

PLACES WITHOUT NAMES¹

Time: 30 minutes, can be stretched to 2 sessions (if concentrating on writing)

Age: 5th grade and up

WHAT IS IT?

Students write a description of their community without proper nouns.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This exercise gets students to start thinking about themselves and their relation to their community in new ways.

When is this useful?

This is a great exercise to do before groups have formed, but it can also be a good break exercise to help the team focus on what their community is like and how they want to make it better.

MATERIALS: None

CORE CONCEPTS: Public, diversity, self-interests

SKILLS: Being imaginative and creative, sharing stories

ACTIVITIES / STEPS:

- A. Students will discuss the things that make their community, or where they live unique (brainstorm on board). You may want to divide class if students come from many different communities.
- B. You may need to do a short lesson on “proper nouns.” Mad Libs are a great way to teach this.
- C. Try to pick on item on brainstorm work with class to describe without using proper nouns
- D. Students write (1-2 pages) a description of their community. The goal is not to objectively describe their community, but capture what is important to them.
- E. Students read and discuss their descriptions.
- F. Optional—editing, peer editing, etc.

EVALUATION:

1. What was the hardest thing to describe without proper nouns?
2. How did you think of their community differently by writing their descriptions?
3. How do you think of community differently by hearing other’s descriptions?

¹ Developed by John Gwinn at Phillips Community Television.