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A History of Cities

When people immigrated to America, they gathered together to live in small communities or neighborhoods. They had to clear land; plant crops; build homes, farms and roads; and establish businesses. More and more people followed, and the communities grew.

The immigrants faced many dangers, obstacles and challenges. Without protection, the people were vulnerable to wild animals, disease, enemy attack and crop failure, to name just a few.

As more people arrived, more development was needed. They needed more housing, roads and protection. As a result of this, communities grew into towns and cities where people came together and chose to govern themselves through a democratically established municipal government. Citizens created these governing units to be in charge of overseeing the city's activities, services and development.

The first European settlements in Florida and the United States were Pensacola and St. Augustine. They became cities in territorial Florida in 1822.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Through study of their personal heritages and culture, students can research the communities, towns or cities from which their families came.
- 📖 Students can research how their particular city is laid out and develop maps for important landmarks, government buildings and businesses in relation to their home and school.
- 📖 Students can research how their city got its name. If they live outside a city, they can select a nearby city.



3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities through history. For example, they can look at how and why cities were developed in Europe during the Middle Ages.

4th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities during the Colonial times. For example, they can look at the needs of the people, laws, government, agriculture, transportation and communication.
- 📖 Students can hold a town meeting to draft the charter (constitution) to establish a new city. Discussion can include the geographical boundaries, services to be provided, how many elected officials will govern the city, setting an election date, and selection of a city name.

5th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities in the State of Florida. What might have caused development to occur as it did (i.e., train routes).
- 📖 Students can focus on the history of their city (or nearby city) and its government. Have resource people who have been long-time residents tell what it was like in the “old days.” Other resource people should include city government officials.
- 📖 Students can write and perform a play about the founding of their city, or they can prepare a video about the history of their city.
- 📖 Students can write a paper on the history of their city.
- 📖 Students can research any festivals/celebrations held locally and the historical significance to the development of their city.

Student Questions:

1. Why is it important to know the history of your city?
2. How were sites for cities selected?
3. What were some of the factors responsible for the growth of your city?
4. Where would you go to find information about the history of your city?
5. What ethnic groups were instrumental in the formation and growth of your city?
6. Why did some cities thrive while others failed?
7. What are some similarities and differences of the development of cities in Europe and America?

What Is a City?

A city is a place where you live, work, go to school and play. A city is a place where you carry on your day-to-day life. Some cities are also called towns or villages. Cities are communities that may be made up of several neighborhoods. A city is a municipal government created by the citizens through legislative special act, and established by vote of the citizens, through adoption of a charter.

A city government provides services to its citizens and sets up rules and regulations, called ordinances, that allow us to have a beautiful, safe and healthy place to live.

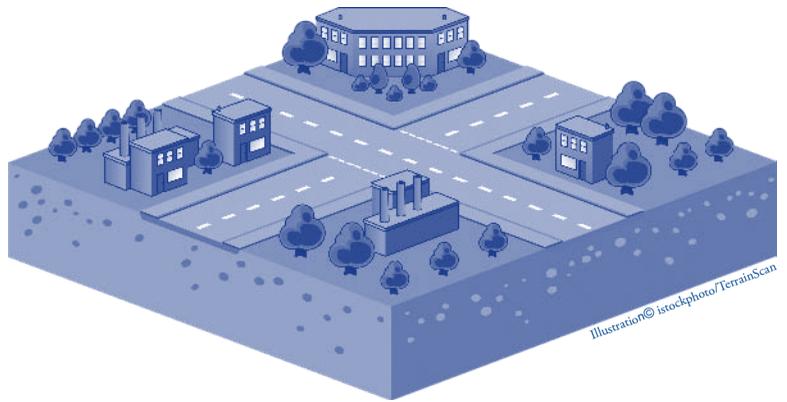
The central building from which these services are offered and rules are made is called city hall. The people working at city hall provide us with many services like clean water, garbage collection, playgrounds, streets, lights, and police and fire protection.

Half of Florida's population lives in a municipality. In Florida, if you do not live within a city, you live in the unincorporated county. Cities vary in size, but each one is a true example of democracy in action at the level closest to the citizen.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Students, using mapping skills, can research a city's boundaries and where specific city operations are located.
- 📖 Students can design posters, booklets, or multimedia presentations about the services that they use in their city.



3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can research the history of the development of their city government. They can look at pictures of the city from different periods to see how it has changed over time. They can build models or designs of their own city. These visuals can be shared with lower primary grades during their studies.

4th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the differences of cities during Colonial times and compare with current practices. Field trips to various city-run services can be very useful. Resource people from city service departments are excellent sources of information and for classroom speakers.
- 📖 Using the Internet, students can investigate the home pages of various Florida municipalities, looking for such information as department structure, services provided, elected officials and city history.

5th Grade

- 📖 Students can do interviews with city department personnel about the specific functions of the departments. Presentations can be made to their own class and at other grade levels.
- 📖 Students can write reports or keep journals about what they have found that makes up a city.
- 📖 A sister-school program would allow students to write to students in other states or countries to find out about their life and their city governments. In addition to writing letters, they could send pictures from local newspapers/magazines that depict life in their communities, comparing and contrasting their city with other cities.

Student Questions:

1. What is a city? What is a citizen?
2. Why is it important to learn about city government?
3. New cities may be created at any time. How many cities make up the State of Florida today?
4. Name and describe the services provided to citizens through city hall?
5. Where do citizens go to inquire about city services?

Governing Body: Who Runs City Hall?

Every city is governed or run by a group of people who make and change laws. These people run the city because the people in the city voted in an election to let them do so. The people elected to run the city are usually called mayor, councilmember or commissioner. Most councils have five or seven members. The people adopt a charter, which is like a constitution, and in it the people decide how they will govern themselves. They meet as a council during the month to take care of city business. Anyone can attend these meetings. The meetings are usually held in city hall.

How a city runs depends on what form or type of government is in place. The form of government is stated in each city's charter. There are four basic forms of government in Florida and there are many variations of these forms.



- 📖 **Council-manager form:** This is a very prevalent form of government today. With this form of government, the city council (including the mayor) appoints a city manager who supervises and coordinates the various departments throughout city hall. The manager prepares the budget for the council's consideration and makes reports and recommendations to the city council.
- 📖 **Council-weak mayor form:** This was the original form of city government in America. It is still widely used in small cities. With this form of government, the city council as a whole has control over administration or operation of the city. Many times the position of mayor is rotated from year to year among the councilmembers. The mayor has little authority and usually has no more power than any other councilmember.
- 📖 **Council-strong mayor form:** This form of government was created from the weak mayor form of government. However, it is different because the mayor is actually the chief executive. In other words, the mayor has a lot of power over administration or operation of the city. The mayor has appointing powers and may also veto or vote against the actions of the council.
- 📖 **Commission form:** With this form of city government, each commissioner serves as director of one or more departments. Collectively, the commission adopts policy, and each department implements it. The mayor assumes ceremonial leadership, and the commission collectively governs.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Students can discuss the differences between appointed and elected positions.
- 📖 Introduce and discuss with students the concept of representative democracy (i.e., citizens vote for the people who make policy decisions; the policy makers, in turn, hire workers to implement their policies).
- 📖 Students may get involved in decision-making and rules in their classroom. Relate the process to decisions made at the city level (for example, ordinances or laws).

3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can research how cities have been governed throughout history. They can begin to see different systems of governing. Invite elected city officials into the classroom for presentations and discussions.

4th Grade

- 📖 Invite the county supervisor of elections or city clerk to speak to students about city elections and what is involved. Students can elect their own city officials in the classroom. Campaigns can be run and a mock city council meeting can be held.

5th Grade

- 📖 Students can study the roles of city officials and how a city council meeting is run. Field trips to actual council meetings would be beneficial. Students can conduct their own council meetings dealing with issues that are relevant to their city or school.
- 📖 If there is a city election being held during the school year, students can read and analyze information about the election from the newspaper and discuss the candidates/issues with classmates through class discussion. Then, on voting day, students can vote on the race(s) or issue(s). Compare their results with the actual outcome of the election.

Student Questions:

1. Why is it important to know who your city officials are?
2. Is one form of city government better than another?
3. How often are your city officials elected?
4. How often and where are city government meetings held?

Appointed City Officials

While citizens elect or vote on people to make some decisions about how a city is run, other people are appointed or hired to implement the city council's actions. Some of the key city staff are described below.

-  **City manager:** The council-manager form of government requires that the city council appoint or hire someone to run the city. Not all cities have this form of government. This person is often referred to as the chief administrator or city manager. The city manager supervises and coordinates the various departments throughout city hall. The city manager prepares the budget for the council's consideration and makes reports and recommendations to the city council. All department heads usually report to the city manager. The manager's position is expected to be non-political.
-  **City clerk:** All Florida cities have a city clerk. Usually the city charter says what the duties of the city clerk should be. The responsibilities of the clerk typically include attending all city council meetings, taking minutes of the meetings, and being responsible for all or most official records. Additional duties of the clerk may include those of the treasurer, purchasing officer, etc. In a few cities, the clerk is elected by the people, but in most the clerk is appointed by the city manager or city council. In some municipalities, one person is chosen to be both city manager and city clerk.
-  **Finance officer:** The finance officer, who is sometimes referred to as the treasurer, usually serves as the chief financial officer for the city. This is typically clarified by the city charter. Duties of the finance officer include the collection and receipt of all city monies. The finance officer is responsible for keeping records of city monies and for investing these funds. He/she is responsible for paying city employees and others who provide goods and services to the city. The finance officer often reports to the city manager and city council on the financial condition of the city.
-  **City attorney:** In most cities, the city council appoints a city attorney to give them legal advice. The city attorney may be a full-time employee, part-time employee or hired on a case-by-case basis. The city attorney gives legal opinions on issues affecting the city and advice on laws that the council is considering.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Introduce the terminology of the appointed city personnel. Describe their duties to the students and how their positions are different from elected positions. If at all possible, have the actual city staff come for a visit to the classroom.

3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can research the different appointed city positions available through history. Presentations can then be made to the class.

4th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the appointed city positions through Colonial times as compared to current practices, identifying the specific functions of the positions. Field trips or classroom visits by city personnel would be appropriate.

5th Grade

- 📖 Students can develop their own appointed positions in the classroom. They must have job descriptions in order to fill the city positions appropriately through the hiring process.
- 📖 Reports and/or interviews can be done about the specific city positions.

Student Questions:

1. Why are some city officials elected and others appointed? What positions are appointed in your city (or a nearby city)?
2. What types of appointed city officials are needed to provide the wide range of city services? How do these positions compare to jobs at other places within the community?

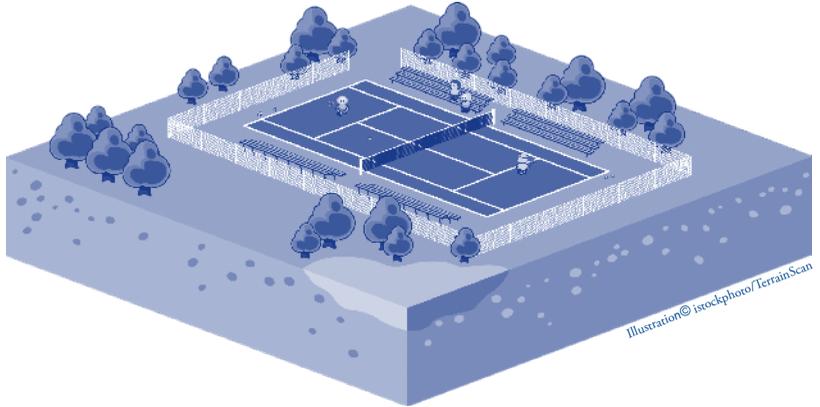
City Departments

There are many departments that make up a city government. These departments are necessary to operate the city and to provide services to its citizens. Not all cities provide the same services or have the same departments. The services, and ultimately the structure of the city government, are decided upon primarily by the residents of the city.

Some of the most common city departments are:

- 🏠 **Utilities** - provides water and wastewater treatment (a few city departments provide other utilities like electricity and natural gas to homes and businesses).
- 🏠 **Public Works** - provides for garbage pickup, traffic lights, streets and road maintenance, and city building maintenance.
- 🏠 **Planning** - implements plans for the future growth and development of the city.
- 🏠 **Finance** - prepares payments for running the city, invests city revenues and handles the budget.
- 🏠 **Parks and Recreation**
- provides recreational programs and activities for residents, such as sports, arts and crafts, and special events; staff also maintain city facilities, parks and playgrounds.
- 🏠 **Police** - makes sure that all laws are obeyed; keeps citizens safe and protects their property. Many police departments have programs/staff in schools to help students, such as the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program, Officer Friendly and school resource officers.
- 🏠 **Fire** - provides fire protection to the community; also has fire prevention programs to make people aware of fire hazards and teach what to do in a fire emergency.

Other city departments might include: library, building inspection, engineering, technology services, code enforcement, and animal control.



Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Students can brainstorm about what kinds of services they think they receive from the city. What departments do they think provide these services? How often do they use them?
- 📖 Resource people from different departments can come and talk with the students about the services that are provided by the city.
- 📖 Students can make posters, write reports, and/or make presentations about the city services they use.

3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can perform the brainstorming activity as described in 2nd grade (see above). Discussion can be furthered by including the topic of how these services are paid for.
- 📖 Students can research how services were developed through history.
- 📖 Resource speakers from city departments can speak to the class.

4th Grade

- 📖 Students can research what city services were available in Colonial times through the 1880s, comparing services of “olden times” with current available services.
- 📖 Begin introducing problem-solving situations. For example, in the event of floods, fire and weather-related damage, what would your city do?

5th Grade

- 📖 Students can take field trips to city service facilities.
- 📖 Students can obtain an organizational chart from their city. Review the various departments and services of the city with the students.

Student Questions:

1. Have you participated in any recreation programs offered by the city? Which ones?
2. Does the police department offer any programs, such as DARE, in your school?
3. What other city services do you and your family use?
4. Why do you think the city provides services to its residents? Who pays for these city services?
5. What future services do you think your city will provide for its citizens?

How Citizens Participate in City Government

It is very important for residents to participate in the activities of their city government. Policies and major decisions of the city are made by city officials with the input of city residents. It is important for citizens to know how their government works and get involved because these decisions impact the lives of all residents.

The following are some ways you can get involved in your city government:

- 🗳️ Voting for someone running for office, or voting for or against an issue that will affect you and all city residents. You must be 18 years old to register to vote.
- 🗳️ Attending and speaking at a city public hearing.
- 🗳️ Writing letters or calling your city officials about an issue that affects you.
- 🗳️ Serving on a city advisory committee and/or board. These are usually set up by the city council/commission to deal with an issue or problem and are made up of both citizens and city council/commission members. Some examples are the Planning and Zoning Board and the Recreation Advisory Committee.
- 🗳️ Running for an elected office, such as mayor or council/commission.
- 🗳️ Working for the city. There are many different types of jobs with city government – accountants, managers, engineers, secretaries, firefighters, police officers, planners and many more.
- 🗳️ Serve as a volunteer in a city department such as parks and recreation.

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Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 🗳️ Brainstorm what students think an elected official is. Ask an elected city official to speak to the class about why he/she ran for public office.
- 🗳️ Hold a mock city election in the class.

3rd Grade

- 📖 Hold a mock city election in the class.
- 📖 Students can research how citizen participation in government has evolved through history.
- 📖 Invite elected city officials to speak to the class. What kind of qualifications did they need? What laws and regulations did they have to follow in the process? Has it turned out how they expected?

4th Grade

- 📖 Hold a mock city election in the class.
- 📖 Students can research the progression of citizen participation in city government in the United States. Presentations can be written reports, posters, charts, graphs, plays or multimedia.
- 📖 Invite elected city officials to speak to the class.
- 📖 Students can research what kinds of committees/boards local cities have established and the qualifications to serve in this volunteer capacity.

5th Grade

- 📖 Hold a mock city election in the class.
- 📖 Invite elected city officials to speak to the class about current issues in the community.
- 📖 Students can follow and investigate a current issue in the community. If possible, students can attend or tape a city council meeting about the issue. Students then can hold their own election on the issue. They may wish to become involved in the actual issue. Presentations can be written reports, posters, charts, graphs, plays or multimedia.

Student Questions:

1. If you had a problem and wanted to make sure your city officials knew about it, what would you do?
2. Is there a job in the city that you would like to have? Why?
3. Why do you think people run for elected office? Would you ever like to be a mayor or a councilmember?
4. Do you think it is important for citizens to become involved with their city government? Why?

City Revenues, Expenditures and Budgets

Revenues

The city provides many services to its residents. To pay for these services, the city must raise money, called revenues.

Some of the ways Florida cities raise revenues are through:

- 📖 Property taxes on homes and businesses.
- 📖 User fees (charges for services). For example, residents might be charged for water and garbage service, and some recreation activities.
- 📖 Fines, such as fines for disobeying city laws (ordinances).

Expenditures

The revenues a city receives are, in turn, used by the city. A city must pay for the services that it provides to the residents, and there are costs to run a government. The money that is spent is called an expenditure.

Expenditures pay for the salaries of employees; roadway construction and maintenance; recreation programs, such as ball fields and community centers; garbage pick-up, etc. Some of the biggest expenditures for Florida cities are police and fire services.

Budgets

A city budget is a plan for the city government. It is a guide of how money will be spent (expenditures) and where money will come from (revenue). Citizen input helps direct the budget. Once the city council adopts the budget, the city staff must spend the money as the budget states.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- 📖 Students can examine what resources they have through their families. How does the family get money? How is it budgeted? How do they budget an allowance? Do they need to perform a service in order to get the allowance?



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- 📖 Students can choose an item that they want to buy that is beyond their normal allowance. Students should then develop a budget and decide how they would save their money to purchase the item. How long would it take to save the money?

3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can continue budgeting activities. (See 2nd grade.) Students can be given an imaginary amount of money with specific items/services they must purchase. They must establish a budget. Students can create graphs indicating where their money goes.
- 📖 Students can research how cities get and spend their money.

4th Grade

- 📖 Students can interview their parents and others (with permission) on their budgetary habits. Students can create their own budget.
- 📖 Students can research how specific city departments have developed budgets. Invite personnel from a city department for a discussion with the class about the process.

5th Grade

- 📖 Contact the city to obtain a budget and discuss it with the class. To illustrate the budget, students can create different forms of graphs. Students can review the costs of running a specific department (i.e., police department). To carry this action further, students can compare the costs of different government items to items that they are familiar with. For example, how much does a police car cost? Compare that to how many bicycles can be purchased with the same amount of money.
- 📖 Have the city's budget director or a budget analyst from the city come and talk with students about the city's budget and their role in developing the budget.
- 📖 Hold a mock city council meeting/public hearing to discuss the proposed city budget. Students can play the role of the city council, city staff and citizens who present arguments for funding for specific programs. Given a set amount of revenues, students must select between funding for various programs and reach a balanced budget.

Student Questions:

1. Do you have a budget for how you spend your allowance or any money that you receive? Why is it important for a city to have a budget?
2. How does your city get its money? What is a tax? Why do governments have to use taxes as a source of revenue? (upper grades)