

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT, AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT AN 8TH GRADER?

The big buildings, the elected officials, the talking heads on television, the politicians in the blogosphere ... it has nothing to do with you, right? 8th graders are far removed from the world of government, right? There is really no pertinent reason for you to learn about the ins and outs of government, right? Well ... wrong.

In this online activity, you will be introduced to the topic of government by using The Democracy Project from PBS, available at <http://pbskids.org/democracy/mygovt/index.html>. In this activity, you will click “around a town” and find out different ways in which the government has an effect on an everyday average citizen, like you. As you travel to each of the locations in the town, list some of the ways in which the government affects you. For each area, see if you can come up with some other effects as well.



To begin, find out the definition of “GOVERNMENT” from your favorite 8th grade history teacher:



How does the government affect you at school? Make sure you explore the school, including the cafeteria, clinic, classroom, and playground.



How does the government affect you in the hospital?



How do the various levels of the police affect you?



How does the fire department affect you?



What role does the government play with the media, and how does that affect you?



What role does the government play with the library, and how does that affect you?



How does the government affect housing, including your house?



How does the local courthouse affect you?



What role does the government have with parks?



What about the role of government in transportation? How does that affect you?

Try to think of a few more ways in which the government (local, Wisconsin, or Washington D.C.) has an impact on your life:



Don't worry about visiting the big capitol yet ... that's coming up in a few days!