



LEARNING CHALLENGES FROM:

# BRIDGE to the BARRENS<sup>®</sup>

547 East Main Street, Riverhead NY, 11901  
Phone: (631)369-3300 Email: info@pinebarrens.org

TOWN MEETING

## TOWN MEETING



**Grade Level:**  
5-12

**Activity Level:**  
Interactive

**Seasonality:**  
Fall, Winter, Spring,  
Summer

**Time:**  
1 to 1 1/2 hours

**Group Size:**  
1 or 2 classes

### OVERVIEW

Students will participate in a mock town meeting to decide if a portion of the Pine Barrens should be developed.

### OBJECTIVE

Students will:

1. participate in a debate
2. understand the influence public opinion can play in government decision making

### MATERIALS

Watch or stopwatch  
Paper  
Pencils  
Area maps

### PROCEDURE

Divide the students into small groups. Each group will represent and role play the opinions of an interest group. For example, students may represent the views of a conservation organization, a "Mom and Pop" business, a large corporation, etc. (There should be relatively equal numbers of interest groups potentially for and against the proposal.) One group will be the town council.



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Two adults are needed to assume the roles of the moderator and the developer.

The moderator will begin the town meeting by introducing the developer. The developer now has a few minutes to present his/her plans to develop a Pine Barrens area into a shopping mall, amusement park, etc. It is suggested that the developer use area maps and diagrams to make his/her point.

Once the developer has presented, the groups have 10 - 15 minutes to choose a spokesperson, and to think of any questions and/or points they would like to present to the developer.

Next, the moderator will allow each group's spokesperson a predetermined amount of time (three to five minutes) to ask the developer their questions and make their case to the town council why they are for or against the project.

Once all groups have had a turn, the town council will have five minutes to talk among themselves and vote for or against the proposal.

## **FOLLOW-UP and EVALUATION**

Review the Town Meeting Procedure. Discuss how the students feel it went and how a similar event might play out in real life.

Discuss some of the legislative history involved with preserving the Pine Barrens.