



VOTE SMART

JUST THE FACTS

Lesson 4 - Three Levels of Government

Standards: National Council for the Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

NCSS 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

NCSS 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

NCSS 6: Power, Authority and Governance

Objectives:

SWBAT (students will be able to) name the three levels of government.

SWBAT understand the differences of powers and responsibilities held by local, state and national government in the USA.

SWBAT analyze primary sources to discover where these powers originated.

Subject Matter:

Local government, state government, national government, enumerated powers

Materials:

- Access to internet
- Projector or Smartboard
- Printed worksheets

Procedure: (60 min)

Set/Hook/Warm Up:

Show [this](#) Teachertube video on federalism. Before hitting play, ask them to take note of at least one federal power, one state power, and one shared power.

After the video is over, check for comprehension by asking students to try to explain what federalism is. Take a few answers, and when satisfied ask the lesson essential question.

Lesson Essential Question: What are the basic characteristics and functions of local, state and national government, and how do these three levels of government interact with each other?

Activity 1 - Class Discussion:

The system of local, state and national government is complex, overlapping and confusing. This activity is an opportunity for the teacher to walk students through the issue and answer any lingering questions from the warm up video. First, it is necessary to explain the difference between the local-to-state relationship and the state-to-national relationship. States have kept their own specific powers, laid out in the Constitution, that the National government cannot interfere with. Local governments, however, derive all of their power from state governments. Local governments do not have a distinct set of duties and responsibilities, so the functions we list for local governments are generalizations rather than set in stone rights or duties. You can conclude, from this design of government, that states are the base unit of American government. They charter municipalities and they ratified the Constitution. Next, write on the board the list of responsibilities from the “Lesson 4 Activity 1” document in randomized order. Go through the list, asking students if the responsibility should fall under local, state or national government. In order to give students a comprehensive study guide, ask them to make columns for local, state and national, and to write down each responsibility in the matching column. The teacher should also write these columns on the board, giving the students a correct list to copy. Have students think critically by asking why they believe each responsibility falls where it does.

Activity 2 – Constitution Primary Source Exercise:

This exercise is intended to make students recall the information they learned in Activity 1, while also giving them experience reading primary sources. Pass out the worksheet named “Lesson 4 Activity 2.” Allow students to complete in small groups, they should have everything they need to successfully complete the worksheet. Some of the wording might be tricky for them, so make sure to walk around looking to answer questions.

Activity 3 – Local Government Worksheet - Labeled “Lesson 4 Activity 3”:

This is a simple worksheet that should be used to get students thinking about their own local governments. Pass out the worksheet and answer any questions students may have. If computers are accessible, it would be productive to let students research their own local politicians on votesmart.org (steps below) or their local government’s website. Steps to use votesmart.org:

1. Go to votesmart.org
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click “[Offices and Officials](#)”
3. Under the “Office Type” scroll down menu, click “Local Legislative” or “Local Executive”
4. Choose your state using the “State” scroll down menu and Locality using the “Locality” scroll down menu
5. Click on a local politician

Cool Down Exercise:

Use the slides labeled “Lesson 4 Cool Down.” Make two teams out of the class to make the game more exciting. The way the game should work is that you pull up a slide with a distinguishing characteristic about one of the three levels of government. Instruct the students to raise their hands as soon as they think they have the answer to the slide. Call on

the first student to raise his/her hand, and if s/he answers correctly, award his/her team with a point. However, if s/he answers incorrectly, deduct a point from the team total. If nobody raises his/her hand at first, allow the teams to talk over what they believe the answer is. Depending on the score of the game and level of interest, offer more points for the harder questions at the end.

Assessment:

The teacher will collect the primary source exercise and local government worksheet, and give a grade based on completion and accuracy. The teacher will informally assess student comprehension and participation during the class discussion exercise.

Self-Reflection:

Teacher's List of Local, State, and Federal Government Responsibilities and Powers

Local:

Roadworks
Public Works
Waste Disposal
Parks & Recreation
Public Health (hospital administration)
Education Initiatives
Urban Planning
Economic Development

State:

Establish Local Governments
Issue Driver's Licenses
Regulate Intrastate Commerce
Conduct Elections
Ratifying Constitutional Amendments
Public Health and Safety
Possess Powers not Specified to National Government
Establish a State Constitution
Police

Federal:

Print Money
Declare War
Establish an Army and Navy
Enter into Treaties with Foreign Governments
Regulate Commerce
Establish a Post Office

Source:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/federal-state-local-government-responsibilities.pdf>

Primary Sources Exercise

Name: _____

Throughout this lesson you have learned about the powers delegated to the national government and powers kept by the states. But how exactly were these powers delegated? Pasted below are two excerpts, one from the Constitution and one from the Bill of Rights. Read each excerpt, and underline any powers that you recognize from the previous activity. Next, Fill out the lines underneath with which powers are delegated, and who they are dedicated to.

1. Article 1. Section. 8:

“The Congress shall have Power

To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

Powers Delegated (Choose Powers Listed In Earlier Exercise):

These Powers Are Delegated To _____

2. Amendment 10:

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

Powers Delegated (Choose Powers Listed In Earlier Exercise):

These Powers Are Delegated To _____

Sources:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html

Local Government Worksheet

Name: _____

Using what you have learned about the responsibilities of local government, think about what your local government does in your town! Fill out the questions below to the best of your ability.

1. Name any local politicians in your town, city or county. List their names and their positions.

2. Name any local projects or jobs you can think of in your town, city, or county. Explain what the project is and why you believe it is a local, not state or federal, project. (Example: building a town park)

3. Think of one local project that you would like your local government to start. Explain the project, why you would like to see it be done, and why you believe it is the local government's responsibility to do it.
