

**Social Studies Content Themes for Middle/High School**  
**From**  
***“The Making of Milwaukee Curriculum”***

**Civics/Government:**

**Teaching about Civics/Government in Milwaukee**

The following activities are from “The Making of Milwaukee” on-line curriculum.

- **Governing Milwaukee (Debate Historic Issues Affecting Milwaukee County)**
- **Public Health Issues (Research Public Health Topics)**
- **Designing a Political Party**
- **Designing a New City**
- **Connecting with Public Officials**
- **Milwaukee’s Claim to Fame: Better or Worse (Trivia Activity)**
- **Why Does It Take So Much Time? It Doesn’t Happen Overnight (Research Milwaukee’s Socialists)**
- **A New Deal for Milwaukee (Simulation)**
- **Words of Wisdom (Analyze a Quote)**

**GOVERNING MILWAUKEE**

*\*\*Note to Teachers: For one of the rules in the following activity, students will be considering the role that beer played in Milwaukee’s history and leisure time. This activity is not in any way designed to promote the use of alcohol or to suggest that drinking is necessary for leisure. Make sure you have several strategies to deal with any potential comments or issues related to this topic before using this activity.*

In this activity, the class will serve as the governing body of Milwaukee County and will work together to create laws or rules for Milwaukee County. Each group will have its own interest in trying to pass laws that benefit their entire ethnic group. At the same time, they will have to learn to compromise and strike deals with other groups to get laws passed.

1. Divide students into groups based on the percentage of different racial and ethnic groups in Milwaukee County. (Note: You may want to use the census data from *Activity 1: Milwaukee By The Numbers* as a guide. However, explain to students that these are not precise numbers for each group either from 1905 or today. Furthermore, you may want to limit the ethnic groups to those discussed in the video chapters since students will have more background information about these groups to guide them during this activity. Finally, keep in mind that Jewish immigrants to Milwaukee came from various countries with Russia and Poland serving as two of their main homelands.).
2. The teacher or a member of the class selected by the rest of the class will enforce the following rules during the activity:

- The activity begins with the teacher reading a proposed rule. The teacher may select from the rules listed below to help the class get started or ask each group to write and submit one rule.
- Students select a leader from their group to discuss the rule with the leader of the other groups in the middle of the room for 5 - 10 minutes.
- The teacher allows any student time to speak in favor or against the rule in front of the class. Limit this time to a total of 5 - 10 minutes.
- A vote is taken on the rule with a majority of students needed to pass the rule.
- The whole process starts over again with #1.

3. Use the following rules to help the students get started:

- **Rule #1:** No one can attend the German (beer) gardens on a Sunday.
- **Rule #2:** Any religious events associated with the city should be held at St. John's Cathedral, a Catholic Church.
- **Rule #3:** A new library in Milwaukee will be named after Golda Meir, the city's most famous Jewish immigrant.
- **Rule #4:** In order to build a new road through the center of the city that is important for all travelers coming into Milwaukee, the Italian community's Church, Madonna di Pompeii Church, will have to be torn down.
- **Rule #5:** Every citizen should pay higher taxes to help the Irish people rebuild their homes that were ruined in the Third Ward fire.

4. After the activity is over, the teacher should lead a class discussion addressing the following questions:

- What did this activity suggest about compromising to pass rules?
- What was easy or difficult about agreeing on rules for the city?
- How might this activity have been different if you would have been personally affected by any of these issues or rules (for example, a rule limiting the amount of time kids can watch television)
- Do you think debates on rules like these made Milwaukee a more unified or divided community during this period of time?
- What does this activity suggest about the benefits and challenges to living in a culturally diverse community?

## **PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES**

1. After viewing the Video Chapter 10, *Trouble in Town*, students will compare and contrast the public health issues that existed for the city and people of Milwaukee around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and those that existed around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
2. First, ask students to list public health issues that existed for Milwaukee around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in one column and brief descriptors of that problem in another parallel column.
3. After students have shared various problems, have a class discussion on what they think life would have been like if they had been living in the late 1800's/early 1900's. After the discussion, and on the back of their original list, have students pose 1 or 2 questions about health and life concerns they are curious about regarding that time in our history. Or, have students write 1-2 "I Wonder" sentences. Ex: *"I wonder why so many children under five died during that time."* Or, *"I wonder who collected the garbage in the 1800's and how they accomplished it."*

Follow-up Learning Activity:

- Students will go to the website of the city, county and/or state health department to discover what current public health problems are being addressed by their city, county and/or state. After locating the home page of the governmental agency, look under the "department" heading to locate the health department section.  
 City of Milwaukee: [www.ci.mil.wi.us](http://www.ci.mil.wi.us)  
 Milwaukee County: [www.milwaukeecounty.org](http://www.milwaukeecounty.org)  
 State of Wisconsin: [www.dhfs.state.wi.us](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us)
- After listing 5 public health issues they are most interested in and sharing those lists with the class, students will choose one health issue and investigate how the city; county, and/ or state describes that issue and what they are doing to address it.
- Students will prepare a short speech or write a descriptive essay on the nature and challenges of the health issue and what is being done to address it.
- Students will present their speech or essay during a class meeting, a school assembly, a PTA meeting, or even at the Health Education Center in downtown Milwaukee.
- Students will close the speech or essay with new questions and/or statements of concern they have as a result of their initial investigation. It is possible that these emerging questions could serve as the basis for further research.

## **DESIGNING A POLITICAL PARTY**

After viewing Video Chapter 11, *Socialists at Work*, have students describe the nature and goals of the Socialist Party at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After sharing these

descriptions students will explore the nature and goals or platforms of the current major political parties: Democratic Party, Independent Party, Libertarian Party, Republican Party, and Socialist Party.

1. Students will investigate the beliefs, symbol, and goals or platforms of the major political parties as individuals or small groups by going to the national website of each party.
  - a. The Democratic National Party: [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)
  - b. The Independent American Party: [www.usiap.org](http://www.usiap.org)
  - a. The Libertarian Party: [www.lp.org](http://www.lp.org)
  - b. The Republican National Party: [www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org)
  - c. The Socialist Party: [www.sp-usa.org](http://www.sp-usa.org)
2. Students will report their findings on a mini-poster in a consistent format such as, a titled T-Chart with the name and symbol of the party at the top of the chart and the beliefs and goals within specific sides of the T-Chart.
3. Students will display their finished posters within their class.
4. Students will draw conclusions about the nature of political parties, and their symbols and goals.

#### Follow-up Learning Activity:

Based on what they have learned from their investigations, students will design their own political party, including a name, a symbol and goals. Students unveil their new parties during a ceremony for classmates using full size poster boards to display their ideas.

## **DESIGNING A NEW CITY**

1. Have students describe various ways the city of Milwaukee has changed since its beginning.
2. Then ask students: *“What aspects of Milwaukee have not changed over long periods of time?”* Direct student to the idea that history represents both change and continuity.
3. Have students imagine that there is a huge tract of land that has just been donated to the State of Wisconsin a few miles from Milwaukee on Lake Michigan. The person donating the land has stated that this land must be used for a new city in which a diverse group of Wisconsin citizens can begin new lives and work together to build their new city. The benefactor has also set aside a one million dollar prize for the winner/s of the best city design. The contest may be entered by a design group including up to 4 members with individual group members receiving a prize piece of land and new home if they win the contest.

4. After a discussion on why the Socialists established zoning ordinances in 1920 and why cities still have zoning ordinances, instruct students that they get to enter the contest and submit a design “lay-out” or map of a new city, paying close attention to where they will place neighborhoods, main streets, businesses, industry, government services, schools, parks, entertainments etc.
5. First, brainstorm with the class what kinds of features they might like in a new city. Then have the class decide on symbols for a map key that will be used in the construction of their maps so that everyone in the class is able to interpret each other’s city designs. Keep this listing of possible city features and map symbols on a chart so that all students use it for a consistent reference.
6. Now students can meet within their groups and list specific features they want in their new city.
7. In order to keep every member of the group actively involved, after students have made decisions about what to include in their city, each student in the group can begin to draft a particular part of their city on an 8 ½ x 11” piece of paper.
8. These pieces can then be moved around and put together like pieces of a puzzle once all their sections are complete. Make it clear to students that it is in their best interest to try various configurations or designs. Help them think about where they might want their parks, schools, housing developments, businesses, industries, major roads, etc. Then let students make the final decision related to the design of the new city.
9. After students have what they feel is a winning design, have them individually or as a group, think of a name for their new city.
10. Be sure to follow up this activity with time for student groups to share their designs and rationales with each other, as well as time to process what agreements and disagreements they had within their group regarding final decisions on how to design a new city.
11. After sharing designs, rationales, agreements, and disagreements, ask students what they have learned about city planning/zoning.
12. Students can exhibit their winning designs in the school hallways. The designs can also be judged by classmates, teachers, city planning officials, or city/urban planning professors from local universities.

Follow-up Learning Activity:

- Contact a city planning or zoning official to be a guest speaker and/or to be a judge for the city design contest.

## CONNECTING WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

To support the study of political leadership, visit the office of a city council member, a state legislator, or county supervisor. Or, invite the political leader to the school or class. Ask the public official to speak briefly about a.) Their beliefs about the kind of community leaders people want, b.) How they made the decision to become a public official, and, c.) Their current community/regional visions and legislative priorities.

1. Students prepare to interview the public official by constructing questions related to their own beliefs about serving the public, their aspirations, and the leadership style and ethics they feel are necessary to accomplish the job.
2. Students share and critique each other's questions.
3. Students decide on the format of the presentation including the introduction, the question and answer session, and the closing thank you and/or presentation of a small memento or gift to the speaker. Choose students to take the lead on various parts of the presentation. Make it a grand occasion with students performing leadership positions.
4. Before the public leader/official arrives don't forget to work with students on how to collect and report the data collected, as well as how to pose questions to a public official during a press conference. For example: *"Good Afternoon, mayor..... My name is..... My question for this morning is..... I ask this question because....."*
5. After the speaker, work with students to write one of the following:
  - A newspaper article describing the highlights of the presentation such as the who, what, where, when, and why.
  - A thank you to the public official describing what they learned from the presentation and new questions that emerged after the presentation.
  - An essay on what they learned from the presentation.

## MILWAUKEE'S CLAIM TO FAME: FOR BETTER AND WORSE

**True or False:** Students can earn one point for each correct response and one additional point for the correct answer if they believe the answer is false.

1. Milwaukee became the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> largest city in the 1800's. (T)
2. Milwaukee's County Courthouse has always been at its present location, on 9<sup>th</sup> and Wells. (F) *It was originally located at the north end of Cathedral Square.*
3. Milwaukee's city hall, completed in 1895, was built on a swamp. (T)
4. So many wealthy German's lived in Milwaukee they built houses that looked like castles in various parts of the city. (T)

5. A Polish flat is a kind of bread that doesn't rise during the baking process. (F) *A Polish flat is a small house that has been raised to accommodate a basement apartment.*
6. During the late 1800's, eight suburbs developed, including Waukesha. (F) *The eight suburbs did not include Waukesha.*
7. It is said that Milwaukee had 1,300 saloons and only 100 churches in 1891. (T)
8. The average life expectancy in Milwaukee around 1890 was approximately 28 years. (T)
9. Pollution did not occur in Milwaukee until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (F) *Various types of pollution were enormous problems during the late 1800's.*
10. The Flushing Station was built in Milwaukee around the 1888 to help the flushing of toilets be more efficient in disposing of sewage. (F) *The Flushing Station, built in 1888, was designed to flush the dirty Milwaukee River with clean Lake Michigan water.)*
11. David Rose was an honest and ethical mayor in Milwaukee during the late 1800's. (F) *Mayor Rose was corrupt and tolerated many vices within the city such as gambling and bribery.*
12. In 1903, 3,000 Milwaukee citizens jammed Turner Hall to complain about their corrupt city government. (T)
13. The Socialists gained popularity and power in Milwaukee because the working people wanted a shorter workday and an honest government. (T)
14. Victor Berger was Milwaukee's first Socialist mayor. (F) *Emil Seidel was the first Socialist mayor, elected in 1910.*
15. The "Forty Eighters" were a group of middle-aged Milwaukee citizens who joined the Socialist Party. (F) *The "Forty Eighters" were German Socialists who encouraged free thinking.*
16. Daniel Hoan, Milwaukee's 2<sup>nd</sup> Socialist mayor, was nicknamed, "Fighting Dan" because he had a bad temper. (F) *He was given the nickname because he was a persistent leader.*
17. Daniel Hoan established Jones Island as the place to process Milwaukee's sewage. (T)
18. In order to establish Jones Island, the city had to convince the Kaszubs, Milwaukee's Polish fishing community, to vacate the island. (T)
19. Charles Whitnall established the Milwaukee County Park System, which eventually led to the design and construction of 145 parks. (T)
20. The Milwaukee County Zoo was originally in Lake Park on the East side of Milwaukee. (F) *The zoo was originally situated in Washington Park.*

## **WHY DOES IT TAKE SO MUCH TIME? IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OVER-NIGHT.**

1. Students investigate the rise of the Socialist Party in Milwaukee through various resources.

*Teachers and students are also encouraged to use the following sections on The Making of Milwaukee website, [www.themakingofmilwaukee.com](http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com):*

- *The transcript of “The Making of Milwaukee” Milwaukee Public Television series located within the “About the Making of Milwaukee” section.*
- *The interactive timeline within the “Milwaukee’s History” section.*

To go directly to the interactive timeline section of *The Making of Milwaukee* website, click here now: <http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com/history/timeline.cfm>

2. Students will draw conclusions about why it took approximately 20 years for the Socialist party to gain control of Milwaukee’s city government.
3. To help students construct general statements of beliefs about why worthwhile things take time to accomplish, encourage them to first describe personal examples of accomplishments in their own lives or the lives of family members that took a long time to achieve.

## **A NEW DEAL FOR MILWAUKEE**

During the Great Depression, the city of Milwaukee received millions of dollars from the federal government through Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal programs to employ people and make multiple improvements to the city. As the video and the accompanying book *The Making of Milwaukee* suggest, the New Deal left a powerful imprint on Milwaukee’s history. (Examples include Whitnall Park, Parklawn (a low income housing project), and a large doll collection and exhibits for the Public Museum). In this simulation, students will be in charge of spending federal money to improve the city of Milwaukee for as many people as possible. Each group (or individual) will create a plan that explains the project(s) they will include to improve the city and they must justify how they will spend the money they receive. Each group (or individual) will only receive a limited amount of money. The following rules will guide the simulation:

1. Every group (individual) will receive the same amount of money - \$1,000,000.
2. The money must benefit as many people as possible.
3. Students must be able to justify why they spent the money in a particular way and also estimate the number of people who will be employed and benefit from each project.
4. Students can select from the following list of possible items to spend: (Please tell students that these are in no way based on actual Depression-era or present day dollar figures):
  - A small park (one third of square mile)– \$250,000
  - A medium sized park (two-thirds of a square mile)- \$500,000
  - A large park (one square mile) – \$ 750,000
  - 1 Park shelter - \$25,000

- 1 Stone Bridge for a park - \$50,000
  - 1 Waterfall for a park - \$75,000
  - 1 Park statue - \$25,000
  - A small arts and crafts project (e.g. doll collection) - \$25,000
  - A medium size arts and crafts project (e.g. toy project) - \$50,000
  - A large size art project (e.g. orchestra) – \$100,000
  - A small public works (e.g. a recreation center) building - \$250,000
  - A medium size public works (e.g. a school) building - \$500,000
  - A large public works (e.g. water plant) building - \$750,000
  - A small museum exhibit - \$10,000
  - A medium size museum exhibit - \$25,000
  - A large public museum exhibit - \$50,000
  - A public greenhouse for a botanical garden - \$100,000
  - A small housing project (50 units) - \$250,000
  - A medium size housing project (100 units) - \$500,000
  - A large housing project (150 units) - \$750,000
  - A public swimming pool - \$50,000
  - A public golf course - \$150,000
5. Student should keep track of the money they spend and make sure it does not exceed \$1,000,000.
6. These projects are just a start. The students may create their own projects and should then consult with the teacher on what the cost of the project should be.
7. Students should present their plan to the rest of the class and explain their justification for the items they included in their plan to improve Milwaukee. The following discussion questions might serve as an effective way to wrap up the activity:
- Was it better to improve the city with smaller, medium size or large projects? Why?
  - What were / would have been the advantages and disadvantages of including small projects in your plan?
  - What were / would have been the advantages and disadvantages of including medium size projects in your plan?
  - What were / would have been the advantages and disadvantages of including large projects in your plan?
  - How does your plan compare to the actual projects that were completed in Milwaukee as a result of the New Deal? (use information from the video for discussion here)
  - What does Milwaukee need most for improvement today? Why?

Follow-up Learning Activity:

- The teacher might want to have students research the actual cost of the projects during the New Deal completed in Milwaukee. Students could also compare their ideas with the money being currently spent on any similar projects by the city of Milwaukee or Milwaukee County today. Budget information for the city of Milwaukee can be accessed on the city website <http://www.ci.mil.wi.us> and budget information for Milwaukee County can be found on the county's website <http://www.co.milwaukee.wi.us>

## WORDS OF WISDOM

1. In the Video Chapter 15, *The Exploding Metropolis*, Frank Ziedler (Mayor of Milwaukee, 1948) was quoted as saying:

*“We participate in local government...in order that by our participation there may emerge nobler beings with enlarged concepts of liberty, truth, justice, co-operation, peace and righteousness.”*

2. Discuss the following questions:
  - What was the underlying theme of Ziedler's quote?
  - How do you think Milwaukeeans reacted to Ziedler's words of wisdom?
  - What were Ziedler's motives/intentions in delivering such words to his citizens?
  - Do you believe Ziedler, a politician, was sincere and truly believed in these words? Explain.
  - Do you think Ziedler's words were an effective tool in motivating Milwaukeeans to embrace change in their city? Explain.