

Chapter Five: Activities High School



Chapter Five: Vocabulary

Revenue—income or money received or collected

Ad valorem—in proportion to value

Central appraisal district—the entity responsible for appraising property in the district for each taxing unit that imposes ad valorem taxes on property

Appropriate—to set apart for or assign to a particular purpose or use

Budget—budget is a plan of action for a fiscal year

Budget policy—attitude toward spending used in planning a budget

Indebtedness—the condition of owing money to somebody

Effective tax rate—the rate necessary to generate the same amount of tax revenue as provided in the previous year's budget

Appropriations—sum of money that has been set aside from a budget for a specific purpose

Disbursement—pay out of money, especially from a fund

Chapter Five: Notes and Review

1. The main sources of county revenue are _____, _____, and _____.
2. Ad valorem tax is levied on _____ and _____.
3. You pay your vehicle registration fee at the _____ office.
4. A county can collect fines and fees from _____, _____, _____ or _____.
5. The purpose of a county budget is to _____.
6. The budget officer's role is to _____.
7. _____ means to set apart for or assign to a particular purpose or use.
8. A county treasurer is responsible for
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
9. The county auditor is an elected /appointed official.

Chapter Five: Notes and Review Key

1. The main sources of county revenue are **property taxes, fines, and fees**.
2. Ad valorem tax is levied on **buildings and property**.
3. You pay your vehicle registration fee at the **county tax assessor-collector's** office.
4. A county can collect fines and fees from **probation fees, court fees, traffic fees or birth certificates and marriage license fees**.
5. The purpose of a county budget is to **make a plan for the next fiscal year**.
6. The budget officer's role is to **develop an estimate of revenue for the next year based on revenue from the past year. The budget officer collects requests from officials and departments. Using the revenue estimates and departmental requests, the budget officer compiles the initial budget proposal**.
7. **Appropriate** means to set apart for or assign to a particular purpose or use.
8. A county treasurer is responsible for
 - a. **disbursement of funds in the county treasury**
 - b. **paying money from the treasury in line with the directions of the commissioners court**
 - c. **making the payment of all county checks to the payees**
9. The county auditor is an **appointed** official.

Chapter Five: Activity One

Supplies: chalkboard, newsprint, markers, computer

Directions: Use a chalkboard or newsprint to list fines and fees, as well as the offices that collect them. For example, who has received a traffic ticket? Where was it paid? Where do you go to purchase license plates?

Organize into small groups. Each group will contact a county office to discover the specific dollar amounts of the fees and fines it collects. Refer to the offices listed in Chapter Two. Then ask the students to estimate how much revenue a county receives from fines and fees. Remember the vehicle registration fees from the county tax assessor-collector's office.

Contact your county treasurer, county budget office or chamber of commerce to find out how much your county received from sales tax revenue in the last year. Ask the students if this is a significant number.

Contact the local tax appraisal district to get the total of property taxes in the past year.

Finally, use the totals for various types of revenue to construct a pie chart or bar graph comparing types of county revenue.

Chapter Five: Activity Two

Supplies: computer with Internet access, copy of your county's budget

Directions: Connect to the following Web sites, where students can read about county offices and explore the career possibilities of each office. Using the county budget, research the salaries of people in these offices.

vgyoung.tamu.edu/pubs/42.pdf

vgyoung.tamu.edu/pubs/14.pdf

vgyoung.tamu.edu/pubs/44.pdf

Chapter Five: Activity Three

Supplies: 9 markers, newsprint, \$200 in play money to represent county revenue, copy of *County Positions and Offices* cards, copies of *County Departmental or Precinct Duties*, copies of *County Office Expenses*, colored masking tape

Before activity:

1. Using the tape, mark areas on the floor to represent county offices. Set up a county sheriff's department, county Extension service, county tax assessor-collector's department, county clerk's department, county treasurer's department and four county commissioners precincts. The commissioners court should be located in the center of the other departments and precincts.
2. Prepare a current year county budget, based on \$200 as the total amount of revenue that was available. Assign a certain number of chips to each department and precinct.
3. Cut apart the *County Positions and Offices* cards and have students draw for positions and departments. A county commissioner will serve as department head for each of the four precincts. Students should gather in the spaces marked for their departments/precincts.
4. Give each department and precinct the description of its duties and expense items and a copy of the current budget.
5. Explain that it is time for the county to set its budget for the coming year. Last year the county had \$200 in revenue, and that same amount was budgeted for departments and precincts. The job of each department and precinct is to submit to the commissioners court the amount it thinks it will need for the coming year.

Game:

The department heads and commissioners are to meet with their department or precinct personnel and determine how much money will be needed to cover expenses during the coming year. They should review the list of expenditures and place a value on each operating expense. Then they will total their expenses to arrive at the amounts they will request of the total county budget. Each department must be able to defend its costs and its need for more money. They can use the newsprint to write down reasons why their department should get more or less money this year. The commissioners can take money away from a department if they feel there is a greater need in another department.

Let each group work for 15 minutes. Then the county judge will call a budget hearing and each department/precinct will be asked to present its needs to the court. It is best to put a time limit on these presentations.

The court may appoint the judge, auditor or budget officer (based on class size) to record on the newsprint the total money requested, by department, and the total available (\$200). If revenues exceed departmental requests, the commissioners court can adjust the budget by adding more to some departments/precincts and then vote to approve the budget. The commissioners court has to use all \$200. All five members of the commissioners court should participate in the vote.

If departmental requests exceed revenue, the commissioners court must decide whether to cut the amounts requested by departments/precincts or to increase revenue by raising the tax rate (and possibly anger the citizens). They may call for further information from the departments/precincts.

After final discussions and adoption of the new budget, the judge, auditor or budget officer will write up the budget for coming year.

County Positions and Offices

County Judge	Commissioner Precinct 1	Precinct 1 Constable	Precinct 1 Justice of the Peace
Commissioner Precinct 2	Precinct 2 Constable	Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace	Commissioner Precinct 3
Precinct 3 Constable	Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace	Commissioner Precinct 4	Precinct 4 Constable
Precinct 4 Justice of the Peace	County Sheriff	Sheriff's Department	Sheriff's Department
County Clerk	County Clerk's Office	County Clerk's Office	County Tax Assessor-Collector
Tax Assessor-Collector's Office	Tax Assessor-Collector's Office	County Treasurer	Treasurer's Office
Treasurer's Office	County Extension Agent-Agriculture	County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences	County Extension Agent-4-H and Youth Development

County Departmental or Precinct Duties

<p>County Sheriff Patrol county to protect public Maintain jail Train new deputies Educate public on crime prevention</p>	<p>County Extension Service Educate public in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth, and community development Develop leaders in the above areas Provide life skills training</p>	<p>County Tax Assessor-Collector Assess and collect property taxes Issue certificates of title and licenses for motor vehicles Conduct voter registration and compile election poll lists Collect fees on businesses under state mandates</p>
<p>County Clerk Record legal instruments such as property deeds Serve as clerk of commissioners court and county judicial court Issue and record birth, marriage and death certificates Conduct elections for county, state and federal offices</p>	<p>County Treasurer Maintain county employee's payroll and benefits Pay county bills Maintain county revenue funds (includes investing funds to generate additional revenue) Keep track of county budget as it is used</p>	<p>County Commissioner Precinct 1 Repair existing roads and bridges in county Build new roads and bridges in county</p>
<p>County Commissioner Precinct 2 Repair existing roads and bridges in county Build new roads and bridges in county</p>	<p>County Commissioner Precinct 3 Repair existing roads and bridges in county Build new roads and bridges in county</p>	<p>County Commissioner Precinct 4 Repair existing roads and bridges in county Build new roads and bridges in county</p>

County Office Expenses

<p>County Sheriff Sheriff's salary Deputies' salaries Dispatcher Patrol cars and radios Car maintenance expenses Boarding of prisoners (food, clothing, etc.) Travel Supplies Computers Postage Phones Uniforms Miscellaneous</p>	<p>County Extension Service County agents' salaries Travel expenses Secretaries' salaries Training Supplies Phone Postage Miscellaneous Office machines and supplies</p>
<p>County Tax Assessor-Collector Tax assessor-collector's salary Deputies' salaries Supplies (vehicle registrations, titles, voter certificates, etc.) Phones Postage Training Miscellaneous</p>	<p>County Clerk County clerk's salary Deputies' salaries Supplies Training Postage Phone Miscellaneous</p>
<p>County Treasurer Treasurer's salary Clerks' salaries Supplies Phones Postage Miscellaneous</p>	<p>County Tax Assessor-Collector Tax-Assessor's salary Assessors' salaries (four) Supplies Phone Postage Miscellaneous</p>
<p>County Commissioner Precinct 1 Secretary's salary Equipment operators' wages (four per precinct) Mechanic's wages Equipment fuel and oil Foreman's or Engineer's wages Road equipment and repairs Equipment repair parts (filters, tires, hoses, etc.) Road material (asphalt, gravel, etc.) Miscellaneous</p>	<p>County Commissioner Precinct 2 Secretary's salary Equipment operators' wages (four per precinct) Mechanic's wages Equipment fuel and oil Foreman's or Engineer's wages Road equipment and repairs Equipment repair parts (filters, tires, hoses, etc.) Road material (asphalt, gravel, etc.) Miscellaneous</p>
<p>County Commissioner Precinct 3 Secretary's salary Equipment operators' wages (four per precinct) Mechanic's wages Equipment fuel and oil Foreman's or Engineer's wages Road equipment and repairs Equipment repair parts (filters, tires, hoses, etc.) Road material (asphalt, gravel, etc.) Miscellaneous</p>	<p>County Commissioner Precinct 4 Secretary's salary Equipment operators' wages (four per precinct) Mechanic's wages Equipment fuel and oil Foreman's or Engineer's wages Road equipment and repairs Equipment repair parts (filters, tires, hoses, etc.) Road material (asphalt, gravel, etc.) Miscellaneous</p>