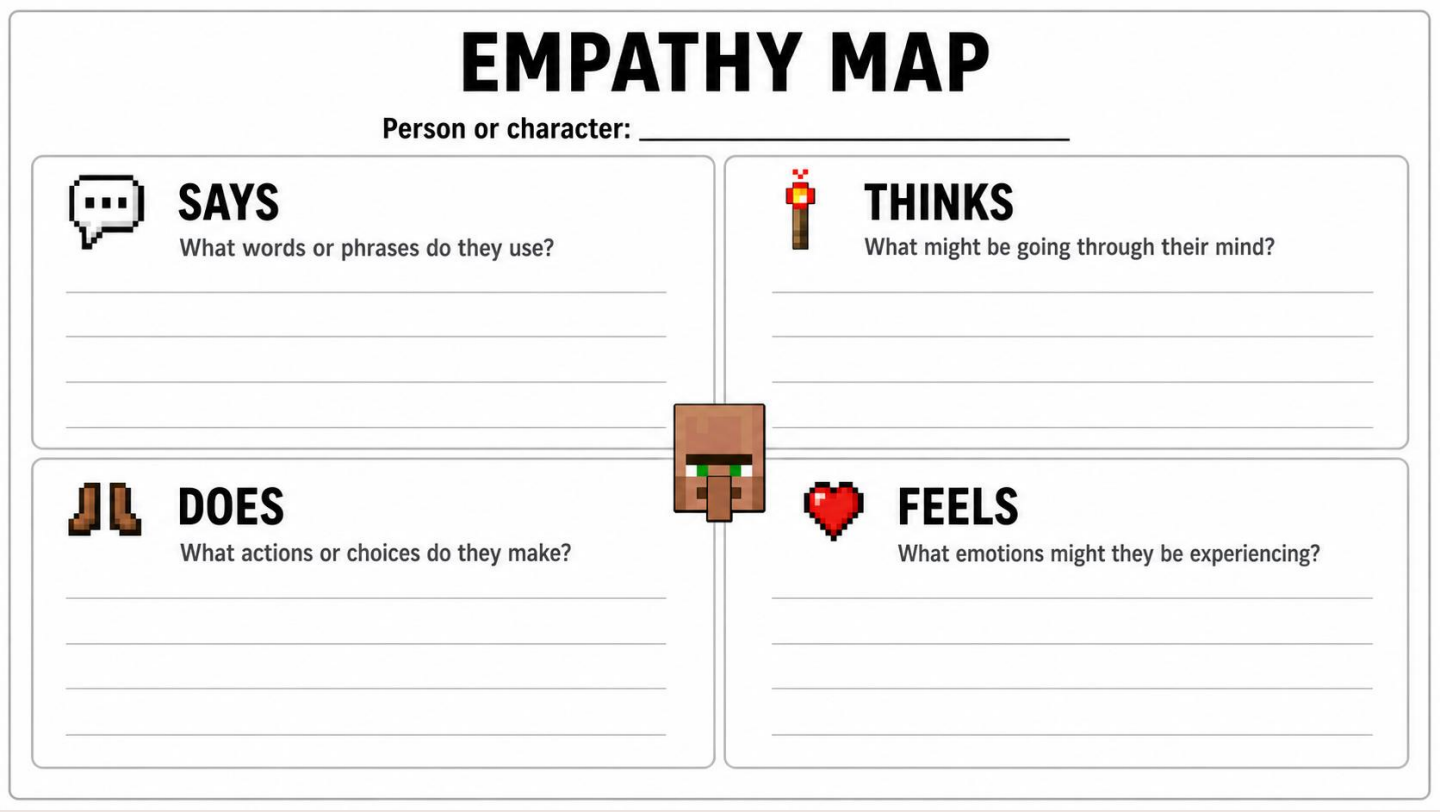
Design thinking is a creative way to solve problems by focusing on what people need. Instead of just guessing a solution, you will brainstorm ideas, test models, and learn from what works and what doesn't work. This activity will guide you step-by-step to finding ways to address a need in your community.

Directions:

Use what you learned about democracy, voice, and fairness to identify ways to solve a real-world problem in your school, neighborhood, or community.

Step 1: Empathize (Understand the Need)
Who do you want to help? This could be your classmates, younger kids in your school or community, your neighbors, or animals/pets. To help find a good solution, we need to listen to the people and understand what they care about and what they need.

Talk to two or three people in this group and complete the empathy map below.



Step 2: Define (Focus on the Problem)
Now that you've listened to them, narrow it down to one clear problem that your group can actually tackle.

In **one clear sentence**, state the exact problem or conflict the person or people are facing. Look at the bigger picture. Is anyone else affected by this issue? If so, consider their perspective, too.

Our community needs a way to... because ...

Why does solving this problem contribute to the **common good** (helping everyone, not just one person)?



Step 3: Ideate (Brainstorm Solutions)
It's time to brainstorm! Don't hold back—think of ways to address this issue. No ideas are bad ideas. Think of as many creative, fun, or simple ways to solve your problem statement as possible. If it affects more than one group, think of ways to make both sides happy.

How can we solve this problem so that it is **fair to everyone**? List a few different ideas you have.

List three completely different ways your group could help solve the problem:

Idea A Idea B Idea C

Review your ideas with your team. Practise the skills that you learned in Village Square. Listen to your team, discuss your choices, and vote on the best one. You may need to change an idea, and that is okay.

Which idea did you agree on and what is one small adjustment you made so that everyone on your team felt heard?

Which idea did you pick? If you made any changes, write them here. Idea: Changes:

Step 4: Prototype (Select the Best Plan)

A prototype is where you choose your absolute best idea and map it out. It can be an outline, a blueprint, or even a model. It doesn't have to be perfect, it just needs to show how your plan will work.

Example Project:

Example Project: If your problem is "The school playground has too much trash," your prototype might be a map showing where three new student-painted trash cans or recycling bins could be placed, along with a draft morning announcement or posters asking students to keep the school clean.

What is your project idea? Describe it in 2-3 sentences.

The Blueprint: In the space below, sketch your prototype, map out your plan, or write down the steps of how your project will work.

Why is this specific solution better than the other ideas you came up with?

Step 5: Test and Reflect (Get Feedback)
Let's test our efforts to see how the solution worked. Show your prototype to a teacher, a classmate, or a parent to see if it works and is fair.

Share your plan with someone. What is one thing they loved about it and what is one piece of advice they gave to make it better?

Glows (sunshine) What they liked:	Grows (seedling) Their advice:

Optional Step 6: Next Steps (In Action) or Civic Responsibility
You might be ready to put your plan in action, or you might have to go back a step or two and make some changes. No matter what, your next steps are very important.

Go Back: What changes do you want or need to make? Why? What step do you need to return to? What did you learn about yourself and your community while working on this plan?

Ready to Go: Your plan is ready for the next step. Congratulations!

What resources do you need to make this plan work? Resources are the tools and supplies that you will need to use. Sometimes plans require an adult to help. If your plan requires an adult, they are considered a resource, too.

Tools:

Supplies:

Community member/Adult:

What will each team member need to do to make this project happen? Who is responsible for what?

List each member, their role in the project, and their responsibilities.

What is one small action you could take that might make a difference in a community you're part of?

Community Impact Project

You are about to become an inventor and problem solver!

You will use a process called Design Thinking to help your school, neighborhood, or community. Design thinking is a creative way to solve a problem.

Directions: Use what you learned about democracy, voice, and fairness to identify ways to solve a real-world problem in your school, neighborhood, or community.

Step 1: Empathize (Care and Listen)

To help people, we first need to listen to what they need.

Who do you want to help? *(Circle one)*

1. Classmates or your friends
2. Younger students
3. Neighbors
4. Pets or animals that live in the area

Talk to 2 or 3 people in this group. Ask them what feels unfair, hard, or frustrating in their day.

Name	What is unfair or hard for them?	Why do they feel this way?

Step 2: Define (Focus on the Problem)

Now, pick ONE main problem to solve.

Complete this problem sentence:

Our community needs a way to _____ because

_____.

How can solving this problem help more people in your school or community and not just one person?

Step 3: Ideate (Brainstorm Ideas)
It's time to brainstorm! Think of 3 different ideas to solve the problem. No ideas are bad ideas. Be creative!

How can we solve this problem so that it is **fair to everyone**? List a few different ideas you have.

Idea A Idea B Idea C

Group Talk: Share your ideas with your team. Listen kindly. Talk about your choices and then vote on the one that you think will work best.

Which idea did your group pick? Did you make any changes so everyone felt included?

Step 4: Prototype (Draw or Design your Plan)

A prototype is a quick drawing or model of your idea.

Example Project: If your problem is “The school playground has too much trash,” your prototype could be a picture of student-painted recycling bins or trash cans. It could also be posters asking students to keep the school grounds clean.

What is your project idea? Describe it in 2-3 sentences.

The Blueprint: Draw a map, picture, or list the steps of your plan in the box below.

Why is this idea the best choice?

Step 5: Test and Reflect (Get Feedback)

Show your drawing or plan to a teacher, classmate, or parent. Ask them for their thoughts.

What they loved about it	Their advice to make it better

Optional Step 6: Next Steps (Get Ready to Act!)
Are you ready to try your plan, or do you need to fix a few things first? *(Check one)*

Go Back: We need to change a few things first.
Ready to Go: Our plan is ready for action!

What supplies do you need?

Tools and Supplies	**Adult Helper(s)**

Who is on your team and what is their job?

Name	**Job**

END OF DOCUMENTs