



# MAKING PLANS

☆☆ Grades 7-8

## Skills and Objectives:

- Students will use real-life problem-solving skills to choose a site for a new school.

### Suggested Groupings:

Small groups, individuals

### Getting Started:

**1.** Ask students how they think census information is used. Explain that federal, tribal, state, and local governments, and businesses use census information on age, gender, language, housing, employment, income, and transportation to tailor services to a community's needs. This information is an integral part of urban planning decisions. Census data are often organized by census tracts (see "Chalkboard Definitions" box).

- Tell students they will do a site-planning exercise by using census-style data and other factors to pick a new school site. Ask: **What factors would you consider in selecting a site for a new school?**

**2.** You may wish to do the following as a warm-up activity:

- Write these categories on the chalkboard:
  1. Children aged 6-12
  2. Adults aged 65+
  3. Households without cars

- Ask students to name the category or categories that would most affect plans for the following:

- A. A new bus route [2, 3]
- B. A new middle school/jr. high school [1]
- C. A new community center [1, 2, 3]

How might a person from each of the age categories feel about each plan? For example: How would adults 65 and older feel about a new school being built near them?

- 3.** Discuss with students how information about other characteristics (such as gender, language, employment) can help local govern-

### Chalkboard Definitions

**census tracts:** small, relatively permanent subdivisions of counties that generally have 2,500 to 8,000 residents. Tract boundaries usually remain the same from census to census, allowing people to compare data from several censuses.

**statistics:** a collection of numerical data.

ments serve their constituents. If necessary, give an example, such as using census information on languages spoken in the home as a guideline for hiring bilingual workers at social service agencies.

### Using Activity Worksheets:

- Distribute copies of the Lesson 4 Activity Worksheets (pages 13 and 14) to the class and introduce students to the lesson.
- Invite students to come up with their own examples of how census information might be used. Students could look on the U.S. Census Bureau Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) or in the library for additional

categories of census data.

### Wrapping Up:

- Have groups compare the sites they chose for a new school. Most groups probably chose Site B based on what is nearby (convenient transportation, residential housing, a large school-age population) and what is not nearby (industrial areas, a highway, other existing schools).

- You might wish to stage a mock Town Meeting to discuss students' site selections. At this meeting, add a cost consideration to the selection process. Propose to students that it will cost twice as much to build a school on Site B, as it will to build on Site A or C. Building a school on Site B would mean raising taxes. Ask students to rethink their site selection with this in mind. **Would their decision remain the same? Why or why not?**

### Extension Activity:

Have groups brainstorm for other planning decisions that could be made from the data in this lesson, for example: a new playground or children's hospital.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

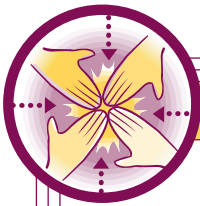
# Making Plans

One way that census data are gathered and organized is by **census tracts**. Census tracts are small areas within counties that generally have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents, averaging 4,000 per tract. Local governments can use tract **statistics** to make decisions, such as which areas could use a new bus route, or which neighborhoods need more playgrounds.

What if you were a local government official? How would you use census-style data to make plans? Give it a try. A local school district has to decide where to build a new middle school/junior high school. The planning chart below helps you analyze each site. Use the School Planning Map and the Census Table on page 14 to fill in the chart below and choose the best site for the new school. For each factor on the chart, rank the sites from 1 (best) to 3 (worst). Explain your reasoning for the ranks you choose. Then add up the rankings for each site to see which one comes out with the lowest total. That's your site!

## Planning Chart

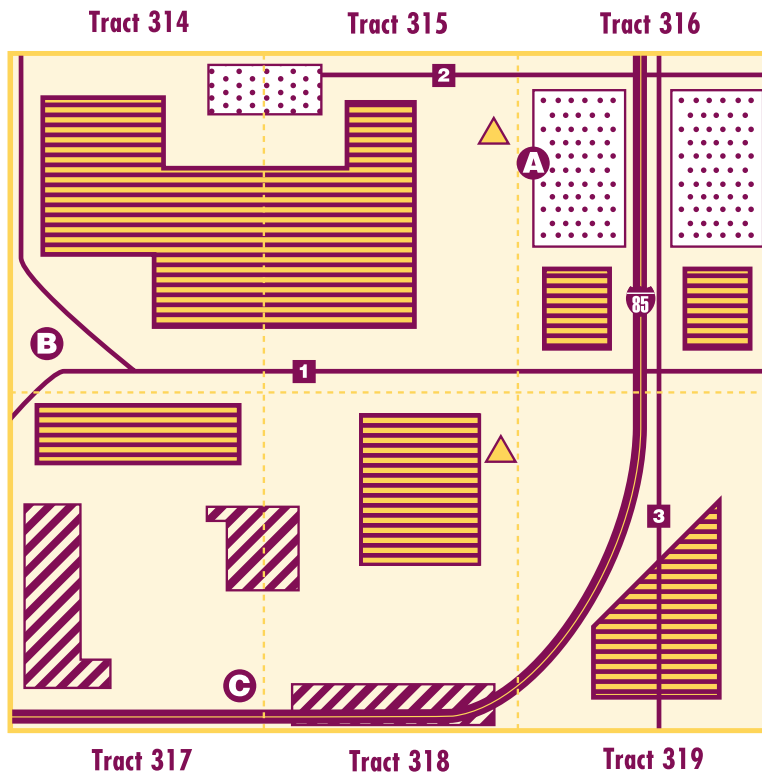
FACTORS TO CONSIDER	SITE A	SITE B	SITE C	REASONING
<b>School-Age Populations</b> Schools should be located near areas where lots of kids live. Which sites are near tracts with large school-age populations?				
<b>Existing Schools</b> Should schools be close together, or spread out among areas with lots of children?				
<b>Industrial Areas</b> Factories can cause noise and air pollution. How might this affect a school?				
<b>Transportation</b> How will kids get to school? Are there roads leading to the site, or will the community have to build new ones? Is it dangerous to put a school near a large highway?				
<b>Totals</b>	_____	_____	_____	



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Making Plans (continued)

## School Planning Map



## Census Table

TRACT	CHILDREN ACES 6-12
314	1673
315	2170
316	863
317	1397
318	1169
319	942

MAP KEY	
	Existing Middle School/Junior HS
	Possible New School Sites
	Industrial
	Commercial
	Residential
	Interstate Highway
	County Road

● Which site did you choose? Explain why you picked this site.

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