

Albuquerque Model City Council Curriculum

Model City Council: Lesson 1

Lesson Topics: Introduction to city government and City Council districts

Aim: To gain a basic understanding of Albuquerque city government; to identify and begin an exploration of your own City Council district.

Skills to be Addressed:

- Gathering information from a website

Objectives:

Students will:

- Have some basic knowledge of the role of government and the City Council.
- Know how to find their council district; know in which district their school is located.
- Learn how to gather information about the city from its website.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Timeframe: One 60 minute period.

Materials:

Computers with access to Internet, including one that can be displayed on a screen.

Scavenger Hunt: Albuquerque City Government at a Glance: cabq.gov

Procedure:

I. Basic Introduction to Albuquerque city government:

Explain:

The Albuquerque City Council is the lawmaking (legislative) body of the city of Albuquerque. It is made up of nine members from nine districts across the city. They are elected to four-year terms in elections staggered every two years. The council is an equal partner with the mayor in governing the city. Councilors propose bills and pass laws to help govern the city.

The mayor is the executive leader of the city, just as the president is the chief executive of the United States. The mayor is charged with enforcing city law. One of the mayor's greatest responsibilities is drafting the budget.

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The City Council checks the power of the mayor. The mayor must work with the council to get what he wants; he can't simply pass the budget or a law by himself. This prevents one person or one branch of government from having too much control over Albuquerque.

The council represents the city's diverse communities. Council districts comprise relatively large geographical areas of the city. This allows communities that didn't necessarily vote for the mayor to be represented, and it gives a voice to the needs of local residents. The council must find a way to balance the city's many different interests. Council members want to pass legislation that serves the citizens of their districts, but they also must look out for the whole city.

II. Find your district and councilor.

Go to cabq.gov. Under "Departments" or "A to Z" find the [City Council page](#). Click on [View information about the City Council](#). On the Council page, click on [Find your councilor](#).

Using the table below, type in your high school's address in the "Search by Address" to find the number of your district and the name of your councilor. (The district number is also provided below, but it's more fun to find it yourself).

Explain that students may live in a different district than the school's district. They can enter in their own address to find out their district and city councilor.

Notice how the larger the population within the district, the smaller the geographical size of the district. This is to ensure that approximately the same number of people reside in each district.

Ask: Why would the City of Albuquerque want to have the same number of people in each district?

High School	Address	City Council
Albuquerque High	800 Odelia Rd. NE 87102	District 2
Atrisco Heritage*	10800 Dennis Chavez Blvd SW 87121	District 3*
Cibola	1510 Elison Dr. NW 87114	District 5
Del Norte	5323 Montgomery Blvd. NE 87110	District 4
Eldorado	11300 Montgomery Blvd. NE 87111	District 8
Highland	4700 Coal Ave. SE 87108	District 6
La Cueva	7801 Wilshire Ave. 87122	District 4
Manzano	12200 Lomas Blvd. NE 87112	District 9
Rio Grande*	2300 Arenal SW 87105	District 3*
Sandia	7801 Candelaria NE 87110	District 7
Valley	1505 Candelaria NW 87107	District 2
Volcano Vista	8100 Rainbow Rd. NW 87114	District 5
West Mesa	6701 Fortuna Rd. NW 87121	District 1

* Atrisco Heritage and Rio Grande HS lie outside the city limits. They've been "assigned" to District 3 for this curriculum.

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Click on your district on the map to go to your councilor's web page that has information about your district. Briefly explore the projects, legislation, services, etc. on this page. Make notes in a group KWL chart (Know, Want to Know, Learned) that you can return to after students have explored and photographed their own district and/or after a visit from your city councilor or council staffer.

If you plan to invite a councilor or council staff person to your classroom, you may want to schedule it now. The telephone number for the council office is 768-3100.

In the next several days, students will find out more about their district by exploring it themselves. They'll take pictures and create a slide show about the district. They'll look at the district from the point of view of a city councilor or council staffer, evaluating what's good, what's bad, and what can be improved.

III. Virtually explore the city of Albuquerque.

Find out what services the city provides and how the city government operates through its website, cabq.gov.

Students use "Scavenger Hunt: Albuquerque City Government at a Glance" to find out more about the city. Students can hunt for the answers in groups or as individuals. Working alone, a student might take over an hour to complete this.

Answers are found on "Scavenger Hunt – answers."

Go over the answers as a class. The scavenger hunt can lead to discussions about city services, the city budget, and the city council.

- Questions 1 and 2 refer to the city's all-purpose 311 phone number and app for answering questions about the city.
- Questions 3 through 16 deal with city services that might interest teenagers.
- Question 17 addresses voter registration.
- Questions 19 through 20 deal with the budget.
- Questions 22 through 25 deal with City Council meetings.

IV. Possible Homework:

- Finish the Scavenger Hunt.
- Learn more about your district from its councilor's web page.
- Find out in which district your home is.
- Download the ABQ311 app.

V. Optional Assignment

Using the A-Z directory of links on cabq.gov, students create a display, slide show, alphabet book for younger children, or some other presentation about Albuquerque featuring items beginning with each letter of the alphabet. (There's no "Q" – so maybe something quirky for Q?)