

Open Forum 1

Web Site Transcript

Chapter 8

A = Susan

B = Adam

C = Helen

A: Adam! Come and sit with us!

B: Hey, Susan. Hi, Helen. What's going on?

C: Not much. We were talking about the local elections today. You know, the elections for the city council. I just came back from the voting station, and Susan here is still deciding who to vote for. Did you vote yet, Adam?

B: I didn't know there were any elections today. Anyway, I don't think I'm going to vote. I don't usually vote in local elections. I don't know what I'm voting for! I don't know the people or the issues. I mean, who cares about the city council? I don't even know what they do.

C: Well, I have to disagree with you, Adam. I think it's important to vote in every election.

B: Yeah, well, I vote in some elections. I voted for the president, but this is just a local election. It's not important. What do you think, Susan? Do you think local elections really matter?

A: Well, I agree with you to a point, Adam. A local election is less important than the general election—we're not choosing a president—but it's the idea of voting that's important to me. You know women couldn't vote at all a century ago. I feel I have to vote. I have to use my right.

C: Exactly, Susan. But I think you're both wrong about local elections—they are important. The city council has a lot of control over this city. They make decisions that can affect all of us. For example, do you know that one of the candidates wants to cancel the Independence Day parade this year?

A: Really? That's terrible.

B: I thought you hated parades.

A: Yeah, I do. But it's a tradition. You can't just cancel the Independence Day parade!

B: I don't see why not. Nobody goes to it anyway.

C: That's exactly the problem, Adam—and you too, Susan. People in your generation just aren't involved in the community. That's why you're not interested in voting in the local elections. When I was a girl, I grew up in a small town, and we

had a stronger community. Everyone went to the Independence Day parade, and it was so much fun! When I was a teenager, I volunteered at the parade—I collected money for local charities.

B: The world's a bigger place now, Helen. Look at the modern world—the Internet, international airline travel, 24-hour news channels. The local community isn't just your small town anymore. Who cares about a dumb Independence Day Parade when there are wars and famines? I vote in the general election because the president has power in the international scene. The city council can't do anything important. They're only interested in silly parades.

C: I'm not saying the international scene isn't important, Adam. Come on—you know I'm majoring in international relations. But I believe that the global community starts with local communities. And you have to vote to have a voice in your local community. I know the world has changed since I was a kid, but what worries me is that you young people aren't trying to improve the community. You can't just say that local politics aren't important any more.

B: And you think that voting today will make the world a better place, Helen?

C: Yes, I do.

A: Well, I do too. I'm going to vote, and I won't vote for canceling the parade. Adam, want to come with me to the voting station?

B: Nope. I still say it's a waste of time, and besides, I have class now.

C: What class are you going to?

B: Social studies...