



## PLAN BASIC: BARKING DOG SCENARIO



*How would you respond responsibly to a neighborhood problem?*

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**Rationale:** Students will engage in a social problem-solving strategy, PLAN, to learn how to approach everyday neighborhood challenges by partaking in meaningful dialogue. They will think about the perspectives of all parties involved and develop solutions to address the matter.

**Lesson Overview:** The PLAN framework stands for **P**roblem Description, **L**ist of Options, **A**ction Plan, and **N**otice Successes. Through this framework, the students will be able to analyze a problem, generate their own solutions, create an implementation plan to solve the problem, and reflect on the problem-solving process. The framework can be applied to a variety of different issues such as current events, historical events, and even a school-based problem.

<b>Overview of PLAN: A Problem Solving Strategy</b>	
1) creating a <b>Problem</b> description that defines the issue being discussed	<b>(P)</b>
2) brainstorming a <b>List</b> of goals, options and pros, cons to solve the problem	<b>(L)</b>
3) developing and acting on an <b>Action Plan</b> to solve the problem	<b>(A)</b>
4) <b>Noticing</b> successes as part of ongoing evaluation and refinement	<b>(N)</b>

Please note that the idea of the PLAN is to help students learn and use a specific problem-solving strategy. If you or other teachers in your grade already are using such a strategy, perhaps as part of an SEL or character education or bully/violence prevention or related program, you may want to use that as a framework instead of PLAN, for the sake of consistency for students.

**Objective(s):** To introduce students to the steps of social decision making and problem-solving and provide students with an overall strategy to use the steps together and in sequence to address a community problem.

**Standards:**

**SEL Focal Skill:** Responsible Decision Making

- Develop, implement, and model effective problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions.

**Timing:** One forty-five-minute period

**Lesson Materials:**

- Student Notebook

- Pencil/pen
- Copies of the scenario below
- Chart Paper
- PLAN acronym anchor chart

**Part I: Identify the Problem (5-8 minutes)**

1. Hand out/project the scenario below to your students. Have them gather in groups of 3-4 and read through the scenario.
2. Provide time for them to discuss the scenario and determine what the problem is. Feel free to provide the following chart to guide their discussion ([Problem Description Graphic Organizer](#)). For purposes of time, they should not fill it in, just to use it as a guide to shape their discussion. Have them clarify what the problem is by having them write out what the actual problem is in their notebooks.
3. Conduct a quick share out, having students from the groups report out their thinking. Either see if you can arrive at a consensus and proceed on that basis, or allow the subgroups to proceed based on their perspectives on what the problem is.

Scenario: What would you do?

This is a story of a young couple who move into their first house after years of saving and looking for just the right home. By the time they move, their family has already grown to include a new baby. Now, they find that their next-door neighbor has a dog that stays in the yard at night. The dog barks at every sound he hears, he barks at people and cars going down the street, he barks at the leaves as they rustle on the trees. He barks all night long! The barking wakes the couple's baby who then cries all night long keeping the couple awake all night long. After weeks of this, the couple is frazzled and exhausted.

**Part II: List Options to Solve the Problem (12 minutes)**

1. Have students **List Options** for solutions for how they might have solved the problem.
  - Identify a SMART GOAL (Specific, Measurable, Action Plan, Realistic, and Timely - *link provided at the end of the lesson*) if relevant, from the perspective of different groups involved in the situation.
  - List as many short and long term solutions as you can think of.

- Pick 2-3 solutions and think about the pros and cons of these options. *See graphic organizer.* Have the groups discuss the best options and have them select the most viable option to help the couple responsibly address the problem.

**Example options students might generate:** report the problem to the police, file a complaint with the municipal office, go speak to the dog owners, send the dog to obedience school,, call a meeting with neighbors to brainstorm some ideas, write a letter to the dog owners

**Options students might pick:** File a formal complaint with the municipal office

**Pros:** gain the attention of the dog owners, the municipal office will respond and may offer suggestions, work the proper channels of municipal ordinances

**Cons:** a municipal response may foster ill will with dog owners, there may not be anything the municipal authorities can do.

### **Part III: Develop an Action Plan**

1. Have students create their own **Action Plan** they might have used for addressing this problem. In the PLAN Comprehensive lesson you will compare the action plan the students develop to the historic or current event solution.
  - Create action steps to outline how you would solve the problem (action steps for different groups if relevant).
  - What obstacles might you encounter?
  - What information do you need to know?
  - What resources might you need to access and research ?

#### **Sample Action Plan:**

1. Gather information on noise ordinances and dog owners' rights.
  2. Call the municipal office and express the impact of a barking dog on your quality of life.
  3. Write a letter expressing concern and clarifying what the ordinances permit.
  4. Reassess the barking dog situation and follow up with a phone call with the municipal contact in one and a half weeks.
3. Facilitate a whole-class discussion so students can process and report out what they discovered about solving the problem and have them reflect on their solution development.

Note in PLAN Comprehensive, this section will be different to accommodate for the academic content. For the purposes of introducing the students to the process

- a. What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem?
- b. Why were some options hard to choose between?
- c. Why were some options not viable?
- d. Would your solution be effective why or why not?

If students noticed that the action plan is likely not successful or didn't speak to the specific stakeholders impacted by the plan, consider having the students revise their plan. They can suggest how they would have approached the neighborhood issue differently the next time around.

#### **Part IV: Notice Successes & Reflect on the PLAN Process (20 minutes)**

1. Notice successes! Debrief in small groups or as a whole class by addressing the following questions.
  - What went well?
  - What did not go well?
  - How would your plan have worked differently?
  - What can be learned from this experience that is relevant to present issues?

**Formative Assessment:** Have students discuss a response to one or more of the following questions:

- How does brainstorming as many solutions as possible influence your action plan, and what does this say about thinking 'outside of the box'?
- How does anticipating obstacles influence your action plan and likely outcomes?
- In this everyday scenario, how do the rights of one group intersect with the rights of others?
- How might this issue of addressing this neighborhood problems be a relevant skill to develop?
- How did looking at the issue from many perspectives enrich the development of your action plan?