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**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **YMCA Texas Youth and Government Delegation Handbook**



## **YG DELEGATION HANDBOOK**

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## INTRODUCTION

YMCA Youth and Government programs spur personal growth and encourage life-long, responsible citizenship by providing experiential learning for young people and public forums that recognize youth ability and potential. Through local delegation meetings, the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program cultivates and promotes:

- An understanding of local, state, national, and international concerns
- Research, study, and debate on public issues
- Exploration of careers in public service through a real-life experience with government
- Interaction with adult and youth leaders involved in decision-making processes
- An understanding of political systems and the forum they provide for effective and peaceful resolution of issues and concerns
- Appreciation for the diversity of viewpoints on public issues and a concurrent respect for ideas, beliefs, and the positions of others
- Demonstration of citizenship responsibilities and leadership roles essential to the health of a participatory democracy

The information in this handbook is intended to aid District Directors, advisors/coaches, and youth officers in developing and conducting a program to achieve the above objectives and prepare their delegations for participation in Youth and Government. It includes schedules, outlines, agendas, ideas, activities, and supporting materials. Club leaders should adapt these materials to fit the needs of a given local delegation and refer to other materials available on the YG website (e.g. eight-lesson curricula for sections, codes of conduct) as needed.

YMCA delegations meet individually or occasionally in larger cluster groups. Whatever the case may be, a meeting should occur at least every other week from September to December. This schedule helps delegates keep in touch with the program, sustains delegation momentum, and provides opportunities for training/fundraising/socializing. Local delegation meetings should emphasize both logistics/program content (again, see curricula) and personal development. It is vital that delegates have experiences and develop skills in the following areas:

- Team building, particularly as it relates to learning from others and making mistakes
- Leadership, especially servant leadership
- Character development
- Critical thinking
- Conflict management
- Self-expression and public speaking

Remember that you always have resources immediately available to you on the website and can contact other advisors from nearby delegations, [your District Director, or the State Office](#). The State Office recommends that new advisors attend other delegations' meetings to see how they are run, attend work nights/trainings where available, and network as much as possible.

Good luck!

## LOCAL CLUB/DELEGATION MEETINGS

Local club/delegation meetings are the heart of Youth and Government programs. Almost all YG delegate training and learning takes place at the local level, so building relationships among advisors and delegates is vital. We encourage schools and Y branches to set up their programs in a club format that allows for student leadership opportunities. However, we know some schools incorporate YG into their classes, so the setup of the sessions/lessons/meetings will vary. We have shared below some basic information that may prove helpful for adult and student leaders as they plan group meetings.

### HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE DELEGATION MEET?

All delegations should meet at least every other week. At the beginning of the program cycle, it may be necessary to meet every week. After State Conference, meetings may become more infrequent. Regardless of exact schedule, delegates and advisors should get together on a regular basis to prepare for the District and State Conferences.

### WHO SHOULD LEAD THE MEETINGS?

If the club does not have established club officers, the club advisor can run meetings, especially at the beginning of the program cycle. However, the club should establish a student leadership team whenever feasible. An adult needs to be present to keep the group on task, but a club's elected officers/student leadership team should lead the meetings when available. **YG is a student-led program.**

### WHAT CLUB OFFICERS SHOULD WE HAVE?

Each delegation determines the number and types of club officers required based on club size and other needs. At minimum, clubs usually have a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. See "Sample of Club Officers and Bylaws" later in this handbook.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THESE MEETINGS, ANYWAY?

Each delegation determines its own meeting agendas, often based on the eight-lesson curriculum for each section available on the YG website. Suggested activities include:

- Icebreaker and team-building activities, especially during early meetings
- Discussing program sections and responsibilities of participation in each area
- Going over the Code of Conduct and other expectations (do this at every meeting if you can!)
- Setting delegation fundraising plans and goals
- Training activities in specific program sections
- Preparing bills, court briefs, news articles, lobbyist position papers, and SAF proposals
- Holding practice sessions so delegates can practice in a "safe" environment. Encourage debate and constructive criticism during these practice sessions.
- Holding research sessions to prepare delegates with background material needed for preparation of submissions and presentations at the District and State Conferences

### MUST ADVISORS COME TO THESE MEETINGS?

YES! Club/delegation meetings help advisors get to know each other and connect with delegates in mentoring relationships. Advisors are held to the same standards of attendance as participants as well as their own Code of Conduct. Advisors can work with each other and delegates to take responsibility for specific parts of meetings or delegate training sessions.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD THE YOUTH LEADERS DO AT MEETINGS?

**As much as possible!** In smaller/newer delegations, adult leadership will likely initially handle most club leadership and communication of information. However, as students advance in their program participation, they can take on a more active role leading meetings and training their peers. In larger/more established delegations, the students should elect club officers for a program year as noted above. Club officers and advisors should collaborate to set meeting agendas.

## WHAT IF THE DELEGATION NEEDS HELP TRAINING DELEGATES?

Local officials are welcome to attend delegation meetings as participants prepare their bills, court briefs, news articles, proposals, and lobbyist position papers. Members of Texas' actual House and Senate or city councils can host bill writing seminars or sessions, and local lawyers are often willing to assist with case briefs. Media personalities from local newspapers, radio stations, and/or TV stations can present trainings for media delegates. Don't be afraid to ask prominent local officials to work with your delegation. Often, they are happy to oblige and generally enjoy meeting young people and their families (who are, after all, their constituents!).

A further note on local training sessions: students can get involved in every training session regardless of their section of participation. Youth need exposure to all aspects of government in order to do their jobs at the District and State Conferences most successfully and gain a holistic understanding of the democratic process. Our country's future leaders should seek exposure to as much information about our government and its functioning as possible!

## HOW DO I MAKE THESE MEETINGS INTERESTING?

Food, door prizes, and special events/recognition can liven up club/delegation meetings and provide important social elements for the delegation. As long as students and adults set appropriate boundaries for the fun, it should not threaten the quality of preparation for program activities.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STATE CONFERENCE?

Don't forget to hold a final meeting after the program cycle concludes. Celebrate each student's accomplishments, thank adult advisors and other supporters for their assistance, evaluate the state program and the local delegation's efforts using surveys the State Office sends via email, plan for the future, and contemplate the whole experience. After months of preparation on the local level and an emotion-packed State Conference, reflective conversations among delegation members will make a great experience even better. You can also talk at this meeting about other Y and youth leadership programs available to your students. They can even help the JYG program!

## STANDARD PRACTICES FOR LOCAL CLUB/DELEGATION MEETINGS

- Set schedule ahead of time for local club/delegation meetings (including parent meetings).
- At a minimum, club/delegation meetings should take place every two weeks.
- Plan all meetings in advance and prepare a definite curriculum, using eight-lesson curricula available on YG website as needed.
- Infuse elements of adult leadership and student leadership.
- Develop mentorship between students, matching experienced students with new students.
- Build relationships between students and adults so they can effectively support and respect each other when at program events.



## ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

### MAY

Club registration opens  
Recruitment and planning for next year (ongoing)  
State Directors' Conference (every three years)

### JUNE

Youth Governor's Conference in D.C.

### JULY

Conference on National Affairs (CONA) in North Carolina

### AUGUST

National Judicial Competition (NJC) in Chicago  
Individual registration opens  
Clubs recruit students  
Fall District Director meeting

### SEPTEMBER

Mandatory advisor training (if not in August)  
Clubs recruit students  
Clubs elect student leaders if don't have already  
Parent information meeting (recommended)  
Club activities begin!

### OCTOBER

Students prepare for District in clubs  
Ensure all students are registered and have paid District Conference fees  
Candidate application due  
YG Board Meeting

### NOVEMBER

District Conferences  
Register for State Conference  
CONA application due for returning students

### DECEMBER

Register for State Conference  
Students prepare for State  
Ensure all students have paid State Conference fees

### JANUARY

High School State Conference in Austin  
VIP event for key donors  
Pre-State parent information meeting  
CONA application due for new students

### FEBRUARY

CONA recommendations due  
Middle School State Conference in Austin

### MARCH

CONA and NJC selections  
National Advocacy Days in D.C.  
Spring District Director meeting

### APRIL

Recruitment and planning for next year (ongoing)  
Officer training  
YG Board Meeting  
Clubs elect student leaders for following year

## SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR CLUB MEETINGS

The State Office recommends that the first one or two club meetings include:

- An overview of the YG program structure, purpose, and goals
  - Make it clear to students which sections the club is prepared to offer and/or discuss with students which sections they would like to join.
- A group building/get to know you activity
- YMCA Code of Conduct
- Review of calendar of events and District deadlines (registration for program and conferences, payment, bill/proposal/brief submission, candidate application, CONA application, Gov Cab/Lobbyist application, District and State, post-State survey)
- Review of leadership positions. It is crucial that club advisors make students aware of leadership opportunities including chair/clerk positions in SAF and Legislative, Legislative appointed positions, candidacy, Gov Cab/Lobbyist spots, and CONA.
  - Go over candidate criteria and responsibilities.
- Discussion of available financial assistance and fundraising needs/plans
- Student leadership team introductions/elections and calendar for any student leadership meetings occurring outside club meetings

Consider encouraging participation at your first meetings by providing pizza or other food and hosting a Q&A session for new delegates after your first meeting.

It is always good practice to end a meeting with a reminder of the time and date of the next meeting and to consider bringing in relevant guest speakers.

After they introduce program basics and logistics, club leaders can turn to program section preparations during subsequent meetings. With help from a 2018 grant from the Texas Bar Foundation, Texas YG has prepared eight-lesson curricula for each program section. Club leaders can draw from these curricula when planning meetings. Each lesson will last approximately one club meeting (two when noted). Depending on club size and frequency of meetings, leaders can move through lesson plans for different sections simultaneously or alternate between sections.

2018 Eight-Lesson HS Legislative Curriculum

2018 Eight-Lesson MS Legislative Curriculum

2018 Eight-Lesson HS SAF Curriculum

2018 Eight-Lesson MS SAF Curriculum

2018 Eight-Lesson Judicial Curriculum (both Appellate and Trial)

2018 Eight-Lesson Media Curriculum

**NEED TO HYPERLINK ALL**



## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- Start on time! This is critical! We all have limited time on our hands, and club leaders should recognize this constraint and ensure they prepare for meetings.
- Keep the agenda on track at all times!
  - Prepare a WRITTEN agenda before the meeting and use it! This preparation often happens at officer meetings. Refer to the minutes of past meetings and to your delegation program calendar when building your agenda. The agenda should also include the basic ceremonial items such as focus on Y values, attendance, etc. See sample agenda below.
  - Most long, argumentative, chaotic, and/or drawn-out sessions stem from poorly prepared agendas. Officers should not ask membership to choose from among many recommendations. Instead, they should cull through options in advance and make up to three recommendations to the larger group based on their research. They must ground their recommendations in supporting information and documentation, not just “gut feeling” or “opinions.”
  - Continuously remind the members of the purpose and objectives of the delegation and of your duty as leader to see the club fulfill those goals. You must shorten, reject, and postpone business that interferes with either scheduled program or stated purpose.
  - When members bring up business not on the agenda and not conducive to immediate decision/resolution, consider the following courses of action:
    - Appoint a committee to study the issue and propose recommendations at a later date.
    - Handle the issue at the next officer meeting.
    - Call a recess of up to five minutes so that the members may discuss the matter informally among themselves. Generally, this process will unify thought somewhat and distill many varied opinions into two or three key viewpoints.
- If delegation members complain that other members are unruly, don't pay attention, or talk during meetings, you may need to address the following:
  - Club leadership's lack of agenda
  - Club leadership failure to narrow options/make a decision in advance
  - Insufficient information available to delegation members → decision making process hindered
  - Club leadership failure to involve members in decision making
  - Too many items on the agenda
  - Allowing immediate discussion on an issue that should have been referred to a committee
- Practice good group facilitation skills:
  - Stay flexible and observant
  - Brainstorm approaches to solving group problems and completing group tasks
  - Decide on how decisions will be made (consensus, majority vote, etc.) and adhere to this protocol
  - Propose and enforce selected limits (time constraints, ground rules, activity locations, etc.). Include the group in this process by soliciting feedback.



## SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

Consistency is key! While you are not required to follow this exact format, try to adhere to a similar structure for each club meeting. As stated, student and adult leaders should work together to prepare agendas in advance.

### **Call to Order**

#### **Focus on Y Values / Opening Thought / Devotional**

- A three–five minute group discussion about one of the core values of the YMCA (caring, honesty, respect, or responsibility) or a related reading, thought, or brief character discussion.

#### **Attendance Taken**

- This can be done by the delegation secretary. Keep a written or electronic record of who has been attending meetings.

#### **Opening Group Activity**

- Any group activity should relate to the topics covered at that day's meeting. In addition, all group activities should end with a "debriefing" question that asks individuals to reflect on what they learned through that activity.
- Allow up to 10–15 minutes for a group activity and consider asking a student who is not an officer to lead it. See activity suggestions later in handbook.

#### **Officer Reports**

- Each of the officers should report individually on an as needed basis.

#### **Old Business**

- Any topics carried over from the last meeting.

#### **New Business**

- Announcements/topics new to this meeting.
- Includes lesson/key program-related activity for the day (e.g. research session).

#### **Other Business**

- Any business not previously stated.
- You can ask delegates to hold questions until this time.

#### **Next Meeting**

- Review any delegate responsibilities occurring before the next meeting. May include fundraisers, deadlines, other events, etc.

### **Adjourn**

You may use a more flexible agenda when planning your **end-of-year celebration**. Consider inviting parents and other guests and holding the event in the evening to facilitate their attendance. Recognize member and delegation accomplishments. You may choose to have a brief invocation and to install new officers during this event. Do something special for your advisors!

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

To help students learn about leadership, character, and their community:

- Ask them to attend a local city council meeting.
- Ask them to attend a local school board meeting.
- Invite a legislator to speak at a club meeting.
- Invite a member of the media to speak at a club meeting.
- Invite a lobbyist to speak at a club meeting.
- Invite Youth and Government alumni to speak at a club meeting.
- Invite other government officials (both elected and appointed) to speak at a club meeting.
- Hold a mock committee hearing and invite community leaders to observe or participate.
- Visit your local legislator at the Capitol or his or her District Office.
- Research at the local library.
- Contact the Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records for help with bill/proposal/brief writing.
- Plan and execute a club service project in your local area.
- Invite local business owners to speak at a club meeting about bills/proposals that would benefit them.
- Encourage students to write their local legislator or congressperson about an issue.
- Invite local attorneys to help with bill drafting or court case preparation.
- Visit historical government points of interest.
- Host a joint meeting with another local delegation.
- Invite a member of a local political party to speak at a club meeting.
- Attend the county supervisor's meeting.
- Invite YMCA board members to your meeting to observe/speak.
- Help educate the community about Youth and Government.
- Invite someone from Toastmasters (a public speaking organization) to do a workshop on public speaking. If possible, have each student prepare something for presentation and constructive critique.
- Contact your community paper with a proposal for a story on your delegation.
- Reach out to a neighboring school or community where no Youth and Government delegation exists and help establish a group.
- Invite local civic organizations to come to meetings and speak on various topics (Women's Political Caucus, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.).

### GUEST SPEAKER IDEAS/TIPS

- Treat your guest speakers like VIPs! Make sure to send them a reminder confirming details and a thank you note.
- Invite them to speak at least 2-3 weeks before the meeting you hope they can attend.
- Assign a student to accompany the guest throughout his or her visit. This delegate can meet the guest at the door, bring him or her to the meeting room, help introduce the guest, escort him or her out of the building after the meeting, etc.

## IDEAS FOR MOTIVATING STUDENTS

- Make all club members a locker sign with YG logo the week of District Conference. Laminate the locker signs so that they last.
- The week after conferences, work with school office to announce delegates who received recognition over the PA system.
- Make cookies or other snacks and have available at meetings and conferences.
- Make goodie bags for your teachers and/or youth.
- As youth advance to State, provide additional locker signs that reflect that accomplishment. Laminate the locker signs so that they last.
- Submit a recap article to the school/local newspaper after every conference. If feasible, try to mention every student who attended, and definitely name award winners.
- Work with school yearbook staff to ensure YG receives coverage. Provide staff with pictures if requested.
- Make a scrapbook that has copies of media articles, pictures from conferences, funny captions, etc.
- Send handwritten letter/thank you to all participants at the end of the program cycle. Thank them for their time, and congratulate them on their victories.
- Secure YG letterman jackets and/or badges for students who already have letterman jackets for athletics.
- Make sure school includes UIL/YG along with athletic awards in any end-of-year ceremony.
- Hang permanent banners from the cafeteria or gym ceiling for each year a club receives premier delegation.
  - The State Office recognizes premier delegations that meet the following criteria:
    - Minimum of 10 students in club qualify for State Conference.
    - Students and advisors submitted all required documentation for their delegation (i.e. bills, proposals, briefs, candidate applications, Code of Conduct, and parental authorization forms). Students and advisors registered before their District deadline.
    - All students and adults attend all required events at the Conference and display active participation. For example, no sleeping during session occurs, and adults take part in the minimum number of volunteer shifts and mandatory adult meeting.
    - Exceptional overall behavior of delegation. No incident reports about any delegates. All students and adults follow YMCA Texas Youth and Government Codes of Conduct at State Conference.
    - All delegation members abide by Dress Code.
- Ask local businesses and organizations to sponsor scholarships. Encourage students to apply.
- Establish a YG "Wall of Honor" featuring the name of each student who wins a scholarship and/or recognition at District and State. This wall will make anyone who walks into your building aware of your YG tradition of excellence!

## GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Groups tend to progress through five stages. Club leaders can identify their group's stage by its characteristics and consider actions they may need to take to resolve associated conflicts.

**1) Forming**

Characteristics: polite, non-threatening, “instant” community with temporary alliances and cliques, tolerance for blanket statements, and “everyone likes everyone” atmosphere

Associated Issues: inauthentic, nervous atmosphere in which minimal work gets done and people avoid conflict/minimize differences

**2) Storming**

Characteristics: group members take sides, attack and challenge one another, and won’t speak to or listen to one another; tense, uncreative, and unconstructive atmosphere in which members may gang up on leader

Associated Issues: individuals’ uncertainty about whether group respects them and beginning to define group norms

**3) Norming**

Characteristics: time of sacrifice as members accept group norms; new alignment and acceptance of roles

Associated Issues: norms solidified; comfortable silence and effective listening; expectations, prejudices, defenses, weaknesses, assumptions, and motives fade away

**4) Performing**

Characteristics: healthy conflict resolution, efficient work completion, and passionate, exciting environment

Associated Issues: members learning to work together after realizing they cannot do job individually; personal growth

**5) Adjourning**

Characteristics: recognition of group ending; may be solemn or celebratory or involve acting out

Associated Issues: strong feelings about termination need to be voiced

To help solve individual and/or group problems, the advisor must be willing to:

- Admit he or she may be wrong.
- Avoid deliberately embarrassing a student.
- Remember that all people have emotions.
- Remember the connection between physical and mental health/state (when tired, hungry, or hurried, students will have difficulty problem solving).
- Watch out for spur-of-the-moment reactions (think first, act second).
- Know that people are won by being asked, not told.
- Reference formula for problem solving:
  1. Just what is the problem?
  2. Why does it exist?
  3. How can it be solved? Look at ALL possible solutions!
  4. Select the solution that will work best.
  5. Evaluate: Did it work? Why or why not?

## TEAM BUILDING

### WHY TEAM BUILDING?

The purpose of team/group building is to:

- Help create a feeling of belonging
- Help the group learn to work together
- Learn the value of group decision making
- Help identify leaders within the group

Every YMCA Youth and Government meeting builds a team of young people who can support, challenge and help each other. While each group will develop its own identity based on the individuals involved, club leaders must set the stage and provide the tools to create a healthy group. Remember that the YMCA is built on relationships! We facilitate the connections that make experiences meaningful for delegates and advisors. The exercises in this section are designed with that task in mind.

Team/group building should occur ASAP and begins the first day of YMCA Youth and Government club meetings! It should be an ongoing activity at all group meetings/events, and it does require some planning and preparation.

Times team/group building may prove especially helpful:

- When introducing the group to each other (VERY important during recruiting)
- At the opening of meetings
- During problem solving/conflict resolution
- When acknowledging group successes

Tips on choosing activities from the California YG program:

- Be sure that the activities or games you choose support points club leaders plan to make later in the meeting. If you can refer to something delegates did during a game, your point will become much more understandable and memorable.
- Make sure that you can do the game in the time and space allotted. The game will lose its impact if you have to continue it another day (unless you plan this split in advance).
- Know how to play, lead, and facilitate the activity. This will keep the game moving and prepare you to explain the directions.
- Practice the game. You can get the students' perspective this way. Don't have your students do an activity that you can't do or wouldn't want to do. Practicing also helps you explain what to do.
- Design the games with your outcomes in mind. In other words, don't have your students play a game just to fill time.
- Modify games to fit the group's idiosyncrasies. The game should be set up to fit the environment, and all activities must be age-appropriate. You have the power to modify game rules!
- Anticipate and plan for possible pitfalls. Think about how delegates might react to the game.

- What if they hate the idea? What if they take longer than anticipated on a certain element? What if they don't understand part of it? How would you handle these situations? Be prepared.
- Be flexible. Think about what activities you can modify or eliminate due to lack of interest or time.

When processing team building activities with your group, consider using the What? So What? Now What? Group Processing Method. Select from the questions below, tailoring them to the activity but asking at least one from each category to the group at large after an activity.

**WHAT?** Helps people recall what they have experienced. Sample What questions include:

- What was the task you were given?
- What did we just do?
- Any observations about the experience?
- What was that like for you? Was it easy or difficult?
- Any frustrations?
- What did you notice/observe about the experience?

**SO WHAT?** Helps people analyze and discuss the purpose of the experience. Sample So What questions include:

- Why did we just do that?
- How did you feel about it? Was it what you expected?
- What was the high point or low point for you?
- What did you notice about the people or the process?
- Did you have any "aha moments" (breakthrough learning experiences)?
- What did you learn...about yourself, the task, the process, the issue, the group?
- Did this experience have any impact on you?

**NOW WHAT?** Helps people think of new applications for their experience and ways to transfer the experience to their everyday lives. Sample Now What? questions include:

- What did this activity have to do with YG?
- What did you learn or experience today that impacts your life?
- What did this activity have to do with teamwork, service, and leadership skills?
- How will you work differently as a group after this experience?
- Do you see the group using this in any way later during the year?
- Will you do anything differently as a result of having done this activity?

The team building exercises below are divided into the following categories:

- Initial Exercises: help delegates get to know each other through social interactions and the sharing of personal information.
- Group Exercises: provide opportunities for group members to work together as a team and learn to value all members; may require a higher level of familiarity and trust.
- Closure Exercises: prepare for and reflect on the termination of an activity or group.

## TEAM BUILDING: INITIAL EXERCISES

### **LET'S GET GROUNDED – ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES**

Even established groups need to have structure and defined expectations. Creating ground rules together helps empower the group and also gives group leaders a tangible, agreed upon reference if problems arise in the future. Begin a discussion about the importance of everyone being on the same page about the group and behavior standards throughout the year. The leader may establish the rules, post them, and ask the group to offer feedback and come to agreement on them, adding any rules that are missing. The group leader can also start with a blank slate and ask the group what rules they will need to have a successful year.

Sample rules include:

- **Accept Others**
  - Each person has a right to say what they think. Accept what they say as what they feel or think, not jumping to correct them.
  - Listen to each other and show respect for each person. You do not have to agree with other people to accept them and show respect for them.
- **Speak for Yourself**
  - Say what you think or feel but do not try to speak for others.
  - Avoid phrases like “we...”, “people always...”, “I’m sure you agree that...,” etc.
- **Avoid Put-Downs**
  - Verbal put-downs hurt people even when they laugh and appear unbothered.
  - Put-downs are often contagious and reciprocal. The “game” continues to build up until feelings get truly hurt.
  - If people fear put-downs, they hesitate to share personal feelings and ideas, especially if those feelings/ideas vary from the group norms or expectations. If you don’t avoid put-downs, you may limit value discussion.
  - Non-verbal put-downs also hurt. These can include facial expressions, gestures, side conversations, etc.
- **You Have the Option to Pass**
  - In ground rule discussions, everyone should try to participate at least once. However, not everyone has to share thoughts or feelings on every question. Sometimes a question has disparate meanings for different people.
  - When people feel free to pass, they can participate at their own level rather than in ways they think others expect.
- **Delegates are Responsible for Own Learning**
  - Each participant in the group will learn something different from each session. Each person will learn as much or as little as he or she chooses to learn. The leader focuses on creating an environment in which each participant can learn.
- **Expect Unfinished Business**
  - Group members will often want to continue discussion after time has elapsed. It is okay to end a session with questions still hanging.

### **LOLLIPOP SELF-PORTRAIT**

- Provide bubble gum, lollipops, colored paper, and miscellaneous art supplies.

- Have participants chew the gum and put it on a piece of paper. Walk around and stick a lollipop on the gum, attaching it to the paper.
- Tell participants, “The lollipop candy is your head. The stick is your skeleton. Using supplies available, create your facial features, your hair, and your clothes – a self-portrait.”
- Have participants share their creations with a partner and have that partner introduce the participant to the group.

## TAKE A GUESS...

- Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to write the numbers 1 – 20 down the side. Make sure participants do not write their names!
- Participants should write down as many facts about themselves as they can next to the numbers.
- Collect the pieces of paper, mix them up, and pass them out. Ask participants to make sure they do not have their own sheets.
- Have participants read the first half of each sheet out loud. Then, ask the group to guess the identity of the writer. Continue reading the second half of each sheet after guessing.

## SCRABBLE

- Create Scrabble tiles on 8 1/2 x 11 papers, one letter per piece. Make sure to include vowels!
- Give each person one or two letters, depending on size of group. Delegates will try to create as many words as possible in five minutes by combining letters with other people.
- When a group lines up and creates a word, members should write the word on the back of their letters and move on.
- After five minutes, have individuals count words and report to group.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - Was it easy or difficult for you to approach other people?
  - Who had the most words? What might be some reasons why \_\_\_ got the most words? The longest or shortest?
  - What was the most unique word?
  - What was it like to have an odd letter - Q, Z, X? Was it more challenging?
    - How did you deal with that?
  - How does this activity relate to YG? Any lessons we can take with us?

## LINE UP

- Have participants line up according to birthday, alphabetically by first name, middle name or last name, height, etc.
- Gradually make the game more challenging by blindfolding the entire group or particular individuals, silencing the group or particular individuals, or doing both before you give the next “line up” category!
- Possible discussion questions:
  - How well did you work as a group?
  - What made the activity easy/difficult?

- How does the activity relate to our experience as a group? Any lessons we can carry with us?

## **INTERVIEW**

- Copy the "Interview Sheet" below for each participant.
- Have individuals partner up with other participants they don't know very well and interview each other using the sheet.
- Based on the information gathered, partners should introduce each other to the group and emphasize the three most interesting things that they learned.

### *INTERVIEW SHEET*

Tell me your full name and what it means or a story about how you were named.

Who do you live with? Describe each person.

If you could star on any television show, which show would you choose and why?

If your best friend were to describe you, what would s/he say?

If you could be anywhere but here right now, where would you be and why?

What is one thing you feel really proud of?

Who is your hero or heroine...somebody you really respect?

## **A SIMPLE TEST**

- Make and distribute copies of "A Simple Test #1." Ask group members to complete.
- Ask "How did you do?" and facilitate a discussion with the following point: None of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These people represented the best in their fields in their time, but the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten.
- Make and distribute copies of "A Simple Test #2." Ask group members to complete and share answers in groups of two or three.
- Ask "Was this quiz easier?" Facilitate a large group discussion about how people tend to care most about and remember others who make a difference in their lives.



*A SIMPLE TEST #1*

Name the five wealthiest people in the world.

Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.

Name the last five winners of the Miss America scholarship.

Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.

Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.

Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

*A SIMPLE TEST #2*

Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.

List the names of a few teachers who helped you on your journey through school.

Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.

Name a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.

Name five people whose company you enjoy.

Name three people whose heroic stories have inspired you.

**SOMETHING UNIQUE**

- Participants stand in a straight line, side to side.
- One person takes a step forward and says something that is somewhat unique about him/herself. If others have the same quality or have done the same thing, they step forward as well.



## YMCA BRANCH SCAVENGER HUNT (FROM AMBER SWEASY, RIDGEDALE YMCA)

- Delegates will try to answer all of the questions accurately within the allotted time.
- Teams must stay together at all times and try not to disrupt other members, guests, or staff as they gather information. The team that gets the most answers correct in the allotted time should receive a small special prize!
- Questions:
  - How many times around the track equals one mile?
  - Who is working at the membership desk? Have them sign the paper (when not busy).
  - How many locker rooms are there and how do they differ from each other?
  - How many beverage vending machines are there?
  - What color are the basketballs in the gym?
  - Where was the basketball invented?
  - How many lanes are there in the pool?
  - How many total Aquafina buttons are there on the vending machines?
  - What are the four core values of the YMCA?
  - Name three residential camps run by YMCAs in Texas.
  - How much does a granola/protein bar cost in the vending machine? Note the brand.
  - Do the TVs in the fitness center receive the Disney Channel?
  - How many basketball hoops are there in the gym?
  - How many staircases and individual steps are there in the branch?

## YOU'VE GOT MAIL

- Have participants sit in chairs in a circle with one less chair than there are people.
- One person stands in the middle of the circle with the "mail bag." That person pulls out a slip of paper and says "I have mail for anyone who....." and reads the paper.
- Ideas for writing on pieces of paper. Adapt based on your knowledge of the group!
  - Likes to play sports.
  - Likes the winter.
  - Likes to stay up late.
  - Likes the summer.
  - Rides public transportation more than once a week.
  - Has been on a team.
  - Speaks a language other than English with family.
  - Has swum in the ocean.
  - Has been on a farm.
  - Doesn't like bugs.
  - Has been to camp.
  - Has had a broken bone.
  - Has caught a fish.
  - Likes to read.
  - Likes to dance.
  - Has moved more than twice.
  - Likes school.
- Anyone who identifies with the statement read stands up and tries to find a different seat. The participant left standing becomes the next mail carrier.



## IN THE HAT (works well during travel!)

Prepare questions and place in a hat. Sample questions include:

- If you could “uninvent” one thing in the world so it would no longer exist, what would you choose and why?
- If you could change one of your personality traits, what would you change and why?
- If you could be invisible for one hour, where would you go and what (legal things) would you do?
- If you were to perform in the circus, what act would you do?
- If you had to describe the single worst thing a friend could do to you, what would you say and why?
- If you could teach your children only one lesson in life, what would it be and why?
- If you could be anything in a refrigerator, what would you be and why?
- If you could remove one show from television forever, what show would you eliminate and why?

Pass the hat around a circle, having participants draw a question and answer it as best as they can. After an individual has answered a question, open it up to the group for further discussion.

## CANDY, CANDY, CANDY

- Purchase ten kinds of assorted candy and assign a question to each type of candy. Write the assignments on a large piece of paper.
- Pass around a bowl. Ask participants to choose five different pieces and not to eat yet.
- Post the questions you have assigned to each piece of candy and tell participants they can eat each piece only after they have shared an answer to the question. They can answer each question multiple times if they took several of the same kind despite instructions.
- Sample questions include:
  - What makes you laugh?
  - What makes you cry?
  - If you could become an animal, what would you choose to be?
  - What about your cultural heritage makes you proud?
  - When you were much younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?
  - If you could have any job without having to go to school, what would you do?
  - Where do you feel most at peace?

## TEAM BUILDING: GROUP EXERCISES

### **BALLOOP**

- Split delegates into groups of three, and give each group a blown up balloon.
- Have players join hands within their small groups. Each group should attempt to keep the balloon up in the air while continuing to hold hands. Give one minute of practice time.
- When practice is over, call out the name of a body part. While continuing to hold hands, the group must use that body part to keep the balloon up (e.g. hands, heads, elbows, noses, etc.) Change parts every 10–15 seconds.
- As groups improve, call out a sequence (e.g. elbow, knee, and nose). In that case, the first person uses an elbow to hit the balloon, the second uses a knee, and the third uses a nose. Remind groups that the balloons should never hit the ground or stop moving and that hands must be joined at all times.

### **GREAT AMERICAN EGG DROP**

- Split the group into teams of four–six people.
- Give each group a set of materials that includes 20 straws, 30 inches of tape, three paperclips, one rubber band, and one egg.
- Instruct groups to construct the safest “vehicle” for their eggs to drop from six feet off the ground, using only the provided materials. The egg must remain in the vehicle somehow, and groups should try to prevent their egg from cracking upon dropping it.
- Give groups 30 minutes to construct the vehicle and come up with a name and a short “commercial” advertising it.
- Gather participants back in a large group and have each small group present its vehicle commercial. Have one representative per group stand on a chair and drop the egg from approximately six feet above ground.
- If more than one egg does not break, have participants drop the surviving eggs from greater heights until one egg remains.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - Did everyone in your group commit to a common plan? Did you plan at all or just start building?
  - Does it save time to plan first?
  - Did anyone feel left out or unheard?
  - How would you compare the planning you did here with the planning you’ll need to do to succeed in Youth and Government?

### **TRUST WALK**

- Pair individuals up with other group members they don’t know as well.
- Blindfold one member of each pair. Spin the blindfolded person around a few times to disorient him or her.
- Ask the other member of each pair to lead their partner to a destination.

## TIME BOMB

- Attach a timer to a water bottle, your “bomb,” and place the bottle inside a square of four chairs that are taped or roped off. No delegate can go inside the chairs.
- Make a wide variety of “tools” available (coat hangers, tape, bike locks, brooms, magazines, cord, spatulas, etc.).
- Break participants into groups of four and give groups five minutes of planning time so they can strategize and assess what tools they would like to use to reach the “bomb.” Have groups send one representative to the “tool box” to select three tools per group. Take turns, having group representatives select one tool at a time.
- Representatives return to groups. Groups have four more minutes of planning time.
- Give each group a chance to rescue the “bomb” before it goes off.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - How did your group go about planning during the first planning period?
    - Did you go with the first reasonable suggestion or did you gather other suggestions?
  - What happened when you didn’t get the tools you requested?
    - Did you spend a lot of time complaining or did you go to work?
  - How did the group go about planning during the second planning period?
  - What lessons from this activity could you apply to group functioning overall?

## AMOEBA RACE

- Tie a long rope around a team of people, bunching everyone up tightly.
- Set up a course for the “amoeba” to run: 25 feet, over a box, 25 feet, under a table, etc.

## MY ALLOWANCE

- Split participants into groups of four and tell each group they have a sum of money for their allowance.
- Give groups five minutes to brainstorm uses for the money.
- Ask each group to come up with three items/experiences they would purchase, taking into consideration individual preferences.
- Ask small groups to report their decision to the entire group.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - How many items did you name while brainstorming?
  - How did your group reach a consensus on three items?
    - Did you have to compromise?
  - Was everyone happy with the final decision?
  - What did you learn about making decisions as a group?
  - What lessons from this activity could you apply to YG?

## BACK ART

- Form two teams and have each team sit in a row, one person behind the other. Have participants take a vow of silence that lasts for the duration of the exercise.
- Give the person in the front of each row a piece of paper and a pencil.

- Show the last person in each row a simple hand drawn picture of an object (flower, ice cream cone, etc.) This person uses his or her finger to draw the object on the back of the person in front of him or her.
- This drawing on the back of the person in front of you continues until the drawing gets to the first person in line. He or she draws what he or she thinks the object is on these pieces of paper.
- Compare to initial object.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - What happened to the drawing as it went through the line?
  - Why did it happen?
  - Could the group have done anything to improve accuracy?
  - Does this kind of distortion happen with verbal messages as well? How? How can groups prevent this process?

## CHAIN RELAY

- Create teams of three. With masking tape, connect the hands of team members so the person in the middle is connected to each of the other team members. The middle person should not be able to use either hand. The people on the outside should have the use of the outside arm/hand.
- Set up various task stations, making sure you have two more stations than the number of teams. Some station suggestions:
  - Fold an airplane
  - Cut out a circle from a piece of paper
  - Blow up and tie off a balloon
  - Untie and tie a shoe
  - Do a somersault without breaking connection
- Share rules with participants:
  - The final task (you can designate; usually the somersault) must be done last.
  - If you break the connection between your hands, you are disqualified.
- Possible discussion questions:
  - What was it like to be in the middle?
  - What was it like to be on the end?
  - Did anyone feel frustrated during the activity? Why?
  - Did the activity get easier after you had done a few stations?
  - How did your team communicate or not communicate?
  - How can we decrease frustration during our Youth and Government experience?



## TEAM BUILDING: CLOSURE EXERCISES

### **PASS IT ON**

- Pass out envelopes that contain one 3 x 5 index card per group member.
- Ask participants to write their name on their envelope.
- Participants pass envelopes to the left. Give group members two minutes to take out an index card and write down a strength of or note of appreciation to the person whose name is on the envelope.
- Continue to pass the envelopes until they make their way around the group.

### **FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS**

- Have each person in the group make a braided or beaded bracelet, providing the needed supplies.
- Pass around a large bowl. As participants place their bracelets inside the bowl, have each share one thing they feel they contributed to the group this year.
- Pass the bowl again and ask each participant to close his or her eyes, select a bracelet, and say one thing he or she learned from or will take away from the group this year.

### **PAPER ON THE BACK**

- Tape a piece of paper on everyone's back.
- Have everyone write one thing he or she appreciates about each person on the piece of paper on that person's back.
- Ask participants to remove the pieces of paper from their backs and review the comments.
- Ask each participant to choose one comment to read out loud.

### **LETTER TO YOURSELF**

- Give all delegates a piece of paper. Ask them to write a letter to themselves sharing how they felt about their YG experience, how they have changed, what things they learned that they would like to remember for the future, etc.
- Give delegates envelopes and have them insert the letter, seal the envelopes, and address the letter to themselves at their home address.
- Mail the letters at a pre-determined time in the future (e.g. as the next school year begins).

### **MEMORY BOOKS**

- Have each participant prepare one page to insert in a memory book that you will distribute to everyone. The page could feature artwork, "Remember When," quotes or notes, pictures, etc.
- Collect each page and compile, adding a YG cover. Using an electronic format may keep costs down.

## STONES

- Sit in a circle and pass around a basket of small, attractive stones or beads. Have each participant take one.
- Ask participants to say one thing they learned or will take from the group and one thing they would like to leave with the group. As each person finishes, all participants should pass their stones to the left and receive a stone from the right. By the time everyone has spoken, each participant has touched every item and has the stone he or she chose originally.
- Provide leather and wire to make necklaces with the items after discussion.

## CANDY, CANDY, CANDY (REPRISED)

- Purchase ten kinds of assorted candy and assign a question to each type of candy. Write the assignments on a large piece of paper.
- Pass around a bowl. Ask participants to choose five different pieces and not to eat yet.
- Post the questions you have assigned to each piece of candy and tell participants they can eat each piece only after they have shared an answer to the question. They can answer each question multiple times if they took several of the same kind despite instructions.
- Sample questions include:
  - What was the highlight of your Youth and Government experience?
  - What challenge(s) did you face?
  - What did you learn about yourself?
  - What did you learn about the group?
  - What will you miss about YG during the off-season?
  - What words of advice would you give a new Youth and Government group meeting for the first time?

## SPIDER WEB

- Stand in a circle and have one person start by holding on to a piece of yarn and throwing the yarn ball to someone else. Whoever is throwing the yarn says something they appreciate about the person who is catching the yarn.
- Continue until everyone has been appreciated and holds a piece of string, creating a web.
- Make an analogy about the web and the Youth and Government session. Ask questions like:
  - How was our group like this web this session?
  - How did we support each other?
  - What happened when one of us was down or didn't follow through? (Kneel to the floor, holding piece of string.)
  - What happened when one of us accomplished/completed something or achieved a success? (Raise piece of string up.)
  - How can we carry the lessons we learned with us during the off-season?

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The YG program emphasizes the servant leadership approach. This practical philosophy supports people who really want to serve others and who choose to lead in a way that truly serves them.

Servant leaders may or may not hold formal leadership positions.

Servant leadership encourages delegates to work together, to trust each other, to see a vision of what they could become, and to listen to each other. It encourages the ethical use of power and empowerment of others.

**In servant leadership, the real motivation for leading is first and foremost to serve others, not to have them serve you.**

Questions to ask when evaluating leadership for servant qualities:

- Do those I serve grow as persons?
- Do they, while being served by me, become healthier, wiser, freer, more confident people who are more likely to become servant leaders themselves?
- What is the effect of my actions on the least privileged among the people I serve? Will they benefit from my actions or at least not be further deprived as a result of what I do?

## **SERVANT LEADERSHIP REFLECTION EXERCISE**

Review the above information with delegates. Give each a piece of paper, a pen, and miscellaneous markers/crayons/colored pencils. Ask them to answer the following questions individually. After delegates complete the prompts, invite them to share with the group if they feel strongly about a particular question.

- What about servant leadership calls out to you?
- People have various motivations for wanting to lead. If I am being honest, what are the top three reasons I feel motivated to seek leadership?
- Servant leadership begins with the desire to change myself. In light of my motivations, what changes do I need to consider making to become a servant leader?
- Clearly, being a servant leader is not easy. What ideas do you have for staying motivated to strive to lead according to this servant leadership approach?
- How could I use my power of influence to help release the leadership potential within my fellow delegates so they will feel encouraged to develop their capacity?
- What specific actions could I take to share some of my power by empowering others to help me make some decisions and to complete some tasks, thereby demonstrating my trust in them, their intellect, and their abilities?
- What specific actions could I take to ensure that I make time to listen openly and receptively to the people I serve and to their ideas and perceptions?
- What specific actions could I take to help those I serve feel more valued as people?
- Draw the perfect servant leader. We're asking for creativity and a clear explanation of your sense of servant leadership, not artistic talent!

## **GENERAL LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS**

Ask students to circle the four leadership characteristics they currently feel describe them most strongly. Ask them to put a square around the four leadership characteristics in which they would most like to grow. Next to each squared item, students should write one concrete action step they can take to increase this leadership ability.

1. Can plan for the future, envisioning results before anything actually happens.
2. Can effectively communicate that vision to other people.
3. Great credibility – when they say they will do something, they do it.
4. Can juggle complicated tasks and streamline processes.
5. Can move groups from being stuck to looking toward the future and its potential.
6. Can help others feel ready to change.
7. Can get groups to work in new and different ways.
8. Willing to assume responsibility for change even when it involves risk.
9. Able to overcome resistance to change while respecting others' viewpoints.
10. Willing to take risks.
11. Thinks about what to do in "worst case" scenarios.
12. Rehearses mentally.
13. Develops trust among group members.
14. Not a workaholic and maintains good work-life balance.
15. Has high self-worth and self-esteem without being cocky.
16. Focuses on the positive, not the negative.
17. Can create and stick to an agenda.
18. Can stay flexible and depart from an agenda when necessary.
19. Has passion and intensity.
20. Challenges others respectfully, seeking the best in everyone.
21. Pays attention and listens carefully.
22. Capable of influencing others without coercing them.
23. Puts "know-why" ahead of "know-how."
24. Knows himself or herself and those he or she serves.
25. Reliable.
26. Persistent.
27. Solves problems instead of blaming.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The Y's commitment to character development makes it extraordinarily valuable to the communities and people it serves. However, building on this commitment and integrating it into everyday operations and programming can prove challenging.

What are the three challenges that Y programs must accept to enjoy all possible benefits in relation to character development?

- To embed character development and the Y's four core values -- caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility -- into the Y's culture (who the staff and volunteers are and how they operate) so it will last.
- To become involved in a long-term process in which character shapes everything done at the Y including programming, hiring, planning, and budgeting.
- To ensure that everyone - staff and volunteers at all levels of the organization - is involved with and committed to character development. Everybody must accept the role of teacher of values as an integral part of his or her job. All staff and volunteers must accept the challenge to teach the core values first and foremost by leading by example with their own attitude and behavior.

You can find examples of living out each of the Y core values below. These represent starting points for discussing these values with your students. Please, elaborate!

### Caring

- Befriending someone new at each meeting or conference.
- Helping a fellow delegate with research/questions/answers.
- Celebrating fellow delegates' accomplishments and life events (e.g. birthdays).

### Honesty

- Representing yourself factually (vs. just giving opinion or falsifying information).
- Reporting a Code of Conduct violation to an adult (witnessing and not reporting a violation carries the same consequences as participating in a violation).

### Respect

- Learning about the other side of an issue in an attempt to understand a fellow delegate.
- Leaving intense debate on the floor/in committee/at delegation meetings.

### Responsibility

- Knowing deadline dates and getting your materials in on time.
- Asking for information you are missing.
- Planning ahead to get your fees paid by the delegation deadline (through fundraising, monthly payments, and scholarships as needed).
- Understanding the expectations and consequences of the Code of Conduct.

### CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

These examples from Y-USA may help you plan character development activities for your delegation. Remember, you are free to pull in your own activities.

### **CHAIN STORIES**

Purpose: To encourage creativity and imagination in participants as they think about the four values.

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

- A great activity for a low energy group!
- Introduce a topic (story) by picking one of the four values and defining what it means. Explain that you will start a story line out loud and that each student will have a chance to add on to and continue the story until it comes to an end.
- Example: "Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Johnny who brought his favorite video game with him to the YMCA one day to show his friends. Johnny left his game out on the table after lunch and Billy saw it sitting there. Billy really wanted that video game for Christmas but did not get it. He went over, picked up the game, and..."

### **FOUR VALUES TAG**

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Gym or playing field

Description:

You must have an odd number of people. The leader calls out one of the four values and everyone (including the leader) finds a partner and locks elbows. One person will not have a partner and becomes the new leader. Partners tell each other what they have done this week/day that fits the value. The new leader calls out a different value and so on.

### **QUIET TIME**

Purpose: To better understand one another and pay attention to nonverbal communication.

Value(s): Caring, Respect

Facility and Equipment: Board games, cards, sports equipment, gym and/or multi-purpose room

Description:

- Set aside one-two hours and explain that participants should not engage in spoken communication at all during that window.
- Set up activities including board games, cards, sports, etc.. Doing "nothing" is not an option.
- Explain that participants will have to find ways to communicate other than speaking (also discourage writing) when choosing teams, explaining the rules of games, etc.
- After time has elapsed, discuss with participants how they communicated with one another. Ask questions about whether it was difficult, frustrating, etc. and lessons learned.
- Ys may use this activity during an international theme week to highlight awareness of the many languages in our world, to break down communication barriers in a new group, and/or for understanding the deaf community.

## THE BODY TALKS

Purpose: To help participants practice communicating acceptance nonverbally using gestures, body language, and facial expressions.

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

- Divide the group in half, numbering off 1, 2, 1, 2....
- Explain that all the 1s should move about the area while the 2s stand still. The 1s should greet 2s using gestures, body language, and facial expressions to communicate the message, "I want to get to know you and to be your friend." No one should speak.
- Have the 1s and 2s switch roles, and repeat this exercise.
- Ask all to share their thoughts about how it felt "listening" to nonverbal communication.

## THE GIFT THAT LASTS

Purpose: To help a group recognize its members as individuals. To help identify the needs of individuals and attempt to meet them. To practice nonthreatening ways of dealing with interpersonal conflicts.

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: One 3 x 5 index card and one pencil/pen per participant

Description:

- Give each participant a 3 x 5 index card.
- Ask all members to write some "weakness" or concern they have about themselves, something that keeps them from becoming who they want to be, on their cards. They should leave their cards anonymous or sign their cards with "Dear Abby" pseudonyms like "Shy" or "Discouraged" that reflect their problems.
- Collect the cards and divide the group into small groups of three. Give each triad three cards from participants outside their small group.
- After reading and discussing a card, members of the triad write a "gift" on the other side of the card, words of affirmation and/or advice that will help the person cope with his or her problem. Then, they sign their names on the gift side.
- When all groups signal that they have finished, collect the cards. Lay all of the cards, problem side up and gift side down, on a table or in the center of the floor. Instruct each participant to find and collect his or her card and read the gift. Allow enough time for all who wish to discuss the gifts they have received to locate one of the givers and have a short conversation.

## THE OUTSIDERS

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

Place one group member outside a circle formed by others standing in a close huddle, arms on each other's shoulders and legs touching. The person outside tries to break into the circle. Members try to keep the person out. When a person succeeds or finally gives up, the group, including the

outsider, discusses feelings, interactions, and so on. Ask questions like “How did it feel to be ‘selected’ as the outsider? How did the insiders feel?” You can repeat the activity multiple times using different outsiders.

## **TRUST SHIELD**

Purpose: To help participants focus on their beliefs related to trust and share these briefly with others.

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Masking tape; one piece of blank paper, one pencil/pen, and one copy of the “Trust and Relationships” information sheet for each participant

Description:

- Give each participant a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Ask everyone to draw a shield and divide it into four sections, numbering them 1 through 4. Then, read the following directions:
  - "In Section 1, put some words or pictures that make clear what you value most about being trusted."
  - "In Section 2, list some qualities that make it easy to trust someone."
  - "In Section 3, write or draw symbols of things that cause us not to trust others."
  - "In Section 4, show some things that you value most about your family and closest friends."
- Allow time for participants to complete all four sections.
- Subdivide the group into smaller groups of three and have each participant describe, section by section, what he or she put on his or her shield.
- Tape the shields on the wall or in some other prominent place, and let participants do a "gallery walk" and look at everyone else's shields.
- Distribute copies of the “Trust and Relationships” information sheet for all to read on their own.

### Trust and Relationships Information Sheet

- Trust must be present in order for two individuals to have a meaningful relationship. The best way to build trust is to follow the time-honored principle known as the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- Start by accepting yourself for who you are. Work at avoiding self-put-downs and negative judgements of yourself, then treat others the same way. People like to be accepted, and when acceptance is reciprocal, it enhances a relationship.
- Building trust in relationships also requires dependability. When you say you will do something, do it. Not doing it decreases trust, but following through increases trust.
- Consistency is also key to trust. You will feel better about yourself and enhance your relationships if you always say what you believe. Not doing so causes personal stress and confuses those with whom you are trying to build a relationship.
- Finally, trust depends on openness. Keep in touch. Share openly and frequently. Relationships are for sharing, caring, and listening. When participants commit to openness, trust will build.

## TV RESPECT

Purpose: To recognize examples of respect and disrespect in society.

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: A recording of a TV show or streaming access

Description:

Participants can do this activity with their clubs or at home as an assignment. Ask them to consider the meanings of respect and disrespect, consulting a dictionary. Then, ask them to pick a favorite, age-appropriate TV show (or put one on for the group) and watch an episode, looking for ways that the characters show respect and disrespect. Have students write down or talk about examples of both. Ask them to consider the following question: in the cases of disrespect, how could the characters have acted differently to show respect?

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION ACTIVITIES

Constructive conflict resolution and problem solving demonstrate a high degree of character development. The following exercises will help students practice effective communication during conflict situations.

### GRAB THE BANANAS

Purpose: Emphasize the power of cooperation when it comes to conflict resolution.

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: Pieces of paper for keeping score and score key

Description:

- Divide the delegates into groups of three. Within each group, designate one delegate as player A, one as player B, and one as a referee/scorekeeper.
- Ask delegates to imagine the following scenario:
  - A and B are the only survivors of a shipwreck and have managed to reach, in a weakened condition, a remote desert island. They come from different countries and speak different languages, so they can't talk to each other. Rescue may never arrive and will be impossible for at least ten days. The island has one source of food, bananas. In your weak condition, you can harvest only four bananas each day. This may not provide enough food for both of you to survive. You have two choices: you can share the four bananas evenly, or you can try to grab all four bananas. If both players grab, they will lose the bananas through their destruction. If one grabs and the other shares, the grabber gets all four bananas.
- The referee will say, "1, 2, 3, show!" Each player will bring hands up from under the table or from behind backs at the same time. If your hands have an open palm, it means you're sharing. If your hands have a closed fist, it means you're grabbing. The referee will conduct ten rounds, one for each day on the island, and will mark the score on the score card.
- Discuss the game afterwards. Possible questions include:
  - Did one party's choices early in the game lead to mistrust and make grabbing more frequent?
  - Did those who cooperated generally have a better chance of survival?
  - Did individuals attempt to use some sort of strategy?

- How might you have been able to communicate?
- Would real people behave as you did during the game?
- How would interactions change if the two parties saw one another as enemies from the beginning?
- What about if they were close friends who cared for each other very much?
- Does this kind of give-and-take happen in real life?
- How would a positive leader act in a limited resources situation like this?

### Score Key:

If both A and B grab, give A 0 points and B 0 points.

If both A and B share, give A 2 points and B 2 points.

If A grabs and B shares, give A 4 points and B 0 points.

If A shares and B grabs, give A 0 points and B 4 points.

## **CONSTRUCTION GAME**

Purpose: Demonstrate the challenge of effectively understanding verbal messages.

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Tinker toys, blocks, legos, etc., enough to build a model and provide each group with the same pieces used in the model

### Description:

- Build a structure using 10-30 building pieces. Put behind a screen or box to hide from participants.
- Divide participants into small groups and seat them around a common work area. Give each group the exact same pieces (unassembled) that you used to build the model.
- Have each group select one runner to serve as the only person who can view the model.
- The runner will direct the members of the group to produce a structure exactly like the one behind the screen. The runner observes the model structure, races back to the group, and verbally instructs the group members on how to copy the model. Runners cannot use body language and must clasp their hands behind their backs when giving instructions.
- When a group thinks it has finished, it should signal the facilitator who will compare the group's structure to the original. If identical, that group wins. If not, the facilitator returns the incorrect model to the group, and the group continues to work. After the first group has successfully completed its structure, the remaining groups should continue until done or until the frustration level becomes uncomfortable.
- Debrief using the following questions:
  - Share some examples of the runner using effective communication?
  - Did the runner give instructions that were too general and easily misunderstood?
  - Did the receivers provide direction through adequate feedback?
  - Why is feedback so critical?
  - Did all the group members participate?
  - Did the pressure of competition adversely affect the runner's ability to provide effective information?
  - Did the group develop common terms for certain pieces?
  - What did the runner wish to express non-verbally that was more difficult to express verbally?

- What kind of language or cultural differences affected the group's performance? What does your experience suggest about working in multicultural settings?
- How does effective communication relate to good leadership?
- How can you use what you've learned through this game to become a more effective communicator? More effective group member? More effective leader?

## ZOMBIES

Purpose: Appreciating differences and the value of diversity

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: A whistle or other attention-getting device

Description:

- Group members become zombies. As zombies, they must all do the same things, though not necessarily at the same time. The group decides on five things a zombie can do (e.g. sit down, stand up, walk around the room stiff-legged, sharpen pencils, etc.). Zombies can only do these five things and nothing else.
- The leader serves as the zombie patrol. If you see a zombie doing something zombies cannot do, blow your whistle, and all zombies must freeze until you count to 15.
- Discuss:
  - What was it like to be a zombie?
  - After a while, how did it feel to always do the same things?
  - How does diversity make life more interesting?
  - What are some different types of diversity?
  - What problems arise related to diversity?
  - How does a leader feel about diversity?
  - How does a leader handle situations that may come up relating to diversity issues?





## **SAMPLE OF CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS**

Thank you to the Houston District, Ft. Bend YMCA for this example.

### **Article 1. General Provisions**

1.1 Club name. The name of this organization shall be the Fort Bend YMCA Texas Youth and Government Club, called "the Club."

1.2. YMCA Coordinator. The person designated by the Fort Bend YMCA to oversee and assist the Club shall hereinafter be known as "the YMCA Coordinator." All Club actions shall be subject to the approval of the YMCA Coordinator.

### **Article 2. Membership**

2.1 Eligibility for membership. Membership in the Club shall be open to any individual who is eligible to participate in the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program or who has participated in the program during the previous six months; and who is not a member of any other YMCA Texas Youth and Government club.

2.2 Requirements of membership. The membership of the Club shall consist of those who have registered with the Secretary and met all other requirements of membership.

2.3 Attendance at District Conference. All members shall be required to attend the District Conference. This requirement may be waived by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

2.4 Financial obligations. Payment of assessed dues by the specified deadline shall be a requirement to maintain membership. This requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers

2.5 Fundraising. Participation in mandatory fundraising activities shall be a requirement of membership, but such requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

### **Article 3. Meetings**

3.1 Club meetings. Meetings of the Club may be called by the President at his or her discretion. The President shall call a meeting upon the request of a majority of the Club officers or of one-third of the membership of the Club.

3.2 Procedure. All meetings shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised except as specified in these bylaws or special rules of the Club.

3.3 Notification of meetings. Notification shall be provided to all members and interested parties at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This notification shall include a summary of business to be conducted at the meeting. Meetings may be called with two days advance notice with the approval of a majority of the Club officers.

### **Article 4. Officers**

4.1 List of officers. The officers of the Club shall consist of the following: President,



Judicial Coordinator, Legislative Coordinator, Media Coordinator, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

4.2 Terms of office. Each club officer shall serve a term of one year from the time of their election, or until their replacement is elected.

4.3 Vacancies. If the office of President shall fall vacant, the Vice-President shall assume the office of President. If other offices shall fall vacant, the President shall appoint an acting replacement who shall serve until the election of a permanent replacement.

4.4 Duties of the President. The President shall preside at all meetings. He or she shall act as a liaison between the members of the Club and the YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall be responsible for scheduling necessary meetings, directing the Secretary to provide notification of those meetings, and performing any other duties normally associated with the office of President.

4.5 Duties of the Judicial Coordinator. The Judicial Coordinator shall train members participating in the judicial section, shall assist them in the formation of judicial teams, and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at judicial training meetings. He or she shall be responsible for coordinating mock trials, with the purpose of allowing all teams the equal opportunity for training prior to competition.

4.6 Duties of the Legislative Coordinator. The Legislative Coordinator shall train members participating in the legislative section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at legislative training meetings and shall serve as Parliamentarian at all official meetings of the Club. He or she shall prepare a plan for the allotment of the Club's legislative seats, which shall be subject to approval by majority vote of the officers.

4.7 Duties of the Media Coordinator. The Media Coordinator shall train members participating in the media section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He or she shall schedule and preside at media training meetings.

4.8 Duties of the Vice-President. The Vice-President shall assist the President, shall preside at all official meetings at which the President is not present, and shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Vice-President.

4.9 Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes at all official club meetings, issue informational notices to club members at the direction of the other officers, facilitate the registration processes, complete any necessary clerical work for the YMCA Coordinator and for the other officers, and fulfill any clerical duties that may arise in connection with the District and State Conferences. He or she shall be responsible for keeping the official membership roster of the Club and determining the voting strength of the membership. He or she shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Secretary.

4.10 Duties of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Club, coordinate its fundraising activities, and perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Treasurer.



4.1.1 Selection of Webmaster. By majority vote, the officers shall select the Webmaster. The Webmaster shall be responsible for the maintenance of and content of the Club website.

#### **Article 5. Nominations**

5.1 Offices requiring nomination. Any member desiring to seek office at the District or State level must receive the nomination of the Club in order to do so.

5.2 Qualifications. A candidate for office must meet the applicable District and State qualifications for the office being sought, as well as being a member of the Club.

5.3 Filing deadline. All candidates seeking the nomination of the Club must declare to the President their intention to do so, prior to the specified filing deadline. This filing deadline shall be determined by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance.

5.4 Necessity of nomination election. In the event that multiple candidates file for the same office, an election shall be held to determine the nominee of the Club. Two weeks' notice of the election shall be required unless waived by majority vote of the Club officers.

5.5 Governor. Candidates for Governor shall be elected by the membership of the Club.

5.6 Section offices. Candidates for District or State section offices shall be elected by their respective sections.

#### **Article 6. Elections**

6.1 Times of election. Officer elections shall be held annually, before June 1 but after the State Conference. Nomination elections shall be held, as necessary, at a time chosen by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance. Nomination elections for statewide, judicial, legislative, and media offices shall be held after the August meeting but before the registration deadline of the District Conference. Nomination elections for Hyde House offices shall be held after the District Conference but before the State Conference.

6.2 Method of voting. Voting in all officer elections and nomination elections shall be by secret ballot, with the exception of absentee ballots. Ballots which result in a tie shall be decided by a secret-ballot majority vote of the officers after the second ballot.

6.3 Absentee voting. Absentee voting via email, phone, and written ballots shall be permitted in all elections. Absentee ballots must be received by the President, Vice-President, Secretary, or, in the case of section nomination elections, the respective section coordinator, before the election.

6.4 Coordinator elections. Candidates for section coordinator shall be elected by their respective sections.

#### **Article 7. Treasury**

7.1 Dues. Any dues shall be assessed by majority vote of the membership of the Club.



7.2 Fundraising. Any Club fundraising efforts shall be approved by majority vote at a Club meeting, or by majority vote of the Club officers. In any case such that participation shall be a requirement of membership, efforts shall be ratified by majority vote of the membership of the Club.

### **Article 8. Amendments**

8.1 Adoption. These bylaws may be amended at any Club meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing, and distributed to the Club, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. However, a majority vote of the Club membership shall be sufficient to adopt an amendment without prior notice.

8.2 Distribution of amendments. An amendment shall be distributed to the Club by the President or Secretary upon the request of any Club member.

Last amended January 27, 2005

Bylaws of the Fort Bend YMCA Texas Youth and Government Club

## **HISTORY, PURPOSE, AND ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS YG PROGRAM**

### HISTORY

The YMCA Youth and Government program was established in 1936 in New York by Clement "Pete" Duran, then a director of the Albany YMCA. Duran coined the motto of the program: "Democracy must be learned by each generation." Texas Youth and Government (YG) is part of this nationwide, youth-led, civic engagement and academic enrichment program for high school and middle school students.

The Texas Youth and Government Program was organized in 1946. It held its first Legislature in December of 1947 under the chairmanship of Dr. Humphrey Lee, Chancellor, Southern Methodist University. It was initially organized under the auspices of the Southwest Area Council of YMCAs

The Judicial section of Youth and Government began in Texas in 1960. Since then, other program sections have been added including lobbyists, middle school legislature, media, and State Affairs Forum. Thousands of teens have participated in the program and have grown up to be responsible citizens and future leaders of our nation.

In 2000, the American Bar Association became a supporter of Youth and Government, creating a policy requesting that lawyers become involved in the program and stressing the importance of engaging and educating students about the United States legal process. About this issue, Sandra Day O'Connor and Roy Romer said in 2006:

"Most young people today simply do not have an adequate understanding of how our government and political system work, and they are thus not well prepared to participate as citizens."

As of 2012, the Youth and Government program operated in 37 states and the District of Columbia, serving 47,000 high school students around the country.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of Youth and Government is to prepare a selected group of young people for moral and political leadership in the American democratic process by providing guidance, training, and



experience in the theory and practice of determining public policy on the state level. It is called “a laboratory in citizenship and government.” Our mission and primary goal reflect our purpose.

*Mission:* To help teenagers become responsible citizens and future leaders of our nation.

*Goal:* To create an environment in which students can increase their political awareness and understanding while learning the meaning of social action through an actual hands-on experience in government.

### ORGANIZATION

Youth and Government has a State Office under the YMCA of Austin Program Services branch and five location-based Districts. Current districts are listed below.

District 1: Midland

District 2: Austin/Corpus Christi/San Antonio/Williamson County

District 3: Houston/Port Arthur

District 4: Fort Worth/Arlington

District 5: Dallas/Palestine

The State Office employs a full-time State Director as well as part-time administrative staff. Each District has a YMCA staff person serving as District Director. District Directors serve as direct coordinator and point of contact for all YG clubs in their area and organize a one-day conference each year, the District Conference. This training experience prepares delegates for the State Conference and gives Districts an opportunity to nominate officers and other youth leaders. Delegates must attend a District Conference to qualify for State. Allocation of State delegate spots is based on District Conference participation.

A Board of Management determines Youth and Government policy, oversees the program, controls the budget, and directs all activities. The Board membership is representative of the participating YMCAs and youth delegates. Board membership cannot exceed 30 persons. One staff, one lay person, and one other person meeting either criterion can represent each District. Meetings are open to District Directors and youth officers. The Board can elect up to nine members at large, and the State Director’s supervisor also serves on the Board.

YG needs many other volunteers to assist with committees, trials, and other activities. Youth and Government recruits community volunteers to evaluate delegates’ performances at conferences. It also relies on Section Leaders, expert volunteers who work with the State Director to manage sections of the program (Media, State Affairs Forum, Gov Cab/Lobbyists, Legislative, Judicial, and Candidates/Elections. See more below).

The Youth and Government student leadership training experience occurs in three phases:

1. Local club training
2. Training at District Conferences
3. The annual State Conference replicating Texas’ government and its functions



The program, youth-led to the fullest extent possible, centers on the local clubs, homeschools/schools, and communities with the State Conference representing its zenith. It depends on partnership between local schools/clubs and YMCAs.

YMCA staff duties include:

- Assisting with student registration and document submission (e.g. bills, briefs, proposals)
- Co-facilitating club meetings as needed
- Behavior monitoring, enforcing codes of conduct
- Serving as liaison to YG District and State Offices

Teachers and other school staff play a crucial part in program operations, serving as volunteer club advisors. Responsibilities include:

- Facilitating student-led club meetings
- Registering the club online and ensuring students complete individual registrations
- Helping students adhere to all payment and application deadlines set by District
- Attending annual mandatory club advisor training at the start of school year
- Assisting students with any fundraising activities undertaken on behalf of YG
- Behavior monitoring, enforcing codes of conduct and signing up for volunteer positions at State Conference like floor and stairway monitor

Texas YG clubs operate in a variety of ways:

- As part of a school's UIL enhancement
- Incorporated into a school's classrooms and curriculum
- In combination with clubs such as World Affairs Council, Student Government, and/or Debate
- As stand-alone clubs at schools or YMCA branches

**ALL CLUBS MUST PARTNER WITH A LOCAL YMCA. IF YOU DO NOT LIVE NEAR A PARTICIPATING YMCA, PLEASE CONTACT STATE DIRECTOR TO ESTABLISH YOUR CLUB AS AN INDEPENDENT CLUB.**

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of program sections. An eight-lesson curriculum for each is available on the YG website and linked to on page 7.

### **Legislative (High School and Middle School)**

Students in the Legislative section write, present, and debate bills. At conferences, bills are heard in a committee first, and some advance to be heard in the House/Senate chambers. Bills that pass both chambers go to the Youth Governor for consideration.

YG assigns each Legislative student to a chamber. Chamber assignments are based on student age and experience level.

High school chamber assignments are as follows.

- Farabee Senate: 62 seats. Chamber is limited solely to 11th and 12th graders with previous Legislative experience. Experienced 12th graders have precedence.

- House of Representatives: 150 seats. Chamber is primarily for 10th and 11th graders with previous Legislative experience. If seats are available based on District allotment, outstanding 9th graders with JYG experience can be moved up at the discretion of their District Directors in consultation with the State Office. 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have no Legislative experience but have debate experience should be assigned to House.
- Hyde Senate: 72 seats. Chamber will be added if Legislative delegates fill all available seats in Hyde House, House, and Senate. It is primarily for first-year 10th and 11th grade students (or those who have limited Legislative experience) and possibly for 9th grade students with JYG experience.
- Hyde House: 85 seats. Primarily for first-year 9th or 10th grade Legislative students. Most 9th grade students with JYG experience will remain in Hyde House unless their District Director approves moving them to Hyde Senate or the House based on their experience, debating skills, and the availability of seats.

Middle school chamber assignments are as follows:

- Senate: 62 seats. 8<sup>th</sup> graders with at least one year of Legislative experience.
- House of Representatives: 150 seats. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with at least one year of Legislative experience.
- Duran Senate: 62 seats. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with limited or no experience in Youth and Government. Place new 8<sup>th</sup> graders here over Duran House. Chamber will be eliminated and delegates moved to House or Duran House if it has less than 30 delegates.
- Duran House: 150 seats. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with limited or no experience in Youth and Government.
- Duran Council: 150 seats. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### **State Affairs Forum (High School and Middle School)**

Students in the State Affairs Forum section write, present, and debate proposals. At conferences, proposals are heard in a committee first, and some advance to a general assembly. Proposals describe students' non-legislative solutions to pressing state/national/international issues, and students can use visual aids to make their case.

### **Judicial (High School Only)**

Mock Trial students study a legal case and associated statutes and precedents. At conferences, attorneys alternatively adopt the roles of prosecution and defense to argue both sides with help from student witnesses.

Students in the Moot Court (Appeals) section study the same case as Mock Trial students with the assumption that one side has appealed an existing verdict. At conferences, they alternatively defend and challenge that verdict based on questions outlined in YG materials.

Student judges/justices deliver a verdict at the end of rounds. The State Office issues new case materials each fall.



### **Media (High School Only)**

Students in the Media section create articles, videos, and social media posts covering District and State Conference activities. During State Conference, they produce at least two newsletters, numerous blog posts, and continuous social media coverage on Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Sub-sections include Broadcast, Social, Print, and Photojournalism.

### **Governor's Cabinet/Lobbyists (High School and Middle School)**

This section is only available during State Conference itself. Legislative delegates may apply for these positions after their District Conferences.

The Governor's Cabinet section (High School and Middle School) works directly with the Youth Governor. The Youth Governor sets a legislative agenda for the State Conference. He or she then works with the Cabinet to lobby in the Legislative chambers for his or her agenda, which is comprised of specific bills or issues he or she would like to see debated and acted upon. The Lobbyists (High School only) make reasoned arguments against the Youth Governor's agenda.

### **Candidates (High School and Middle School)**

Each program cycle, Texas Youth and Government students elect ten high school officers and three middle school officers to provide youth leadership. The YMCA requires all candidates running for these positions to adhere to the Y core values: caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty. Candidate rules and responsibilities are available on the [Candidates page](#) of the YG website.

High school officer positions:

- Youth Governor
- Lt. Governor
- Secretary of State
- Chief Justice
- Attorney General
- State Affairs Forum (SAF) Chair
- Print Editor-in-Chief
- Broadcast Producer
- Social Media Editor
- Photojournalism Editor

Middle school officer positions:

- Junior Youth Governor
- Lt. Governor
- SAF Chair

Students must run for their desired position at their District Conference and win the nomination before seeking election at the State Conference. All delegates at State Conference vote for and elect at-large candidates (Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Chief Justice), while the Media and SAF sections elect their chairs and editors internally.

## PROGRAM COST AND PLANNING

Delegates pay a District and State Conference registration fee. This fee includes transportation to and from the conference (if relevant), State hotel room (four students to a room except in special cases), and several meals. Fees vary by District and by year. District Directors will communicate with advisors and students regarding transportation plans (e.g. chartered bus, parents dropping students off, etc.) and work directly with the State Office to reserve student hotel rooms. On average, District Conference fees range from \$40-\$100, and State Conference fees range from \$325-\$400.

District Directors will announce the fees for the program cycle at the beginning of the school year. Advisors will participate in a required advisor training and sign a Code of Conduct and Responsibilities document that commits them to club support for the year. They will help students turn in all paperwork and monies on time. Delegates must pay all fees before attending a conference. They must also submit the document required for their section (Media assignment, SAF proposal, Legislative bill, Judicial brief) before their District deadline.

The State Office highly recommends that clubs have fundraising projects during the fall. Past projects have included candy sales, bake sales, pancake breakfasts, shows, dances, selling concessions at athletic events, partnering with restaurants to receive a portion of proceeds, etc. In addition, many schools and YMCA branches will work with students to provide financial assistance and scholarships. The State Office actively seeks grants that support student financial assistance. Organizations like service clubs have also responded to requests for contributions.



## HIGH SCHOOL TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The high school Texas YG program aligns with the following TEKS.

### **United States Government**

113.44.C.(7) Government. The student understands the American beliefs and principles reflected in the U.S. Constitution and why these are significant. The student is expected to:

(D) evaluate constitutional provisions for limiting the role of government, including republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights;

113.44.C.(8) Government. The student understands the structure and functions of the government created by the U.S. Constitution. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze the structure and functions of the legislative branch of government, including the bicameral structure of Congress, the role of committees, and the procedure for enacting laws;

(C) analyze the structure and functions of the judicial branch of government, including the federal court system, types of jurisdiction, and judicial review;

113.44.C.(20) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

(C) analyze and defend a point of view on a current political issue

(D) analyze and evaluate the validity of information, arguments, and counterarguments from primary and secondary sources for bias, propaganda, point of view, and frame of reference

113.44.C.(21) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(A) use social studies terminology correctly;

(C) transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate;

(D) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

### **English Language Arts and Reading, English IV**

110.39.C.(1) Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, discussion, and thinking--oral language. The student develops oral language through listening, speaking, and discussion. The student is expected to:

(A) engage in meaningful and respectful discourse when evaluating the clarity and coherence of a speaker's message and critiquing the impact of a speaker's use of diction, syntax, and rhetorical strategies;

(B) follow and give complex instructions, clarify meaning by asking pertinent questions, and respond appropriately;

(C) formulate sound arguments and present using elements of classical speeches such as introduction, first and second transitions, body, conclusion, the art of persuasion, rhetorical devices, employing eye contact, speaking rate such as pauses for effect, volume, enunciation, purposeful gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively;

(D) participate collaboratively, offering ideas or judgments that are purposeful in moving the team toward goals, asking relevant and insightful questions, tolerating a range of positions and ambiguity in decision making, and evaluating the work of the group based on agreed-upon criteria.

110.39.C.(4) Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to:

(F) make inferences and use evidence to support understanding;

(G) evaluate details read to analyze key ideas;

(I) monitor comprehension and make adjustments such as re-reading, using background knowledge, asking questions, annotating, and using outside sources when understanding breaks down.

110.39.C.(5) Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:

(D) paraphrase and summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order;

(E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating;

(G) discuss and write about the explicit and implicit meanings of text;

110.39.C.(9) Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and use appropriate conventions. The student is expected to:

(A) plan a piece of writing appropriate for various purposes and audiences by generating ideas through a range of strategies such as brainstorming, journaling, reading, or discussing

(B) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing in timed and open-ended situations by:

(i) using strategic organizational structures appropriate to purpose, audience, topic, and context

(C) revise drafts to improve clarity, development, organization, style, diction, and sentence fluency, both within and between sentences;

110.39.C.(11) Inquiry and research: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student engages in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes for a variety of purposes. The student is expected to:

(A) develop questions for formal and informal inquiry;

(B) critique the research process at each step to implement changes as needs occur and are identified;

(C) develop and revise a plan;

(D) modify the major research question as necessary to refocus the research plan;

(E) locate relevant sources;

(F) synthesize information from a variety of sources;

(G) examine sources for:

(i) credibility, bias, and accuracy; and

(H) display academic citations, including for paraphrased and quoted text, and use source materials ethically to avoid plagiarism

### Journalism

110.62.B.(3) The student reports and writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and researches self-selected topics to write journalistic texts. The student is expected to:

- (A) demonstrate an understanding of the elements of news;
- (C) locate information sources such as persons, databases, reports, and past interviews; gather background information; and research to prepare for an interview or investigate a topic;
- (D) plan and write relevant questions for an interview or in-depth research;
- (E) gather information through interviews (in person or telephone);
- (F) evaluate and confirm the validity of background information from a variety of sources such as other qualified persons, books, and reports;
- (I) revise and edit copy using appropriate copy editing symbols;
- (L) write captions;
- (M) demonstrate an understanding of the function of headlines through the writing of headlines.

110.62.B.(4) The student demonstrates understanding of the principles of publishing through design using available technologies. The student is expected to:

- (C) use illustrations or photographs that have been cropped to communicate and emphasize a topic;
- (D) use graphic devices such as lines, screens, and art to communicate and emphasize a topic;

### Advanced Broadcast Journalism I, II, III

110.64.B.(2) The student understands how broadcast productions are created and disseminated. The student is expected to:

- (A) understand the role of various personnel, including producers, station managers, technical directors, camera operators, webmasters, and news anchors, in broadcast journalism;

110.64.B.(3) The student produces programming such as newscasts, interviews, and public service announcements. The student is expected to:

- (C) apply pre-production skills such as storyboarding, scriptwriting, and scheduling;
- (J) critique the broadcast to find its strengths and weaknesses to improve products based on those critiques.

### Photojournalism

110.65.B.(1) The student interprets/critiques visual representations



## MIDDLE SCHOOL TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The middle school Texas YG program aligns with the following TEKS.

### **Social Studies, Grade 8**

113.20.B.(15) Government. The student understands the American beliefs and principles reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and other important historic documents. The student is expected to:

(D) analyze how the U.S. Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights.

113.20.B.(20) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

(E) support a point of view on a social studies issue or event

113.20.B.(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(E) support a point of view on a social studies issue or event

113.20.B.(30) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(C) transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate; and

(D) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

### **Social Studies, Grade 7**

113.19.B.(15) Government. The student understands the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution. The student is expected to:

(A) describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels

### **English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 8**

110.24.B.(1) Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, discussion, and thinking--oral language. The student develops oral language through listening, speaking, and discussion. The student is expected to:

(A) listen actively to interpret a message by summarizing, asking questions, and making comments

(B) follow and give complex oral instructions to perform specific tasks, answer questions, or solve problems;

(C) advocate a position using anecdotes, analogies, and/or illustrations employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, a variety of natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively

(D) participate collaboratively in discussions, plan agendas with clear goals and deadlines, set time limits for speakers, take notes, and vote on key issues.

110.24.B.(9) Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions. The student is expected to:

(A) plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies such as discussion, background reading, and personal interests;

110.24.B.(10) Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and use appropriate conventions. The student is expected to:

(A) plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies such as discussion, background reading, and personal interests;

(B) develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by:

(i) organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction, transitions, coherence within and across paragraphs, and a conclusion; and

(ii) developing an engaging idea reflecting depth of thought with specific facts, details, and examples;

(C) revise drafts for clarity, development, organization, style, word choice, and sentence variety

110.24.B.(12) Inquiry and research: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student engages in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes for a variety of purposes. The student is expected to:

(A) generate student-selected and teacher-guided questions for formal and informal inquiry;

(B) develop and revise a plan;

(C) refine the major research question, if necessary, guided by the answers to a secondary set of questions;

(D) identify and gather relevant information from a variety of sources;

(E) differentiate between primary and secondary sources;

(F) synthesize information from a variety of sources;

(G) differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism when using source materials;

(H) examine sources for:

(i) reliability, credibility, and bias, including omission

(l) display academic citations and use source materials ethically

