



VOTE SMART

JUST THE FACTS

Lesson 1 - What is a Special Interest Group?

Standards: National Council for the Social Studies

NCSS 5: Individuals, Groups and Institutions

Objectives:

SWBAT (students will be able to) understand what a special interest group is and what kind of issues they address.

Subject Matter:

Many of us have things we are interested in or care a lot about such as sports, music or community service and often times we join a group with other people who have the same interest as us. Sometimes we even give our time and our money to support the goals of these groups. This is also how special interest groups work. A special interest group is a group of adults who have a shared interest in promoting a particular political belief or idea that they care about. Over the course of the next few days we'll learn about what kind of special interest groups there are and how they influence our government.

Materials:

- Lined paper and pencil

Procedure: (20-30 min)

1. With students seated at their desks ask them about the groups or activities that they participate in. What is the common interest shared by everyone in the group? What is the goal of the group? Have students fold a piece of paper into thirds and write the answers to these questions in the first two columns. Mention that special interest groups operate in a very similar way in that they are made up of people who have a common political interest.
2. Ask the students how they contribute to these groups? Do they give their time to their group/activity? Do they give any money/fundraise for their group/activity? Have them write their answers to these questions in the third column of their paper. Explain to students that in order for a special interest group to accomplish its political goals, it needs people to give their time and money to it.
3. If you have time, you can also have students name any groups/organizations that they think may be a special interest group and why or why not they are a special interest group.

4. Review the key concepts of special interest groups and have the students describe in their own words what a special interest group is. Inform students that for the next few days they are going to learn more about the different kinds of special interest groups and how they influence our government.