



Credit: SeventyFour/Shutterstock

## Activity 6: Who is Responsible?

This activity opens with a general poll about responsibility for sociopolitical issues. Afterward, students discuss who should be responsible (i.e., governments, industries, communities, individuals) for the threats facing the Southern Residents. The activity helps students understand that a single entity alone cannot solve these issues—it will take all of us working together to save them. The activity wraps up with a discussion around the limitations and benefits to different types of action (i.e., individual, collective, governmental).

### Key Student Questions

- How do different groups (i.e., governments, industries, communities, individuals) have different responsibilities for sociopolitical issues?
- How can individual actions be limiting? How can they be beneficial?
- How can systemic actions be limiting? How can they be beneficial?

## Key National Standards

### CCSS

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B](#)

### C3

- [D2.Civ.1.6-8.](#)
- [D4.6.6-8.](#)
- [D4.7.6-8.](#)

## Keywords

**Collective action**—People working together to achieve a common objective.

**Individual action**—Actions taken by one individual person, acting based on their personal decisions.

**Responsibility**—Something that you should do because it is morally right, legally required, etc.

**Sociopolitical**—Involving both social and political factors.

**Systemic change**—Change that leads to sustainable and large-scale impacts.

## Supporting Vocabulary

**Single-action bias**—Individuals responding to a threat are likely to rely on one action, even when it provides only incremental protection or risk reduction and may not be the most effective option.

**Social**—Relating to people or society in general.

**Political**—Relating to politics or government.

## Introduction

1. Give students a few minutes to free write about their position on the following statement: **Who is responsible for solving problems in our society?**
2. Project the [Who is Responsible?](#) display copy.
3. Ask for a volunteer to explain the purpose of a Venn diagram. *A Venn diagram is an illustration that uses circles to compare and contrast information and/or illustrate relationships among two or more topics. Overlapping circles represent commonalities.*



## Required Materials

- **Display copy:**  
[Who is Responsible?](#)  
Pg 68
- **Handout:**  
[Who is Responsible?](#)  
Pg 70-71  
1 per student
- **Driving Question**  
Poster from Activity 1

4. Point out a few overlapping areas and provide a few examples that are relevant to your students.
5. Give students a minute to think about where their personal opinion falls on the Venn diagram in response to the question: Who is responsible for solving problems in our society?
6. Ask for a few students with different perspectives to explain their thinking.
7. Ask the class to think about who is responsible for protecting and recovering the Southern Residents.
8. Have each student mark their initials on the Venn diagram to indicate their opinion.
9. Ask for a few students with different perspectives to explain their thinking. Do not erase these marks until the end of the lesson.
7. Project the [Who is Responsible?](#) Venn Diagram.
8. Have each student mark their initials on the Venn diagram to indicate who should be responsible for solving their selected issue.
9. Ask for a few students to explain their thinking and how their views may have changed throughout the activity.
10. Lead a class discussion, Think-Pair-Share, or free write using the following prompts:
  - How can individual action be beneficial? How can it be limiting?
  - How can governmental action be beneficial? How can it be limiting?
11. Share the following excerpt with the class:

In the face of a challenge as massive as saving the Southern Residents, it can be daunting to try to figure out what you as an individual should do to help. Should you focus your efforts on getting your family to buy greener cleaning supplies? Or ride public transit? Or volunteer for habitat restoration events? While individual efforts are important, changes in government policies and industry practices are necessary to enact the large-scale changes that the Southern Residents need.

In our next lesson, we will have the opportunity to balance the needs of Southern Residents, community members, and the economy by acting as different members from the Orca Task Force. This Task Force includes government officials, members of various industries, and different community groups. Together, these groups will advance the recovery and conservation of Southern Residents by leveraging their expertise and resources.

## Activity

1. Return the [Threats and Solutions](#) handouts from Activity 4. If you did not complete this activity, ask students to brainstorm a list of the threats to Southern Residents and possible solutions to these threats. Use the [Threats and Solutions](#) answer key to round out the student-generated list.
2. Give each student a copy of the [Who is Responsible?](#) handout.
3. Have each student or small group select a different threat from the [Threats and Solutions](#) handout. Instruct students to write their selection at the top of their [Who is Responsible?](#) handout.
4. Give the class about 20 minutes to complete the worksheet.
5. Call the class back together.
6. Ask for a few students to share their thoughts.

## Driving Question

Review the list of questions from Activity 1. Cross off any questions that were answered in today's activity. Add additional questions that may have arisen.

## Discussion Questions

1. How can individual action lead to large-scale (i.e. systemic) impacts?
2. How can consumers influence companies to make their practices more sustainable?
3. How does the conservation and recovery of Southern Residents rely on individual participation?
4. How does the conservation and recovery of Southern Residents rely on collective participation?
5. How are power and responsibility connected?

## Share Your Students' Work

Help inspire Southern Resident conservation around the globe by sharing your experience with this unit. Tag photos, student work, and student quotes.

- Facebook: [@NOAAFisheriesWestCoast](#)
- Twitter: [@NOAAFish\\_WCRO](#)
- Instagram: [@NOAAFisheries](#)



## Additional Resources



### Articles

[Focusing on how individuals can stop climate change is very convenient for corporations](#)

This article highlights the importance of systemic change in preventing the catastrophic effects of climate change.

[Individual Action, Collective Change: Six Ways Individuals Can Create Environmental Change](#)

This article describes collective actions and their role in creating environmental change.

[Individual vs. Collective Action](#)

This module explains the difference between individual action and collective action.

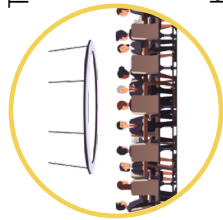
### Video

[How to understand power](#)

In this TED-Ed series, Eric Liu describes the six sources of power and explains how understanding them is key to being an effective citizen.

# Who is Responsible?

## GOVERNMENT

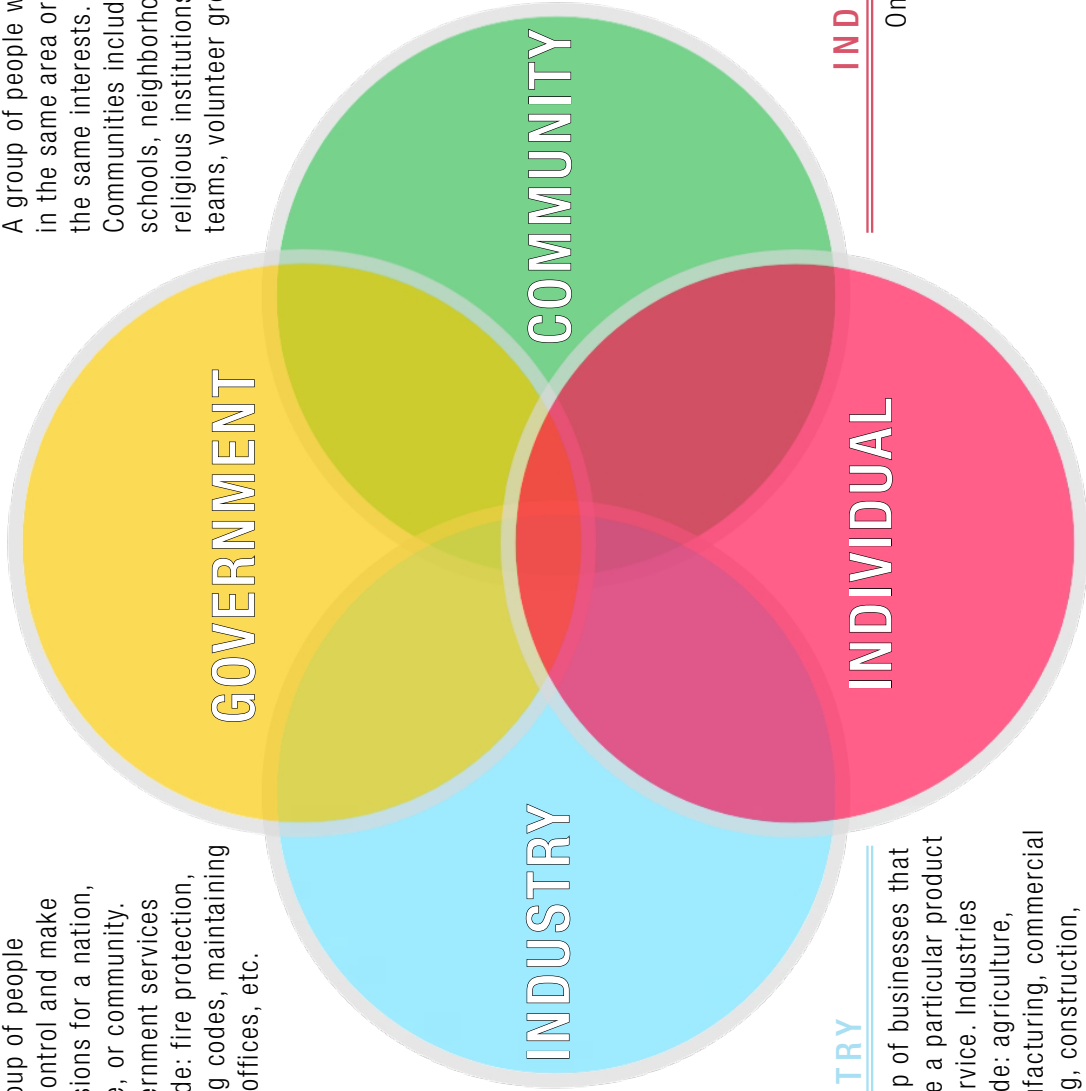


The group of people who control and make decisions for a nation, state, or community. Government services include: fire protection, building codes, maintaining roads, establishing post offices, etc.

## COMMUNITY



A group of people who live in the same area or have the same interests. Communities include: schools, neighborhoods, religious institutions, sports teams, volunteer groups, etc.

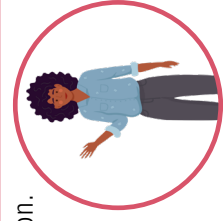


## INDUSTRY



A group of businesses that provide a particular product or service. Industries include: agriculture, manufacturing, commercial fishing, construction, restaurants, etc.

## INDIVIDUAL

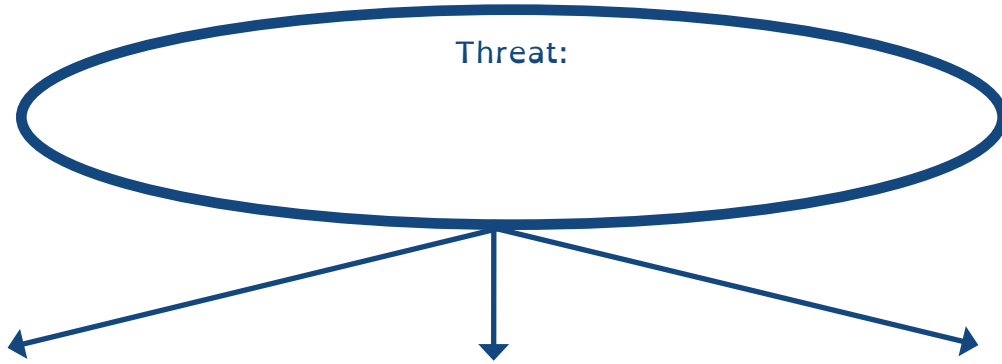


One person.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Who is Responsible?



Cause 1

Cause 2

Cause 3

1. How are individuals, communities, industries, and/or governments connected to this issue?

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2. How can these groups be part of the solution?

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3. Which group(s) might have the greatest effect on the problem? How so?

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4. Which group(s) might be most equipped to solve the problem? How so?

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5. What advantages does this group/these groups have over the others?

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**Reflect**

1. Given that there are so many other people whose actions are affecting the Southern Residents, what difference do your own individual actions make?

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2. What responsibilities do you have to society?

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3. What responsibilities do industries have to society?

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4. What responsibilities do governments have to society?

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