



VOTE SMART

JUST THE FACTS

Lesson 6 - Unit Wrap Up

Standards: National Council for the Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

NCSS 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

NCSS 6: Power, Authority and Governance

Objectives:

This lesson is designed to familiarize students with the legislative process and to increase students' knowledge of their representatives and their duties in the House of Representatives.

SWBAT (students will be able to) understand how bills become laws

SWBAT identify their local representative

SWBAT understand what their representatives job duties include

Subject Matter:

American government, House of Representatives, local government, laws

Materials:

- Access to internet
- Pencils/paper
- Blackboard/whiteboard
- Attached worksheet

Procedure: (100-110 min)

Set/Hook/Warm Up

For this warm up activity, have students write the following questions on paper. Explain that students should rely on their previous knowledge of the legislative process to answer the following questions. Give students about 5-10 minutes to answer the questions.

1. What is a bill?
2. Who creates bills?
3. How does a bill become a law?

Lesson Essential Question: Who is your state representative and what are his or her job duties? How do representatives represent us?

Activity 1 - Find a Bill that Your Representative Has Introduced:

Using votesmart.org, have students look up their state representative's voting record/bills they have introduced. Have students spend a good 20 minutes doing this. Tell students to pick one bill they like/feel strongly about. (Based on students' computer ability, this could also be done as a class, however using the internet can help students develop their computer skills for research). After they have found information on their representatives, have students fill out the attached worksheet. Explain what their representatives do and that proposing bills is one of the main responsibilities of a representative.

Activity 2 - Act it Out (this may take the entire class period):

For this activity, students will be able to act out the process of how a bill becomes a law, while also demonstrating the work duties of House Representatives.

1. Assign students different roles, those roles include:
 - a. Citizens
 - b. Senators
 - c. Representatives
 - d. The President
2. Have the students assigned as citizens compose a bill they believe should be passed. Help students brainstorm by asking questions like "what is a problem right now in your community?" Examples could be improving recycling programs, ending graffiti, etc. Have citizens physically write their proposed bill on a piece of paper.
3. Have students assigned as representatives work closely with the citizens to draft up the proposed bill.
4. The students assigned as representatives will then discuss why this bill should or shouldn't become a law. Help probe questions with the students by asking them the following questions:
 - a. Who will this bill benefit?
 - b. What is it trying to do?
5. The students assigned as representatives will then vote on the bill. This can be done either verbally or written. If the students decide to pass the bill, it will move onto the students assigned as the senators. (If for some reason the students do not pass the bill, you can still continue onto the senators to see what would "hypothetically" happen if the bill was passed).
6. Students assigned as senators will discuss the bill much like the representatives did. After about 5 minutes of discussion the senators will vote on the bill. If the bill passes it will move onto the students assigned as president.
7. The students assigned as president will decide if the bill should be signed into law, or if the law will be vetoed. He/she must give a statement as to why he/she did or didn't sign the bill.
8. If at any point the bill fails, lead a discussion with the class why they think the bill failed. Ask them the following questions
 - a. Why did this bill not become a law?
 - b. Could there be changes made to the law to make it better?

- c. What exactly were everyone's roles in making this bill move through the process?
 - d. What did the representatives do to help this bill move forward? Is there anything they could have done differently?
9. If time permits, and students agree the bill can be improved, go through the process again. This time, hopefully the outcome will be different.

Cool Down:

- 1. What's one thing you like about your representative's policies based on today's lesson?
- 2. What's one thing you dislike about your representative's policies based on today's lesson?

Assessment:

The teacher will collect the "representative bill" worksheet and give a grade based on completion and accuracy. The teacher will informally assess student comprehension and participation during the "writing a letter" exercise.

Self-Reflection:

My Representatives Worksheet

Name:_____

Date:_____

Directions: Go to www.votesmart.org and look up information about your local representation. To find your representation, type your zip code into the search bar and scroll through the options.

1. Who is your state representative?
2. Who is your state senator?
3. Are any of your state representatives up for re-election this year?
4. What are some examples of bills proposed by your state senator?
5. What political issue do you care most about?
6. Pick one bill that has been proposed by your state representative/state senator.
7. After choosing a bill, compile a list of questions you have about the bill (examples: "Who does this bill benefit?", "What is the bill striving to accomplish?")
8. In your own words, what does representation mean?
9. In your opinion, what is the most important duty of a state representative/state senator?
10. Based on the information you have found, do you believe your state representative/state senators do a good job of representing you? Why or why not? What can they do differently?