

## SOUTH CAROLINA CAREER GUIDANCE EFFECTIVE EXERCISES

TITLE: MINIMUM WAGE

SUBJECT: Guidance Activity

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9-12

SC Career Guidance Standard/Competency

- Learning to Work: Standard 4. Students will demonstrate a positive attitude toward work and the ability to work together.
  - Competency 4.10. Acquire employability (SCANS) skills necessary to obtain and maintain jobs.
- Learning to Work: Standard 5. Students will understand how community awareness relates to work.
  - Competency 5.1. Identify how economic and societal needs influence the nature and structure of work.

National Career Development Guidelines Goal/Indicator

- Career Management: GOAL CM4. Master academic, occupational, and general employability skills in order to obtain, create, maintain, and/or advance your employment.
  - Indicator CM4.K3. Demonstrate attainment of general employability skills and personal qualities needed to be successful in school and employment (e.g., critical thinking skills, problem solving, resource information, and technology management, interpersonal skills, honesty, and dependability).
- Career Management: GOAL CM5. Integrate changing employment trends, societal needs, and economic conditions into your career plans.
  - Indicator CM5.K1. Identify societal needs that affect your career plans.
  - Indicator CM5.K2. Identify economic conditions that affect your career plans.

### Lesson Objectives

1. Students will understand the concept of *minimum wage*.
2. Students will gather information, through a public opinion poll, about the pros and cons of raising the minimum wage and analyze the data they collect.
3. Students will understand the potential influence of public opinion polls on political decisions that can impact economic conditions and employment trends.

### Assessment

1. Students will conduct a public opinion poll with at least 10 interviewees on the topic of the pros and cons of raising the minimum wage, gather information, and analyze it.
2. Students will describe how public opinion polls potentially influence political decisions that can impact on economic conditions and employment trends.
3. Students will recognize that information management is an important employability skill.

### Preparation

- Prior Learning—Optional: Introduction to employability skills (SCANS)
- Handouts/Worksheets—*Public Opinion Poll* worksheet
- Resources—N/A
- Time Required—90 minutes plus time outside of class to conduct the public opinion poll and analyze the results

## Procedures

### Part One

- Engage students in a discussion of issues related to the question of whether or not to increase the minimum wage. Points of discussion include:
  - What does the term *minimum wage* mean?
  - What is the current minimum wage?
  - What does the term *cost of living* mean?
  - What are some of the reasons for the controversy when someone suggests raising the minimum wage?
    - Who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage?
    - Who would suffer losses from an increase in the minimum wage?
    - What does raising the minimum wage mean for big business? For smaller businesses?
      - What actions might businesses take in response to an increase in the minimum wage?
      - How does increasing/not increasing the minimum wage affect you?
- Explain to students that public opinion polls are often taken by various groups that want to understand how the public is feeling about a particular issue or topic. Brainstorm some examples of public opinion polls the students are aware of. Has any student been polled?
- Tell students they will conduct a public opinion poll regarding the issue of whether or not to increase the minimum wage.
- Divide the class into three groups and assign each group a target population to poll (i.e., ages 14-21, ages 22-45, ages 45+). Each student will poll 10 people from his/her target group.
- Give students a copy of the *Public Opinion Poll* survey sheet and review it with them.
- Give students time to conduct the poll and compile their analysis of the responses in a short summary and chart.

### Part Two

- After students have completed the poll and its analysis, have students share their results with the class. Points of discussion include:
  - Compare and contrast the results for each group.
  - What do the statistics tell you about the attitudes and opinions of each age group?
    - What factors would influence the opinions of people in the different age groups?
    - How would politicians use this information when forming their platforms for election?
      - How might political decisions about the minimum wage impact the economy and employment trends?
- Continue the discussion by exploring the kinds of skills the students had to use to

complete the assignment. Remind students that information management skills (i.e., acquiring and evaluating information, organizing and maintaining information, interpreting and communicating information, and using computers to process information) are important employability skills used in many occupations.

- Optional: Have students brainstorm some occupations that are involved in developing, conducting, and analyzing surveys such as public opinion polls.

- Optional: Partner with the mathematics and social studies teachers to further expand this topic and integrate it into the academic curriculum.

# Public Opinion Poll

## Minimum Wage

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Group Surveyed: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Part 1—Interview 10 people in the age group you were assigned. Ask each of them the following questions and write their responses below.

Question #1—What do you think the minimum wage is right now?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #2—What do you think the cost of living is at this time?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #3—In your opinion, what are some of the reasons for the controversy when increasing the minimum wage is suggested?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #4—Who do you think would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #5—Who do you think would suffer losses from an increase in the minimum wage?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #6—What effect do you think increasing the minimum wage would have on big business? On small businesses?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Question #7— In your opinion, what actions might businesses take in response to an increase in the minimum wage?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Questions #8—How would an increase in the minimum wage affect you?

Responses

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

