

Lesson Plan: Sanctuary Cities

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Featured resources

[KQED's The Lowdown: What Are Sanctuary Cities?](#)

[Washington Post: What Are Sanctuary Cities and How Trump's Executive Order May Affect Them?](#)



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Opening quick write prompt:

Do you think city governments should always cooperate with state or federal governments? Why or why not? Cite at least one example to support your answer.

A quick write allows students to write down their thoughts before discussing the opening question in order to increase participation and make the discussion more accessible to English Language Learners.

Objective

- Students will analyze sanctuary city policies nationwide and efforts by the Trump administration to limit or end these policies.
- Students will evaluate and write arguments in support or in opposition to sanctuary city policies.

Essential Question and Lesson Context

What is a sanctuary city? Why do people support or oppose sanctuary cities?

President Trump signed an executive order last month aimed at bolstering local immigration enforcement and punishing cities and counties -- often referred to as "sanctuary cities" -- that don't fully comply with federal immigration authorities. In response, San Francisco filed a suit in federal court arguing that Trump's executive order exceeds his constitutional power. This lesson will examine the history of sanctuary cities and ask students to look at arguments on both sides of the issue in light of recent developments.

Key vocabulary

Pre-teach key vocabulary before students do the activity, especially if you have English Language Learners. After going over the simple definition, consider providing a visual aid or having students draw one. More ideas for how to pre-teach vocabulary can be found [here](#).

Word	Simple definition
Affirm (v.)	To say something is true or show a strong belief in something
Derisive (adj.)	Expressing scorn or contempt
Detain (v.)	To officially keep someone from leaving a place, to hold
Nonbinding (adj.)	Having no legal force
Sanctuary (n.)	A safe place, a place of refuge and protection

Direct instruction and guided practice

- Discuss the quick write prompt to address the concept of local-federal cooperation. While students may bring up the issue of sanctuary cities as an example, encourage them to explore all sides of the question before getting more specific.
- Go over the definition of a sanctuary city. Show students the interactive map on [The Lowdown post](#), of sanctuary cities in California. You may also want to show this national map from [the Washington Post](#).
- **Transition to independent practice:** Ask students, after looking at the map, if they think sanctuary cities have anything in common? Why do some places decide to become sanctuary cities?

Independent practice

- Individually or in small groups, students read [The Lowdown post](#). While they read, they should complete a T-chart on paper or an online document listing the arguments in support and in opposition to sanctuary cities.
- After finishing the post, students individually write a response to express their own opinion supporting or opposing sanctuary cities.
 - **Model:** In my opinion, sanctuary cities should/should not be able to choose whether to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. I think this because _____ (Students should cite at least two examples from the text to support their opinion.)

Assessment/Reflection

- As a class or in their small groups, students share/discuss their opinions about sanctuary cities. Be sure students cite specific examples from the text to support their position along with relevant personal examples or evidence from other sources. (*To learn more about discussing controversial topics in the classroom, check out [this post](#) from the New York Times Learning Network.*)
- Optional: Wrap up by asking students the quick-write question again. (Do you think city governments should always cooperate with state and federal authorities? Why or why not?)

[Circle chats](#), small-group discussions and [think-pair-share](#) provide a safer space for students to practice speaking and listening, and also boost participation during whole-class discussions.

Extension/Homework

Write/speak locally: Students turn their pro/con arguments into a letter, short speech or presentation, then research ways to make their voice heard in their community. (Example: Speaking during the public comment section of a city council meeting, posting in an online forum, etc.) For a list of how to contact local officials in your area, check out [KQED Learning's Local Election Toolkit](#).

First 100 Days: Art in the Age of Trump: KQED Arts is accepting submission from artists of all ages for this series. Art of all types (visual, music, dance, poetry) are welcome, and ideally submissions should focus on a specific issue, rather than the appearance or personality of a politician. Find the online submission form [here](#).

Common Core standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.