

Honoring Citizen Heroes

Suggested Application: Language Arts, Leadership

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- work collaboratively to analyze Citizen Service Before Self Honors (also called Citizen Honors) nominations, debate who should be awarded, and defend their selection with reasoning and evidence
- reflect on ways they can contribute to their own communities

Introductory Activity:

The class will review the history and purpose of the Citizen Service Before Self Honors award, using Lesson A4 if needed.

Small Group Activity:

The teacher will divide students into groups of four to six and give each group an envelope that contains the six preselected nominations (available for download at www.themedalofhonor.com) for the Citizen Service Before Self Honors award. Groups will follow these directions, and the teacher will provide time limits ("You should now have eliminated one option".... "two options"....etc.) to keep the groups on task.

Group Directions:

- Each person will silently read one or two of the nominations and then summarize what they have read to their group.
- Once each person has shared, the group will begin to deliberate which nomination will earn their recommendation for the Citizen Honors award.
- The group will listen to the time limits given to them by the teacher and will eliminate options until they are left with only one nomination.
- When the group has made their final nominee, they will review the reasons that they chose that nomination.
- A group leader will need to be chosen to share their reasoning.

Whole Group Activity:

Teacher will lead a discussion in which each group leader will share their chosen nomination and the reasons why their group chose that nominee. The teacher will keep track of responses and reasonings as the students share out. It works well to list the nominees on the board and tally during the discussion.

Small Group Activity:

The teacher will direct each group to discuss the results of the selection activity and the reasoning behind those results.

Whole Group Activity:

The teacher will show the class pictures of the actual Citizen Honors awardees and provide more detail on each of them. The teacher will direct a conversation on whether learning more about the awardees including their full story--gender, age, etc.--would have changed their selections. Students will offer their thoughts and reasoning on their final decision.

Concluding Activity:

Students will be asked to write a reflection on the difficulty of having to choose only one awardee when so many people are deserving of the recognition. Students can elaborate on how learning about various Citizen Honors awardees has changed or enhanced their understanding of what they can do to help within their communities.

Assessment:

Discussion, reflection

Resources:

Preselected Citizen Honors nominations, slides with pictures, and additional information on the Citizen Honors nominees (all available at www.themedalofhonor.com)

Extended Activity:

Students can research local heroes and submit a nomination for Citizen Service Before Self Honors award on the Medal of Honor Foundation website.

Students can work together to create a classroom or school citizen award. They should work together in groups to choose the criteria for the award, write nomination guidelines, establish selection guidelines, and then carry out the process from announcement through award. This assignment also works with pre-existing school or classroom student recognition awards such as Student of the Month.