

Political Science

Little Chute
Social Studies

Grades 10 - 12, .5 Credits

Course Overview

Political Science is a course designed to increase student knowledge and understanding about the system of democracy used in America. Students will not only discuss some of the founding principles of democracy, but also the application of knowledge to situations where students have to make decisions. This is a course where students work through situations with the guidance of the teacher. Students need to be motivated to read and ask questions and not rely on the teacher to tell them information. There is a lot of group activity and interaction in this course.

Scope and Sequence

Timeframe	Unit	Instructional Topics
3 Day(s)	Unit 1- The Nature of Power, Politics, & Government	1.1: Understanding Vocabulary 1.2: Five Political Games
3 Day(s)	Unit 2- Comparing Forms of Government	2.2 Different forms of government 2.3 Social contract theory
4 Day(s)	Unit 3- Federalism: National, State, & Local Powers	3.1 Types of federalism 3.2 Implementation of federalism
4 Day(s)	Unit 4- Citizen Participation in a Democracy	4.1 Voter behavior 4.2 Citizen participation in local, state and national politics
4 Day(s)	Unit 5- Parties, Interest Groups, & Public Policy	5.1 Functions of political parties 5.2 Political Ideology
3 Day(s)	Unit 6- Public Opinion and the Media	6.1 Public Opinion 6.2 Role of the Media in shaping political narrative
4 Day(s)	Unit 7- Political Campaigns and Elections	7.1 The process of a political campaign 7.2 National, State and Local Elections
4 Day(s)	Unit 8- Lawmakers and Legislatures	8.1 Meet your representatives
3 Day(s)	Unit 9- Congressional Lawmaking	9.1 Legislative Process
3 Day(s)	Unit 10-: Chief Executives and Bureaucracies	10.1 Roles of the Presidency 10.2 Powers of the Presidency
3 Day(s)	Unit 11- Courts, Judges, & the Law	11.1 Structure of the Court System

		11.2 Due Process and Appeals
4 Day(s)	Unit 12- The Criminal Justice System	12.1 Structure of the Criminal Justice System 12.2 Functions of the Criminal Justice System
4 Day(s)	Unit 13- The Roots of American Democracy	13.1 The causes of the American Revolution 13.2 The failures of the Articles of Confederation
4 Day(s)	Unit 14- The United States Constitution	14.1 Constitutional Convention and Constitutional Compromises 14.2 Checks and Balances 14.3 Separation of Powers 14.4 Federalism 14.5 Debates between Antifederalists and the Federalists
3 Day(s)	Unit 15- The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties	15.1 The rights and liberties in the 10 Amendments 15.2 The rights and liberties in the subsequent Amendments. 15.3 Landmark Supreme Court Cases

Academic Vocabulary

See Individual Units

Materials and Resources

See individual units

Course Details

UNIT: Ch 1 The Nature of Power, Politics, and Government -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students examine the concept of power and how it influences politics and shapes government authority.

Preview Students complete a "personal power assessment" to evaluate power in their own lives.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students participate in a trading game to explore how people gain and exercise power.

Processing Students analyze quotations that express various views about power to determine which they believe are most true about power, politics, and their own lives.

Academic Vocabulary

power
authority
legitimacy
mandate of heaven
divine right of kings
social-contract theory
government
public good
coercion
revenue
polity
nation-state
sovereignty
politics
institution

Unit Level Key Questions

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- analyze the relationship between power and authority.
- describe the purpose and role of government.
- explain how political behavior is a natural function of society.
- evaluate differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power and authority.

TOPIC: Understanding vocabulary -- 0 Day(s)

Description

Students will demonstrate their understanding of key vocabulary by creating a logging words and images of the terms that follow. This includes the following --

- create a symbol or an icon to represent the term.
- write a definition of the term in your own words.
- write a sentence using the term.

Academic Vocabulary

power
authority
legitimacy
mandate of heaven
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revenue
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sovereignty
politics
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Learning Targets

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of important political terms.

Students will use a logging words and images to show not only the definition of a word, but putting it into their own words, and creating images that help them demonstrate the concept to others.

Assessment: The use of logging words and images and a checklist for the tool. Class discussion.

UNIT: Ch 2 Comparing Forms of Government -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students investigate the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of governments and economic systems.

Preview Students debate the benefits and drawbacks of having various groups of people at their school make the rules.

Activity In a Response Group activity, students take on the role of representatives at a constitutional convention that is charged with creating a stable government and an economic system for a fictitious, newly independent country.

Processing Students suggest government and economic systems based on a new country's various priorities.

Academic Vocabulary

democracy
monarchy
dictatorship
market economy
traditional economy
republic
parliament
command economy

monarchy, dictatorship, theocracy,
single-party state, direct democracy, parliamentary
democracy, presidential democracy
unitary system, federal system,
confederal system
traditional economy, market economy,
command economy

Unit Level Key Questions

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- analyze the origins and development of governments over time and classify various political systems.
- analyze the advantages and disadvantages of various political systems and compare the ways in which power is distributed in systems of shared power.
- compare and contrast constitutional democracies with authoritarian regimes; presidential and parliamentary governments; and

federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.

- classify and evaluate various economic systems and identify the role of government in each.

UNIT: Ch 6 Federalism: National, State, and Local Powers -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Students analyze the purpose and function of the U.S. federal system of government, identifying the roles and responsibilities of national, state, and local governments.

Preview Students examine the advantages and disadvantages of sharing decision making with their parents.

Activity In a Response Group activity, students discuss three case studies illustrating the challenges of defining state and national powers in the federal system.

Processing Students create a public service flyer to help young people understand how to use the federal system to create change in issues of importance to them.

Academic Vocabulary

expressed powers
interstate commerce
intrastate commerce
unfunded mandate
devolution
apportionment
gerrymandering
redistricting

Unit Level Key Questions

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify the benefits and drawbacks of the federal system.
- analyze historical and current challenges to defining national and state powers.
- summarize the roles and responsibilities of national, state, and local governments.
- demonstrate how to use the federal system to create change in a public issue.

UNIT: Ch 7 Citizen Participation in a Democracy -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship and how citizens can influence all levels of government.

Preview Students analyze a photograph of a lunch counter sit-in and predict the problem being addressed and the tactics people in the picture are using to try to effect change.

Activity In a Visual Discovery activity, students identify forms of civic participation that individuals or groups

have used to effect change on the local, national, and international levels.
Processing Students identify and develop plans of action to address particular issues.

Academic Vocabulary

citizenship
lawful permanent resident
undocumented immigrant
naturalization
ideology
liberalism
conservatism
civil society

Unit Level Key Questions

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- examine paths to U.S. citizenship and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens.
- analyze methods of bringing about political change or maintaining the status quo.
- identify forms of civic participation.
- develop a plan to address a local, national, or international problem.

UNIT: Ch 8 Parties, Interest Groups, and Public Policy -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the influential role of political parties and interest groups in government and public policy.

Preview Students analyze their political beliefs and reflect on their preconceived notions about, and affiliations with, political parties.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students work in groups to create informational Web sites about simulated presidential candidates and interest groups, before participating in a meet-and-greet to learn about the relationship between politicians and interest groups.

Processing Students register to vote and then answer questions about their party choice and the role of parties in government and society.

(Note: this lesson is the first of a three-part Experiential Exercise. See the second option under "Deeper Coverage" for tips on how to connect this activity to the activities students will participate in for lessons "Public Opinion and Media" and "Political Campaigns and Elections.")

Academic Vocabulary

political party
interest group
platform
two-party system
pluralism
political action
committee (PAC)
lobbying
public policy

Unit Level Key Questions

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- analyze the roots of political parties and the role parties play in the political process and public policy development.
- identify the organization of political parties, including third parties, and evaluate how participation in parties affects the government.
- analyze the platforms of political candidates and parties.
- evaluate the significance of interest groups in terms of their goals, methods, and influence on government and public policy.

UNIT: Ch 9 Public Opinion and the Media -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the role that public opinion and the media play in American politics.

Preview Students analyze a political advertisement and identify the purpose of such media.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students work in groups to analyze persuasive techniques and then create and evaluate campaign commercials for presidential candidates.

Processing Students write position statements on the reliability and effectiveness of campaign commercials.

(Note: This lesson is the second part of a three-part Experiential Exercise. See the second option in "Deeper Coverage" for tips on how to connect this activity to the activity students participated in for the lesson "Parties, Interest Groups, and Public Policy.")

Academic Vocabulary

public opinion

political socialization

opinion poll

margin of error

mass media

spin

media bias

negative campaigning

Unit Level Key Questions

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- analyze the role of the media in shaping public opinion.
- evaluate the extent to which the media act as a free press.
- analyze the influence of media coverage, political advertising, and public opinion polls on local, state, and national elections.
- identify persuasive techniques and their application in U.S. campaigns.
- write position statements about the influence of political advertising on voters.

UNIT: Ch 10 Political Campaigns and Elections -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students study the U.S. electoral process.

Preview Students organize the steps in the electoral process for a presidential candidate and then determine how well this process helps the country to elect the best individual as president.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students participate in parts of the electoral process in a presidential race, from the primaries to the Electoral College.

Processing Students develop ideas for improving the U.S. electoral system.

(Note: This lesson is the third part of a three-part Experiential Exercise. See the second option under "Deeper Coverage" for tips on how to connect this activity to the activities students participated in the previous two lessons)

Academic Vocabulary

plurality
winner-take-all system
primary election
general election
caucus
party base
stump speech
coattail effect

Unit Level Key Questions

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify ways in which voting rights in the United States have expanded over time and identify the current qualifications for voting.
- analyze the process for nominating candidates at all levels of government.
- plan for and participate in a debate of current political issues.
- identify how elections are funded and how funding is regulated.
- analyze party identification and voter behavior in the United States.

UNIT: CH 11 - Lawmakers and Legislatures -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the structure and important functions of the legislative branch of government.

Preview Students "meet" a newly elected member of Congress and identify information from the representative's background that may help him be an effective legislator.

Activity In a Social Studies Skill Builder, students become staff members for a newly elected member of Congress and participate in an orientation for new congressional staff to learn important aspects of being an effective legislator.

Processing Students research their own national or state legislators and evaluate their effectiveness.

Academic Vocabulary

constituent
pork
standing committee
joint committee
conference committee

appropriations
joint resolution
casework

Unit Level Key Questions

What makes an effective legislator?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- analyze the formal and informal qualifications for members of Congress.
- identify the enumerated powers of the legislative branch and the checks provided by the Constitution to that branch on the other branches of government.
- compare the organization of the legislative branch at the national and state levels.
- analyze graphs, tables, diagrams, and political cartoons to understand the responsibilities and challenges of being a legislator.

UNIT: CH 12 - Congressional Lawmaking -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the process by which the legislative branch passes bills as well as about other factors that influence how laws really get made.

Preview Students propose bills that they would like to see passed into laws and create mental flowcharts of the steps they think are involved in making a law.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students create a mock House of Representatives to experience steps in the legislative process--including working in committee, party caucuses, and floor debates--as well as other factors that influence the lawmaking process.

Processing Students create mental flowcharts reflecting their increased understanding of the official process of how bills are passed through Congress as well as the other factors that influence that process.

Academic Vocabulary

congressional page
seniority rule
filibuster
cloture
hold
rider
Christmas tree bill
logrolling

Unit Level Key Questions

How do laws really get made?

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- explain the formal process of how a bill travels through Congress, including the role of committees.
- identify other factors that influence the lawmaking process.
- practice their persuasive speech and debate skills.

UNIT: Ch 13 - Chief Executives and Bureaucracies -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students identify various roles that modern presidents fulfill and examine the structure and functions of the executive branch.

Preview Students examine a daily diary of a recent president to identify presidential roles and duties.

Activity In a Problem Solving Groupwork activity, students create interactive exhibits on a day in the life of a modern president for four presidential libraries and museums.

Processing Students write and conduct an opinion survey to evaluate the current president's job performance.

Academic Vocabulary

reprieve

pardon

cabinet

executive order

bureaucracy

pocket veto

administration

whistle-blower

Unit Level Key Questions

What qualities do modern presidents need to fulfill their many roles?

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- compare the formal and informal qualifications of national, state, and local chief executives.
- identify the responsibilities and roles of the modern president and the ways in which presidential power has increased over time.
- explain the organization and functions of the executive branch.
- describe the role and impact of government bureaucracies.
- evaluate the current president based on performance in various presidential roles.

UNIT: 14 - Courts, Judges, and the Law -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students learn about the organization and function of the judicial system.

Preview Students analyze and discuss a montage of images that relate to the court system.

Activity In a Response Group activity, students analyze primary source documents, images, and a recording, as well as data and diagrams, to determine which type of court each set of information represents.

Processing Students write a comment for a blog in which they evaluate how effectively the U.S. judicial system ensures justice for all.

Academic Vocabulary

criminal law

civil law

burden of proof

defendant

prosecution

plaintiff

writ of certiorari

legal brief

Unit Level Key Questions

How is the U.S. judicial system organized to ensure justice?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local courts and the interrelationships among the various types of courts.
- determine the role that judges play in the court system and describe the ways they are appointed.
- explain the structure, function, and process of the Supreme Court.
- state and support an opinion on how effective the U.S. judicial system is in ensuring justice for all.

UNIT: 15 - The Criminal Justice System -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students examine the stages of the criminal justice system as well as the constitutional rights of those accused of a crime.

Preview Students reflect on a scenario in which class members are accused of a crime.

Activity In a Writing for Understanding activity, students review the criminal case of a death row inmate and write an amicus brief in support of or opposing his claim that his constitutional rights were denied.

Processing Students write a letter to the editor stating and defending a position on how just the U.S. criminal justice system is.

Academic Vocabulary

misdemeanor

felony
grand jury
indictment
arraignment
plea bargain
restitution
incarceration

Unit Level Key Questions

From doing the crime to doing time: How just is our criminal justice system?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify the constitutional rights of individuals in the criminal justice system.
- describe what happens during each stage of the criminal justice process.
- explain how an individual's due process rights uphold the principles of limited government and judicial review.
- analyze whether a defendant was afforded due process in the criminal justice system.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student
Student Handout 1 copy per pair of students
Information Master
Guide To Reading Notes

UNIT: CH 17 - Creating American Foreign Policy -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students examine the tools of American foreign policy, as well as the people, institutions, and worldviews that shape it.

Preview Students examine a list of U.S. foreign policy goals and identify which they believe are most and least important.

Activity In a Response Group activity, students assume the role of members of the National Security Council to advise the president on three foreign policy scenarios.

Processing Students analyze U.S. involvement in a current foreign policy event.

Academic Vocabulary

foreign policy
globalization
diplomacy
ambassador
diplomatic immunity
diplomatic recognition
summit
sanction

Unit Level Key Questions

How should the United States conduct foreign policy?

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify and give examples of U.S. foreign policy goals.
- identify the tools used to carry out U.S. foreign policy.
- describe the powers that the U.S. Constitution gives the president and Congress in the area of foreign affairs.
- analyze U.S. involvement in a current foreign policy event as reported in a news article.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student
Student Handout A-C: 1 of each per student
Information Master
Visuals
Guide To Reading Note
photograph of the president optional

UNIT: CH 18 - Confronting Global Issues -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students examine the structure, purpose, and work of international organizations.

Preview Students consider the advantages and disadvantages of international organizations responding to global climate change.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students assume the role of delegates to the United Nations to debate a fictitious draft resolution on global climate change.

Processing Students research an international organization and evaluate its effectiveness in responding to a global issue.

Academic Vocabulary

intergovernmental
organization (IGO)
nongovernmental
organization (NGO)
global warming
collective security
sustainable development
convention
greenhouse effect
protocol

Unit Level Key Questions

How effectively do international organizations respond to global issues?

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- identify the purposes and functions of various types of international organizations.
- contrast the strengths and limitations of international organizations.
- debate a global issue from the perspective of a specific country.
- evaluate the goals and work of an international organization.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student

Student Handout A: 1 per student; B: 1 per pair of students copied onto heavy paper or cardstock; C: 1 per pair of students

Information Master

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Visuals

UNIT: CH 3 - The Roots of American Democracy -- 4 Day(s)**Description**

Overview

Students trace the evolution of democratic government in the United States by analyzing the political philosophies, documents, and historical figures that shaped its development.

Preview Students compare ancient Greek and Roman buildings with those in Washington, D.C., to predict how ancient ideas influenced the United States.

Activity In an Experiential Exercise, students "walk through" the National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol to interview historical figures about key ideas that influenced democratic government in the United States.

Processing Students compose journal entries on the writing and ratification of the Constitution from the perspective of delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

Academic Vocabulary

representative

government

rule of law

limited government

individual rights

separation of powers

popular sovereignty

constitutionalism

majority rule

Unit Level Key Questions

What ideas gave birth to the world's first modern democratic nation?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- evaluate the historical ideas and political philosophies that shaped the development of the U.S. government.
- summarize key political principles expressed in the foundational documents of the United States.
- examine the debates and events that led to the writing and ratification of the Constitution.
- analyze the ideas expressed in the Constitution from the perspective of a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student

Notebook Handout 1 for every 4 students, cut apart

Student Handout A: 1 per pair, B and C: 1 biography and corresponding mask per pair; D: 1 per student

Guide To Reading Notes

Visuals

UNIT: CH 4 - The United States Constitution -- 4 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students examine the Constitution to understand its guiding principles and the basic structure of the government it created.

Preview Students examine an outline of the Constitution and draw inferences about the intentions of the framers in creating our government.

Activity In a Social Studies Skill Builder, students delve into the Constitution during three engaging challenges that require them to examine specific provisions of the document as well as its overarching principles.

Processing Students propose amendments to the Constitution and describe why they believe these changes are needed.

Academic Vocabulary

due process

republican government

checks and balances

federalism

independent judiciary

strict construction

loose construction

judicial review

Unit Level Key Questions

How and why did the framers distribute power in the Constitution?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- examine the fundamental governing principles on which the Constitution is based and how those principles are embodied in the document.
- analyze how the Constitution establishes a limited government in which powers are distributed among different levels and branches.
- summarize how the various elements of the Constitution exemplify efforts by the framers to divide power.
- propose and defend amendments to the Constitution.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student

Notebook Handout 1 per student

Student Handout A and C: 3 copies of each, cut apart; B, D, and E: 1 of each per pair Information Master

Visuals

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UNIT: CH 5 - The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties -- 3 Day(s)

Description

Overview

Students study the Bill of Rights, with a particular focus on debates over the protection of civil liberties contained in the First

Amendment.

Preview Students examine a school-based situation involving a conflict of rights and then explain what they think is fair.

Activity In a Problem Solving Groupwork activity, students simulate a Supreme Court hearing on a First Amendment case that focuses on a conflict of rights.

Processing Students examine a current event involving a conflict of rights and argue what they believe is constitutional and fair.

Academic Vocabulary

civil liberties

civil rights

incorporation

libel

slander

prior restraint

self-incrimination

double jeopardy

Unit Level Key Questions

How are your rights defined and protected under the Constitution?

Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

- examine the Bill of Rights and Supreme Court decisions and explain the evolution of the first 10 amendments.
- discuss the meaning and significance of each right secured by the Bill of Rights.
- debate landmark Supreme Court cases to explore what happens when rights conflict.
- evaluate a current situation involving a conflict of rights to determine what they believe is constitutional and fair.

Materials and Resources

Notebook Guide 1 per student

Notebook Handout 1 per student

Student Handout A-D: 20 copies of each; E: 1 per group

Information Master)

Visuals

Guide To Reading Notes