





Lesson 2: How to Create a City

- Objectives** Students should be able to understand the origin and the reasons for local government; explain the relationship between state and local government; describe the basic organization of city government; and examine the powers of local government.
- Materials** Facts on Florida Cities
Local Government Vocabulary
List of what makes a city a good place to live
Activity 2-1, Part 1: Exploring the City Charter
Activity 2-1, Part 2: Exploring the City Charter – Where Can You Find It?
- Vocabulary**
- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| annexation | incorporated area |
| charter | municipality |
| incorporate | unincorporated area |
- Strategies**
-  Make a list of what makes a city a good place to live. Ask if those are also good reasons for creating a city. Add any new reasons that students suggest. Ask who could provide for the items on the list if city government did not exist. Remind students of the reason most citizens choose to form a city: in order to get the kind and level of services they want.
 -  Tell students that citizens cannot just declare on their own that an area is incorporated. The state legislature of Florida has made rules and has set up procedures for incorporation. Write on the board the five requirements for becoming a city that are listed on the Facts on Florida Cities pages. Discuss each one, asking students if they think these are reasonable requirements. Using the Facts on Florida Cities pages, explain how the incorporation process proceeds through the legislature once a charter is written.
 -  To introduce city charters, explain that a charter sets forth the rules for operating a city. [To view a city charter, go to <http://www.municode.com>, click on “online library” then “Florida.” From there you can pick from a number a cities.] If you have already studied Florida state government and the state constitution, you can compare the constitution to a charter. If your school has a student government organization or school clubs, compare a charter to their constitution, bylaws, or rules for operating. They probably share many of the same characteristics such as elections, choosing an executive head, a legislative body to approve rules, and a list of powers that the organization has.
 -  Distribute Activity 2-1, “Exploring the City Charter (Part 1),” and go over it discussing briefly the organization of the city charter and what it covers. Distribute “Where Can You Find It? (Part 2)” and allow students to use the list in Part 1 to complete it. Discuss the answers in class.

Activity 2-1, Part 1: Exploring the City Charter

The city charter is the law that governs and controls the municipality. Each city adopts ordinances (laws) to establish services and programs. The specific details of each service are not established in a charter, but are spelled out in the ordinance. Generally, a charter has these six parts:

1. Incorporation, boundaries and powers

This section contains the official name of the city, a description of city limits (boundaries) and a list of areas where the city has the power to act, such as:

animal control	water treatment plants	police and fire protection
building regulations	sewers and drainage	parks and recreation
taxation	utilities	public transportation
garbage fees	cable television	solid waste
traffic control	planning and zoning	

2. Structure and type of city government

This part of the charter creates the city council, sets its size and the length of council member terms, specifies procedures for filling vacancies, establishes the frequency of meetings, and gives procedures for passing ordinances. It also details the form of government the city will have, generally one of these four forms: council-strong mayor, council-weak mayor, commission, council-manager.

3. Administrative organization and function

This section names the general city departments that may be created, such as public works, police, fire, library, parks and recreation, and public utilities. It also describes the appointment procedures for, and any duties of, officials such as the city attorney and city clerk. These are broadly written and can be further detailed in ordinances.

4. City election procedures and regulations

In this section, the duties and procedures for a city election are listed.

5. City financial powers

This part of the charter lists the power of taxation and procedures for tax collection; and it specifies fees that can be charged, collection procedures and requirements for accounting and budgeting.

6. General provisions

This section contains the provisions for continuing ordinances in effect if the charter is rewritten, and the effective date of the charter.

Activity 2-1, Part 2: Exploring the City Charter – Where Can You Find It?

Using the description of a charter in Part 1, write the number in the blank of the part of the charter in which you would find the power for a city to do what is described in each statement.

- _____ 1. The city of Lincoln has a dog pound to house stray animals that are picked up.
- _____ 2. Property taxes will be due on the first of November each year.
- _____ 3. The city council has five members.
- _____ 4. The city of Lincoln was incorporated on April 28, 1950.
- _____ 5. City elections are held on the same date as the state's general election.
- _____ 6. The city attorney for the city of Lincoln is appointed by the mayor and approved by the council.
- _____ 7. Council members are elected to serve four-year terms.
- _____ 8. The city of Lincoln collects and disposes of garbage once a week.
- _____ 9. The city can charge residents a fee for garbage collection.
- _____ 10. The city government has eight departments.
- _____ 11. The city of Lincoln uses county voting equipment for its elections.
- _____ 12. The city is looking into providing cable television for its residents.
- _____ 13. The city clerk is responsible for keeping the minutes of council meetings and posting them on the city Web site.
- _____ 14. In order to pass an ordinance, it must be read aloud at a council meeting and then voted on at the next regular meeting of the council after a public hearing is held.
- _____ 15. When the charter was rewritten several years ago, the council continued in effect all the ordinances that had been previously passed.
- _____ 16. The Suwannee River makes the southern boundary of the city of Lincoln.
- _____ 17. The finance department uses the accounting procedures recommended by the state Department of Banking and Finance.
- _____ 18. The city manager prepares the agenda for council meetings.