

## How does a Municipality decide? Simulation of a Council Meeting



### Lesson Plan

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<b>Title of Activity:</b> How does a Municipality decide? Simulation of a Council Meeting	<b>Subject area:</b> Civics / Social Studies
<b>Grade Level(s):</b> 12+ ages	<b>Duration:</b> 90–120 minutes

#### **Learning objectives:**

Students will:

- understand the basic structure of local government (mayor, council, municipal office)
- explain how municipal decisions are made and what public money is used for
- connect the activity with the Active Citizen Compass (ACC)
- experience democratic participation through simulation
- formulate opinions and support them with arguments
- reflect on the role of an active citizen in the community.

*Note: The learning objectives can be achieved through the classroom simulation alone. The visit to the Municipal Office is optional and serves as an enrichment activity.*

#### **Teaching Method:**

A combination of experiential learning, cooperative learning, and an inquiry-based approach.

#### **Teaching Techniques**

Dialogue, group work, discussion, role-play, case study, demonstration, practical simulation.

#### **Materials / Resources / Technology use:**

Student scenario sheet, simplified municipal budget, student work sheet, role description cards, ballot papers, flipchart, markers.

#### **Activity Description**

**Introduction:** (10–15 min)

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Teacher introduces the topic of local government and connects it with ACC. Students create a mind map: What do we already know about how our municipality works and who makes decisions?

### **Optional Step 1: Visit to the Municipal Office**

Students ask questions, take notes, meet the mayor, and learn about how the municipality functions.

Note: The visit to the Municipal Office is optional. If it cannot be organized, the entire activity can be fully implemented in the classroom.

### **Step 2: Preparation for the Simulation (10 min)**

Teacher distributes role cards and explains the scenario: The municipality must decide whether to buy a new municipal utility tractor for 75,000 EUR or repair the old one for 25,000 EUR. Students read their roles and prepare arguments.

### **Step 3: Simulation of the Municipal Council Meeting (30–40 min)**

Teacher moderates; students act in their assigned roles. Arguments, questions, and debate unfold according to council rules. Students discuss pros and cons of both options, consider the municipal budget, and ask guiding questions.

### **Step 4: Decision & Voting (5 min)**

Students vote on the final decision (new municipal utility tractor vs. repair old tractor).

Teacher explains majority voting.

### **Step 5: Reflection (10–15 min)**

Students reflect on the democratic process and what makes an argument strong. The discussion is guided by reflection questions from the student worksheet and focuses on the role of active citizens in municipal decision-making.

### **Closure: (5 min)**

Summary of how democratic local decision-making works and why active citizens are important, and that decisions which seem straightforward and clear at first glance are often more complex when all arguments and perspectives are taken into account.

### **Assessment:**

Traditional: worksheet to check understanding and knowledge

Alternative: observation during simulation, self-reflection, discussio