

Urbanology Digital Game - Future City Creation – Teacher Instructions

(<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/urbanology-online>)

Introduction:

Urbanology is a quick and easy survey game from the BMW Guggenheim Lab that allows students to create a future city based on the balancing of eight categories related to urban living: innovation, transportation, health, affordability, wealth, lifestyle, sustainability, and livability.



Overview:

Urbanology asks player(s) a series of ten yes/no questions regarding different urban issues. Their answer alters two or more of the eight categories in a positive or negative manner, and they see a breakdown on how all previous players have answered. Once all ten questions have been answered, the game calculates which present day city their hypothetical city most represents, and the players get to see how they have balanced the competing categories.

Activity:

This activity is scalable depending on computer availability and student needs. The game can be completed as a class, in small groups, or as individuals. The most important part is the discussion that will be generated by the 10 questions and the changes each question causes in the eight categories:

- Innovation – the quality of your city’s education and pro-business infrastructure
- Transportation – the quality of your city’s transport infrastructure, public transit, traffic flow, and airports
- Health – the general health and wellbeing of people in your city
- Affordability – the cost to the individual for living in your city
- Wealth – the city’s wealth, including tax revenue and the number of active businesses
- Lifestyle – arts, sports, culture, leisure activities, and tourism
- Sustainability – a measure of how green your city is
- Livability – access to public parks, security, individual comfort

The conclusion of the activities can also be altered depending on the unit it is being integrated into. Options include municipal government, urban geography, social justice, and NGOs. The Guggenheim Lab also accepts submissions for new survey questions, so this could be used as a conclusion activity for the class; again, in small groups or as individuals.

Whole Class Activity

Teacher projects game using digital projector/smartboard, class answers questions together. This is a good starter activity, introducing students to issues that face urban communities and the realities of trade-offs required between competing interests. It can also be used as a teaching moment for municipal politics.

Minds On	Activity	Conclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the eight categories to your class, briefly describing each one • Have each student choose what they think is the most important factor for a city, and the least important; then share with their elbow partner (for more in depth, have them rank all eight categories) • Popcorn some ideas and thoughts, discuss how life involves tradeoffs/compromise. Here the teacher can guide the lesson for the chosen learning goals (urban issues, voting and democracy, etc) • Explain game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each question, have one student read it to the class, discuss the question • Get student(s) to speak for yes and no sides, teacher's choice on how • Remind students to think about question in terms of their most and least important factors • Class votes on each question. This can be done either openly or with heads down (can lead to a separate discussion about voting, how it changes when it's in the open) • After each question, Urbanology shows the breakdown of how players have answered that particular question. This can be used as another discussion point or bypassed for now • Once the game is complete, the class will learn which city is most similar to their hypothetical, and the values of the eight categories (click on 'More Info' button). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a class discussion on the results. Did student's most and least important categories match the outcomes? What are some problems with the city you created? What are some limitations to this game? • Each student should complete an exit card (exemplar attached), to check for comprehension • Subsequent lessons could lead to more discussion about voting and voting right, the power of local government or deeper discussions about the eight categories

Small Group Activity

Students complete game in groups of three (optimal size to avoid vote ties). It is run similarly to the whole class activity, except that students should have a greater opportunity to voice their opinions in a safer atmosphere (less anxious speaking in front of 2 peers rather than 25). After each group has completed the activity, they can give a short presentation (1-2 minutes) about the city they created, touching on the same points as the first activity (tradeoffs, negotiations, voting).

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Individual Student Activity

This is a great activity to get students thinking about issues facing their communities. The questions in Urbanology can sometimes be a direct reflection of certain cities, but can also be used as jumping off points for deeper discussion specific to particular neighborhoods. Students will play the game themselves, then group depending on: a) city result or b) impactful question categories.

Minds On	Activity	Next Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the eight categories to your class, briefly describing each one • Have each student rank the eight categories from most important to least important, and make a jot note or two about why • Pair students and have them compare lists, ask them to explain to each other why they chose the way they did • Popcorn some ideas and thoughts, discuss how life involves tradeoffs/compromise. Here the teacher can guide the lesson for the chosen learning goals (urban issues, voting and democracy, etc) • Explain the game to the students and get them to go to the webpage on their individual computers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the students play the game (twice if there is time, to get exposure to a greater number of questions) • During play, students should make a note of questions they felt particularly strongly about • At the end of the game, each student should record their eight scores and the city they created in their notebook; then get back with their original partner and share. Did their answers match up to their most important/least important? Do they like the city they created? • Share observations/conclusions as a class, which questions impacted people the most? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use this activity a jumping off point, once the class discussion has finished, get the students to group themselves according to the question that they found best/most important and the category that it fit into (this should hopefully create 8 groups) • This groups can now be used to have students apply these questions/categories to their own community or neighborhood, leading to activities around local organizations or issues, and how the students can affect change as individuals

Exit Card Exemplar

What was your least important category? Why?

What was your most important category? Why?

Did the city the class/your group/you created reflect your objectives?

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