

Harvard CIVICS Curriculum Book



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

Harvard CIVICS Program
Fall 2017



Program Description

About The Harvard CIVICS Program

Harvard CIVICS is a joint IOP and PBHA public service initiative run by students, for students. We believe every young person in American schools can be a valid participant in our democracy and deserves an excellent civics education. We place motivated undergraduate volunteers in over 25 5th and 8th grade classrooms in 8 Boston area schools to teach civics, American history, and government. Our aim is to provide the students we serve with the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to take active roles in their communities and beyond. CIVICS teachers work in pairs and visit the same classroom every week for eight weeks each semester.

Our Curriculum and Teaching Philosophy

The Harvard CIVICS curriculum offers a comprehensive and straightforward introduction to American governance, civil rights, and political participation. The curriculum is built to both engage and challenge elementary and middle school students without assuming prior knowledge of American history. It enables participants to rationalize their everyday perceptions of current events, entertainment, and American culture within the context of citizenship that is both non-partisan and encouraging of diversity. Our hope is that after completing a year of CIVICS instruction, our participants will not only have a stronger understanding of their role in American history and recognize that they are citizens in a democratic society entitled to certain liberties, but also develop a clear conception of how they may exercise those liberties to make a difference in society.

Recognizing that the best way to keep students engaged in critical thinking is through participation, we view teaching as a dialogue, not a lecture. All of our lessons are interactive and involve skits, crafts, videos, audio recordings, games, and visual aids. We also incorporate traditional teaching methods in our lessons as well, including brief talks with key ideas and notes written on the blackboard. Given that the curriculum requires no prior knowledge of American history or government, it enables participants to weave everyday experiences into a more concrete understanding of how those experiences reflect different aspects of citizenship.

Fall 2017 Program Leadership

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Curriculum Themes

The CIVICS Fall Curriculum is guided by five core themes. Each unit will incorporate one or more of these themes. After this semester of CIVICS instruction, students should leave the classroom with not only a good grasp of the basics of the American government, but also a lasting understanding of how to apply these themes in their everyday lives as good citizens:

❖ **Free Expression:**

CIVICS teachers should establish a respectful, judgement-free zone in which sharing and speaking out are welcome and encouraged. It is important that students feel free—and motivated—to share their thoughts, questions, opinions, and criticisms of government and current events. Expressing one’s thoughts is a cornerstone of democracy, and it starts in the classroom.

❖ **Choice:**

Students should be the drivers of the classroom. CIVICS teachers should adapt their teaching style to how their students best respond. Choice is a significant part of democracy, and students should leave the CIVICS program knowing that they can actively shape their government by expressing their choices.

❖ **Fairness:**

Throughout the curriculum, students will think about rules and regulations. CIVICS teachers should encourage students to judge the fairness of the processes in our government. Fairness is a fundamental component of democracy, and it is important for students to identify fair and unfair processes and structures.

❖ **Questioning:**

The CIVICS classroom should be an active one in which students analyze the government—not just learn facts. CIVICS teachers should constantly ask our students to question the institutions—both formal and informal—that form the basis of our government. Students should be encouraged to question the status quo and think about how the government could work better.

❖ **Action:**

CIVICS is about good citizenship, and good citizenship requires participation and civic action. Perhaps the most important lesson that CIVICS teachers can convey is that everyone can be actively involved in their government. Most lessons will incorporate a civics action component that students can engage with directly.

The Fall 2017 CIVICS curriculum was modified from the Fall 2016 CIVICS curriculum. Revisions by Damian Richardson and Jack Jue, with editing support from Andrew Lobell.

❖ Unit 1 ❖
Setting the Class Tone and Introducing
Ideas of Governance



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Unit 1 Goals

1. **Establish that the CIVICS environment is one of free expression:**
Students need to leave the first class understanding that CIVICS is a place for sharing and speaking out. The process of students and teachers introducing themselves is extremely important, as it will establish a strong foundation of trust and mutual respect for future lessons.
2. **Set a tone for engagement, critical thinking, and empowerment:**
Our volunteers lead discussions rather than dominate them. During this time, students should feel empowered to raise their voices. We should teach our participants courage so that they can extend their voices beyond the classroom.
3. **Encourage students to consider the purpose of government and how they would define it:**
Participants should leave the first class thinking about what they would do if they had the responsibility of creating a government or working with one.
4. **Discover what students are familiar with and what would be interesting for them to learn.**
This is the class where you will learn how much your students know and do not know, and most importantly, what sort of issues interest or affect them most.
5. **Begin considering the makeup of the classroom and set a precedent for how you plan to interact with the students:**
Remember that this is not only your introduction to the students and the classroom but also their introduction to you. You need to take note of the specific way in which the students in the classroom learn. Are there any special or ESL needs that you might need to attend to? **Note your discoveries in the teaching log at the end of the lesson.**

Learning Goals

As you begin to make your lesson plans in the future, it is important for you to take into account different forms of learning and how you can implement these in your class.

- ❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** This type of learning emphasizes reinforcement of material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged. It may be a good idea to emphasize this type of learning when students are having difficulty conceptualizing lecture-dense information.
- ❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** This type of learning visually reinforces the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes. It may be useful to use these activities to supplement lectures and to reinforce the needed vocabulary for the week.

❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** It is critical to incorporate reading comprehension and document analysis skills in your teaching. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Throughout the rest of the curriculum, you will be expected to have these guidelines in mind as you craft your lesson plans.

Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What is governance? What is good governance? Why do we need a government, and how come the same sort of government does not work in different situations?

How did the American government come to exist, and why is it different from other forms of government?

What is a democracy? What are the better parts of democracy, and what are its flaws?

How do the citizens in a democracy play a role in establishing and maintaining a democracy?

- Citizen: Individuals in a society that can make valid constitutional or right claims.
- Constitution: Written document setting forth the fundamental structure of government and rule-making.
- Contract: An agreement made between two or more people. A social contract is an agreement between citizens about the rules that society should have.
- Democracy: Governance by the people or by representatives of the people
- Vote: A formal indication of choice normally expressed through a ballot in governments.

If you feel that the students might benefit from reinforcement, you might consider reviewing the terms at the beginning of class.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Activity: Introductions and Rule-setting (20 min)

Purpose:

To establish classroom norms and get to know your students. This is your chance to show that the CIVICS classroom is a friendly, open space, which encourages students to speak their minds.

Materials:

A ball, stuffed animal, or other object that can be easily thrown. The object should be appropriate to the grade-level of the students. Whiteboard or blackboard and erasable markers or chalk, markers, and paper.

Method:

- ❖ Begin by telling the class a little bit about you - perhaps your name, age, where you are from, and your favorite movie or dream job. Once you are done, gently pass the ball on to another student, who will do the same and then pass it on. Finish the activity once everyone has gone.
- ❖ Have students make nametags on paper tents. **Be sure that the classroom teacher holds on to them for future classes.**
- ❖ Engage students in a discussion about rules for the semester. Ask students what they think are important rules for the CIVICS classroom (both for students and teachers). Write their suggestions on the board and encourage discussion. If students have not mentioned it yet, be sure to include respect for others' opinions on the list. Make it clear that these are the rules everyone must follow for the next eight weeks. Have the students vote on the final rule list, and once the majority of students vote yes, call it the "**Classroom Constitution.**" This gives them a stake in obeying them as they are rules that you came up with together. **It may be helpful to talk to the classroom teacher ahead of time to make sure they are comfortable with this.**
- ❖ Once the classroom constitution has been passed, explain to students that what they just engaged in is CIVICS. They had a direct hand in crafting the governing structure of their classroom and specifying the duties of being good citizens in the classroom. Communicate that this process can be replicated outside of the classroom too.
- ❖ Be sure to also explain that the students just modeled **democracy**, a process in which discussion and voting between participating citizens determines the rules of the entire society. This is the kind of government in which we live, which means that we as citizens have the ability to contribute to the creation of society's rules.
- ❖ Conclude by saying that the real **Constitution** is a document describing the fundamental rules of government. This includes not only the organizational structures of government, but

also voting procedure and rights.

Variant Difficulty:

This is an introductory activity, but if you feel that the students are particularly engaged or active, divide them into small groups and have each group write their own set of rules for the CIVICS classroom. Call representatives from each group to share the rules they created. Encourage discussion. As a classroom, add together the rules on which most of the students can agree. Vote on a final rule list, and once a majority of students vote yes, call it the “Classroom Constitution.” Communicate that this process is somewhat similar to how the Founding Fathers crafted the United States Constitution.

II. Beginning of the Year Survey (15 min)

Purpose:

To evaluate current student knowledge of material and to identify the ‘starting point’ of students.

Materials:

Surveys will be provided to all co-teachers.

Method:

- ❖ Communicate this to students as a “get-to-know you” exercise or a survey that is administered to all students. Emphasize that this is not a test, and it will not be graded. If students do not know the answer, encourage them to make their best guess.
- ❖ Pass out surveys and allow students roughly ten to fifteen minutes to complete it. This is a silent activity. Help students quietly who have questions. When students are finished, make sure to collect surveys and return to the CIVICS leadership team (more instruction will follow).

III. Kinesthetic Learning and Discussion of America's Government (10 min)

Purpose:

Use a game and a short discussion to ensure that students leave with a simplified but accurate conception of the Constitutional Convention.

Materials:

Blackboard, visual aid

Method:

- ❖ Tell students to stand up from their desks. Divide the classroom into three spaces. Designate one space "Agree," the second "Unsure," and the third "Disagree." Then, read out the following statement: "Everyone, even kids, should have an equal vote." Once you have divided the class into the several groups, choose one or two students to elaborate on why they voted as they did. If students are not as eager to participate, introduce these other debates as you see fit:
 - We should always do what the majority of people want to do.
 - (Boston/Cambridge) should be able to make all of its own rules.
 - Democracy is a perfect form of government.
 - The President should be able to do whatever he or she wants.
 - Government should treat everybody exactly the same.
 - People should be forced to vote.

- ❖ After the activity is over, have the students take a deep breath and return to their seats. Explain how in the same way that they had trouble agreeing on all of their points, the Founding Fathers of the United States had similar disputes.

- ❖ Using the activity as a backdrop, put the ideas into an American context with a very *brief* lecture about the background of drafting the constitution. Ideally, you should mention:
 - More than 300 years ago, the United States began as a religious and political refuge for English *pilgrims*, who fled religious persecution in England. These pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock aboard the Mayflower in 1620. Over time, settlers from England, Spain, France, and the Netherlands also arrived on the American continent. The English part of this settlement soon developed into 13 colonies—including Massachusetts.
 - As time passed, these colonies grew larger and more self-sufficient. Eventually, these colonies declared their Independence from Britain, whose policy of taxation and denial of representation for American colonists had become unbearable for many Americans. Name-dropping famous people like George Washington, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson may be helpful, but don't delve too deeply into discussion on these figures.
 - After breaking free from Britain, the colonists were left with a new question: How do we govern ourselves now that the British are gone?
 - They came together and, through the Constitutional Convention, developed the *Constitution*, a series of rules that continue to govern America today. It is exactly what the students did in the island simulation. The Constitution ensured that the United States would be a democracy—as opposed to the monarchy in England. In fact, many facets of the Constitution are a direct response to what the early Americans saw as Britain's unfair governing practices.
 - This American experiment was not perfect; many people were left out of this democracy, including women, slaves, and Native Americans.

Variant Difficulty

If you have a class that is more mature, use the history lecture to set the scene first, and then ask your students what kinds of concerns the Founding Fathers might have had once the war ended. When you have a long, running list, jump into a discussion about the Constitution and how it addresses these concerns. Consider showing a documentary clip or using other visual media to put these concepts into perspective, and start a discussion based on what you just showed. Do your students agree with the choices the founding fathers made? Why or why not?

If time permits, it may also be good to entertain a short debate about the strengths and weaknesses of democracy. What are the challenges presented if everyone is entitled to a vote?

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started:

Kinesthetic

* Start with an introductory activity that will break the ice, like a name game. Ensure that you also do something to establish classroom rules that everyone feels obligated to follow. Fun name games include going around the room, having someone say their name and a food that has the same first letter as their name (i.e. Ike likes ice cream), and then having the person after them repeat the names and foods of everyone before them from memory before adding to the chain.

Audio /Visual

*Use music as the backdrop of your history lesson. Especially if you have access to the *Hamilton soundtrack*, you can use songs from the musical to bolster your discussion.

*Use a skit to simulate the Convention. Have different students play the parts of famous dissenters and orators, and be sure to pause after each scene so that the students understand what's going on. Bring props and music to supplement the experience

Reading/Writing

*Have each of the students write a constitution with 3 rules for the classroom. Once you are done, have the students share one of their ideas and begin writing them on the board. Lead a discussion on what problems might arise from so many individuals writing a constitution and how democracy also necessitates compromise.

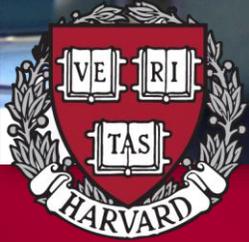
*Create a constitution on your own and have the students read it aloud. Then, lead a discussion on whether they think it is fair that they had no input in writing the rules of the class and how this might relate to democratic systems.

- Here are some simulations from our old curriculum that you may find useful that concern the general role of a government / democracy and their caveats and strengths.
- **Acting Out a Democracy:** Have the students vote about which kind of candy they'd like you to bring in the following week. First, have all the students submit a vote, and count each one equally, with the majority winning. Then, have just one student (the "dictator") choose the type of candy. Then, have only a select group vote. Have a class discussion about which type of voting process was the most fair.
- **Pros and Cons of Majority Rule Democracy:** Divide the students into four groups. Give each group a sheet of paper containing a quotation either supporting or opposing majority rule democracy. Have students discuss the quotation and debate to what extent they agree with the quotation. Bring the class back together and have each group share the key points of their debate.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 2 ❖
Separation of Powers and The Executive
Branch



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Unit 2 Goals

1. **Explain the separation of the government into three branches and the importance of the division of power:**
Participants should learn that the government is divided into Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, and that the next few weeks of class will focus on the differences between each. Entertain a discussion about why the division of powers is necessary.
2. **Explain what the Executive Branch is and its responsibilities:**
The President is the head of the Executive Branch and is responsible for enforcing the law.
3. **Discuss how the President is also the primary driver of US foreign policy:**
The President meets with foreign leaders, negotiate treaties, and serve as Commander in Chief. There are checks on these powers; a vote of Congress is required to declare war, and it takes a supermajority of the Senate to ratify a treaty.
4. **Describe how one of the President's most powerful tools is the power of persuasion:**
An effective President will persuade the public, Congress, and even some political opponents to adopt his/her ideas by giving speeches, traveling the country, and promoting his or her vision. It is this ability that allows him/her to influence the types of legislation that are proposed.
5. **Emphasize that despite the power of the office of the President, the President seldom works alone when making decisions:**
An extensive team of expert advisers helps the President make decisions. The President is the face and the final decision-maker of the Executive Branch, but the job would be impossible without the Cabinet and many other officials.
6. **Provide students with an understanding of the last election cycle.**
Students should have a simple understanding of the method by which Presidents are elected. Without going into extensive detail, teachers should provide an overview of the last election.
7. **Review the notes you made during Lesson 1 and make adjustments accordingly:**
This is your first chance to use the information you have gathered about your classroom to make adjustments to your teaching decisions. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week's teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ Kinesthetic Learning: Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore

the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.

❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.

❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What are the three branches of government? Why is the American government divided into three branches?

What is the Executive Branch, and what is it responsible for? Who can be President? How is the President elected?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving a single person so much power? Do you think there are enough checks on Presidential power? What are the limits of its power?

Who were the candidates for President in 2016 and what ideas did they have for the position?

- **Cabinet:** A group of advisors in the Executive Branch appointed by the President with the Senate's approval; each is the director of an important federal department and advises the President.
- **President:** The head of state, commander in chief, and head of the executive branch. Also known as **POTUS**, President of the United States.
- **Veto:** The presidential act of rejecting passed legislation. Vetoed legislation can still become law with the 2/3 majority counter-veto vote of both the House and the Senate.
- **Vice-President: (advanced)** A VP is elected with the President and assumes office if the President dies.
- **Soft power (advanced):** The President exerts this sort of power by influencing public opinion and legislative action. Sometimes referred to as the "bully pulpit."

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Discussion: Separation of Powers (10 min)

Purpose:

To present a simple metaphor for the separation of powers and provide a rationale for the division of powers among the three branches of government.

Materials:

None.

Method:

- ❖ Begin a discussion about decision-making. You can frame this discussion with something as simple as a family deciding what to have for dinner. Are decisions better when made in a group or when made by a single person? What are the advantages of getting multiple people to agree on a decision? What are the disadvantages?
- ❖ Use school as an example of separation of powers. Teachers are in charge of the everyday learning that happens in the classroom, while the principal and other administrators are in charge of discipline and other administrative tasks. The teachers and administrators make some decisions together and some decisions separately. The principal can usually overrule a decision made by a teacher, but a group of teachers can influence the principal.
- ❖ Explain that in a similar way, the government is divided into 3 branches, each with different powers and responsibilities. The branches make decisions independently of one another but must often work together to accomplish the tasks of government. The federal government is divided into three branches so that one branch does not become too powerful. We will discuss specific checks and balances in the next few lessons.
- ❖ Ask the students, what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the separation of powers?

I. Activity: What Makes a Good President? (15 min)

Purpose:

This warm-up exercise is designed to assess what your students already know with figures they are familiar with.

Materials:

Whiteboard or chalkboard, erasable marker or chalk, pictures

Method:

❖ Print out pictures of 5 pop culture figures that your students would know. These may be sports figures, entertainers, or—perhaps—politicians. Post these in places around the room. Have students stand up from their desks and congregate around the photo of the person they believe, would make the best president.

❖ Once the students have made their individual choices, discuss what qualities of those figures would make them Presidential. What qualities does an effective leader need to have?

❖ Have the students return to their seats. Explain the following concepts of the Presidential office. Stop after each bullet point and provide real-world examples or what-if scenarios to ensure that your students understand before moving on to the next point.

- **Who can be President? Who has been President? What does it mean to be presidential?**
 - This is an important time to address questions of age, race, gender, and more in this discussion. Can a woman be President? What made President Obama significant? Be sure to emphasize that although the office has been occupied by only men so far, the presidency is not limited by race, gender, or sexual orientation.
 - Discuss what it means to act “presidential.” What kind of temperament is necessary for the job?
- **Enforcing the Law**
 - Explain that the president’s primary responsibility is to *enforce the law* (or *execute* the law). If Congress makes a law requiring that schools have more difficult tests, it is up to the president to ensure that those schools *are* having more difficult tests.
 - A good example of this is President Kennedy’s 1963 executive order that federalized the National Guard in order to integrate the University of Alabama. If you wish, show a quick video of the showdown between JFK and the Alabama governor.
- **Presiding, but Never Alone**
 - Given the wide range of tasks the government has to do, one person can’t handle everything. Help students understand that some authority is given to assistants to the President, under his control but often working independently to do what Congress requires. Further, explain that these people often have specialized experience in certain areas that makes them more qualified on issues than the President. The President also appoints 15 cabinet officers who are his/her chief advisors.
- **What else does the President do?**
 - Executing the law is only the beginning of the picture. In addition, the President

drives foreign policy, can veto legislation, is the commander in chief of the military, and can sway opinion to get Congress to act. Play a clip from a “State of the Union Address” to give a visual example.

- Discuss how and why the legislative and executive branches are different. *What would happen if the President could make laws on his/her own? Are there times that it makes more sense to have one leader directing things rather than all 535 members of Congress? Don't forget to ask about the flip side, however. Are there times when it is worse having one person make a decision?*

Variant Difficulty:

If your students are having trouble grasping the powers of the Executive Branch, keep your explanation as simple as possible, ensuring that it revolves around "enforcing the law." Do not mention foreign policy or the veto.

For older and more experienced students, however, it may be worthwhile to discuss how certain especially well-regarded or famous Presidents (Abe Lincoln, FDR, JFK, Ronald Reagan) used their powers to enforce or enact certain laws, or if appropriate, drive foreign policy in specific directions. You may also discuss how presidents can also have some power to legislate through executive orders. It may also be helpful to talk about abuse of Presidential power and corruption (Richard Nixon).

II. All-in-A-day's Work: A Presidential Simulation (15 min)

Purpose:

Allow students to understand the many roles of the President by providing them with scenarios in which Presidential power would be used.

Materials:

Whiteboard, Clipboard, Pen

Method:

❖ Divide the students into groups of 3-4. There should be 7 total groups spread evenly around the room. Each of these groups will represent a role that the President must serve. Each group will represent one facet of the President, so there is no need to have them choose one president among themselves.

❖ One of the co-teachers will serve as the President's Chief of Staff. This person will be in charge of providing each group with details of his/her duties for the day. Standing at the front of the room, ask each group one of the following questions (noting thereafter the associated power of the President).

- Chief of State: Mr./Madame President, could you please address the nation regarding the importance of this 4th of July holiday?
- Chief Executive: Mr./Madame President, what would you think about appointing ___ as head of the FBI?
- Chief Diplomat: Mr./Madame President, what would you like to tell the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom regarding the proposition to be allies in the Middle East?
- Commander-in-Chief: Mr./Madame President, how would you like the U.S Army to respond to the possibility of war ahead? Should we station more troops and begin training or remain put?
- Legislative Leader: Mr./Madame President, could you give a quick statement on the bill in Congress currently that supports human rights in Ethiopia?
- Chief of Party—Mr./Madame President, _____ is running for Congress in California, as the leader of the party, what can you say about his/her ability to be in office?
- Chief Guardian of the Economy, Mr./Madame President, unemployment is up 4% since last fiscal year, what are some ways that we might be able to fix this problem?

❖ Once the seven groups have had a chance to respond, explain that the President performs all seven of these roles daily. He/she must often weigh very different concerns depending on the issue at hand.

Variant Difficulty:

The questions you ask during this discussion are completely at your discretion. You might make the severity of the decision even more “ceremonial” if the class might not be up to the questions of state provided here. If your class is particularly adept at public speaking, you can turn the exercise in to a more formal, moderated debate using a stopwatch or phone timer. If you feel the class is mature enough, increase the severity of the questions you ask—bring in topics like terrorism, police brutality, etc...

III. Current Events (5 min)

Purpose:

Discuss some of the president’s actions in the past months.

Materials:

YouTube clips of recent news stories, if desired

Method:

- ❖ Discuss President Trump’s performance over the past few months. A good way to keep your own bias out of the discussion is to use the comments from prominent politicians (both Democrats and Republicans) that discuss the president’s actions, rather than your own. You

may wish to discuss the president's twitter habits, the state of the economy, the FBI investigation into possible collusion with Russia, Trump's stance on immigration, or Trump's response to national tragedies like the Charlottesville protests or natural disasters.

- ❖ Explain the process of voting for president. Speak from personal experience if you voted last year (should be everyone unless you're a freshman!) Discuss the low percentage of Americans who participated in the election and the importance of your students taking the time to vote when they are old enough.
- ❖ Close by taking questions either about the election or the Presidency in general.

Variant Difficulty:

N/A. This is a quick discussion that you should moderate without searching for specific answers.

Improv Suggestions

Kinesthetic

* Have the students get up from their desks and create a list of qualities that you can read out. Have the students respond by going to separate ends of the room if they agree or disagree with the following statement "A good leader/President must be ____." You can begin with qualitative statements and move on to issues of race, gender...etc to make points about what the restrictions are/are not on who can be President.

*Create a skit to show how the President interacts with his or her cabinet as well as other members of the executive branch by having one of the co-teachers serve as President. Don't forget to freeze after every scene to explain what's going on and to ensure comprehension.

Audio /Visual

* You'll probably want to start out with some kind of warm-up discussion about what makes a good President, and what the President can and can't do. Consider showing clips of famous Presidential speeches, and asking students what they notice.

* To explain the Cabinet, consider asking the students what kind of sidekicks or helpers a good President would need. Consider using a clip from a superhero-style show or other skit to illustrate your point (Batman and Robin for instance), making sure to draw appropriate parallels to make your point

Reading/Writing

* Bring copies of excerpts from famous Presidential speeches or documents (Washington's Farewell Address or the Gettysburg Address) with video if you can find it. Then have a discussion about the sort of qualities displayed by those leaders and why those qualities are Presidential.

*Have students respond to different crises for one of the co-teachers (who will be the President) by creating worksheets for them that have various scenarios that they can respond to in written fashion before having a class discussion.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 3 ❖

The Legislative Branch

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Unit 3 Goals

1. Teach students about the Legislative Branch:

Students should understand that the branch for lawmaking is called the Legislative Branch, and that it consists of the House and the Senate. By the end of the lesson they should be familiar with the differences between these two bodies, the powers of Congress as a whole, and how Senators and Representatives are elected.

2. Explain the process through which laws are made:

By the end of the lesson students should understand how a bill becomes a law.

3. Demonstrate how citizens can get involved with politics:

Make sure students understand their role in the legislative process. How do they fit into the making of a bill? Discuss how they can contact their local representative and make a difference.

5. Review the notes you made during Lesson 2 and make adjustments accordingly:

Continue to tweak your teaching styles using the strategic choices you made last week as a starting point. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week's teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.

❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.

❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these five general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What is the legislative branch? What are its powers and responsibilities, and how is it subdivided? Why does this organizational design matter?

How does a bill become a law? What is the role of the people in the lawmaking process?

What are some of the challenges that come with a legislative body like Congress? What happens when Congress is wrong? What are the checks on Congressional power?

How does Congress affect my life? Who are my legislative representatives and how can I reach them?

- Bill: An idea for a law that a legislature is going to vote on.
- Congress: The body of government that initiates, debates, and votes on legislation; consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- Law: A rule created and enforced by the government.
- Senate (advanced): The upper, smaller (100 members) house of Congress.
- House of Representatives (advanced): The lower (435 members) house of Congress
- Legislation (advanced): Proposed new laws (Bills) that are considered by Congress.
- Legislature (advanced): Any government body that votes on laws.

If you feel that the students might benefit from reinforcement, you might consider reviewing the terms at the beginning of class.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Discussion: Laws and Us (10 min)

Purpose:

Enable students to define the term law for themselves through practical, everyday examples, and warm the classroom up for later activities.

Materials:

Whiteboard or blackboard, erasable markers or chalk.

Method:

❖ Begin a discussion about the similarities and differences between the rules and laws. Be sure to ask the following questions:

- What is the difference between a rule and law?
- What happens if you break a rule (such as a classroom rule), and what happens if you break a law?
- Why do they exist? What sorts of things do they protect?
- Do they seem fair?
- Who do you think made them?
- What happens if we break them?
- How do you define "law?" What makes it different from a rule? You will want to emphasize that laws are Congressionally approved. Laws guide not only the appropriate actions of citizens, but of government officials too.

❖ When you feel that you have initiated enough of a discussion, set up the next part of the discussion by asking if the students believe there should be rules for those who make laws. As part of your role as a co-teacher, you will want to make sure that you moderate discussion in a way that maintains a high level of respect. You can do this by calling on a specific number of students on different sides of a debate or by encouraging participation with treats if you wish (though you will need to check with teachers about dietary restrictions if you elect this).

Variant Difficulty:

If the concepts in the discussion seem too simple for the class, move on to a discussion of specific laws. Call on students to name laws and create a running list; ask more complicated follow-ups to the questions above. For example, if your students say that a law seems unfair, probe them for details. Why is that law unfair? Does it target a specific group of people? What do you think the people who drafted it were thinking?

II. Brief Lecture: How Bills Become Laws (15 min)

Purpose:

Explain how bills become Laws, and introduce the concepts of the House, the Senate, and Congress. **There is a diagram at the end of this lesson that you can use as a visual aid.**

Materials:

Whiteboard or blackboard, erasable markers or chalk, copies of the **diagram included at the end of this guide** to distribute to students, paper, and writing utensils. How you use and introduce the diagram is up to you. You can print copies or give the students blank paper and have them draw their own.

Method:

- ❖ The process of how bills become laws is complicated enough to warrant a lecture-based activity. Before you begin, remind students how our government is divided into three branches: **Executive, Legislative, and Judicial.**
- ❖ Now start introducing the process of creating, debating, and passing a bill by using a visual aid. It may be helpful to use media - Schoolhouse Rock has a great video here at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQIKiag>. Famous speeches for or against Bills may be inspirational as well.
- ❖ Explain that the Legislative Branch creates the laws, and that it is made up of two components, which together form Congress: The House of Representatives and the Senate. If the group is especially struggling with the concept, use metaphors. Discuss the differences in size and responsibilities of the House and the Senate. You can also discuss the types of bills that originate in each house if the class is particularly advanced
- ❖ Go through the diagram with them box by box and explain how the Bill works its way through committees, is voted on, is signed/vetoed by the President, re-voted upon, and then passed. You want to emphasize the fact that the bill has two different versions and ultimately must be signed by the President, who may veto it, unless the veto is overturned. (Explain to students that this is an example of checks and balances.)

Variant Difficulty:

You are the best judge of your class. If they do not comprehend the diagram, streamline it and re-write your own on the board. If the class is having trouble distinguishing between the House and the Senate, just talk about Congress and mention only that it is divided into the House and Senate without detailing these organs too specifically.

If your class is moving quickly and everyone is on board, move into more detail about the history of having an Upper vs. Lower House at the time of the Constitutional Convention, and the

worries of farmers vs. the elite in matters of representation. How deep you go into the history is up to you. If some of the students are having difficulty with the concepts, you should take a few minutes to check for comprehension and clarify the lesson (making sure to include any students who seem to be having difficulties with the material in ways in which you know they will succeed so as to arrive to the answer with their input).

III. Activity and Discussion: Simple Model Congress (15 min)

Purpose:

Simulate the bill-drafting process by creating a bill to resolve an issue relevant to the students. This will allow students to better conceptualize a Bill's passage into law.

Materials:

Pencil and paper for participants.

Method:

- ❖ Pick an issue of relevance to your students' lives; depending on the tone of the class and the length of time, it can be anything from "Should there be CIVICS homework this week?" or "New classroom rules" or "How can we curb gun violence in the city?"
- ❖ Divide the students into two larger groups and one smaller one (of 3 or 4). The different groups should spread out to different parts of the room. With one of the co-teachers, the small group will draft a bill of ideas to resolve the problem you choose. One student should read the bill in front of one of the bigger groups. This will be the Senate and should discuss the bill with one co teacher serving as a moderator. Take an initial vote.
- ❖ Repeat the process with the second large group. This will be the House of Representatives.
- ❖ Once the bill has been discussed, have everyone who is a House representative vote. If it passes, the Bill goes to the President (the other co-teacher).
- ❖ The President can decide to let the Bill pass or veto it. If the President vetoes, the House and Senate revote together and need 2/3 majority to overrule the veto.
- ❖ Be sure to close with a summary of how Bills become laws, and ask them whether or not they thought the process was fair. Consider asking:
 - Did the process go how you imagined it should go? What worked well? What went poorly?
 - Is there anything significantly different between this exercise and real life congress?
 - If you don't like a Bill, who can you write to in protest to ensure that your voice is heard?

Variant Difficulty

Although this simulation seems complicated, toggling the difficulty of the exercise is very straightforward. If your class seems like it's struggling, choose a simple topic that they can relate to - like eating vegetables for dinner or having no homework.

To make the exercise more complex, choose a real-world issue for your students to address. Think about crime and punishment or worker's rights. You can even show your students a news clip from YouTube and pretend that there is an imminent crisis, which needs their attention immediately to set the mood.

IV. Current Events and Contacting Your Congressmen (5 minutes)

Purpose:

Now that the class is almost over, use the last section of class to incorporate civic action and current events into this lesson.

Materials:

Paper, pencils, post-it notes.

Method:

- ❖ Look up who the students' representative(s) is/are. Their senators are Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey. Ask if anyone in the class knows their representatives. Write the Congressmen's contact information on the board. Direct students to copy it down and keep it in a safe place. They should contact their representative when they want to have input on new or existing laws.
- ❖ Explain that if enough constituents contact their representatives, they may change their minds about a key piece of legislation. Expressing your opinion to your representatives is a key part of the lawmaking process.
- ❖ Find an article that showcases a recent action taken by that representative to demonstrate that these public servants are actively involved in the community.
- ❖ Take any final questions and answer them orally. When you are out of time, have students write down their questions on post-it notes and bring them with you so you can answer them next class.

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started:

Kinesthetic

*Find out what your students know about laws by playing some sort of game where they can identify real world laws for points. Another fun game might be to read them a series of rules and laws, and your students have to figure out which ones are which and how to distinguish between the two in their own words. Read out rules or laws and ask students to walk to one side of the room if they think it's a rule and another if they think it's a law.

Audio/ Visual

* Use a metaphor to introduce the students to the idea of separation of powers. One way to do this is to treat the law making process as a decision of what to have for lunch. Have some of the students write “menus” for a lunch that must be created by a lead chef who has to accept the menu offerings, and a nutrition expert that has to verify everything. Finally, note the importance of each step and make the connections between the roles in the activity and branches of government

*If you have an artistic class, let your students draw their own diagrams of a Bill's transition using markers and colored pencils. See if they can conceptualize everything you told them through images and arrows.

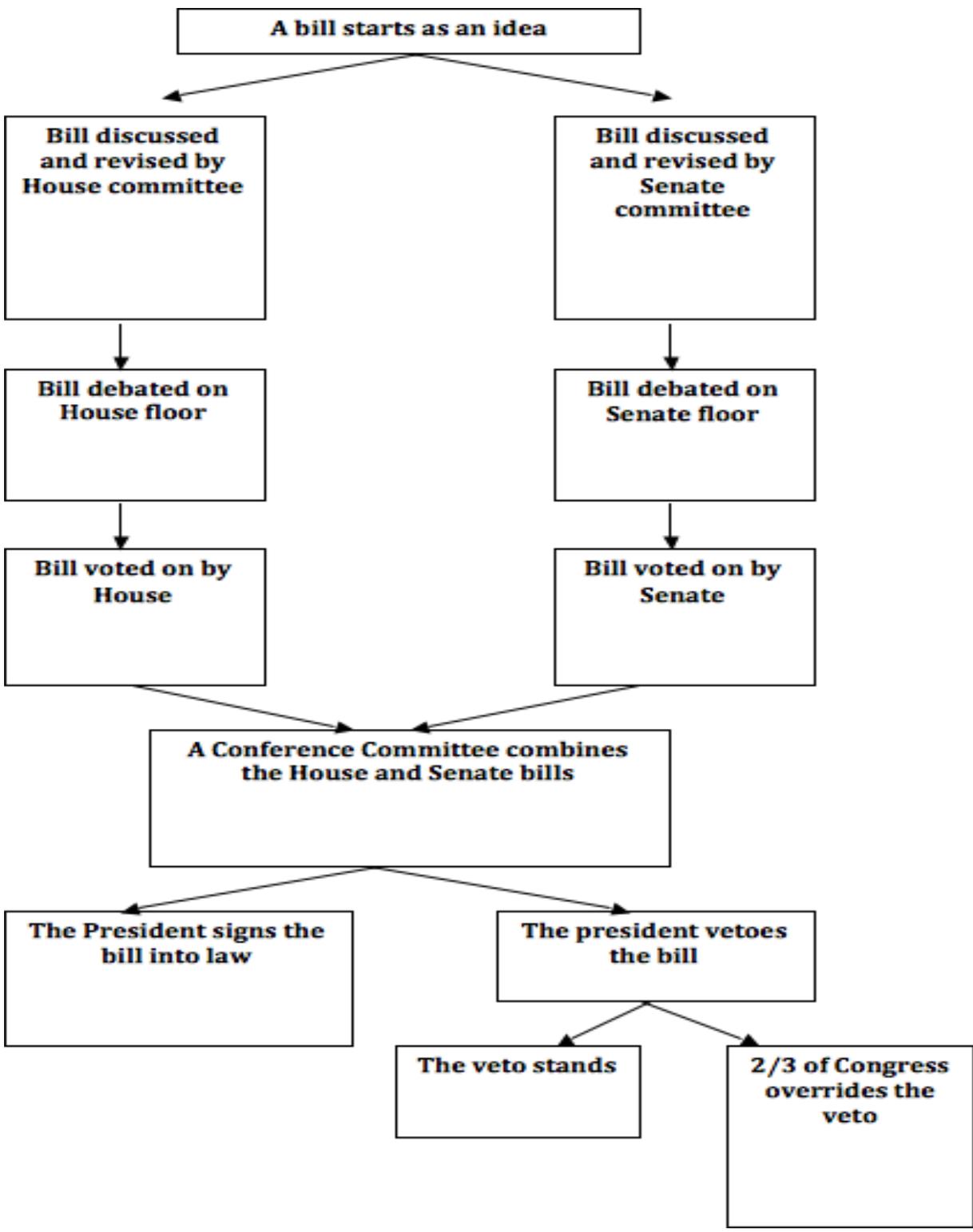
Reading/ Writing

*A good icebreaking activity might be to have students draft their own laws and then debate them. Ask the participants about their experiences afterwards - was it easy or difficult to persuade other people? Use the activity as a precursor to your explanation for how real laws are debated and drafted.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

CIVICS Fall 2017 | Unit 2 Diagram: How a Bill Becomes a Law



❖ Unit 4 ❖
The Judicial Branch



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

Harvard CIVICS Program
Fall 2017



Unit 4 Goals

1. Explain the role of the Judicial Branch:

Describe how the Judicial Branch interprets the laws in reference to the Constitution and how it is composed of the Supreme Court and all federal courts beneath it. Describe the idea of the Supreme Court interpreting the “supreme law of the land” and thus having the final say in constitutional interpretation.

2. Fundamentals of the Supreme Court and the concept of Judicial Review:

Students should understand the authority and limits of the Supreme Court—in particular the significance of judicial review.

3. Describe the Supreme Court as an active, dynamic court

The Constitution is a living document that constantly morphs and changes. Our participants should understand the role of the Judicial Branch in interpreting the Constitution to match our contemporary concerns. They should know that laws change over time, and that civic participation is crucial to this.

4. Provide an overview of checks and balances.

This lesson concludes the overview of the three branches of the Federal government. Students should understand how the three branches interact and how they check each other’s power.

5. Review the notes you made during Lesson 3 and make adjustments accordingly:

Continue to tweak your teaching styles using the strategic choices you made last week as a starting point. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week’s teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.
- ❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.
- ❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What is the role of the Judicial Branch? How does it interpret the law? How does it help keep the power of the other two branches in check?

How are Supreme Court Justices appointed? What are the strengths and weaknesses of having non-elected officials in office? Do you think it is fair?

What do we mean when we say the Constitution is a living document?

How has the Supreme Court affected your life? Do you think the Supreme Court is effective at shaping society? How can you find out more about the Supreme Court?

- Supreme Court: The highest court in the United States, equipped with the power of judicial review. Its decisions overrule the decisions of the lower courts.
- U.S Constitution (review): The central document written by America's founding fathers that outlines our most important laws, which take precedence over all others. No law can violate the constitution.
- Judicial Review: The Supreme Court holds this power, allowing it to strike down laws that are unconstitutional (inconsistent with the Constitution).
- Appoint (advanced): To name or assign an unelected official to a position.
- Precedent (advanced): A previous decision of the court used as a source for future decision-making.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Activity – Judicial Review in the Classroom (10 min)

Purpose:

Introduce the idea of the judicial review by referencing the Classroom Constitution.

Materials:

Blackboard or whiteboard, erasable markers or chalk

Method:

- ❖ Tell the students that the co-teachers have decided on a new rule for the classroom: “All students must agree with the co-teachers’ opinions during CIVICS class. If they choose to share a different opinion, they have to go to a half an hour of detention after school.” Write this rule on the board.
- ❖ Discuss the fairness of this new rule. Be sure to reference the Classroom Constitution (project it on the board if possible). Ask the students if this new rule is consistent with the principles set forth by the Classroom Constitution. Make sure to nudge them in the right direction.
- ❖ After a few minutes of discussion, select nine students at random. Make sure you note that you will have more activities in the future so that everyone will get to participate at some point. Explain that the nine students will independently decide if the new rule violates the Classroom Constitution. Have each of the nine students vote and explain their decision if they would like. Be sure that the outcome strikes the rule down.
- ❖ Announce that the rule is void, and explain that the classroom just exercised *judicial review*—the power that allows the nine justices of the Supreme Court to reject or amend a law if it determines that it is *unconstitutional* (inconsistent with the Constitution). The co-teachers acted as the president (the new rule was like an executive order), and the nine students acted as the Supreme Court. As powerful as the president (and co-teachers) may seem, their decisions can be overturned by five justices (or students).

II. Introducing the Judicial Branch (15 min)**Purpose:**

Give a *brief* lecture about the Judicial Branch and how it operates to set students up for the interactive simulation to follow.

Materials:

Blackboard or whiteboard, erasable markers or chalk, to write down notes on the board, gavel if you have one.

Method:

- ❖ Begin by asking the students if they know how courts work, and what it means to be a lawyer or a judge. If you have a small gavel, you can use it to pass around and moderate the discussion, making sure first to establish that they are not to play with the gavel but rather to see

it as their opportunity to play the role of a justice. If you don't have a gavel, use a tennis ball, stuffed animal, or another object.

❖ Explain that the Judicial Branch is composed of government courts that rule over **federal cases**, and that the Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. If lower federal courts cannot work out the case, it gets passed to the Supreme Court. Nine justices are appointed for lifetime terms on the court until they retire, resign, are impeached, or pass away. One of the justices serves as the Chief Justice of the court. The President has the power to nominate new justices, but this nomination must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate (this is a check and balance between the Executive and Judicial Branches). Generally, cases do not reach the Supreme Court unless they are appealed from lower courts (state, federal district, appellate), and they get to choose what cases they hear.

❖ A Supreme Court decision can only be overturned by Constitutional Amendment or a later Supreme Court decision. This power is not directly in the Constitution. However, in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), Chief Justice John Marshall established a rationale for *judicial review*. This type of judicial decision that guides future cases is called a *precedent*.

❖ Constitutional law is *alive*. Laws adapt and change depending on our own circumstances - something written in the 1800's may or may not be relevant to today's world. It is the job of the court to interpret our laws in a way that keeps them up to date with contemporary concerns.

❖ Close with a discussion to make sure that your students comprehend the material. Consider asking the following questions:

- Do you think it is fair that the public doesn't elect Supreme Court Justices?
- The Justices were given life terms so that they can make decisions based on what they truly believe to be just and not based on public opinion. Do you agree with this or should they have limited terms?

Variant Difficulty:

The complexity of the discussion is in your hands. If the class is having comprehension trouble, explain that the Supreme Court is the highest court in the US and that it is responsible for interpreting whether or not laws that we pass are fair; mention judicial review but do not get into its complexities. For older or more experienced classes, use real world examples (*Brown v. Board of Education* and *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*) to explain how "interpreting the law" means ensuring it does not violate our Constitutional rights. There is more information on these cases below. It may also be interesting to note that appointing Justices to the Supreme Court is one of the ways a President can leave a lasting legacy on the country even after his term ends.

Brown v. Board of Education

Case Information: In the 1950, most schools were segregated on the basis of race. If you were white you would go to one school, if you were black or any other race you would go

to another school. This practice is known as “segregation”. Often the non-white schools had much fewer resources than the white schools. Some students did not think this was fair, and decided to go to court.

Result: 9-0

Majority Opinion: Separate schooling is inherently unequal, and schools must be integrated with “all deliberate speed”.

Dissent: N/A

Strategy: This is one the most important cases in terms of schooling and racial equality in the United States. Rather than beginning with the details of the case, ask an opening question about whether or not it would be fair for children of different races to have to go to different schools (under the assumption that these schools are theoretically equal). Then, after having a few volunteers share their opinions, discuss what the court decided and why.

While a more advanced concept, it is important to explain that *Brown v. Board* did not all at once make schools equal, nor did it answer all questions on desegregation. *Brown* is a good example of how coming to a decision and implementing that decision are two separate actions. The decision was somewhat ambiguous—in particular, it did not give a clear timeline for desegregation and did not suggest any strategies for implementing desegregation. Fierce opposition among many American communities, resistance to the ruling among the other branches of government, and later court cases whittled away at the strength of the decision. While *Brown* is commonly remembered as a heroic victory for civil rights, its legacy and impact are still disputed.

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District

Case Information: A group of students who wanted to protest the Vietnam War decided to wear black armbands. The school forced them to take off these armbands, claiming they were distracting to the learning environment.

Result: 7-2

Majority Opinion: Students should be allowed to express themselves in a reasonable way

Dissent: The students were disrupting the class and should not be allowed to wear the armbands

Strategy: Set this activity up by describing a situation in which –for instance—the school has decided to do away with school lunches due to a government mandate. Ask for two or three volunteers who oppose that notion to hold on to some object in protest (candy, a rubber band, anything you choose). Then ask the class whether or not these students should be allowed to protest in such a way. Finally, discuss the *Tinker* decision and what it means in a current setting. In other words, what does the decision allow students to do in terms of free speech?

III. Mid-Year Survey (10 min)

Purpose:

To evaluate the progress of students.

Materials:

Surveys will be provided to all co-teachers.

Method:

- ❖ Communicate this survey as way to improve our teaching methods, not as a high-stakes evaluation.

V. Checks and Balances: A Final Overview (10 mins)

Purpose:

This activity should help students understand how the three branches interact and check each other's power.

Materials:

None

Method:

- ❖ Divide students evenly into three groups. Tell each group that they will be playing the role of one of the federal branches (Executive, Legislative, or Judicial). The groups will be working as a collective—not as individuals.
- ❖ Explain that the co-teachers will be dictating a number of scenarios involving a hypothetical action that one of the branches has taken. The other two branches will have one minute to talk amongst themselves to think of an action they can take to check the power of that branch. Keep score on the board if you think it will motivate the students and add to the activity. Any branch that successfully comes up with a check gets one point. If neither branch thinks of a check, the branch that took the action gets a point.
- ❖ Dictate the following hypothetical scenarios:

- The House of Representatives and the Senate have passed a bill that possibly violates the Constitution. (Executive branch can veto the bill; Judicial branch can declare it unconstitutional if it becomes a law.)
 - The President nominates someone to be a Supreme Court justice who did not go to law school. (Legislative branch can deny the president's appointment; Judicial branch cannot do anything.)
 - The President vetoes a bill that the majority of Americans support. (Legislative branch can override the veto with a 2/3 majority. Judicial branch cannot do anything.)
 - The Supreme Court declares a common-sense law unconstitutional. (Legislative branch can initiate the process to amend the constitution; Executive branch can do nothing.)
 - The President commits a serious crime. (Legislative branch can file articles of impeachment; Judicial branch can do nothing.)
 - The President signs an executive order that that possibly violates the Constitution (Judicial branch can declare the executive order unconstitutional; Legislative branch can do nothing.)
- ❖ At the conclusion of the activity, the points of the three branches should be fairly even. Entertain a discussion about the relative power of the three branches. No one branch dominates the others. What are the advantages of this? What are the disadvantages?

V. Current Events and Leftover Questions (5 minutes)

Purpose:

If time permits, use the last section of class to let the students reflect on what they have learned

Materials:

Pencils, post-it notes.

Method:

❖ Using your own discretion, end the class by discussing any current events that may be relevant to the students (regarding state, national, or local politics). This is your time to put the lessons you taught today into action! If anything has happened of note in the election in the last week, make a point to discuss it.

❖ Take any final questions and answer them orally. When you are out of time, have students write down their questions on post-it notes and bring them with you so you can answer them next class. This is a good way to review the old lesson each week before you advance to the next one.

Variant Difficulty:

N/A

Improv Suggestions

Kinesthetic

- * Turn the lecture into a dynamic game that integrates the information that the lecture conveys. In other words, choose different areas of the room that the students can walk to regarding issues relevant to the structure and makeup of the court . Have students think critically about whether or not the Court structure is fair, what advantages and disadvantages having non-elected officials poses, as well as what the implications of judicial review are
- * Run some kind of simulation where students get to present "grievances" to nine judges. As the arbitration process ensues, make sure that the kids are thinking critically about how to present arguments and whether or not the process of presenting to nine arbitrary officials is advantageous or hurtful.

Audio/Visual

- *Download clips from movies such as *Amistad* or *Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight* that show the Court making a dramatic ruling about something the kids can understand. Just make sure that it is age appropriate. Once you have shown the clip, have a discussion with the students about what role the court plays and the important functions it serves.
- * Create a large simulation in which all the students are justices. Choose a case that is age appropriate and have the students listen to oral arguments from the case (which you can find here http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_audio.aspx) and have the students come to a decision. Then, discuss why they made the decision and whether the court at the time made the same decision.

Reading/Writing

- *Part of the challenge of this lesson is making the Court seem relevant to everyday life. Talk about high profile cases - especially regarding the Civil Rights movement or the Vietnam War and how they affect today. Ask the students how they feel about the rulings, or read a formal oral argument written by the presiding Chief Justice and interpret it as a class. Feel free to talk about the current Justices to make the topic seem more approachable and human.
- * Have your students discover what it feels like to be an arbitrator. Give them an issue and have them each write a short, oral argument (a few sentences) like they are a justice and present them to the class.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 5 ❖
Political Parties in America



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

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Fall 2017



Unit 5 Goals

5. Understand the history and function of political parties:

Students should understand that parties organize people with similar political beliefs or goals and enable them to act together and maximize their united political power. Parties also organize primaries, campaigns, and elections to elect party members.

2. Sketch rough policy outlines of each Party while remaining neutral:

Students should understand party positions on several substantive policy issues, and the differences between the notions of liberal and conservative. You should discuss common criticisms levelled against each party, but remember to keep your views out of the lesson. CIVICS is about students learning to think for themselves, not adopting your own particular political views.

3. Discuss and introduce the effects of the two-party system on this year's election:

Students should see the 2016 election through the lens of the major parties at play as well as any relevant third party) in terms of the ideologies that guide each candidate.

4. Review the notes you made during Lesson 4 and make adjustments accordingly:

Continue to tweak your teaching styles using the strategic choices you made last week as a starting point. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week's teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ Kinesthetic Learning: Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.
- ❖ Audio/Visual Learning: Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.
- ❖ Reading/Writing Learning: Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What are political parties, and what are their official functions? Why are parties important to politics? Do you think that they help people come together, or do they pull them apart?

What are the two primary political parties in America? How are they similar, and how are they different? What are the benefits and challenges of a two-party system? How do other political parties operate in American politics?

What does it mean to belong to a political party? What is the relationship between your opinions and your party? How does one choose their political party? Can there be, for example, liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats?

What other public officials represent your interests and what parties do they represent?

- **Political Parties:** Organizations of politicians and voters who generally share policy and broader philosophical beliefs about the purpose and activities of government. In the US, there are two main political parties: Republicans and Democrats.
- **Democrat:** An individual who associates him or herself with the Democratic Party. The Democratic party typically favors government intervention and regulation that promotes social and economic equity.
- **Republican:** An individual who associates him or herself with the Republican Party. The modern Republican party favors small government, free market capitalism, and traditional social values.
- **Liberal (advanced):** An ideology that promotes government activism with respect to social and political change.
- **Conservative (advanced):** An ideology that promotes traditional practices in politics and society and thus a small government.
- **Political Platform (advanced):** A collection of party planks, or positions, on a wide range of issues. The party chooses their platform collectively.
- **Independent (advanced):** An individual who identifies as neither a Republican nor a Democrat.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Activity - What is a Political Party? (15 minutes)

Purpose:

Enable students to define parties for themselves by hinting at a definition with an everyday example of disagreement. Provide a simple metaphor for the guiding principles of the two major parties.

Materials:

Individually-wrapped candy (i.e. Starbursts, Hershey's, Smarties, etc.) **Be sure to check in beforehand with your teacher to make sure that this is ok and take note of any allergies.**

Method:

- ❖ Begin the activity by passing out the candy. Students may not eat the candy until the end of the activity. **If you think your classroom does not have the patience to wait to eat the candy until the end of the activity, speak in hypotheticals rather than passing out the candy.** Place a large pile of candy in front of just three students (choose randomly) and do not pass out candy to the rest of the class. Explain that the students with candy earned it by doing extra homework at home, and the other students did only a minimal amount of homework. Ask the students if they think this distribution of resources (candy) is fair.
- ❖ Have one of the co-teachers take a few pieces of candy from the large pile (still leaving plenty with the original students) and distribute these pieces to the rest of the class. This co-teacher will explain that he/she is acting as the government. Since most students didn't have time to do extra homework, the government is taking a small amount of the candy from the three students and distributing it to the other students. Ask again if the class thinks this is fair.
- ❖ Return all the candy to the original three students. Have the other co-teacher take all the candy from the three students, take a handful for him/herself, and divide the rest evenly among each student. This co-teacher will explain that he/she is acting as the government. He/she will explain that even though the three students earned the candy, they had a lot more time to do the homework. Therefore, they should share their candy evenly with everyone. But it is hard work to divide the candy up evenly, so we lose a lot of candy to the teacher in the process. (Students may now eat the candy).
- ❖ Discuss the relative fairness of the three options as a class, allowing all viewpoints to be heard. Designate three parts of the classroom as representing agreement for the different scenarios and have students move into the areas of the room surrounding you. Once you have gathered, take a vote on the alternatives and tally them. Consider asking the students the following questions: should people get to keep what they earn, even if others did not have the opportunity to earn it? Should the government take what people earn and give it to others, even if it means

we lose some of the earnings in the process?

- ❖ Once you have voted, students should return to their seats. Explain that this activity was a loose representation of our two party system. Republicans favor less government intervention and fewer taxes (scenario one), and Democrats favor bigger government and higher taxes, generally (scenario two). Explain that because the homework scenario was made up, it seemed most fair to distribute the candy equally in the classroom (scenario three). Mention that while complete equal division of resources is not practiced in the US, policies like it are implemented in some European countries and other parts of the world.
- ❖ Have the students begin a discussion about the nature of political parties. Clarify that the discussion will focus in particular on the first two scenarios. Consider asking:
 - Regardless of which side you were on, did you feel like part of a group?
 - What were some of the reasons that you chose the side that you did? Were you persuaded by your classmates?
 - Were there other solutions to the candy distribution problem that you came up with that weren't covered by the two main sides?
- ❖ Take a few minutes to elaborate on the activity—that is, explain that disagreement is the reason that political parties form. End the discussion by having students brainstorm opinions on several subjects of the same nature—from food, to entertainment, to literature. What would happen if each of these different opinions had to be synthesized in a single platform?

Variant Difficulty:

If the class seems particularly engaged in the conversation, consider having the students try to organize themselves based on their responses to the subjects you have set up. Consider telling the students that they must be in two different groups by the end of the activity and discuss what were some of the struggles of choosing what side to join and who to align with.

II. Who's who in American Politics? (15 mins)

Purpose:

Introduce America's two-party system and the basic party platforms of Republicans and Democrats.

Materials:

YouTube clips of various candidates from both parties; a primary document of your choice; or whiteboard/blackboard.

Method:

- ❖ Explain that America has two major political parties: The Republicans and the Democrats.

These parties streamline the political process by allowing millions of Americans to organize and fundraise around common causes and candidates. Use an excerpt from a primary document like Federalist No.10 or Washington's Farewell Address to underscore the nature of political parties in the United States.

- ❖ Discuss the major platforms of Republicans and Democrats on social and fiscal issues and the role that they expect the government to play in the private/public sphere. You should emphasize that Republicans typically favor reduced government intervention because of a belief in free markets. They also hold more traditional social values. On the other hand, typical Democrats favor increased government intervention based in the belief that the government can help resolve issues of social and economic inequality. Their social beliefs are considered progressive (adaptive to new political realities). Make a T-chart of these differences and begin a discussion of where outside views fit into the system. Make sure to emphasize that there are exceptions to liberal and conservative ideologies, but try to explain the thoughts that guide each one for Democrats and Republicans respectively.
- ❖ Identify names of prominent party officials who the students may know. Add them to the T chart on their respective sides. For Republicans, you may wish to mention President Trump, Vice President Pence, Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and/or Senator John McCain. For Democrats, you may wish to mention President Obama, Secretary Hillary Clinton, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and/or Senator Elizabeth Warren. You may want to project pictures of these people as you mention them.
- ❖ Emphasize that a plurality of Americans do not identify with either political party. According to Gallup, 28% identify as Republicans, 28% identify as Democrats, and 41% identify as Independents as of August 2017. These individuals hold beliefs that may borrow from both, or neither, party. They are generally swing voters.

Variant Difficulty:

If the class is interested in more of the history of the parties, you might consider discussing where today's parties come from as well as their forerunners. For older, more advanced classes, you might consider discussing the platform differences in specific issues such as: death penalty, environmental protection, government spending, taxation, affirmative action, etc.

If students are interested in prominent politicians, play a series of clips from famous politicians discussing the issues you just mentioned. Take a vote at the end of each clip - do the kids think the candidate is a Democrat or a Republican? When you reveal the answer, be sure to explain what the "clue" was in each clip. Start out with obvious figures and then transition to Senators and House Representatives who are harder to identify. Finish the discussion by showing clips of Massachusetts and Boston officials and help student identify these.

III. 2016 Election Recap and Current Events (15 mins)

Purpose:

Briefly discuss last year's presidential election and discuss some of the president's actions in the past months.

Materials:

YouTube clips of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during the campaign. YouTube clips of President Trump.

Method:

- ❖ Introduce the two major candidates in the election by playing clips of them either speaking separately or in a Presidential debate. Have the students name the candidates if they can.
- ❖ Explain, to the best of your ability, the history and some of the policy ideas of the two major candidates*. Try to be as unbiased as possible. Here are some thoughts to get you started.
 - Donald Trump (R)—Trump is a businessman who had not previously held political office. He was the Republican candidate in the election whose major platform was to “Make America Great Again”—by pursuing policies that would reduce illegal immigration, combat external military forces, and use American economic power as diplomatic tool.
 - Hilary Clinton—Clinton was the Democratic candidate for President. She had previously served as a Senator and Secretary of State. She is also the first woman to be the nominee of a major party. Her campaign slogan was “Stronger Together” and her major policy initiatives focused on reducing income inequality (by boosting economic growth and minimum wage reform), continuing to reform health care, and holding a strong diplomatic stance abroad.

* It is difficult to keep these conversations neutral, especially if the students already have opinions about the candidates. You should refrain from sharing your personal political views, but answer questions as honestly as you can. If the students make negative comments about supporters of one candidate or the candidate specifically, try to diffuse the situation by explaining the logic that guides the candidate's viewpoints. Attempt to make the comments constructive by explaining the factual circumstances that may be tied to the particular comment.

- ❖ Explain the outcome of the election, being sure to discuss the difference between the popular vote and the Electoral College. If there is time, show video clips from Trump's acceptance speech and Clinton's concession speech.
- ❖ Discuss President Trump's performance over the past few months. A good way to refrain from sounding to condemning is to use the comments from prominent politicians (both Democrats and Republicans) that discuss the president's actions, rather than your own. You may wish to discuss the president's twitter habits, the state of the economy, the FBI

investigation into possible collusion with Russia, or Trump's comments on the Charlottesville tragedy.

- ❖ Explain the process of voting for president. Speak from personal experience if you voted last year (should be everyone unless you're a freshman!) Discuss the low percentage of Americans who participated in the election and the importance of your students taking the time to vote when they are old enough.
- ❖ Discuss any relevant current events.

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started. (Keep in mind the types of activities you choose and the context of your classroom):

Kinesthetic

*Run a skit, simulation, or game to show that a bloc of voters united by common interests can be more effective than a single person voting. Find a good metaphor to start with that you can use to explain the purpose of a party, and supplement it with visual imagery like a YouTube or famous movie clip of people working together. Using a metaphor or imagery might also help explain how third parties divide elections may also be helpful.

* Use props and music if you wish to represent a scene from a political debate in the past. Use this as a precursor for the rise of political parties that is now manifested in Republican/Democrat debates.

* Have the students create a party platform through two concurrent games of telephone. The students at the end of the telephones should then relay the message and then discuss how public opinion might influence a candidate's platforms and the issues in communication that this might pose.

Audio/Visual

*Have students create their own parties to help explain the concept of making a party platform. An exercise in creativity where the kids draw their own party logos based on what is important to them may be a fun exercise. Have the kids present their parties to their friends.

*Use a visual aid (Powerpoint or Prezi would be fine) to show the evolution of political parties. Be sure to identify what the debate that separates the parties was and what governmental ideologies tend to disagree on (the size and scope of government as the overarching point).

* Show videos from past Presidential debates and ask students to work out what they think each Party stands for based on what they have seen.

Reading/Writing

* Write a worksheet that the students could use with 3-4 scenarios that display different forms of disagreement and have the students respond to each one before discussing them as a group and how disagreement is the origin of political parties.

*Have students read excerpts from speeches from past presidential candidates and have them choose what party they believe the speaker belongs to.

*Have the students write their own party platform at the end of the class with at least 5 bullet points regarding class rules from your first class. You might begin this activity and continue it in following weeks by having the students campaign and ultimately choose one platform by the end of the course. This would give students an opportunity to build upon their knowledge from previous weeks.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 6 ❖
Campaigns and Elections



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

Harvard CIVICS Program
Fall 2017



Unit 6 Goals

1. **Facilitate a clear understanding of the American electoral process:**
Students should understand how we choose our leaders on the national, state, and local levels, and what strengths and weaknesses are present in our system.
2. **Encourage involvement in electoral politics:**
Demonstrate that American citizens play an active role in the country's democracy. Brainstorm ways for students to get involved before they are old enough to vote.
3. **Explain and contextualize the Electoral College and general election with regards to the 2016 election (advanced).**

Depending on the extent to which you feel the class would be comfortable, explain electoral politics in terms of how the candidates for the Presidency go about strategizing in their campaigns given that they vie for electoral votes from states.

4. **Review the notes you made during Lesson 5 and make adjustments accordingly:**
Continue to tweak your teaching styles using the strategic choices you made last week as a starting point. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week's teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.
- ❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.
- ❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class.

Questions and Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

How do we elect our government officials? Do you think the process is fair? If so, why, and if not, what would you change?

What is the difference between direct and indirect democracy? What strengths does each system have, and what problems could you foresee?

Who can vote? This was not always the case—why have oppressed groups fought so hard for the right to vote? Why is voting important, and why is it a right?

Even if you cannot vote, why is expressing your political voice in elections important? What does this expression look like, and how can you do it?

- Candidate: A person competing for a specific position in the government.
- Campaign: An effort to reach out to voters and win their support during an election.
- Citizen: A member of a national population who has certain rights and privileges, including, but not limited to, the ability vote in an election.
- Direct Democracy vs. Indirect Democracy (advanced): Direct democracy is a form of government in which all people make policy decisions directly, instead of choosing people to make them on their behalf. By contrast, indirect democracy is a form of government in which people elect others to operate government and enact policy on their behalf.
- Electoral College (advanced): The system used in the United States for the general Presidential election. In this system, the winner of the election in each state gets a certain number of electoral votes according to population, and the candidate with the most electoral votes is elected president.
- Primary Election (advanced): An election within each party to choose who will represent the party in a general election against the other party. There are two separate sets of primaries, one for each party.
- Nominating Convention (advanced): A gathering of a single political party's delegates to determine that party's nominee for President in the larger general election.
- General Election (advanced): An election that includes nominees from multiple parties chosen in each primary.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Brainstorming Discussion: What are Elections? How do they work in America? (15 min)

Purpose:

Determine what your students already know about the electoral process while relaying information in a class-participating dialogue to keep them engaged.

Materials:

Whiteboard or blackboard and erasable markers or chalk.

Method:

- ❖ Before lecturing, ask your students questions about the American electoral process to determine what they already know. Good questions to start with include:
 - If you want to run for President, or for congress, how are you chosen? Who picks you?
 - How old do you have to be to vote?
 - What kind of person would you want to represent you?
 - How old should they be?
 - What should they believe in?
 - What questions would you ask them before you decided that they should represent you?
- ❖ Write down everything that the students know on the board, and then try to fill in the gaps. Emphasize that elected officials are chosen by the people to represent the interests of the people. Ask the students to remember a couple of these ideas because they will need them in the next activity. Shift from a discussion to a short lecture, framing it as a how-to guide to becoming a politician. In order to visually complement your lecture, use the blackboard to create a timeline of an election cycle.

THE TIMELINE OF AN ELECTION

1. Candidates decide to run:
Candidates will often be elected officials looking to be promoted to higher office, but we also have cases of lawyers, businesspeople, teachers, and even actors running for office.
2. Candidates begin to campaign:
This means candidates reach out to voters: they knock on doors, send mail, run TV ads, and build a team of volunteers.
3. Candidates debate within their parties:
Democratic candidates debate other Democrats and Republicans debate other Republicans to choose who will be the nominee from each party.

4. **Primary Elections:**
In two separate elections, voters from each party choose a nominee. At the end of the primary there are only two candidates left: one Democrat and one Republican.
5. **Continued campaigning:**
The nominees from each party keep on trying to gain support from voters. This includes more outreach and more debates.
6. **General Election:**
On the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, the nominees face off, and voters elect a leader.

AMERICA IS AN INDIRECT DEMOCRACY (Advanced)

While in most elections the candidate receiving the most votes is the winner, in a presidential election, the **Electoral College** determines who is elected. Each state has a certain number of **electoral votes** depending on its population, which can be thought of as points. The winner of each state's popular vote receives all of its electoral votes; the candidate who wins Massachusetts, for example, receives 12 electoral votes. After voters have chosen a winner in each state, we tally up the total number of electoral votes for each candidate. Whoever has the most electoral votes is the winner. The people who cast electoral votes are called **electors**, and very rarely, they can vote against the majority will of the state, but this almost never happens.

If you have the time, use the following website to simulate the concept.

<http://www.270towin.com/>

- ❖ This is a lesson that can get very complicated if the class is younger or learning at a slower pace. You will want to emphasize the idea of reducing the candidates from a large field to one from each major party. If you feel that the students have an effective grip on the subject move on to the next bullet; if not, go back and trace using the example of the 2016 presidential election. In other words, discuss the Republican Party choosing Trump over Cruz, Bush, Rubio, and many others in the presidential primary and the Democratic party choosing Clinton over Sanders and O'Malley.

It is also important to note that not all leaders in government are elected. Many (such as federal judges and cabinet members) are appointed. Many career government workers devote their lives to public service in a specific department of the government but never have to be elected.

Variant Difficulty:

For younger classes, the concept of electoral votes, and the overall timeline of running for office, might seem complex. Avoid getting into the details if these ideas are confusing, and jump straight to a discussion of direct vs. indirect democracy. To help explain the concept, it may be useful to find a YouTube clip of a newscast during an election when an interactive map changes to red or blue with the number of electoral votes as the election results come in.

For more adventurous classes, feel free to get into the history of American elections, and discuss

controversial elections like 1824, 1876, 1888 and 2000, in which the elected candidate did not win the popular vote. Another election you might consider discussing is 1800, which represented the first peaceful transfer of power from one party to another (so that democracy passed the test).

II. Small Groups - Local Elections and Student Government (25 min)

Purpose:

Communicate the importance of smaller municipal elections. Encourage students to think about running their own campaigns in their school.

Materials:

YouTube clips if desired. Paper and writing utensils. Markers if desired.

Method:

- ❖ Explain how cities and other municipalities have some powers that are separate from the Federal and State governments. They have elected leaders as well in order to administrate day-to-day activities. Both the Boston and Cambridge City Councils are holding elections this fall. Explain the process of running for city council and perhaps show the students the profiles of some of the candidates.
- ❖ Introduce the idea that student government elections are not entirely different from Federal, state and local elections. Just like elected leaders, student leaders must determine what issues are important to their peers, run successful campaigns, and follow through on their promises. **Be sure to check in with your teacher about the school's policy on student government.** If your school does not have student government, mention that there will be opportunities like this in high school and college. Student representatives generally plan student social events, speak often with administrators, have input on school policies, and manage a budget.
- ❖ Entertain a class discussion about school policies that affect the day-to-day lives of the students. These could involve rules about recess, snow days, homework, etc. Once students bring up some common issues, divide them into small groups of three to four. Be sure that they have paper and writing utensils.
- ❖ Direct them to design a campaign for class president. In groups, students should identify the issue they want to focus on. They should write down a strategy for solving the problem, develop an argument for why that is better than the current solution, and then build slogans for a hypothetical campaign. Have the students design at least one sign that they would hang in the school. Tell the students to be realistic and build campaigns only on issues on which they could feasibly follow through.
- ❖ Once the brainstorming is over, have each group give a short presentation about their campaign (this should be low pressure; i.e have groups volunteer). Be sure to reinforce the material of

the lesson in your interactions with the students. In other words, ask the students if their proposals would be feasible. How would they go about keeping their promises?

- ❖ After all the groups have presented, use the blackboard to list each group. Have all the students put their heads down, name off each group, and ask the students to raise their hands for a group that they were not a part of.

Variant Difficulty

N/A

IV. Closing Discussion – Current Events and the Election (10 min)

Purpose:

Introduce a few parting thoughts about last year’s election and how the students might be able to get involved in future elections.

Materials:

YouTube clips if desired

Method:

- ❖ If you have not in previous classes, introduce the idea of a presidential debate and show important clips from the 2016 cycle debates between the major candidates. Emphasize that debates provide a forum for the candidates to differentiate themselves from their opponents and that candidates will often try to capture the votes of independents during the general election.
- ❖ Conclude with a discussion of how the students can be involved in the election. Brainstorm, how, even though they can’t vote, they can still help their favorite candidates. Why is it true that your vote DOES make a difference?

Variant Difficulty

If you want, you can discuss negative campaign ads with clips and serious subjects such as campaign finance or the importance of swing states in a general election. These discussions are at your discretion should you feel that the students could handle the change of pace. Another worthwhile discussion would be to consider how attack ads are representative of both their creators and their targets.

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started (Keep in mind the types of activities you choose and the context of your classroom):

Kinesthetic

* The central focus of this lesson is to link elections to democracy and citizen empowerment. Consider running a discussion that assesses what your students already know about the electoral process. Have them work in groups to identify potential problems. If they do not know much about the process already, use a skit to explain the rules and age restrictions for voting, the kind of position you can run for, and the nature of the Electoral College.

Audio/Visual

*In order to supplement your discussion of the election, use a visual (using Prezi as an example) of a person running along a track (as they run for President). As they make their way through the progress, stop at checkpoints in order to discuss the necessary steps to reaching the White House.

* Show clips of presidential debates to demonstrate how campaigning works, and what the relationship is between nominees and voters. Analyze each clip together as a class. What did they like about the candidates? What didn't they like? Why did the candidates say what they said?

Reading/Writing

* Create a worksheet that the students can fill in that is a "To-Do List" for a Presidential candidate. Go through the steps of the process step by step and make sure to simulate the steps for the students (run a mini skit as you run through, showing how one teacher declares his/her candidacy and so on).

*Have the students write to President Trump expressing what they would like to see in them as President (qualities, decisions, etc). Then, have a discussion of how they can be involved in the process and how the voting process follows alongside this.

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Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 7 ❖
The Media



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

Harvard CIVICS Program
Fall 2017



Unit 7 Goals

1. **Explain the concept of “the media” and its role in American society:**
Students should understand what the media is and the function it plays in everyday life. It is necessary in not only creating well-informed citizens, but also in holding our leaders accountable.
2. **Encourage smart consumption of media:**
Students should understand what it means to be a media consumer and appreciate the power they have in choosing where they get their news. They should be challenged to think critically about what makes a good news source. As part of this, students should be aware of how different biases affect the way that the media treats stories. Students should feel encouraged to question how media outlets gather and use evidence.
3. **Review the notes you made during Lesson 6 and make adjustments accordingly:**
Continue to tweak your teaching styles using the strategic choices you made last week as a starting point. **Make any new notes and evaluate your old ones in this week’s teaching log.**

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.
- ❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.
- ❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts on paper before sharing them with the class

Questions and Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What do we mean by “the media?” What impact do you think the media has on politics, either harmful or beneficial?

Where do we get our news from, and what are the differences between various types of sources? What about these sources can influence the way we think about issues?

What makes some news sources more trustworthy than others? Why does the trustworthiness of the news matter? How can you tell if a source is credible?

How does social media affect politics and how and why do politicians and the media employ it?

- Article: a written piece in a printed newspaper, journal, or magazine or published online.
- Media: the main means of mass communication (esp. television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet) regarded collectively.
- Source: Where we find our information. Various networks and newspapers provide different viewpoints on the news relevant to viewers and readers.
- Bias: A tendency of some publications to favor a specific set of ideas or people, usually affecting how the publication covers events.
- Press (advanced): refers to members of the media; comes from a time when newspapers and brochures were the main way to get information to a lot of people and the sheets of paper went through a printing press
- Press Conference (advanced): an event in which someone (often a government official) speaks to members of the press in a formal setting

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Activity: Interactive Discussion - What is the Media? (15 mins)

Purpose:

Have students define the term "Media" for themselves through their own experiences while warming the class up for discussion.

Materials:

White board or black board, erasable markers or chalk.

Method:

- ❖ Begin by asking students to think about how they find out when things happen. Start by asking about events happening on a local level (in their family), then their neighborhood or their school, then Boston and Cambridge, and then the state of Massachusetts. How do we find out what happens in other cities or other states? What about things happening in other countries? Make a list on the board so that the students can start conceptualizing the lesson.
- ❖ Explain that it is the *media* that gives us this information, and work with the students to develop a concrete definition of the topic. Emphasize that the word “media” refers to the mass means of communication, or how each of us find out about what happens in our school, neighborhood, city, state, country, and world. Use the list that you have already compiled to outline the important tasks of the media. For example, what is needed for communication to be effective? How do we share information that is pertinent for the whole country?
- ❖ Once you have a definition you are happy with, begin to brainstorm different media sources by creating a chart on the blackboard or whiteboard with three columns: **Type, advantages, disadvantages**. Have your students name different media sources like TV, radio, newspapers, the internet, magazines, etc. and discuss the positives and negatives of each source.

Variant Difficulty:

Depending on the age and maturity of your students, expand the chart on the blackboard by adding two additional columns: **Target Audience** and **Why**. Have your students think carefully about who the target audience of the media is, and why it is aimed at a specific group of people. **Include this discussion in your activity unless you feel that the class would benefit from slowing your pace.** You can also ask students to name specific networks, papers, and websites instead of just types to make the discussion more advanced.

II. Audio/Visual Learning - Who's telling the story? (15 minutes)

Purpose:

To ensure that students understand that the same news story can be told several different ways based on who is reporting it. This activity will ground the concept with an actual, relatable example from the news and segue into the next activity about being a smart media consumer.

Materials:

Laptop with internet connection or YouTube clip *downloaded in advance, whiteboard or blackboard, erasable markers or chalk.

*It is important that you share the clips you will be showing to your classroom teacher in the week before you show them to have their approval.

Method:

- ❖ Begin by showing news clips about the same story from two different sources that are traditionally opposed to each other. An example is provided below.

Be sure to use a story that is appropriate to your classroom. Look at the “Variant Difficulty” section for ideas of how to scale your discussion.

The following video compares MSNBC and Fox News’ coverage of the first presidential debate last year. Before showing the video, tell your students to pay attention to the way in which the debate outcome and the candidates are portrayed by each station.

<https://qz.com/794553/video-who-won-the-first-presidential-debate-depends-on-which-network-you-watched/>

- ❖ Once the clip has ended, open up a discussion. Have one of the teachers record the classroom’s ideas on the board. How did each network view the story? What were the differences between their points? Did they see some things the same? What? What were the things they saw differently, and why do you think they presented them like that?
- ❖ Explain the concept of media bias. If you chose to show the link provided above, explain that MSNBC tends to attract more liberal viewers, while Fox News tends to attract more conservative ones.
- ❖ At the end of the discussion, it might be helpful for students to vote on who told the story better. Ask for volunteers at the end to describe why they thought one source told the story better than the other one. What was it about that source which made the news seem more appealing?

Variant Difficulty:

You can control the complexity of this activity depending on the news story you choose. For a younger or less experienced class, it may be best to pick an issue about something simple like a crime, or a review of a product or restaurant. For advanced students, consider portraying reactions to terrorism, the Iran Nuclear Deal, China, economic bailouts, etc.

For more advanced classrooms, encourage a discussion about the ideological divide in news sources. How can two acclaimed networks come to drastically different conclusions? Is it responsible for Americans to consume their news from networks that may confirm their biases?

III. Game and Discussion – “Fake News or Fact?” (20 minutes)

Purpose:

Discuss the importance of facts and honest reporting.

Materials:

2 pieces of paper, laptop with internet connection (optional)

Method:

- ❖ Explain “fake news” and “alternative facts.” Students are likely to have heard these phrases but may be unsure where they came from or what they mean. Legitimate fake news sources intend to mislead the public by touting stretched or fabricated facts as headlines. Fake news stories did indeed circulate on the internet during the 2016 election. President Trump popularized the term when he began using it in November of 2016 to describe news sources that did not portray him as favorably as others. Since then, the President has used the term often to criticize networks like CNN. The phrase “alternative facts” arose when Kellyanne Conway, an advisor to the president, defended the press secretary’s false statements about the size of the crowd at President Trump’s inauguration.
- ❖ Tell the students that we will be playing a game called “Fake News or Fact,” in which they will determine which news headlines are legitimate and which are not. With two pieces of paper, designate one side of the room as “fake news” and one side of the room as “fact.” One co-teacher will be reading a list of news headlines, students will decide if each headline is fake news or real news, and students will walk to the side of the room that corresponds with their judgment. Emphasize that students are free to choose which side of the room they stand on, but the teachers will be explaining the undeniable facts.
- ❖ Use the following headlines, or include some of your own ideas, keeping your classroom’s comprehension of current events in mind. Be sure to pause between each headline in order to discuss why it is fake or fact:
 - Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election (fact)

- President Obama was not born in the United States (fake news)
 - As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton maintained a private email server for official communications and deleted thousands of emails (fact)
 - Between 3 and 5 million people voted illegally in the General Election, causing President Trump to lose the popular vote (fake news)
 - There were more people at President Trump’s inauguration than any other inauguration in American history (fake news – feel free to project the comparison photo with 2009)
 - There is an FBI investigation into any possible collusion between Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign and Russia (fact)
- ❖ After the activity is over, entertain a discussion fake news in general. Why does it exist? Who writes it? Who reads it? Is it dangerous?
- ❖ Discuss how the game reveals that we need to be careful about what we listen to. Ask the students what things we should be looking out for when we hear a news story. Good examples include:
- Who is reporting this news?
 - When are they writing it?
 - What evidence does the source cite?
 - What do other news sources say about the story?
- ❖ Close the discussion by mentioning that we are media consumers. We don't have a direct stake in what goes on the air, but we can decide how we use and process it, and it is our responsibility to rationalize everything we take in.

Variant Difficulty:

For classrooms that may struggle with the headlines above, invent simple cases of fake news and facts. An easy example of fake news could be: “There is a 100% chance of a snow day tomorrow in Cambridge/Boston.”

IV. Current Events- Media and Politics, Concluding the Lesson (10 mins)

Purpose:

Explain that the way media portrayals of government officials affect our perceptions of them.

Materials:

Laptop with internet connection or YouTube clip downloaded in advance, whiteboard or blackboard, erasable markers or chalk.

Method:

- ❖ Show a clip of a breaking news story from the past week.
- ❖ Show another clip of about that same story from a network that has different ideological leanings.
- ❖ Conclude the discussion by noting the rising interest in social media by government officials. Show a few appropriate tweets from President Trump. What are some of the benefits of social media for politicians to portray their messages? What are the benefits and drawbacks of social media for citizens especially with regards to engaging in debate?

Variant Difficulty:

You can alter the seriousness of the discussion depending on the tone of the clips that you choose. You may choose to show appropriate Saturday Night Live clips to explain the role of satire and the influence that it has on the electorate. **Keep in mind that any satire you choose should be age appropriate.**

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started (Keep in mind the types of activities you choose and the context of your classroom):

Kinesthetic

* Play a game to see what news sources your students already know about. Consider dividing the room into teams and having each team name a media sources. Whichever team can name the most sources without repetition wins. You could also show your students pictures of media logos and see if they can identify the group based on the picture.

* Create a list of pros and cons about the media - what are the advantages of being so interconnected, and what are the challenges? Then, have the students choose different areas of the room to represent their favorite ways to receive information, including a discussion of why they went to the side they did.

Audio/Visual

* Open up a discussion about how stories often get misinterpreted in ways that affect themselves or their friends. If your kids feel comfortable talking about it, ask them to discuss times when rumors about something they didn't do hurt their feelings. Then, relate this experience to the news.

*Use a visual aid (Powerpoint or Prezi would be fine) to show the evolution of the media.

Include how we have moved from paper reporting to magazines to internet and social media.

* Create two different posters from different imaginary newspapers as a class. Write directions for the students to follow portraying actions of the same imaginary candidate in two different lights.

Reading/Writing

* Write a newspaper report for one story that presents two different opinions on the same story. Have the students read both sides and conclude what makes the stories different.

*Have the students write headlines for a specific story or on a specific imaginary political candidate giving them the biases that are influencing the writers. Have the students share their experiences in writing the headlines,

*Write a newspaper story as a class by having each student write one sentence about a topic of your choice. Then, read the sentences in order and discuss how messages can be lost when various people have different biases.

Teaching Log

General Observations	Response of Students to Specific Activities	Notes to Improve for Next Week

❖ Unit 8 ❖
Federal, State and Local Governments



Leadership | Responsibility | Community

Harvard CIVICS Program
Fall 2017



Unit 8 Goals

1. Review the structure of the Federal Government as the semester draws to an end:

For this last lesson, students should be able to demonstrate that they remember the highlights of the semester – most importantly the division of powers and the distinction between America’s three branches of government, the difference between direct and indirect democracy, and the importance of political participation.

2. Discuss the relationship between Federal, State, and Local Governments:

Students by now should have a grasp of the structure of our national government. It is time to clarify how it interacts with the States and how States interact with local governments. Explain the rights of each organization and the difference between them.

3. Wrap up discussion on the election and clear up any remaining questions:

This is your last class together! Try to make sure that the students feel not only informed but also empowered about the world of politics around them.

Learning Goals

Taking the makeup of your classroom into account, choose at least one of the following techniques to reinforce the material for the week:

- ❖ **Kinesthetic Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to have students explore the material through physical and coordinated activity. These types of activities are especially useful in classrooms in which students are especially active/engaged.
- ❖ **Audio/Visual Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to visually demonstrate the material for the week. These types of activities can be very effective in supplementing lecture-style activities in weeks that require an understanding of complex processes.
- ❖ **Reading/Writing Learning:** Choose one or two activities suggested below to give students a written understanding of the material for the week. These types of activities may include primary documents or written response to lecture and can be very effective if you feel students might benefit from the opportunity to gather their thoughts before sharing them with the classroom

Questions and Key Terms

Every CIVICS student, regardless of grade level or school, must be able to answer the following questions while integrating these general concepts, terms, and historical events below by the end of the lesson. Feel free to extend this list as needed with your own terms depending on difficulty.

What is the difference between the Federal, State, and local governments? Over which areas do these respective groups have control? What things do state laws control? Federal laws?

What are some things in Boston regulated by the local government? Or the State? What about the Federal government? If you were creating a government, would you keep these assignments the same?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a federal division of power?

How can I participate in my government and why is this important?

- **Federal government:** The highest authority in the United States, made up of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches. The Federal government passes laws that apply to citizens in all 50 States. Its laws and treaties affect immigration, economics, international relations, national security, and the rights of US citizens.
- **State government:** Each of the 50 States has its own government subservient to the Federal government. These state governments are responsible for creating their own laws on state taxes, crime and punishment, vehicle operation, and worker's rights. These laws differ from state to state as each state has its own government. State governments are protected from excessive Federal interference by the Constitution.
- **Local government:** City or municipal governments specific to one area within a State. They handle all disputes and needs within their given area, but are subservient to State governments. A good example of a local government representative is a mayor.

Sample Lesson Plan

I. Opening Activity: Federal, Local, or State? - Brief Discussion (15 minutes)

Purpose:

Explain the difference between Federal, Local, and State governments in a warm-up game to get the class stimulated for the final review session to follow.

Materials:

Blackboard or whiteboard, erasable markers or chalk.

Method:

- ❖ Begin by explaining to the students that although we have spent so long talking about the government and separation of powers, there are actually three levels of government: Federal, State, and local.
- ❖ Use the whiteboard or a laptop to visually display two ideas of how power is divided among the three levels of government. That is, discuss that some powers are reserved specifically for one of the three levels, while others are overlapping between the levels (such as taxation). In other words, there are times when one level of government will act alone and others the levels work cooperatively.
- ❖ Everything we have discussed in the past pertains to the Federal Government, but many everyday rules, laws, taxes, etc. actually can belong to State and local governments.
 - If students are confused by the concept of State government, explain it in the context of Massachusetts. Ask students if they have seen the Massachusetts State House next to Boston Common (the large building with the gold dome). Explain that this building is where state laws are written, whereas Federal laws are written in Washington, D.C. Ask your students to think of any friends or family they may have outside of Massachusetts. Explain that both the students and their out-of-state friends and family must follow laws passed in Washington D.C., but the out-of-state friends do not have to follow the laws passed in Massachusetts unless they enter Massachusetts.
 - If students are still struggling with the concept of Federal and state laws, provide an example of a federal law and an example of a Massachusetts law and explain who has to follow them and who doesn't.
- ❖ Once students have a general understanding of the powers of the local, state, and Federal governments, have them guess which powers are reserved for whom. Here is a general sense of the power distribution to guide your examples you could use:
 - Declare War: Federal
 - Establish and maintain schools: local

- Regulate trade in Massachusetts: state
 - Conduct elections: state
 - Regulate foreign trade: federal
 - Make regulations for marriage: state
 - Regulate business in Virginia: state
 - Make treaties: federal
 - Take public health and safety measures: state
 - Levy taxes: both state and federal
 - Establish courts: both state and federal
 - Set curriculums for students: local (with state approval).
- ❖ Once the game is over, move into a discussion of which level of government has final say when multiple levels conflict. Explain that the federal law is considered the law of the land and therefore, if a Federal law ever conflicts with a state law, the Federal law will always take precedence. The Constitution is also a document of Federal law, so if a State law (or a Federal one) violates what is written in the Constitution, it can be overturned. Use these examples to reinforce
- Massachusetts bans the sale of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. President Trump says that's not fair, but there is no federal law that mentions Reese's. Are they illegal? (Yes)
 - Massachusetts bans the sale of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Congress passes a law that says that all US citizens have the right to purchase Peanut Butter Cups of their choice. Are they illegal in Massachusetts? (No)
 - Massachusetts bans the sale of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Congress passes a law that says that all US citizens have the right to purchase Peanut Butter cups of their choice, but the US Supreme Court says that the federal law is unconstitutional. Are Reese's cups illegal? (Yes)
- ❖ Be sure to explain the right answer in each instance, and have students repeat it to you in their own words. This is probably the trickiest part of the lesson, so don't hesitate to take your time here!

Variant Difficulty

The difficulty of this activity depends on the difficulty of the questions you ask and the amount of explanation you give beforehand. If you have an experienced class, consider playing the game more competitively like "Simon says" after a few rounds, where people in the wrong category are out. Certain laws (like when one can get a driver's license) are simple to absorb - more complicated laws like taxes get harder. Consider discussing these more difficult laws with older age groups.

To make the game slightly easier, you can also play it in reverse. Ask questions like "I have a pothole in my street. Who do I call?" and students have to decide local, State, or Federal.

If the students get bored quickly, find a sensitive way to discuss real issues - think about minimum wage, or if your students are mature enough, gay marriage.

If the activity is too hard, try to simplify the metaphor. Don't use peanut butter cups, but ask about an everyday issue. For example, if the Federal government, which always takes precedence, rules that you have to be 19 to drive, if the state government says you can drive at 16, who's correct?

II. Final Evaluation (15 mins)

Purpose:

Record the CIVICS programs' progress and identify areas of growth.

Materials:

Evaluations will be provided by the CIVICS program.

Method:

- ❖ Frame this evaluation as a way for CIVICS teachers to see what the students have learned and improve their own teaching. Do not provide direct assistance with content questions.

III. Semester Final Review Game: Civics Trivia for Sweet Prizes! (15 mins)

Purpose:

Give your students an opportunity to rehash everything that they have absorbed over a long semester in a fun game with, if you choose, candy prizes (for everyone). End the semester on a high note and leave your students with confidence.

Materials:

Blackboard or whiteboard, erasable markers or chalk to keep track of points. Candy prizes to give out every round (and additional grand prize if you want).

Method:

- ❖ Divide the class into teams of 3-4 kids. Be strategic and try to separate people who usually sit together, and pair more attentive students with those who may need some additional help.
- ❖ Going clockwise, ask each team a question (sample questions below). The other teams have to stay silent. The team can discuss the answer together before giving their response. If the answer is correct, the team gets a point and everyone on it earns a piece of candy. If not, the next team to raise their hand can try to answer the question and steal the point. Move to the

next team and repeat until you are out of questions.

- ❖ At the end of the game, the team with the most points can get another prize - doughnuts, cake, cookies, or the remainder of the candy. Only distribute prizes if your students have proven to be able to handle competition in the past. This way, students' feelings will not be hurt.
- ❖ Play the game for about 10-15 minutes.

Sample Questions:

What are the three branches of government?

Why do we have separation of powers?

What is judicial review?

How many Supreme Court justices are there?

What does it mean if a law is unconstitutional?

How many people are in the House and the Senate?

What is the difference between the House and the Senate?

Which body can ratify a treaty with a foreign country?

What does POTUS stand for?

What is a veto, and how can it be overruled?

America is an indirect democracy with an electoral college. What does this mean?

What are the two political parties in America?

If you are a registered Democrat, can you vote for a Republican, and vice versa?

Everyone has the right to eat skittles. Are skittles still illegal in Connecticut? Why or why not?

Who are your local representatives?

What are three ways I can get involved in politics?

What is something about civics I didn't know before?

Variant Difficulty

This is a review activity that is meant to be fun but challenging. To make the game harder, make the questions harder by asking for further elaboration (for example, instead of asking *what is a Supreme Court Justice*, also ask the participant to name one or two). You can make more difficult questions worth multiple points for added incentive.

You can also create a jeopardy game beforehand if the classroom has internet and projecting capabilities.

IV. Closing (5 minutes)

Purpose:

Now that the class is almost over, use the last section of the semester to wrap up any leftover questions and provide your students with inspiration.

Materials:

None

Method:

- ❖ Discuss how students think they can be involved in their communities, however they define them. Remind the students of their representatives and how to get in touch with them.
- ❖ Ask the students whether or not they have any remaining questions, doing your best to answer them.
- ❖ Each of the co-teachers should give a final speech expressing a reflection on the semester. What you say is at your discretion, but you should try to make sure the students feel empowered to participate in the political world around them. You might also consider making a card or another commemorative gesture for the class.

Variant Difficulty:

N/A. This is your last class, make it special! Thank you for all your hard work this semester.

Improv Suggestions

If you would prefer not to use the lesson plan above and you want to improvise instead, here are some thoughts to get you started (Keep in mind the types of activities you choose and the context of your classroom):

Kinesthetic

* Make the trivia game kinesthetic by doing a simulation or skit.

Audio/Visual

* Show some news clips about conflicts over States vs. Federal rights, and work with the students to parse out what is happening. Be sure to close with a detailed summary that leaves students with the understanding that Federal laws trump State laws, and State laws trump local laws, but there are certain categories of issues that states have an exclusive right to, and others that the Federal government has an exclusive right to.

* You can play any review game of your choice - the trivia game in the sample lesson plan is open-ended and can be modified to match the needs of your students. If they like Jeopardy, play it Jeopardy style and make a power point. If you want to divide the class into two lines, ask the

leader of each line a question so they compete in groups of two before going to the back to let the next group forward, that's fine. Participants can compete individually this way or for points with each line working as a team. Just make sure that the two lines have different numbers of students so no one is stuck competing against the same partner for the whole twenty minutes.

Reading/Writing

*Begin the lesson by having the students read the tenth amendment of the U.S Constitution. Then have them write down guesses of which powers listed in the original activity belong to which level of government by creating a Venn diagram. Go over the answers and discuss why each level must cooperate for federalism as a power distribution to function properly.

*You might consider writing the class a letter that you read together as a final gesture.

Teaching Log

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