



**WE Are
Canada**
LESSON PACKAGE

CONSIDERING VOLUNTEERISM

LESSON PACKAGE FOR GRADES 9 TO 12

THEME: YOUTH | SUBJECTS: ENGLISH, CIVICS



Canada

WE Are Canada

CONSIDERING VOLUNTEERISM

WE LEARNING FRAMEWORK SKILLS LEGEND:



ARGUMENT
FORMATION



INFORMATION
LITERACY



LEADERSHIP
SKILLS



ORGANIZATION



ACTION
PLANNING



RESEARCH AND
WRITING



CRITICAL
THINKING



REFLECTION

THEME: Youth

SUBJECTS: English, Civics

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9 to 12

LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW:

Students will consider the benefits of volunteering. They will learn about the elements of a news article then analyze opinion pieces on the topic of volunteerism. Students will write an opinion piece on specific volunteer organizations and opportunities. The piece may also be expressed through a video or poster. This writing may be published in the school paper or a special edition classroom paper.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- ▶ What are the benefits and challenges of volunteering? How can we ensure that we are approaching volunteering in a respectful and responsible manner? How can we share information in a significant manner supported with facts in an opinion piece?

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

Students will:

- Learn the difference between fact and opinion and explore the elements of both articles and opinion pieces
- Consider the benefits and ethical concerns involved in volunteering
- Review and respond to non-fiction texts that centre on the subject of volunteerism
- Recognize the fundamentals of news article structure then practice news article writing with research on a volunteer effort

WORD BANK

Article (news)—a piece of writing included with others in a newspaper, magazine or other publications

Editorial—a newspaper article expressing the editor's opinion on a topical issue

Fact—a thing that is known or proved to be true

Opinion—a view of judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge

Opinion piece—an article in which the writer expresses their personal opinion, typically one which is controversial or provocative, about a particular issue or item of news

Persuasive (speech)—good at influencing someone to do or believe something through reasoning or the use of temptation

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Computer, projector and speakers for viewing videos
- Blackline Master 1: Opinions About Volunteerism—Comparing TEDx Talks
- Blackline Master 2: News Article Analysis and Handouts
- Computer lab for research

Recommended Assessment for Learning:

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are also best positioned to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package, teaching strategies include written and video media literacy and jigsaw. Suggestions for demonstration of learning include written, video or poster opinion pieces. Please make any accommodations or modifications that best serve your students.

LESSON 1:

Introducing Volunteerism



SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

Investigate and Learn

1. Begin the class by watching "Youth Volunteerism," a campaign called Change The World, created by Pillar Nonprofit: [youtube.com/watch?v=q4je9N26ouY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4je9N26ouY) (2:27).
2. Ask the class: What sorts of volunteering experiences have you had? Delve further into the topic:
 - a. What sorts of activities or projects did you do?
 - b. How did you find out about these opportunities?
 - c. What was it like? How did you feel before, during and after volunteering?
 - d. Do you agree with the assessment of volunteering that is offered in the video?
3. Ask students: What is a fact? Write the word "fact" on the board. Record student answers on the board surrounding the word; a basic understanding should develop that a fact is information that can be proven right or wrong.
4. Ask students: What is an opinion? Write the word "opinion" on the board. Record student answers surrounding the word; a basic understanding should develop, an opinion is one's reasoned feelings about a topic. It can be argued, but not proven.
5. Write "news article" under—or connected to—the definition of "fact" on the board.
6. Write "editorial," "persuasive speech" and "opinion piece" under—or connected to—the definition of "opinion."
7. Explain that a well-written article will present the different sides of a topic or issue without any intentional bias. An editorial, opinion or persuasive piece will argue one perspective with the purpose of persuading the reader to accept the author's opinion.



EXTENSION: Have students read the article "The Benefits of Volunteerism, if the Service Is Real," from the *New York Times*, by Alina Tugend, July 30, 2010. Ask students: Is this a news article or an opinion piece?

LESSON 2:

Opinions About Volunteering



SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

1. Tell students that they will explore opinion pieces about the topic of volunteerism. In each of the videos that students will be working with, the presenters have strong opinions about volunteering and they are trying to persuade the viewer to accept their opinion. They will support their opinion with evidence—personal stories, data and reasoning.
2. Organize students into groups of four. Each member of a group will select one of the following TEDx Talks on the topic of volunteering. As they watch, have students complete their section of **Blackline Master 1: Opinions About Volunteerism**, using the jigsaw technique. Upon completing the viewing, students will gather in their groups to share ideas. Instruct students to take notes as their group members share, completing the jigsaw handout.

TEDx Talks:

- a. Jingting Kang, "International Volunteering - Valuable or Vandalism?"
▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=4yuGHsf5PSE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yuGHsf5PSE) (13:47)
- b. Joyce Bertram, "How Volunteerism can change your world."
▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=wXb6bDX9FDo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXb6bDX9FDo) (9:32)
- c. Tuan Nguyen, "Volunteerism -- best platform for personal and professional development."
▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=xJ7_Od_etKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJ7_Od_etKg) (11:09)
- d. Ian Breckenridge-Jackson, "Getting more than we give - realities of volunteerism."
▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=5hXFwMyK1KE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hXFwMyK1KE) (13:26)

LESSON 3:

Reporting And Reflecting On Volunteer Opportunities



SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

1. Divide the class into three groups. Each third of the class will be responsible for researching a volunteer organization or opportunity on either the local, national or international level.

Here are some websites to use as a starting point for national and international volunteer ideas:

- a. Canada—youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/volunteer.shtml
- b. International—charityvillage.com/directories/organizations-i-z/international-relief-development-peace.aspx. This is a very thorough alphabetical list of charitable organizations.

Action Plan

2. Tell students that they will be writing an opinion piece on an organization or volunteer opportunity of their choice. Encourage students to focus on a specific event or project that the organization is currently involved in. The opinion piece should explore the extent to which this volunteer organization or opportunity supports respectful and responsible approaches to volunteerism. It should be supported with facts.

Distribute **Blackline Master 2: News Article Analysis and Handouts**. Assign an article to each student and distribute them to the class. Have students complete the analysis. Then, students may use these to plan and organize their article before writing. As an alternative to a written opinion piece, students may present their fact-based opinions through a video or poster.



EXTENSION: For the poster option, review the basics of effective print design:

- a. naldzgraphics.net/tips/tips-in-designing-effective-and-catchy-posters
 - b. guidetopublicwriting.weebly.com/public-service-announcements.html
3. Have students edit each other's articles using the criteria for a news article and their knowledge of proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.
 4. After students have completed the editing process, articles may be posted around the room so that every student can browse the articles.

Take Action

5. In culmination, the opinion pieces may be organized into a class publication and shared with the school.

Report and Celebrate

6. Ask students if they would like to further commit to being a part of youth empowerment, volunteerism and their community by taking the WE Are Canada Pledge. If students are interested, visit WE.ca for more information and to take the pledge.
7. Post the articles and opinion pieces online through social media to share the impact students are having with #WEVolunteerNow or focus on written stories that may be shared in community newspapers, websites or blogs. Ensure that parent permission has been granted where necessary.
8. Ask students to reflect further to understand the deeper impact of volunteerism and how they can ensure volunteerism has lasting impacts:
 - a. How will we ensure that the volunteerism we started will continue every year?
 - b. How might we support the spread of volunteerism to other schools and communities?
 - c. How will we continue to encourage others to volunteer and make change in their communities?
 - d. How can we continue to inform our communities about volunteer opportunities all year round?
 - e. How can we ensure volunteerism is respectful and responsible?
 - f. What did we learn from the articles to help with this?
9. Encourage students to think about and share with a partner how, as an individual, they are able to make change in their communities by volunteering.
 - g. As a young member of society, what other issues are they passionate about and how can they volunteer their time to make an impact?
 - h. How can they continue to apply what they have learned about volunteerism?
 - i. As a Canadian and a global thinker, what have you learned about the importance of volunteering in your community?
 - j. How can you share the lessons you've learned with others now and in the future?
 - k. How do we, as volunteers, benefit from volunteering?

Blackline Master 1:

Opinions About Volunteerism—Comparing TED Talks

Begin by watching the video you were assigned and complete the first row of the chart. Take thoughtful notes—you will be sharing this information with your group members. Fill in the subsequent rows as information is shared by your group members.

TEDx Talk title	Thesis—what point is the presenter making?	Arguments to support her or his thesis?	What message does this talk communicate about volunteerism?	What is your response to this talk? What are your thoughts and feelings?

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

Using the news article assigned in class, complete the following template.

Newspaper or source:

Date:

Author:

Headline:

Who? Who are the people involved in this story? Who is this news story about? Who does the story affect?

What? What is the topic of this article? What aspect(s) of the topic is the article focusing on? List four important facts from the article.

When? When did this story take place? Did it occur over a span of time? Is there a central event that occurred at a specific time?

Where? Where did this story take place? Where did the issue or event occur?

Why? Why did this event occur? Why is it important?

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

UN Volunteers – Inspiration in Action

“Weeding, baking and pacifying”

October 11, 2013

www.unv.org/news/weeding-baking-and-pacifying

Gemena, Democratic Republic of the Congo: This summer UN Volunteers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) organized volunteering initiatives aimed at improving people’s lives. After a call for projects by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in DRC, several initiatives were put forward, each very different from the other, but all with one common objective: to improve the quality of life in Congolese communities.

One of the initiatives was an activity in Gemena organized by UN Volunteer Maurice Mukenge. In partnership with a local youth volunteer association, Planète Jeune. Les amis de la Paix. (Youth Planet. Friends for Peace.), Maurice organized a two-day activity to reflect on the advantages of volunteering.

On the first day, volunteers from all over the region of Gemena got together to discuss the benefits of volunteerism for the community, for society and for the individual volunteer. After the discussion, they received training on conflict management—a theoretical course on mediation and negotiation with many practical exercises.

The following day, around 30 youth volunteers used machetes and hoes to weed the cassava fields of five widows in the community. After a couple of hours of intense and joyful work, all the participants—men and women, young and old—were trained on modern techniques to produce cassava flour. These new techniques make production faster and improve the final product, allowing an increase in revenues and providing non-commercial advantages for families.

In Gemena, everyone had a taste of the new product by savouring doughnuts and lemon cake made with this new cassava flour. The participants who made the cakes were particularly satisfied. “No need to buy cakes anymore, now I can make them for my children myself”, explains a young mother who travelled 75 kilometres to take part in this two-day activity.

This was only one of the volunteers’ small-scale initiatives that allowed the achievement of modest but tangible results in areas as diverse as women’s education, conflict resolution, access to school materials and orphanage restoration.

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

UN Volunteers – Inspiration in Action

“Making the world a better place” to celebrate Mandela Day in Sudan”

July 22, 2016

www.unv.org/news/“making-world-better-place”-celebrate-mandela-day-sudan

Khartoum, Sudan:

“We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference”.

Building on these words by Nelson Mandela, UN Volunteers celebrated Mandela Day 2016 in Sudan by trying to improve life for kids in the Jafar Ibn Auf Pediatric Hospital in Khartoum.

With the idea to make this small piece of world a better place, UN Volunteers participated in the set-up of a recreation area inside the hospital, providing a space where children can play, read, draw, or simply relax in a pleasant environment.

UN Volunteers participated alongside MTN Sudan Telco volunteers and community volunteers in the activity to establish the “Nelson Mandela” recreation area. They spent the day painting the walls, installing a plastic carpet on the floor, and putting together small chairs and tables, shelves for children’s books, games, pencils and notebooks. They helped in redecorating some wards in the hospital as well.

“If one person stands up, there will be two, and there will be more, and everyone will stand up to make an effort and to effect real change,” said Zahra Sadegi, one of the UN Volunteers who participated in the activity.

The UNV Field Unit in Sudan mobilized UNDP and UN Women staff to contribute towards the activity, and collected donations which the UN Volunteers used to buy toys and treats for children being admitted to the hospital.

“Seeing the smiles of the kids after receiving the toys delivered is the best reward we could have for trying to alleviate their suffering,” said UN Volunteer Daniel González. “We volunteer and dedicate our time for the sake of offering some happiness, but what we get back is way greater.”

The idea is also that, in the future, volunteers can help organize activities for kids in the hospital’s recreation area.

The day was celebrated in the presence of H.E.S. Francis Moloi, Ambassador of South Africa in Sudan, Mr. Abdel-Rahman Ghandour, UNDP Deputy Country Director, staff of the Embassy of South Africa, and the Khartoum State Minister of Health. The activity was sponsored by MTN Sudan Telco.

During his presidency in South Africa, Nelson Mandela was a strong advocate for public health. Among his initiatives was the establishment of a train route to the countryside to provide free health care to those in need, the inclusion of the right of access to health care in the South African Constitution and the advocacy for HIV/AIDS prevention in the country.

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

The New York Times

“The Benefits of Volunteerism, If the Service Is Real” by Alina Tugend
July 30, 2010

nytimes.com/2010/07/31/your-money/31shortcuts.html?_r=0

When I was growing up, I don't remember hearing much about community service. My parents were certainly civic-minded, but they were a lot more concerned about the work I did around the house. Like cleaning bathrooms and weeding the lawn.

Nowadays, some sort of volunteerism is a given in many places. Through schools, churches, synagogues, Girl and Boy Scouts and countless other organizations, children and teenagers are expected to do something, whether it be fund-raising for charities, working at soup kitchens or assisting at animal shelters.

In the most positive light, such service teaches children and teenagers to look beyond themselves and understand the role they can play in their community and country. In the most negative light, it is one more activity to tick off en route to college.

“There is some cynicism among people that some portion of community service is prompted by students interested more in résumé-building,” said Richard G. Niemi, professor of political science at the University of Rochester.

But does it really matter why it's done? Isn't it enough to volunteer, no matter the motive?

Well, yes and no. Studies have shown that generally, community service for whatever reason is a good thing. But how it's done and whether it also involves service learning — that is, lessons that discuss homelessness, say, or hunger in a larger context — make a difference.

Joseph E. Kahne, a professor of education at Mills College, and his colleagues just completed a survey of more than 500 teenagers in the 11th and 12th grades from a diverse set of 19 high schools in California. The researchers followed the students for up to three years after graduation.

The students who were engaged in some sort of community service in high school — whether mandatory or voluntary—were more likely to volunteer or be involved in some civic activity. Most, but not all, of the volunteer work had classroom learning attached to it.

Participants get much more out of the work they do, Professor Niemi said, if there is a forum to talk about and question the larger issues involved.

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

Otherwise, he said, students may believe that all problems are solved through individual efforts and government doesn't have a role. "They'll see that the homeless don't have food and that individuals help, but they won't understand the connection between public policy and the homeless," he said.

Professor Kahne also found this to be true in his research, noting that "most service programs do not examine causes of social problems or possible solutions" and, therefore, play down the need for political engagement.

In looking at what volunteering offers, Professor Kahne distinguishes among three types of citizens: "personally responsible" citizens who help people they know and donate blood; "participatory" citizens, who are active in community projects; and "justice-oriented" citizens, who examine causes and possible solutions for society's ills.

"We believe that all three dimensions of citizenship are important, but found that most programs do not address all three and generally pay least attention to the last," Professor Kahne said.

In fact, if teenagers — and adults for that matter — are thrust in a volunteer situation they don't understand or feel that they are simply being assigned made-up work, it can actually have a detrimental effect.

James E. Youniss, a research professor of psychology at the Catholic University of America, said an unpublished study of New York students discovered that they were actually turned off to community service when they were told they were going to help people and ended up doing menial jobs that seemed unrelated.

Of course, volunteering may involve mundane or repetitive work, but those participating need to understand the connection between their work and the overall issue, Professor Youniss said. "It's not that service is bad, but that programs can be bad," he said.

Because of time constraints and concerns about overt political messages, it can be difficult to create programs that offer the insights along with community service, Professor Youniss added.

But that doesn't mean schools and organizations — not to mention parents — should stop encouraging or even requiring children to volunteer. Professor Youniss studied students in one Massachusetts high school that was about to introduce mandatory community service.

He looked at a sample group of teenagers, including those who did no volunteering, those who did so on their own and those required to complete a certain number of hours by their senior year. The students were asked at the beginning and end of their high school career if they were likely to vote when they became eligible and do some sort of community service. Those who weren't volunteering, or weren't required to, usually said they were unlikely to vote or do community service in the future. Those who volunteered without being required generally said they were likely to vote and would volunteer. But the big switch to being much more inclined to volunteer and vote was apparent among those students who had been assigned service in the community, Professor Youniss said.

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

"I remember one kid who was a fullback, who waited until his senior year to volunteer," he said. "Then he filled the 40-hour requirement by every Saturday taking a blind man to a gym and walking him through his physical activity." That changed the boy's outlook on his role in the community and helping others, Professor Youniss said.

What about the many programs that offer young people a way to travel and do good deeds, by building schools in Costa Rica or digging wells in Thailand?

That's fine if you want to travel and can afford it. But most people I talked to seemed to feel that volunteering in your own community over a sustained period of time offers a more worthwhile experience. And if you're using travel volunteerism to burnish your college application, beware. It may backfire.

"We're not idiots," said Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. "We know the price of an air-conditioned hotel and a plane. It's an act of affluent tourism masquerading as community service."

A 2008 survey of admissions officers from the top 50 colleges and universities by the organization DoSomething.org, found that admissions officers consistently put a higher value on continuous volunteering over several years at a local place than a short-term stint overseas.

Mark Segal, director of Westcoast Connection/360° Student Travel, said he understood why some people might be cynical about spending a fair amount of money to volunteer abroad. But, he said, the teenagers who went on the type of community service programs that his company offered typically did volunteer work at home as well.

Spending two weeks or a month overseas immersed in a project "is a life-changing experience," Mr. Segal said. "You're opening the doors for relationships and learning in a way that's very different than being a traveler."

In the survey, the admissions officers said they were confident they could discern when a student was being disingenuous about her commitment to community service. One noted that "insincerity seems likely when there is a laundry list of activities with minimal commitment."

Those surveyed also said they understood some students had to work and didn't have time for volunteering. My sons do have the luxury of being able to help in the community, and I'm glad to say they seem to want to. It's the other service I spoke about — the bed-making and trash-emptying — that they, for some reason, seem far less eager to do.

Blackline Master 2: News Article Analysis and Handouts

UN Volunteers – Inspiration in Action

“Supporting ethnic cohesion and social well-being in Kosovo”

July 19, 2016

www.unv.org/news/supporting-ethnic-cohesion-and-social-well-being-kosovo-0

Kosovo:

A UNV-supported initiative in 2015 empowered young men and women from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) community in Kosovo to start their own social entrepreneurship initiatives and advocate for community needs as “Changemakers.”

The vast majority of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in Kosovo lives in poverty or extreme poverty, faces social exclusion and can enjoy a very limited access to basic services.

Despite the fact that the RAE community has been supported through various projects by NGOs, international organizations and local institutions, their situation has registered a very limited improvement and they continue to be seen as fully dependent on external support.

Up to 35 percent of RAE young men and women are almost completely illiterate, and this is one of the main obstacles for them to successfully integrate into the mainstream socio-economic aspects of Kosovo society.

The “Building a better future for citizens of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Obiliq/Obilić: Participation, Protection, and multi-ethnic Partnerships for improved education, health and sustainable livelihoods” initiative aims to improve the socio-economic position of the RAE by promoting equal access and participation across key drivers of social wellbeing—employment, health, education, social welfare and governance—as well as strengthening the role of civil society through strategic inclusion and mobilization of local NGOs.

The initiative helped to build the capacity of 20 RAE community advocates to become “Community Changemakers,” empowering them to address community needs. UNV provided tailored training on project proposal writing, fundraising, planning, and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, UNV provided a mechanism to allow the Changemakers to design and implement their own community projects with the support of a local NGO partner, The Ideas Partnership.

As a result, three projects were launched, reaching 120 direct beneficiaries and 3,000 indirect beneficiaries in the fields of environmental protection and health. In one, an eight-week activity saw garbage bins distributed in the main streets of the RAE community, accompanied by awareness-raising about the environment and sanitation. In another, elderly RAE citizens received volunteer support in the area of health.

Blackline Master 2:

News Article Analysis and Handouts

Through the training and experience gained through participation in the project, the Changemakers were able to open a kindergarten for 80 children. To do this, they raised funds from the private sector, such as the Raiffeisen Bank's H Stepic Fund Charity.

The Changemakers group serves as a steering committee for the kindergarten, and through the monthly meetings with the kindergarten team they closely follow the activities and its outcomes.

The Changemakers also supported a local NGO partner in reaching out to youth—boys and girls, including young mothers—from the community, and encouraging them to attend and deliver literacy and numeracy courses from which 190 RAE youth benefited.

The Changemakers group was also able to register as an official NGO, further enhancing their ability to advocate for the RAE community.

The Changemakers initiative was part of the UNV/UNDP component of the UN Joint project funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, and implemented by a Kosovar NGO, The Ideas Partnership.