

CLOSE UP CIVIC LITERACY PROGRAM FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS

MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON PLANS



CLOSE UP[®]
WASHINGTON DC



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Goals: In the opening session, students will get to know each other through a series of community-building components in order to have productive and thoughtful conversations throughout the course. Students will then explore issues that are important to them and their communities. Finally, students will be introduced to the structure of the U.S. government and the Preamble to the Constitution.

Objectives: Students will:

- Build community by setting group norms and sharing information about where they are from with others.
- Consider issues that are important to them and their communities.
- Examine political values.
- Write their own modern-day version of the Preamble to the Constitution.
- Analyze the powers of the three branches of government through case studies.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; enough computers with internet access for 3-4 students to share (laptops would be ideal); whiteboard (or Smart Board)

Materials: [Session 1 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); cocktail party tokens, cut out (one per student); three sets of government powers and responsibilities cards, cut out; three pieces of flipchart (labeled Executive, Legislative, Judicial); extra flipchart; markers; pens/pencils

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (20 minutes)

1. Pull up the slideshow's welcome slide.
2. Welcome students and pass out guidebooks, pens/pencils (if needed), and cocktail party tokens. Have students put their name on their guidebook and let them know they will be using them for the whole program. (If possible, designate a space in the room where students can leave their it instead of taking them home each week.) **(5 minutes)**
3. Introduce the cocktail party activity. Explain to students that they will be getting into groups on the basis of the attributes on their cards: number, letter, shape, color, and animal. When they get into their groups, they will introduce themselves each time and answer a question listed on the PowerPoint.
4. Start the activity, being sure to get students into groups first, then asking the question on the PowerPoint. Suggested questions include: **(10 minutes)**
 - What is the best activity for a rainy day?
 - What fictional world would you like to visit?
 - If you were a journalist, what kind of news would you write about?
 - Which person has influenced your life the most and why?
 - What issue or problem will have the greatest impact on your generation?
5. Have a few students share their responses to the last question after everyone is back in their seats.
6. Using the slideshow, go over the goals of the program, provide the program overview, and cover the agenda for the day. **(5 minutes)**

Community Guidelines (20 minutes)

7. Transition to creating community guidelines. Explain to students that they are going to form a learning community over the next eight weeks. Just like in any community, people may not always agree or have the same experiences as each other, so it is important to set and agree upon guidelines at the beginning that explain the expectations for the group. **(1 minute)**
8. Have students think to themselves about a group, club, or team that they have been a part of that they really enjoyed. What made it fun and successful? Also, have students consider a group, club, or team that they did not particularly enjoy. Why wasn't it fun or successful?
9. Tell students that they will get into groups and appoint a facilitator. Using the slideshow, explain that a facilitator will: **(1 minute)**
 - Help the group stay on task.
 - Encourage each member of the group to participate.
 - Keep any single person from dominating the conversation.
 - Help the group achieve the goal on time.
10. Break students into groups of 4-6. Ask them to appoint a facilitator and have them come get instructions and a sheet of flipchart. Half of the groups will receive a piece of flipchart that says, "Our community will..." and half will receive one that says, "Our community will not..." Remind students to be as specific as they can be. For example, we all know that respect is important, but what does it actually look like? What are some specific things we can do to make sure we are being respectful? **(2 minutes)**
11. Give students **7 minutes** to brainstorm their initial lists. Then, combine groups. All of the "Will" groups will join together and all of the "Will not" groups will join together. Students will have **8 minutes** to combine, refine, and agree upon their lists, writing them down on a new sheet of flipchart titled "Our community will..." and "Our community will not..."
12. Have the two groups share out their lists, giving space for the opposite group to make any suggestions or changes to the list. The entire group should approve of the final lists.
13. Ask students: "How will we uphold these guidelines?" Take a few responses.

Where We're From (25 minutes)

14. Explain to students that becoming a responsive and productive community takes time and requires that people get to know each other. Explain that in the next component, students will share a little about themselves and their personal communities and experiences. Share that they will be creating a "Where I'm From" poem individually, and then creating a "Where We're From" poem in small groups. **(1 minute)**
15. Explain that when thinking about where they are from, they can think of any community or place they call home or have called home. Their responses do not have to be from their current neighborhood, city, or state if they do not want to use those places. **(1 minute)**
16. Using the slideshow, read the example "Where I'm From" poem for students. (See the example at the end of the lesson plan.)
17. Have students open their guidebooks to the page with the "Where I'm From" template. Explain the template suggestions (in parentheses).
18. Tell students they'll have **7 minutes** to work independently using the template. Be sure to let them know that they will be sharing at least one line from their poem with a small group to create a new poem, "Where We're From." They do not have to share their entire poem with their group if they do not want to.

19. Get students into groups of 5-6 and have them share one line from their poem to build a “Where We’re From” poem. Students should appoint a facilitator and a recorder. The lines do not have to match the “Where I’m From” template. For example, every student could share the same line from their individual poems and a new poem would be made up of those lines. Give students **8 minutes** to create the “Where We’re From” poem and record it in their guidebooks.
20. Have each group share their “Where We’re From” poem out loud. **(5 minutes)**
21. After all of the groups have shared, take a few responses to the following question: **(2 minutes)**
 - What were some major themes or ideas that were shared among the groups?

Break (5 minutes)

Issues We Care About (20 minutes)

22. Transition to talking about community issues. Explain that communities of every level work to solve problems. In order to do so, they must identify and prioritize the problems they face. **(1 minute)**
23. Start with a whole-group brainstorm, asking students to list as many issues or problems in their communities as they can think of. Help students get specific. For example, if a student lists pollution, ask them how they see pollution every day. If a student says education, ask them what parts of education they are concerned about. Try to get a substantial and diverse list. Record this list on flipchart, a whiteboard, or a Smart Board. **(4 minutes)**
24. Tell students they will work in small groups to categorize these issues in order to help them determine the issues that are most important to address. Divide students into groups of 5-6, have them appoint a facilitator, and give them **8 minutes** to categorize the brainstormed issue list in the table in their guidebook. Let students know that these issues can fit in more than one category because there are many ways to decide the importance of an issue. The issues will be categorized as:
 - Issues that have the biggest effect on our everyday lives
 - Issues that might affect the most people in our communities
 - Issues that policymakers should prioritize
25. As the groups are finishing up, distribute flipchart and tell the facilitators to have the groups list their top six most important issues.
26. When students are finished, have students display their flipchart and allow them to walk around and observe the other groups’ lists. **(2 minutes)**
27. Highlight any trends. Then, work as a whole group to identify the 6-8 issues that students think are the most important to address in their community and would like to explore in the next component and in a few components in the next session. **(5 minutes)**

Community Inventory (35 minutes)

28. Transition to the community inventory. Explain that after identifying and prioritizing issues that are the most important to address in a community, the community should determine what strengths and resources are available and what they might need from outside the community. Let students know that when we are thinking of a community, we mean our local community or things relevant to the state of California. **(1 minute)**
29. Ask students: “What are the strengths and needs of our community?” Record responses in a T-chart on the whiteboard/Smart Board. Provide an example if students are having trouble. “Being close-knit” could be a strength; “affordable housing” could be a need. **(4 minutes)**

30. Ask students to choose an issue they would like to explore for this session and the next session from the 6-8 identified above. They are not locked into this issue for the rest of the program. They will have the opportunity to work on a different issue later in the program if they would like. It is okay if the groups are uneven, but try to have a minimum of four students in an issue area. If one issue area group is very large, invite students to a smaller issue group; if students are unwilling to move, split them into two smaller groups. **(4 minutes)**
31. Once students are in their groups, point them to the table in their guidebook and explain that they will be researching resources the community already has that can help solve problems relevant to their issue area. Provide an example for each of the categories: **(4 minutes)**
- Government services: Example – regarding problems with public transit, the government may have a director of city transportation who is available to meet with the public to discuss concerns.
 - Businesses: Example – regarding financial literacy, a local bank may provide free resources to help people with basic skills such as balancing a checkbook or applying for a loan.
 - Nonprofit organizations or charities: Example – regarding the issue of college affordability, the local YWCA may offer a scholarship to students who are not able to afford college tuition.
 - Community groups: Example – regarding the issue of the availability of healthy food, a local gardening club may donate produce to a local food bank.
 - Individuals: Example – regarding the issue of homelessness, an individual could hold a bake sale to raise money for weather-appropriate clothing for those experiencing homelessness.
32. Distribute laptops to groups, 1-2 per group, or send students to computers to work. If students have phones that can access the internet, invite them to use them for research as well, although let them know they do not have to. Have students use their technology to research and fill out the table in their guidebook. **(15 minutes)**
33. Have student groups share their issue and the list of resources/supports their community holds with the whole group. **(4 minutes)**
34. Reflect with students: **(3 minutes)**
- Is there any overlap among issue areas?
 - Where might there be holes in the support structure of the community? In other words, what supports or organizations were missing from your list that you expected to find?

Break (5 minutes)

Identifying and Prioritizing Political Values (40 minutes)

35. Transition to discussing political values. Tell students that when deciding on a solution to a problem a community faces, the community must consider and balance many different points of view and values. The values people use to make policy decisions are called political values. List the six examples that they will study in more depth: liberty, security, equality, equity, private interests, and the common good. **(1 minute)**
36. Explain to students that political values differ from personal values such as honesty or optimism, because political values provide a reason to choose a given policy. Generally, many policies or laws could help promote individual liberty, but few policies or laws would help promote honesty. **(1 minute)**
37. Divide students into groups of 5-6 and have each group appoint a facilitator. Using the guidebook, have students discuss and record their initial understanding of the six values. **(7 minutes)**
38. As the groups are finishing their discussion, point the facilitators to the matching activity in the guidebook. **(8 minutes)**

39. When students are finished, go over the matching activity and the provided definitions using the slideshow. Ask the groups to discuss the similarities and differences between the definitions they initially proposed. Circulate among the groups, listening to the conversations and, when the discussion is done, share out some of the most productive and thoughtful responses that students shared with each other. **(5 minutes)**
40. Assign each group one of the six political values. Have students work together to answer the discussion questions after examining the curfew law provided in the guidebook. When all of the groups are finished, have each group share their responses with the whole group. **(8 minutes)**
41. Tell students that when people prioritize different political values, it can be difficult to agree on a policy to address a community issue or problem. Ask students to get into their issue groups (from earlier) and appoint a facilitator. **(1 minute)**
42. Ask students to brainstorm the values that may be in tension when people look to solve this issue, making it difficult for people to arrive at a solution. Have students record those values in their guidebook. **(5 minutes)**
43. Ask students to individually determine which of the six values they would prioritize when making a decision about their issue. **(1 minute)**
44. Have students conduct a Take-a-Stand with the six values. Which value do they prioritize the most? **(2 minutes)**
45. Ask students to individually reflect (there is no need to share out unless there is extra time): Are there times when you might prioritize a different value if making a decision about a different issue? Why or why not? **(1 minute)**

Lunch

Examining the Preamble (60 minutes)

46. Transition from talking about political values to talking about the founding of the United States. Let students know that the values of the founding fathers (the men responsible for drafting the Declaration of Independence, leading the American Revolution, and writing the documents that set up our government, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson) can be seen in the structure of U.S. government, laid out in the Constitution. **(1 minute)**
47. Tell students they will watch a short excerpt from a video about the timeline of the founding of the country. Provide background on the founding of the nation using [this video](#) (4:23-8:12).
48. Explain to students that the Constitution forms the basis of our government. The founding fathers of the new United States wanted to correct some of the problems they saw in the British government they had just rejected. They did not want a dictator or king; they wanted citizens to be able to have a say in the government. They also wanted the power of the government to be split up so no one person could take control or take power away from the people. Explain that we will be looking at the structure of the U.S. government in more detail in the next component and next session. **(1 minute)**
49. Explain to students that the Preamble provides the purpose for our government. It is not legally binding in the way that the rest of the Constitution is. Rather, it explains what the founding fathers thought the national government was to do for the country and its people.
50. Using the slideshow, read the Preamble out loud to students. Then conduct a close reading of the Preamble, breaking down each clause and asking students to explain and record the meaning of each clause in their own modern words in their guidebooks (see the attachments for a Close Reading Guide) **(8 minutes)**
51. Conduct a Think-Pair-Share. Ask students to discuss what political values they see within the document. **(3 minutes)**
52. Tell students that they will now have the opportunity to write their own modern Preamble. The Constitution was drafted in 1787; much has changed in American society since then. Their new Preamble

should reflect the political values they hold and explain what the government should do for the people.

53. Put students into groups of 4-6 and have them appoint a facilitator. Have them answer the following questions as a group and record notes in their guidebooks. Allow **7 minutes** for discussion.
 - Why do we need a government?
 - What should the government do? What should it not do?
 - What values should be evident in a modern Preamble?
54. Once students wrap up their conversations, explain that they will now have **15 minutes** to write their own Preambles. Circulate to assist students and answer questions.
55. Have each group share out their Preamble. **(10 minutes)**
56. Reflect on students' work by leading a whole-group discussion of the following questions: **(10 minutes)**
 - What are some of the similarities among our modern Preambles?
 - What are some of the differences?
 - What laws or services does our government provide that can be seen in our new Preambles?
 - What laws or services does our government need or need to strengthen in order to live up to our modern Preambles?

Break (5 minutes)

During the break, hang the sheets of flipchart labeled "Executive," "Judicial," and "Legislative" around the room with plenty of space around each paper.

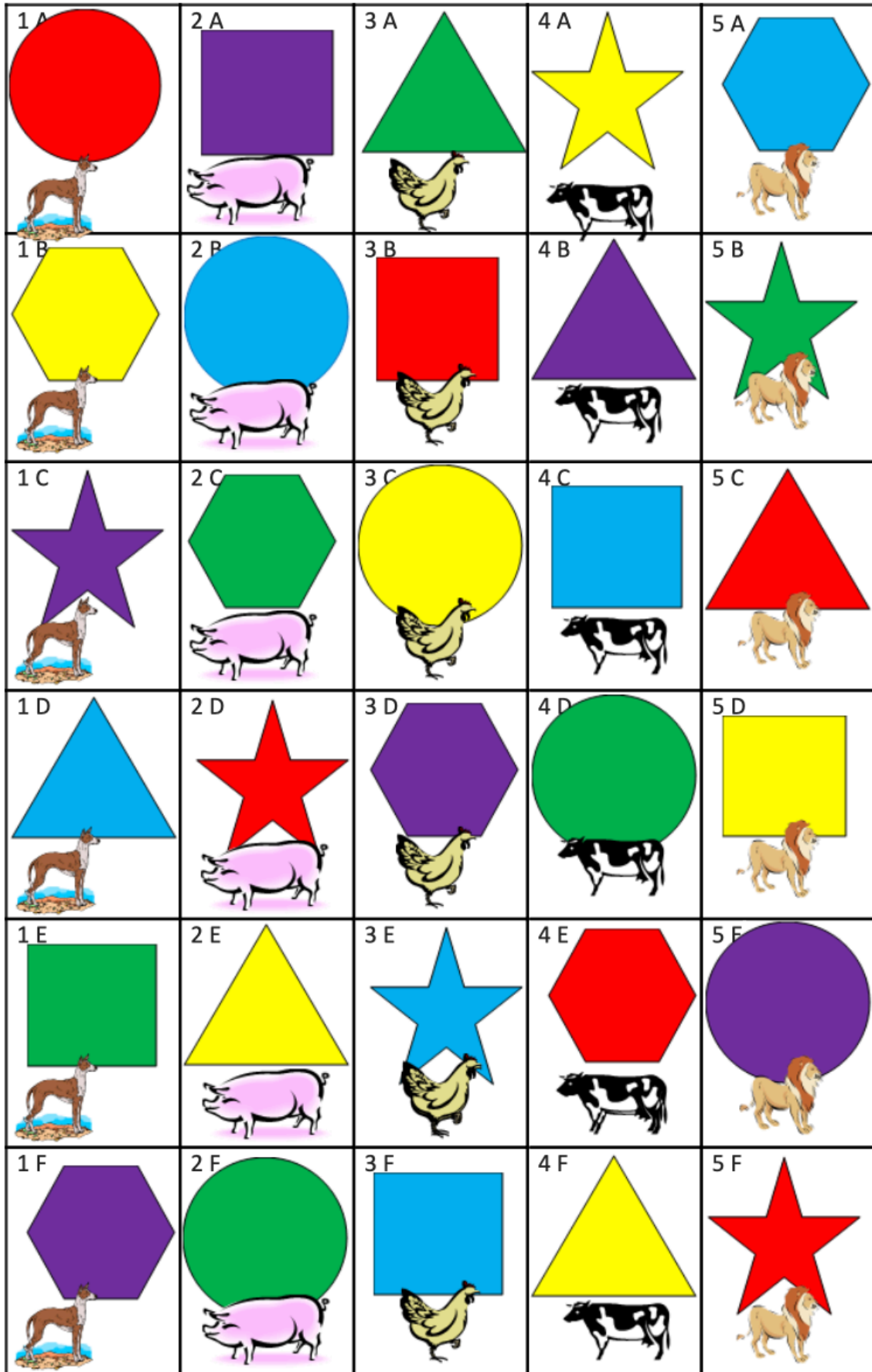
The Structure of the U.S. Government (60 minutes)

57. Tell students that now that they understand the purpose of our federal government as it was intended by the founding fathers, they will begin to explore the way it is structured according to the Constitution. **(1 minute)**
58. Play [this video](#) (start at 0:00, pause at 1:31) to introduce students to the three branches of government and their powers.
59. Tell students that they will work in groups to become experts on one of the branches of government. After studying their assigned branch, they will get into new groups and share their expertise with the new group so that everyone is familiar with the roles of each branch of government. **(1 minute)**
60. Break students into groups of six and assign them to study one of the branches of government in the guidebook. All three branches should be distributed among student groups as evenly as possible. Have students appoint a facilitator and give them **7 minutes** to read and discuss their responses to the questions in their guidebook:
 - What are the roles and responsibilities of this branch of government?
 - What are things this branch cannot do?
 - In your opinion, which roles and responsibilities of this branch have the greatest effect on people's everyday lives?
61. Jigsaw students so that each group has members representing all three branches. Have each student group number themselves 1 through 6. Then, have students form six new groups corresponding with their number.
62. Have students appoint a new facilitator and share their responses from the previous discussion. **(6 minutes)**

63. As student conversations are finishing, pass out to each group a set of powers and responsibilities slips (attached). Tell the facilitator to divide up the cards so that each student has at least one slip of paper. Students should decide together which branch each card corresponds with. Then, students should get up and stand with their card underneath the flipchart. Any extra cards should be assigned to a branch and handed to a student who already has a card representing that branch. **(12 minutes)**
64. Allow students to self-correct by comparing their cards with each other. Circulate around the room to answer questions or help students correct themselves. Use the attached answer key to help students when needed, or go through the answers on the slideshow. **(5 minutes)**
65. Transition to introducing the idea of checks and balances. Tell students that each branch not only has its own independent responsibilities, but those powers are split in a way that limits the power of the other two branches. For example, the president chooses Supreme Court justices, limiting the power of the judiciary, but the Senate must confirm those choices, limiting the power of the executive branch. Continue playing the previous video (start at 1:31, go to the end) to fully explain the idea of checks and balances. **(3 minutes)**
66. After the video, explain to students they will be looking at case studies in which the different powers of the government's branches have come into conflict. They will read their case study, found in their guidebook, and answer the questions at the bottom of the page. Let students know they will be sharing about their case study with the whole group. **(1 minute)**
67. Place students into groups of 5-6 and have the groups appoint a facilitator. Assign each group one of the three case studies: the Wars Powers Act, the Stolen Valor Act/*Alvarez* decision, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's attempt to expand the Supreme Court. Students will answer the following questions: **(12 minutes)**
- Which powers of each branch are being used?
 - What check(s) on those powers were put in place?
 - What were the benefits and drawbacks of the outcome?
68. Circulate among the groups and listen for productive answers. Invite students from different groups to share their thoughts during the whole-group share-out.
69. When students are done, ask different representatives from the three case studies to summarize their case and share their responses to the questions. Ideally, the students invited to share out during group work will respond to some of the questions. **(10 minutes)**
70. Reflect on the component with a whole-group question: **(3 minutes)**
- How effective are the governmental checks and balances in practice?

Daily Reflection (5 minutes)

71. Reflect on the day in a whole-group discussion by choosing some of the following questions:
- What parts of government might be best for addressing the issues your community faces?
 - Why, if at all, is it important to examine your own values when looking for solutions to the problems your community faces?
 - What, if anything, will you take from today's lessons in order to address problems in your community going forward?
72. Explain anything necessary for the next session.



“Where I’m From” Poem Template

I am from _____ (an important memory)

From _____ (a meaningful quote)

I am from _____ (my values or personality qualities)

I am from _____ (influential person or people in my life)

From _____ (a strength of my community)

I am from _____ (something that helps me solve problems)

“Where I’m From” Example

I am from hot summer days and creek moss,

From, “Accomplish one thing a day.”

I am from generosity and understanding.

I am from a smart doctor and patient parent,

From the best volunteers.

I am from teamwork and curiosity.

Preamble Close Reading

Form a more perfect union = Create a united nation

Establish justice = Create fairness and liberty under the law

Insure domestic tranquility = Provide order (through police and military action)

Provide for the common defense = Develop a national approach to military and security

Promote the general welfare = Consider the needs of all people and states when making laws or spending money

Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity = Protect the rights of citizens and future generations

Senate

House of Representatives

Approves treaties

Makes the budget

Collects taxes

Makes rules for the military

Elected every two or six years

Makes the laws

Can declare war

Confirms Supreme Court justices

Supreme Court

Nine justices

Not elected by the people

Interprets the law

Decides how laws apply to situations

Can declare laws unconstitutional

Lifetime appointments

| |
|--|
| President |
| Vice President |
| The Cabinet |
| Appoints Cabinet members |
| Can sign laws passed by Congress |
| Elected every four years |
| Carries out laws |
| Department of State |
| Carries out immigration policy |
| Appoints Supreme Court justices |
| Hosts leaders of other countries |
| Creates treaties with other countries |

Three Branches Answer Key

Legislative Branch:

1. Senate
 - 100 senators; two from each state.
2. House of Representatives
 - 435 voting representatives determined by state populations along with non-voting delegates from U.S. territories and Washington, D.C.
3. Approves treaties
 - Treaties are legally binding agreements between nations that become part of international law.
4. Makes the budget
 - The president may propose a budget but Congress is in charge of spending.
5. Collects taxes
 - Congress has the power to “lay and collect taxes,” although the executive branch, though the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service, is tasked with enforcing taxation.
6. Makes rules for the military
 - Although the president is the commander in chief of the military, Congress establishes the rules the military must follow. As of 2021, Congress is considering changes to how sexual assault cases are handled in the military.
7. Elected every two or six years
 - Two-year terms for representatives; six-year terms for senators.
8. Makes the laws
9. Can declare war
 - The president is the commander in chief of the military, but only Congress can declare war. However, there are numerous examples of presidents circumventing, or going around, this, such as Korea, Vietnam, Kosovo, and Libya—none of which had a declaration of war.
10. Confirms Supreme Court justices

Judicial Branch:

1. Supreme Court
2. Nine justices
 - This includes the chief justice and eight associate justices.
3. Not elected by the people
4. Interprets the law
5. Decides how laws apply to situations
 - Supreme Court rulings may be broad or narrow, depending on the circumstances of the case and the constitutional implications it may have for the whole country or one individual.
6. Can declare laws unconstitutional
7. Lifetime appointments

Executive Branch:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. The Cabinet
 - The Cabinet includes the vice president and the heads of 15 executive departments—the secretaries of agriculture, commerce, defense, education, energy, health and human services, homeland security, housing and urban development, the interior, labor, state, transportation, the treasury, and veterans affairs, and the attorney general.
4. Appoints Cabinet members
 - Cabinet officials must be approved by the Senate.
5. Can sign laws passed by Congress
 - The president can also veto legislation.
6. Elected every four years
7. Carries out laws
8. Department of State
 - The State Department is responsible for the nation's foreign policy and international relations.
9. Carries out immigration policy
10. Appoints Supreme Court justices
 - Justices must be approved by the Senate.
11. Hosts leaders of other countries
12. Creates treaties with other countries
 - Treaties must be approved by the Senate.



Goals: In a series of discussions, students will determine the role and responsibilities of their state and local governments relative to the federal government and consider how power is divided and shared. This discussion will help lay the groundwork for their examination of a controversial national issue.

Objectives: Students will:

- Continue to develop a learning community.
- Determine the right balance of power shared among the federal, state, and local governments.
- Create a law addressing the issues they care about.
- Examine case studies of Supreme Court decisions and analyze strict and loose judicial interpretation.
- Deliver an elevator pitch addressed to the president as a way to convince the executive branch to act on an issue they care about.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; whiteboard (or Smart Board)

Materials: [Session 2 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); flipchart; markers; post-its; judicial interpretation case studies (each student will have a copy of one of the six case studies)

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (20 minutes)

1. Welcome students and make sure they have their guidebooks and other necessary materials. **(5 minutes)**
2. Human bingo: Using the bingo sheet in the guidebook, have students use the prompts to get to know each other, writing down the other person's name in the bingo square when they find a match. The first person to fill out all of the squares (not just those in a row) "wins" the bingo, but allow the activity to continue for the whole time, enabling students to fill out as many squares as possible. **(10 minutes)**
3. Using the PowerPoint, go over the agenda and goals for the day. **(5 minutes)**

Federalism (65 minutes)

4. Transition to the first component of the day by explaining to students that they will be examining federalism. Last week, they discussed the branches of government and how power is divided and shared between the branches of government. Today, they will learn how power is shared between the federal (or national) government and the states. Introduce the video, explaining that the founding fathers worked hard to find the right balance between the powers that the federal government needed to keep the country united and the powers that the state governments needed to be responsive to the day-to-day lives of the people. In addition, smaller communities such as cities and counties have their own governments as well, to deal with local issues. Use [this video](#) (start at 3:08, end at 5:58) to define and explain the rationale and definition of federalism. **(5 minutes)**
5. Tell students that now that they have a rationale for the division of power among different levels of government, they will be working together to consider the benefits and drawbacks of federal, state, local, and shared powers. **(1 minute)**

6. Make groups of 5-6 students and assign them to either federal, state, local, or shared powers. Tell students that they will have **10 minutes** to answer the discussion questions that correspond to their group assignment. The questions are:
 - What are some of the benefits of strong (level of government) power?/What are some benefits of sharing powers between levels of government?
 - What are some of the drawbacks of a powerful (level of government)?/What are some drawbacks of sharing powers between levels of government?
 - Brainstorm a list of laws and services that you believe should be addressed by the (level of government).
7. Jigsaw the groups. Each student in a group is assigned a number 1 through 6, and students form new groups based on their newly assigned number. Have students appoint a facilitator. Once in their groups, tell students they will now share their lists with each other and make a comprehensive list on flipchart divided into four sections: federal, state, local, and shared. Each law or service will be represented under only one category, so if there is overlap, the students will need to negotiate to determine where the law or service should go. Make sure they label their list with their group number. **(12 minutes)**
8. Gallery walk: After students have completed and displayed their lists, allow them to get up and walk around so they can see the similarities and differences between groups. As the instructor, take notes to be able to lead a conversation on specific points. **(5 minutes)**
9. After the gallery walk, ask students to explain their differences and similarities: **(5 minutes)**
 - Why do you think we all listed (service A) and (law B) as a power unique to (level of government)?
 - I noticed (group X) was the only group to list (power C) as a power that should be held by (level of government). Do you mind explaining your reasoning?
 - I noticed some groups listed (power D) as belonging to (level of government) and some listed it as belonging to (different level of government). Why do you think that is?
10. Reveal any differences between students' ideal lists and the actual way power is distributed, if relevant. **(2 minutes)**
11. Transition to the next component. Have students get into the groups on the basis of the issue they identified as important in the previous session. Each group should appoint a facilitator. Tell students to respond to the prompts in their guidebooks and be prepared to share out. **(8 minutes)**
 - Considering the issue you chose last week, identify the level or levels of government that would ideally address your issue.
 - Explain your reasoning and provide an example of what each level of government should and/or should not do about the issue.
12. Have each group share their responses. **(8 minutes)**
13. Reflect with a Take-a-Stand. Designate the corners of the room as either federal, state, local, or shared. Ask the following question: **(2 minutes)**
 - Which level of government is best equipped to address the most important issues we face?
14. Allow students to gather in the corner of the room they identified in response to the question. Have a few students share the issues they were thinking of and their reasoning. **(3 minutes)**

Break (5 minutes)

Characteristics of a Good Law (75 minutes)

15. Transition by telling students that they just studied the way power is shared among different levels of government in our country in a way that helps keep government responsive to the different needs of the people. Remind students that last week, they learned about how power was divided and shared among the three branches of government in order to prevent one group of people from becoming too powerful. For the rest of the day, they will be examining these three branches in more detail, starting with the legislative branch. They will look at the criteria of what makes a good law, apply those criteria, and write their own law. **(2 minutes)**
16. Pass out one post-it note per student and have them record their responses to the following question: **(2 minutes)**
 - What makes a law good (or bad)?
17. Give students **2 minutes** to write a single response to the question.
18. Using the slideshow, reveal the criteria: understandable, enforceable, reasonable, and just.
19. Use the slideshow to explain each element to students.
20. On the whiteboard (or using the slideshow slide if using a Smart Board), create four columns, one for each of the criteria. Give students **4 minutes** to sort their post-its and stick them under the column that best matches their original responses. Check for understanding by scanning the post-its as they are placed.
21. Note any common responses, help correct any that seem to be in the wrong place, and then describe a criterion in more detail if there are only a few examples under it. Quickly spot-checking is fine—the important thing is to notice any trends. **(4 minutes)**
22. Tell students that they will look at an example and apply each of the criteria. Use the slideshow to display: *Because of damage caused by cars, skateboards, bicycles, and other forms of transportation in the city park, the city council passed this law: No vehicles in the park.* **(1 minute)**
23. Hold a whole-group discussion, asking students if the law meets each of the criteria. If students are struggling, prompts could include but are not limited to: **(5 minutes)**
 - Understandable: What counts as a “vehicle?”
 - Enforceable: What will happen if someone breaks this law? Does the law say?
 - Reasonable: Is banning all vehicles an appropriate response to the problem? Why or why not?
 - Just: Are any groups of people affected more than others?
24. Tell students they will now have an opportunity to apply these criteria to an example law. Divide students into groups of five and give them **10 minutes** to examine and evaluate the dress code law found in their guidebooks. The students must give the law a rating of 1 through 5 in each of the criteria, where a 5 means the law exemplifies the criteria and a 1 means it does not match the criteria at all. All students in the group must agree upon the number chosen.
25. Jigsaw the groups. Count students off in pairs of groups 1 through 6. There should be six groups total, with each group having a mix of students from the original groups. Have students appoint a facilitator and give them **8 minutes** to each explain their ratings and their reasoning.
26. After students have finished, have them get into the groups on the issue they identified as important in the previous session. (They were in these groups at the end of the federalism lesson as well.)
27. Tell students that they will be using their guidebooks to help them create a simple law regarding the issue that helps solve a problem or problems surrounding the issue. They will have **15 minutes** to:

- Brainstorm policies that regulate this issue and record the brainstorm in the guidebook. (Note: If students are working on an issue and have difficulty thinking of a policy, help them brainstorm; these policies can be at the local/school level as well.)
- Choose a policy or policies that will help them develop a simple law to address the issue in a way that ensures each of the four criteria have been addressed.
- Write their law on flipchart and post it in the room.

28. Silent reading and review: After students have posted their laws, allow others groups to peer review. The students will walk around to each law and make constructive comments or write questions on other groups' laws. Students do not have to write on every law, but they should read each one. **(7 minutes)**

29. Have the groups re-gather and revise their laws on the basis of their peer feedback. **(5 minutes)**

30. After revising, have each group share out. **(6 minutes)**

31. Reflect with the following questions in a whole-group discussion. **(4 minutes)**

- Which of the four criteria were the most challenging to develop in your law?
- Which were the most important?

Lunch

Judicial Interpretation (55 minutes)

32. Transition to talking about the judicial branch. Students have just taken on the role of the legislative branch, writing a law that they hope fits the four criteria. Once a law is written, it is up to the executive branch to implement it. If there is confusion about what a law means, it can end up in the court system. One of the important powers of the judicial branch is that of judicial interpretation, through which the courts, including the Supreme Court, determine what a law (or a set of laws, especially the Constitution) means when people disagree about how to interpret it. **(1 minute)**

33. Use the slideshow to go through the example. Ask students to interpret: *Find the suspect in the park with the telescope*. Students should be able to come up with a few different meanings for the sentence that could include: **(5 minutes)**

- The suspect is in a park that has a telescope. Find him or her.
- Use the telescope to look for the suspect in the park.
- The suspect has a telescope with him or her. Find him or her in the park.

34. Tell students that this kind of ambiguity comes up quite often when discussing the meaning and application of the Constitution, a document written over 200 years ago in a very different time with a very different society. Supreme Court justices have to decide how the Constitution applies to situations that the founding fathers never imagined. One of the ways they grapple with these complex topics is to choose whether to interpret the Constitution "loosely" or "strictly." **(1 minute)**

35. Introduce [this video](#) explaining loose versus strict interpretation. (Start at 0:00, play until 2:49.)

36. Take-a-Stand: After the video, designate one side of the room as "loose" and one side as "strict." Ask students to get up and stand on the side they agree with most. Ask a few students to share their reasoning. **(3 minutes)**

37. After students have returned to their seats, put them in groups of 5-6 and have each group appoint a facilitator. Explain to students that they will now examine case studies in which the Supreme Court had to interpret the Constitution in order to make a decision on the case.

38. Pass out the case studies and give students **15 minutes** to read and respond to the questions at the bottom of the *first page*. After discussing the questions on the first page, students will turn the page over, read the Supreme Court decision, and discuss their personal beliefs about the case.
39. Jigsaw students. Each group will number their students 1 through 6. Students will get together with their new groups by number and share their discussion with the whole group by: **(15 minutes)**
- Summarizing their case.
 - Sharing their own feelings about the ruling.
 - Giving their opinion on whether the justices should have applied loose or strict interpretation when deciding the case.
40. Reflect by holding a whole-group discussion: **(3 minutes)**
- Why do you think the Supreme Court had to rule on the issues we read about?

Break (5 minutes)

Examining the Executive Branch (70 minutes)

41. Transition to discussing the executive branch. Remind students that the executive branch carries out the laws; oftentimes, it has to figure out the best way to ensure the law is enforced and applied. Its power is constrained by the legislative branch in that the power of the executive is directly tied to the laws that Congress passes. The president cannot make laws. The executive branch is also required to abide by all decisions handed down by the Supreme Court; it has the responsibility to make sure all of its actions are constitutional. **(1 minute)**
42. Remind students that the president is the head of the federal executive branch. Explain the roles of the president using the [presidential power](#) video (start at 2:33, end at 5:51).
43. Tell students that while the president is the head of the executive branch, and he or she is ultimately responsible for the decisions made with executive power, there are many other people who help carry out the laws. Some of the most important advisors to the president form what is called the cabinet. Let students know that they will watch one more [video](#) about the presidential cabinet (start at 0:00, end at 1:07).
44. Tell students that many times, it is easier and potentially more effective to get the attention of the leaders in cabinet positions than it is to get the attention of the president. They will now explore the federal cabinet positions and determine which ones the issue they have been exploring over the last two sessions might fall under. Have students get into groups by issue area and appoint a facilitator. Students will use their guidebooks to look at the list and description of federal cabinet positions and determine which cabinet departments might be involved in their area of concern. Remind students that in the remaining sessions, they will not necessarily continue to work on this issue, but that the skills of identifying the best people to address their concerns will be valuable going forward. Give students **12 minutes** to explore the federal cabinet and decide to whom to address their concerns.
45. When students are done, have them share the cabinet member they are addressing and their rationale. **(10 minutes)**
46. Transition to explaining the next component, the elevator pitch, to the whole group. Explain to students that sometimes, the president really is the best person to take their issue to, especially if they cannot get the attention of those lower in power or if their answer is “No,” or “We don’t have the power to do that.” **(1 minute)**

47. Continue by explaining that while the president cannot make, change, or ignore laws, he or she can help influence policy by using what has been called the “bully pulpit.” This is not a literal place for presidents to make speeches. It is a choice a president makes to call public attention to an issue or to address Congress directly in order to pressure the legislative branch to act on an important issue or to change a law. This pressure can be very intense if it causes the public to rise up in support of the president and also pressure Congress. **(1 minute)**
48. Tell students that presidents do not usually use this kind of pressure if they do not have the support of the people. So, in order for the president to know what the public wants, the public has to convince the president to act. It is difficult to get the ear of the president, but when it happens, a person must speak with purpose and be convincing. **(1 minute)**
49. Explain to students that in their groups, they will write a short “elevator pitch” as if they had the ear of the president for about two minutes. They will ask the president to do something about the issue they are concerned about now. An elevator pitch is a speech that convinces a person in a short amount of time to do something or give their support to an issue or idea. **(1 minute)**
50. Allow students **15 minutes** to work together to create a speech that is 1-2 minutes long. It should convince the president to act on the law they created earlier in the day. Students will use their guidebooks as a place to outline their thoughts. Questions in the guidebook include:
- What should be the first course of action?
 - Is there anything going wrong that should be righted?
 - What will convince the president to support the law you proposed when evaluating the characteristics of a good law?
 - Do you think there is anything the president could or should do without Congress?
51. When students are ready, have them share out to the whole group. **(15 minutes)**
52. Reflect with a whole-group discussion: **(5 minutes)**
- How might an elevator pitch be developed into something more effective at influencing the executive branch?
 - How does knowing the powers and limitations of the executive branch help you make change regarding an issue you care about?
53. Reflect on the session and prepare for the next session with a whole-group discussion: **(5 minutes)**
- Which branch of government is the best for addressing the issues you care about? Why?
 - Finger scale: Have all students hold up the number of fingers that corresponds with their response. *On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to use the government as a way to make change on an issue you care about?* Call on a few students and have them explain their reasoning.
54. Make any announcements. Let students know that now that they have a foundational understanding of the way the U.S. government operates, they will be applying their knowledge in the next few sessions.



FREEDOM OF SPEECH

First Amendment simplified:

The government cannot limit an individual's freedom of speech, the right to religion, the right to gather together, the freedom of the press, and the right to petition the government.

Walker III et al. v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc. (2015)

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org) and from FindLaw's Supreme Court Case Collection (<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/summary/opinion/us-supreme-court/2015/06/18/273797.html>).

Background of the Case

- Texas offers car owners the option of specialty license plates. Those who want the state to issue a particular specialty plate may propose a plate design comprising a slogan, a graphic, or both.
- If the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board (TDMV) approves the design, the state will make it available for display on vehicles in Texas.
- In August 2009, the Texas division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (Texas SCV) applied to have a new specialty license plate issued by the TDMV.
- The proposed license plate had two Confederate flags on it: one in the organization's logo and one faintly making up the background of the plate.
- The TDMV had a policy stating that it "may refuse to create a new specialty license plate if the design might be offensive to any member of the public."
- State officials received multiple negative comments from the public regarding the plate and ultimately voted to reject it.
- The Texas SCV filed suit against the TDMV, arguing that its rejection of the proposed specialty plate design violated the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment.
- The TDMV argued that the Free Speech Clause did not apply because license plates are a form of government speech that is immune from First Amendment protections.
- The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas ruled in favor of the TDMV, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reversed the ruling, holding that Texas' specialty license plate designs are private speech and that the TDMV "discriminated against Texas SCV's view that the Confederate flag is a symbol of sacrifice, independence, and Southern heritage." The Supreme Court heard the case on March 23, 2015.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Do specialty license plates constitute government speech that is immune from any requirement of viewpoint neutrality?

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

Walker III v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc. (2015)

Do specialty license plates constitute government speech that is immune from any requirement of viewpoint neutrality?

Conclusion

Yes. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court held that the government choosing the content of its speech is not unconstitutional. Based on a precedent set in *Pleasant Grove City v. Summum* (2009), the Court held that Texas' specialty license plate is an example of government speech because Texas and other states have long used license plates to convey messages from the state. That government speech is not regulated by the First Amendment. The Court also argued that people associate license plates with the state rather than with the individuals driving the vehicles, and that Texas maintains direct control over the messages on its specialty license plates from design to final approval.

Dissent

Expressing the opinion of the minority, Justice Samuel Alito wrote in his dissent that, with over 350 varieties of specialty plates, an observer would think that the license plates were the expression of the individual drivers and not of the state of Texas.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

FREEDOM FROM UNREASONABLE SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Fourth Amendment simplified:

The government cannot search you or your possessions or take anything from you without permission from a judge or circumstances where there is a dangerous threat to others or if evidence is going to be destroyed.

Riley v. California (2014)

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org) and from FindLaw's Supreme Court Case Collection (<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/13-132-nr2.html>).

Background of the Case

- On August 22, 2009, David Leon Riley was stopped by a police officer for driving with expired registration tags. In the course of the stop, the officer also learned that Riley's driver's license had been suspended.
- An officer searched and found items associated with the "Bloods" street gang. He also seized Riley's smartphone from his pants pocket.
- The officer accessed information on the phone and noticed that some words were preceded by the letters "CK"—a label that he believed stood for "Crip Killer," a slang term for members of the Bloods gang.
- At the police station about two hours after the arrest, a detective specializing in gangs further examined the contents of the phone. The detective testified at trial that he "went through" Riley's phone "looking for evidence, because ... gang members will often video themselves with guns or take pictures of themselves with guns."
- The police found photographs on the smartphone of Riley standing in front of a car they suspected had been involved in a shooting a few weeks earlier, on August 2, 2009.
- Before his trial, Riley moved to throw out the evidence regarding his gang affiliation found on his phone. He said that the searches of his phone violated the Fourth Amendment because the police did not have a warrant.
- However, some of the photographs obtained from the phone were used in the trial.
- Riley was convicted and received a sentence of 15 years to life in prison.
- Riley appealed to the Supreme Court in July 2013. The Court heard his case on April 29, 2014.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Did the warrantless police search of the content on Riley's cell phone after his arrest violate Riley's Fourth Amendment rights?

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

***Riley v. California* (2014)**

Did the warrantless police search of the content on Riley's cell phone after his arrest violate Riley's Fourth Amendment rights?

Conclusion

Yes. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the opinion for the unanimous decision (9-0), in which the Supreme Court held that the warrantless search exception only exists to protect officer safety and to preserve evidence, neither of which is at issue in the search of digital data on a smartphone. The digital data cannot be used as a weapon to harm an arresting officer, and police officers have the ability to preserve evidence while awaiting a warrant by disconnecting the phone from the network, removing the battery, and placing the phone in a "Faraday bag," which uses conductive material to block incoming and outgoing electronic signals. The Court wrote that smartphones are mini-computers filled with massive amounts of private information, which distinguishes them from the traditional items that can be seized from a person, such as a wallet.

Dissent

No justices dissented from the decision.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

Fourth Amendment simplified:

The government cannot search you or your possessions or take anything from you without permission from a judge or circumstances where there is a dangerous threat to others or if evidence is going to be destroyed.

Safford Unified School District v. Redding (2009)

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org) and from FindLaw's Supreme Court Case Collection (<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/557/364.html>).

Background of the Case

- Safford Middle School had a policy which banned the use or possession of any drugs or medicines on school grounds or during any school functions without permission. The prohibition included non-prescription pain relievers such as aspirin and ibuprofen.
- In 2003, assistant principal Kerry Wilson began a school-wide investigation to find students who were sharing or abusing prescription drugs.
- In October 2003, a student claimed that an eighth-grade student named Savana Redding had given some ibuprofen to another student. On the basis of this tip, the assistant principal confronted Savana and escorted her to the office for questioning and further investigation.
- Wilson said that he had a report that Savana was giving pills to fellow students. She denied it but agreed to let him search her belongings. Wilson had an administrative aide take Savana to the school nurse's office to search her clothes. The aide and the nurse ordered Savana to remove her outer clothing, to pull her bra out and shake it (thus exposing her breasts), and to pull out the elastic on her underpants (thus exposing her pelvic area).
- The incident led Savana's mother, April Redding, to sue school officials for the search.
- A U.S. District Court judge ruled that the tip from another student provided enough reason for the search of Savana. Requiring her to strip, the District Court found, was not "excessively intrusive." The Reddings appealed the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
- The Ninth Circuit reversed the lower court ruling and said that a strip search was not appropriate because it was excessively intrusive based on what school officials knew at the time.
- Safford Unified School District officials appealed the case to the Supreme Court, which heard and decided the case in the 2009 session.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Does the Fourth Amendment prohibit school officials from strip searching students suspected of possessing drugs in violation of school policy?

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

Safford Unified School District v. Redding (2009)

Does the Fourth Amendment prohibit school officials from strip searching students suspected of possessing drugs in violation of school policy?

Conclusion

Sometimes, depending on the facts. In this case, Savanna's Fourth Amendment rights **were violated** when school officials searched her underwear for non-prescription painkillers.

Justice David Souter wrote for the majority and was joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito, John Paul Stevens, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The Court ruled that school officials did not have sufficient suspicion to warrant extending the search of Savanna to her underwear.

Dissent

In his dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the school could search students because when students are at school, the school is acting as their caretaker and has an interest in maintaining order.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

First Amendment simplified:

The government cannot limit an individual's freedom of speech, the right to religion, the right to gather together, the freedom of the press, and the right to petition the government.

McCutcheon et al. v. Federal Elections Commission (2014)

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org) and from FindLaw's Supreme Court Case Collection (<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/12-536.html>).

Background of the Case

- In 2002, Congress passed the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), which established two sets of limits to campaign contributions:
 - The **base** limits restrict how much money a person can give to an individual candidate's campaign (\$2,600) as well as to national and state political parties (\$32,400).
 - The **aggregate** limits restrict how much money an individual may donate in total during a two-year election cycle to multiple candidates (\$48,600) and political parties (\$74,600).
- In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations can spend unlimited amounts of money on independent political expenditures (not directly aligned with a candidate or party) because that spending is a form of speech.
- During the 2011-2012 election cycle, Shaun McCutcheon claimed that the **aggregate** limits unfairly limited his donations to candidates and organizations. All of McCutcheon's donations were within the **base** limits.
- McCutcheon sued the Federal Elections Commission (FEC), arguing that the aggregate limits violated his First Amendment right to free speech.
- The U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., held that the aggregate limit served a legitimate government interest by preventing corruption or the appearance of corruption and was set at a reasonable limit.
- McCutcheon appealed his case to the Supreme Court, which heard oral argument on October 8, 2013.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Is the two-year aggregate campaign contribution limit constitutional under the First Amendment?

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

McCutcheon v. Federal Elections Commission (2014)

Is the two-year aggregate campaign contribution limit constitutional under the First Amendment?

Conclusion

No. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court held that the aggregate limit did little to address the concerns that the BCRA was meant to deal with and, at the same time, limited participation in the democratic process. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts argued that the aggregate limit failed to meet the stated objective of preventing corruption.

According to the majority, the aggregate limit also prevented donors from contributing beyond a specific amount to more than a certain number of candidates, possibly forcing them to choose which interests they could seek to advance in a given election. The Supreme Court wrote that the goal of combating corruption cannot limit an individual's freedom of speech, and in this case the aggregate limit did not accomplish this goal. The Court held that there are many other means by which the government may fight election corruption without setting an aggregate limit on campaign contributions.

Dissent

In his dissent, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that the First Amendment protects not only the individual's right to engage in political speech, but also the public's interest in preserving a democratic order in which collective speech matters.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

FREEDOM FROM CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

Eighth Amendment simplified (in part):

The government cannot inflict any cruel or unusual punishment.

***Graham v. Florida* (2009)**

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org).

Background of the Case

- At age 16, Terrence Graham was arrested for armed robbery. He served a 12-month sentence and was released.
- Six months after being released from prison, Graham was arrested and convicted in a Florida state court for armed home invasion.
- Graham was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.
- Graham appealed the sentence, claiming that sentencing a minor (a person under the age of 18) to life in prison without parole (as long as it did not involve murder) was a violation of his Eighth Amendment rights.
- The U.S. District Court in Florida disagreed, saying that the life sentence for a juvenile did not violate Graham's Eighth Amendment rights.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Does the imposition of a life sentence without parole on a juvenile convicted of a non-homicidal offense violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment?"

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

***Graham v. Florida* (2009)**

Does the imposition of a life sentence without parole on a juvenile convicted of a non-homicidal offense violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment?"

Conclusion

Yes. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court held that the Eighth Amendment's cruel and unusual punishments clause does not permit a juvenile offender to be sentenced to life in prison without parole (except in cases of a murder conviction). Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for the majority, used previous precedents to guide his decision, including *Roper v. Simmons* and *Atkins v. Virginia*. The Court made a point to note that life sentences for juveniles for cases outside of murder have been "rejected the world over."

Dissent

Justice Clarence Thomas, joined by Justice Antonin Scalia and in part by Justice Samuel Alito, dissented. Justice Thomas scolded the majority for replacing its own moral judgment for that of U.S. citizens who up to that point had been charged with making the moral distinction as to whether this sentence could be imposed.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

FREEDOM FROM CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

Eighth Amendment simplified (in part):

The government cannot inflict any cruel or unusual punishment.

Glossip et. al. v. Gross et. al. (2015)

This case summary is adapted from Oyez (www.oyez.org) and from information in FindLaw's Supreme Court Case Collection (<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/14-7955.html>).

Background of the Case

- In 2008, the Supreme Court held in *Baze and Bowling v. Rees* that lethal injection is constitutional, but the specific way it is carried out may violate the Constitution if there are better alternatives.
- As a result of that case, anti-death penalty advocates pressured pharmaceutical companies to stop selling drugs to governments that will use those drugs for lethal injection.
- Oklahoma executed Clayton Lockett on April 29, 2014, using a lethal injection procedure that relied on drugs that did not stop pain.
- The procedure went poorly and Lockett awoke after the injection of the drugs that were supposed to make him unconscious. He did not die until about 40 minutes later.
- Oklahoma created a new lethal injection procedure that allowed for four alternative drug combinations, including the one that killed Lockett.
- Charles Warner and 20 other death row inmates sued state officials and argued that the use of these drugs violated the Eighth Amendment's protections against cruel and unusual punishment.
- The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma denied their request. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld the decision.
- On January 15, 2015, the Supreme Court declined to grant a petition to reexamine the case and Warner was subsequently executed. Richard Glossip and two other death row inmates petitioned the Court again. It heard their case on April 29, 2015.

Question Before the Supreme Court

Does Oklahoma's use of the lethal injection procedure that killed Lockett violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment?

Discussion Questions

1. What constitutional issue does this case raise?
2. What decision might the Supreme Court reach if it applied a **strict** interpretation of the Constitution?
3. What decision might the Court reach if it applied a **loose** interpretation of the Constitution?
4. What do you think the Court decided?

Glossip et al. v. Gross et al. (2015)

Does Oklahoma's use of the lethal injection procedure that killed Lockett violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment?

Conclusion

No. The Supreme Court wrote that there was not enough evidence that the use of the drugs that killed Lockett carried a risk of severe pain in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

In a 5-4 decision written for the majority by Justice Samuel Alito, the Supreme Court found that some risk of pain is part of an execution and that the Eighth Amendment does not require a constitutional method of execution to be free of any risk of pain. The Court also argued that interpreting the Eighth Amendment to demand the elimination of all risk of pain would likely outlaw the death penalty altogether.

Dissent

Joined by the other dissenters, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that scientific evidence supports the view that the drug that made Lockett unconscious is not enough to continue unconsciousness through the entire execution.

What was the rationale used by the justices for the decision? For the dissent?

What challenges, if any, did you have applying the different standards to the case?

Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?



Goals: Students will apply their understanding of the Constitution, and the judicial branch in particular, to examine the constitutionality of the recent case, *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.* (2021). Students will then read a Close Up resource to better understand the purpose and characteristics of descriptive text. Finally, students will craft a written essay analyzing a set of articles in preparation for issue deliberations in the next two sessions.

Objectives: Students will:

- Review concepts from Sessions 1 and 2.
- Consider the definition, purpose, and characteristics of descriptive text.
- Explore the current tension about the First Amendment through reading descriptive text and engaging in a role-playing activity.
- Write a blog post on a current California issue.
- Learn how to deliver feedback to a peer.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; enough computers with internet access for each student to utilize; whiteboard (or Smart Board)

Materials: [Session 3 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); articles for the blog post (five copies of each article)

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (20 minutes)

1. Welcome students. Make sure they have their guidebooks and other necessary materials. **(5 minutes)**
2. Review concepts from Sessions 1 and 2 with the following discussion questions:
 - Which branch of government do you believe is the most powerful? Why?
 - Which level of government (federal, state, or local) is the most successful at addressing the problems that everyday citizens face? Why?
3. Using the PowerPoint, go over the agenda and goals for the day. **(5 minutes)**
4. Tell students that the various articles they will read during the Bill of Rights activity are descriptive texts.
 - Define a descriptive text as a piece of text that lists the characteristics of a person, place, thing, policy, or issue, to name a few.
 - Share that the purpose of a descriptive text is to identify and describe a particular person, place, thing, policy, or issue.
 - Some features of descriptive texts are a section that introduces the focus of the text and subsequent paragraphs that describe the focus in detail. A descriptive text almost always uses present tense and adjectives.
5. Introduce the organizer in the guidebook that will assist students during the upcoming activity and their reading.

Bill of Rights (100 minutes)

Introduction (20 minutes)

6. Share via PowerPoint the relevant text of the First Amendment.
7. Direct students to the guidebook and assign each student one paragraph to read under the section titled, "Interpretations of the First Amendment."
8. Ask all students to read their paragraph. Then, direct them to find someone with a different paragraph than they have. Have students introduce themselves, summarize their paragraph, and answer the questions below about their paragraph:
 - Which of the terms used in the paragraph have you heard before? Circle them.
 - Which of the terms used in the paragraph have you not heard before? Underline them.
 - What is one thing you agree or disagree with from the paragraph?
 - How important do you think the First Amendment is to citizens of the United States? What about specifically to students?
9. Have each group of students share their answers to questions 1 and 2 aloud. Create a word bank on the whiteboard or PowerPoint, defining terms for students to ensure they understand them before moving forward.
 - Terms may include: redress, grievances, prohibition.
10. Ask for a volunteer to share why they think the First Amendment was put in the Bill of Rights. If students are struggling, encourage them to consider the history and rationale behind the founding of the United States.

Main Learning Activity (70 minutes)

11. Tell students that they are going to consider how the First Amendment applies to students within schools.
 - Relevant context to consider: In *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969), the Supreme Court ruled that public school students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." This was a victory for students who wore black armbands to protest the Vietnam War.
 - In *Morse v. Frederick* (2007), the Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment offers fewer protections for certain student speech at school events. It upheld the suspension of a student who held a "BONG HiTS 4 JESUS" banner during an event that was sponsored by the school but not on school grounds.
12. Conduct a Take-a-Stand on the following question: Should a school be able to punish a student for posts made on a personal social media account outside of school?
 - Allow time for students to explain their answers aloud.
13. Explain to students that in order to investigate this question, they will first be law clerks working for the Supreme Court. Then, everyone will become justices to decide on the Court case that asks this same question.
14. Direct students to their guidebooks and the fact sheet on the "cursing cheerleader" case, *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.* (2021). Give students time to read using the organizer in their guidebooks. Make sure they understand any relevant vocabulary and that precedent cases establish a principle or rule. **(10 minutes)**
15. Students will be in six groups. Groups A, B, and C will examine the case and prepare to explain the arguments for Mahanoy Area School District. Groups E, F, and G will examine the case and prepare to explain the arguments for B.L. in their guidebooks.

16. Break them into groups and give them a time limit to examine the case further and arguments for their assigned side.
 - As students are finishing, go around to the groups on the Mahanoy Area School District side and number off 1 to 9. Then, go around to the groups on the B.L. side and number off 1 to 9, making sure that you have 4-5 students and a good balance between “Mahanoy Area School District” students and “B.L.” students within each number group. **(10-12 minutes)**
17. Get everyone’s attention to explain the next activity, shared on the Powerpoint.
 - Part 1: You are law clerks for a justice. You have already done research and need to share the arguments about the case. People who did research on the Mahanoy Area School District side should explain those arguments and people who did research on the B.L. side should explain those arguments.
 - Part 2: Now, as a group, you are the justice. Regardless of which side you personally researched, you have to decide the case. As a group, decide which way your justice will vote!
 - Part 3: All nine justices vote and we will have our decision.
18. Break into nine groups do Part 1 and Part 2. Call time when students should start Part 2. **(15 minutes)**
19. Bring everyone’s attention back together for Part 3. Ask each justice to vote and record the votes so the tallies are visible to students. Once you know the decision, ask for reasoning from each side (not every justice, just someone from among the justice groups who voted one way and someone from among the justice groups who voted the other way). **(10 minutes)**
20. Share the actual Supreme Court decision on the PowerPoint and allow time for groups to read the decision. Briefly take students’ reactions to the decision. Is it what they expected? Did it align with how they voted as justices?

Reflection (10 minutes)

21. Reflect on any of the following questions with students, at your own discretion:
 - What protections should the First Amendment grant to students?
 - Does your school have any policies that you think limit students’ free speech?
 - Has working through this case influenced your opinion on whether Supreme Court justices should treat the Constitution as a living document whose meaning evolves over time or stick to the texts and intentions of the founding fathers? Why or why not?
 - What can citizens, states, and the legislative and executive branches do about a Supreme Court ruling they disagree with?
22. Share with students how the current debate about First Amendment rights continues on by using the following notes and discussion questions:
 - What is “hate speech?” Black Lives Matter and #MeToo have renewed this conversation. These movements have raised consciousness and promoted national dialogue about racism and sexual harassment. Should there be laws punishing speech that is harmful or offensive based on race, gender, or gender identity?
 - Should social media platforms be allowed to censor people, politicians, etc.? Should they be responsible for stopping the spread of misinformation? If so, how?
 - There is an ongoing conversation about freedom of speech in educational spaces, including college campuses. Can college campuses restrict certain speakers from coming on campus, or restrict “free speech zones?”
23. Preview to students what they will be doing after their short break.

Break (5 minutes)

While students are on break, set up the piles of printed articles at the front of the room.

Analyzing Descriptive Text and Writing a “Blog Post” (155 minutes)

24. Share with students that they will be analyzing a descriptive text as they did in the first activity with the Supreme Court case study. This time, they will take it one step further to write out their thoughts in the form of a blog post. Provide a rationale of why they are writing a blog post.
25. Tell students that first, they will choose three articles out of the six articles laid out at the front of the room. These articles relate to the issue of homelessness in California. Ask students to share aloud what they already know about this issue before moving forward.
26. Share that they should read the articles and analyze them as they did with the reading organizer in the Bill of Rights activity. Then, they should compile their thoughts in the blog post organizer.
 - Their blog post should include the following components: a short introductory paragraph, neutral background on the issue, multiple perspectives on the issue (who is arguing in support of addressing the issue and who is not, what are they saying), and a short conclusion summarizing the blog post.
27. Introduce the organizer in the guidebook for writing the blog post.
28. Pull up an example of a blog post on the PowerPoint. Walk students through how each component has been addressed in the example before getting them started on their own work. Inform them that in about two hours, they should be done with a draft of their blog post. It will be reviewed in pairs with other students in the classroom.
29. Give time alerts as much as you believe is necessary for your students to stay on track. Ensure that students get one break during this writing time.
30. At about one hour and 45 minutes, have students wrap up their final thoughts. Tell them that now, they are going to pair up with another student to give feedback or suggestions for changes. Define feedback as information or reactions to someone’s work to help them make it better.
31. In pairs, students should first read each other’s work. Then, they should take notes in their guidebooks about if they included all of the necessary components from the organizer, noting any parts that were confusing or hard to understand. Each partner should share their thoughts with the other. Give time for discussion about these comments before finishing up.
32. Allow 20-25 minutes for this feedback process before having students go back to working individually on their blog posts.
33. Continue to check on students as they finish up their blog posts before the end of the day.

Reflection and Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

34. If there is time, direct students to the guidebook and have them conduct a self-evaluation on their writing process. The following questions can be used to guide their self-evaluation:
 - How familiar were you with the issues you wrote about before starting this process? What new information did you learn?
 - Is there anything related to this issue that you would want to know more about? Is there any additional information you think would make your post more informative or helpful to someone trying to understand the issue?
 - After learning more about this issue, do you think you would like to do something beyond this session to address it? Is there another issue you feel more passionate about that you would consider writing about to increase awareness?
35. Give any final announcements before ending the day.



Print five copies of each of the following six articles:

1. <https://calmatters.org/explainers/californias-homelessness-crisis-explained/>
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/13/magazine/los-angeles-homelessness.html>
3. <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2021/06/08/1003982733/squalor-behind-the-golden-gate-confronting-californias-homelessness-crisis>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/dec/31/california-homelessness-initiative-faltered-project-roomkey-pandemic>
5. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/05/20/california-homeless-addiction-drugs/>
6. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/no-one-catch-us-how-california-s-homelessness-crisis-exploded-n1123156>



Goals: Students will study examples of how young people have enacted change in their communities and use those examples to develop a list of skills and attitudes that are common among those people. Students will build textual analysis skills by deliberating about a controversial national policy issue. During the deliberation, students will work together to find consensus on a set of policies by collaborating and examining the issue from multiple perspectives.

Objectives: Students will:

- Study examples of how young people have enacted changed in their community.
- Develop a list of skills and attitudes of young, successful change-makers.
- Assess their own citizenship skills and attitudes.
- Deliberate on a current controversial issue.
- Reflect on the process and value of deliberation.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; enough computers with internet access for each student to utilize; whiteboard (or Smart Board)

Materials: [Session 4 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); flipchart; markers; tape

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (20 minutes)

1. Welcome students. Make sure they have their guidebooks and other necessary materials. **(5 minutes)**
2. Using the PowerPoint, go over the agenda and goals for the day. **(5 minutes)**
3. As a warm-up, brainstorm as a whole group on the following questions: **(10 minutes)**
 - What are actions that citizens, or members of a community, can take to create and maintain a strong democracy? Record these on a PowerPoint slide or whiteboard. Start with a few examples such as: Going with your parents to see how to vote, watching the news, etc.
 - Where do you think the average person can use these actions to play a role in the political process? Start with a few examples such as: Using the skills you learned from your parents to vote when eligible, researching issues you care about that were brought up on the news, sharing your thoughts with your member of Congress, etc.

Youth Action and Citizenship Skills (75 minutes)

4. Transition to speaking about models of action under cooperative and oppositional citizenship.
5. First, define the terms **cooperative citizenship** and **oppositional citizenship** using the PowerPoint. Highlight specific actions that fall under the two realms. **(5 minutes)**
 - Cooperative citizenship is often seen as working “within the system.” Oppositional citizenship is seen as working “outside the system” to generate change.
 - Cooperative citizenship is speaking on behalf of a person or a group of people, often bringing awareness to an issue in a public forum or directly with elected officials and other decision-makers.
 - Oppositional citizenship involves engaging in strategic campaigns of direct action to bring about social or political change.

- Explain that both methods are useful for getting involved in the political process and voicing ideas to make change. Make sure that students understand that cooperative does not mean “good” and oppositional does not mean “bad.”
6. Briefly highlight the power and presence of young people using varied actions to influence systemic change throughout U.S. history. Utilize the Youth Action in the United States section of the guidebook to emphasize the actions taken by these young people. **(5 minutes)**
 7. Explain to students that they will closely examine the skills and attitudes of effective citizens in a strong democracy and study and practice some of those citizenship skills.
 8. Begin by brainstorming a list of people who students consider to be influential, important advocates for change. Then, generate a list of traits or qualities they associate with them.
 9. Tell students that they will read about examples of young change-makers, both past and present, to consider the impact of their actions and the skills they utilized to make change.
 10. Randomly assign students to groups with an assigned profile. In each group, students will read the case study and discuss the following questions: **(15-20 minutes)**
 - What actions did your individual/group use in order to make change?
 - What kinds of skills did they need to succeed in creating change?
 - What challenges existed in attempting to bring about those changes?
 - Why might they have chosen these particular actions over others to address the issue?
 11. After the allotted time has passed, bring students back to the whole group. Jigsaw them into new groups in which each case study is represented at least once. In these new groups, students will share a brief summary of their case study and answer the following questions: **(15-20 minutes)**
 - What was similar between the actions and skills used by the various activists? What were some differences?
 - What do these case studies tell you about the impact of change you can make?
 12. Bring students back together as a whole group. Ask the following question: What skills or practices did you see the young people using in the profiles?
 - Record a list of practices and skills that students observed. Remind students that they should also be recording the practices and skills mentioned in their guidebooks.
 13. Explain that students will now look at a list of Seven Skills and Practices that Contribute to Democratic Citizenship in these same small groups. They can find this in their guidebooks.
 14. In these groups, students should read the list and answer the following questions at the bottom of the page: **(10 minutes)**
 - What skills from the profiles are similar to the ones listed here? How are they similar?
 - Which ones are different?
 - If you were to make a new list of skills and practices that contribute to democratic citizenship, would you include any of the new ones gained from the profiles? Why or why not?
 15. Bring students back into a large group and have some share what they discussed in their conversation. Have students reflect on whether they have used any of these skills in the previous sessions and in what ways.
 16. Explain that as a class, students will continue discussing and practicing these skills over the next couple of lessons, focusing on the skill of cooperation in the second half of the day.
 17. Explain that now, they will be thinking about and evaluating themselves by using the Citizenship Self-Assessment in their guidebooks. There are no right or wrong answers—this is simply an assessment of where they think they are in using these skills. **(5 minutes)**

- Ask students to complete the survey on their own and not to discuss it with their peers.
18. Once everyone has completed the survey, ask them to consider the following question and write down their answer: What is one skill that you would like to practice and improve on? Why? **(5 minutes)**
 19. Give students a 10-minute break before the next part of the day.

Break (10 minutes)

Introduction to Deliberation and Practice (60 minutes)

20. Welcome students back from break and share with them that they are about to take part in a small deliberation in preparation for one on a pressing national issue.
21. First, define deliberation: to work together to come to a consensus and come up with a collaborative solution.
 - Examples of a deliberative body: Juries, Congress, judges on food shows
 - Underscore that this is not going to be a debate.
22. Practice the structure of deliberation with a lower-stakes topic, using the following central question: Out of the four main seasons in the year, which is the best season?
23. First, ask students the following questions and have them respond aloud or collectively on a whiteboard, sticky note, etc.: **(7 minutes)**
 - What do you know about this topic?
 - What are the most important parts of this topic?
24. Then, refer students to their guidebooks and have them read an article about the seasons. **(7-10 minutes)**
25. Have them consider the following question before opening it up to deliberation as a whole group: Based on what you have read, what are the most important factors contributing to what makes the best season? **(10 minutes)**
26. Begin deliberation as a whole group. **(15 minutes)**
27. Reflect on the deliberation process using the following questions: **(7 minutes)**
 - How did your view on this issue change, if at all, through the process of deliberating?
 - Do you think it was an effective process for reaching consensus? Were there aspects of it that you found more or less difficult than you had previously thought?
28. Thank students for practicing deliberating on this topic.
29. As a preview to the national issue deliberation, remind students about the political values conversation. **(10 minutes)**
 - A political value is an ideal you believe in that relates to how the government should operate, whom it should serve or not serve, who pays for it, and who it benefits. Some political values include liberty, equality, justice, equity, security, the common good, and private interests.
 - Ask students: Which of the political values discussed was the most important to you? Allow time for students to respond aloud.
30. Tell them that they should have these at the forefront of their mind as they consider their own opinions and those of their peers throughout the deliberation process.

National Issue Deliberation (120 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes)

31. Explain to students that now they will deliberate on a current national issue: criminal justice reform. They will examine this issue and consider a multitude of policies in an attempt to build consensus around a policy, or set of policies, that they think the government should pursue to address the issue. This will be done through the process of deliberation.
32. Explain to students that we will use the process of deliberation here because we want them to collaborate with their peers. Many solutions exist to address these issues, but so do many experiences, values, and beliefs.
33. Address the central question: What actions, if any, should the government take to reform the criminal justice system?
34. Review the components of the deliberation: Take a focus group survey, read background information, read the policies and discuss opinions in small groups, create a poster of the chosen policy solution, jigsaw and share out, and take part in a final reflection.

Survey (12-15 minutes)

35. Explain to students that they will first be discussing a set of survey statements in order to establish a basic understanding of what experiences and opinions they bring to the deliberation.
36. Divide students into groups of 3-4. Appoint a facilitator and have students turn to the page with the talking survey.
37. Explain to facilitators that they should record every student's individual response. All group members should have an equal opportunity to share why they agree/disagree with each statement, along with any personal experiences if compelled.

Main Learning Activity (80 minutes)

38. Explain to students that they will be moving from discussing personal experiences and opinions to looking at the current reality of criminal justice in the United States.
39. Ask students the following questions, posted on the PowerPoint: **(10 minutes)**
 - What do you already know about this issue?
 - What do you think you want or need to know to have a successful deliberation on this issue?
40. First, students will examine background information about the issue. Allow them **10 minutes** to read the background information, reminding them to use a fresh copy of the descriptive text organizer that they used in the last session. The background information sheet can be found in their guidebooks with the organizer.
41. Ask students: Based on what you have read, what is the most pressing part of criminal justice in the United States?
42. Share that students will now read a policy resource. The resource contains four different policy proposals. These proposals are designed to address different aspects of criminal justice. Explain to students that they will have **15 minutes** to read the resource and consider their own opinions on which policy they agree with the most. The policy resource can be found in their guidebooks.
43. After 15 minutes has elapsed, pair students up to share their thoughts with a partner. Give them a few minutes to do this.

44. Then, create groups of 4-6 students and have them come to a group consensus on the policy option they would most like the government to pursue. The policy options are theirs to choose from, change, or not choose at all. Explain that as they are deliberating, they should keep in mind that some policies contradict each other or would be challenging to implement at the same time. **(20-25 minutes)**
45. As needed, remind students that as they deliberate in their groups, they should take time to consider each policy and what specific actions the policy is asking of the different groups of people involved. Once they decide on a policy approach, they should think critically about their proposed solution using the following questions as guides to their discussion:
- What are the benefits of the policies? What are their disadvantages?
 - Are there any challenges to the proposed policies?
46. Halfway through the deliberation time, bring around a piece of flipchart for each group to write down a summarized version of their proposal.
47. When they have finished, students should post their flipchart around the room.
48. Tell students that they will be put into new groups to share their group's policy proposal, its benefits and disadvantages, and why their group believed it was the best way to address the issue.
49. Jigsaw students into new groups so each policy proposal is represented. Groups should have **10-15 minutes**. Explain to facilitators that while the goal is to learn about other policy proposals, it is necessary to discuss advantages, disadvantages, and affected groups in respect to each proposal.
50. Explain that they will reflect on the issue itself before reflecting on the process of deliberation and the day itself. Direct students' attention to the following questions posted on flip:
- On a 1-5 finger scale (1 = Unnecessary, 5 = Crisis), how high of a priority should this issue be for policymakers?
 - What level of government (local, state, national) would be best to address this issue?
 - How can citizens influence the government to take these actions and/or put these policies into place?

Reflection (20 minutes)

51. Explain that students will now have time to reflect on the process of deliberation. Use the following questions as a guide to your reflection, posted on the PowerPoint:
- How did the process of deliberation go for your proposal group?
 - Do you think it was an effective process for reaching consensus? Were there aspects of it that you found more or less difficult than you had previously thought?
 - How, if at all, did your view on this issue change through the process of deliberating with your group?
 - How, if at all, did you hear political values come up throughout the deliberation?
52. Reflect on the conversation from earlier regarding citizenship skills, using the following questions posted on the PowerPoint:
- How did you see any of the citizenship skills throughout the deliberation?
 - How might improving these skills help you be a more effective student in your school? A more effective citizen in your community?
53. Wrap-up and make any final announcements. **(5 minutes)**



Goals: Students will decide which California-specific issue they care about most in preparation for their essay and presentation that will be developed throughout the rest of the course. Students will learn relevant research and media literacy skills by examining various news articles and considering the characteristics of a reliable and trustworthy source. Students will use those skills to help them gather and organize knowledge, opinions, and policy solutions surrounding their issue.

Objectives: Students will:

- Engage in a California issue deliberation.
- Learn about the structure of the California government.
- Learn research and media literacy skills.
- Gather and organize information surrounding their issue.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; enough computers with internet access for each student to utilize; whiteboard (or Smart Board)

Materials: [Session 5 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); think-aloud article

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Welcome students. Make sure they have their guidebooks and other necessary materials. (5 minutes)
2. Using the PowerPoint, go over the agenda and goals for the day. (5 minutes)

The Structure of California Government (15 minutes)

3. On the PowerPoint, complete and review the matching activity of the roles of the three branches of the U.S. government.
4. Share with students how this structure is similar to the structure of California's government, with three branches of government but a few differences. Some of those differences include:
 - The California State Legislature is composed of the State Assembly, which has 80 members who are elected every two years, and the State Senate, which has 40 members who are elected every four years. As of June 2012, anyone elected to the California State Legislature can serve a maximum of 12 years, regardless of whether they serve in the State Assembly or the State Senate.
 - The California Supreme Court has one chief justice and six associate justices. They are appointed by the governor and the State Bar of California for 12 years and can be renewed by voters every time the term is up.
 - California's local government is divided into 58 counties and 482 cities. Counties and cities have the power to pass local ordinances (laws for a small city or town).
5. Outline California's representatives in government, including the governor, senators, and representatives, all of whom are listed in their guidebooks.
 - Governor: Gavin Newsom (D)
 - Lieutenant Governor: Eleni Kounalakis (D)
 - Secretary of State: Shirley Weber (D)
 - Attorney General: Rob Bonta (D)

- Treasurer: Fiona Ma (D)
- Controller: Betty Yee (D)
- Superintendent of Public Instruction: Tony Thurmond (D)
- Insurance Commissioner: Ricardo Lara (D)

California Issue Deliberation (80 minutes)

Introduction (2 minutes)

6. Explain to students that they will deliberate on a set of California issues: immigration, health, environment, and education. They will examine these issues in an attempt to build consensus around which issues they think the government should prioritize addressing. This will be done through the process of deliberation.
7. Address the central question: What issue should the California government prioritize addressing?
8. Review the components of the deliberation: Read background information on California-specific issues in small groups, discuss opinions in jigsawed small groups, deliberate on what issue the California government should prioritize addressing, share out as a whole group, and reflect.

Main Learning Activity (60 minutes)

9. Create four groups of students and assign each group to one California-specific issue: immigration, health, environment, or education.
10. In groups, students should first read the background information in the guidebook on the issue they were assigned. They should take notes using the Issue Information Organizer. **(10 minutes)**
11. After 10 minutes, have students discuss the following questions, posted on the PowerPoint or on an index card. They can take notes on their issue in their guidebooks: **(15 minutes)**
 - Based on what you read, what do you think is the most important aspect of the issue you read about?
 - Was there anything new you learned about the issue when reading the resource?
 - In your personal opinion, how important is the issue you read about? Why?
12. Alert students that they will now be an expert on their issue in groups with people who read about another issue, so they can share what they learned and come to consensus on what issue the California government should prioritize addressing.
13. Jigsaw students into new groups where each issue is represented at least once. Once students are in their groups, have everyone share two things they learned from the issue resource, using notes they took in their guidebooks.
14. Once everyone has shared, have them begin their deliberation using the following questions (posted on the PowerPoint or on an index card): **(20-25 minutes)**
 - Have you seen, experienced, or heard of any of these issues impacting your community directly?
 - Which issue do you think is affecting your community the most?
 - Are any of these issues important to you? Why or why not?
 - Which issue should the California government prioritize addressing? Why? Come to consensus as a group.

15. Bring students back to the whole group and have them share aloud what issue their group came to consensus on. Record these for students to see.
16. Then, reflect as a whole group using the following question:
 - Were there any issues you cared about that were not discussed today? If yes, what issue is that? Why does it matter to you?

California Issue Inventory (10 minutes)

17. Share that although a number of issues were not discussed during today's deliberation, students must decide on an issue they care about most in order to begin thinking about the final paper and presentation.
18. To get started, review the issues students have been working on in previous sessions. Place students in random groups of 5-6 and have them answer the following questions:
 - How does this issue affect California specifically?
 - What are three examples of this issue affecting my local community?
 - Is this issue something that the California government should try to address?
19. Have each student determine if they would like to change to a different issue for the remainder of their work on the program. However, make sure groups have at least three people in them.

Break (5 minutes)

Identifying Reliable Media Content (95 minutes)

20. Review the agenda of this component with students. **(2 minutes)**
21. Establish a common understanding of key terms: reliable, media, and content. Explain to students that the questions they learn in this lesson can be applied to both a media outlet and a platform as a whole. But more importantly, they should apply these critical questions to each piece of content they engage with or read, regardless of whether they access that particular media outlet on a regular basis.
22. Conduct a warm-up discussion, in small groups, of the following questions: **(10 minutes)**
 - Where do you get news and information most often?
 - How easy or difficult do you think it is to identify a piece of content as reliable?
 - How important is it to identify whether content is reliable before believing information?
23. Bring students back from the small-group discussion and allow them to share their answers to each of the questions aloud. **(5 minutes)**
24. Have students turn to the appropriate page in their guidebooks and individually read Five Questions That Will Help You Determine What Media Content to Trust. As they read, encourage students to underline words they do not understand. **(10 minutes)**
25. Bring students back together after reading and have them share aloud the words they did not understand. Record them on the PowerPoint or whiteboard and work to define them together, contextualizing any full sentences that they did not understand. Provide examples as necessary.
26. Next, move on to identifying the five questions in context. **(5 minutes)**
 - Type: What kind of content is this?
 - Source: Who and what are the sources cited and why should I believe them?
 - Evidence: What is the evidence and how was it vetted?

- Interpretation: Is the main point of the piece proven by the evidence?
 - Completeness: What is missing?
27. Analyze the five questions in context together using the attached article and think-aloud script. Direct students to follow along with you in their guidebook. **(10 minutes)**
28. Explain to students that they will now apply the same techniques you just did together, but on a new article in small groups. **(15 minutes)**
- Tell students: In your guidebook is a second article. Please read it on your own. Once you finish reading, please choose a facilitator and work together to evaluate the article using the rubric. Once you have decided how the article measures up against each of the criteria, highlight the box that best fits your evaluation. Be sure to discuss why you have assigned the score you have for each criterion and how the article could be changed to score higher on low-scoring criteria. Be prepared to share about your discussion when you return to the whole group.
29. Bring students back from their groups and use the following questions to guide their share-out: **(12-15 minutes)**
- Overall, how reliable did you find this article?
 - Were there certain criteria on which you scored the article particularly high or low? Why did you score it as you did? How could you have changed the article so it met all criteria better?
 - How easy or difficult was it to come up with a consensus about the scores your group gave on each criterion?
30. Conduct a final reflection using the following questions: **(10 minutes)**
- How might you need to adjust if a piece of content does not meet some of these criteria fully?
 - Are there any additional criteria you think should be included in this list? Why?
 - What types of content or media sources, if any, do you think these questions might not apply to?
 - Are there any instances where the answers to the questions might be less important?
 - Do you think you could use these questions on a regular basis to assess reliability? Why or why not?

Break (10 minutes)

Starting the Essay Part I: Research (75 minutes)

31. Connect all of the components that have led up to this final paper and presentation: deliberations, research, the blog post assignment, and the issue inventory.
32. Preview the final essay and presentation:
- Share that students will write an editorial (a persuasive essay) for a student newspaper. An editorial is a type of persuasive newspaper article written by or on behalf of an editor that gives an opinion and attempts to persuade readers on a topical issue. The issue will be the California-specific issue students chose after the California issue deliberation.
 - After the editorial is written, students will group up by similar issue area to discuss how to present to an audience on the issue itself (not necessarily the specific issue they focused on in their editorial). They will receive more information on the presentation in Session 7.
33. Tell students they will begin working on the essay by researching their issue in groups. Have students move into groups with similar issues. Then, explain the research organizer in the guidebook as something that will help guide students through the process of researching their issue.

34. Tell students that the goal for the remainder of today is to work on the following sections of the organizer:
- Background information on the issue
 - Individuals in power at the local or state level who are working on this issue
 - Current proposed policy solutions by those individuals at the local or state level
35. With **5 minutes** remaining, gather student attention to wrap up and deliver any final announcements before ending the day.



What Research Says About the Best Way to Spend Money Now to Solve Homelessness Long-Term

Op-ed from NextCity.org

Right away I'm learning what kind of content this is by looking at the title and description of the article. I can tell that this is an opinion piece (an op-ed) that will try to convince the reader to take a certain position on the issue of homelessness. I see that the article was published online by a registered nonprofit organization because the domain is .org. Since I'm not familiar with this source, I will want to look up this organization's mission statement and if it has a particular political leaning or goal.

September 1, 2021

By Rohit Naimpally and Laina Sonterblum

Rohit Naimpally is a senior research and policy manager at J-PAL North America, where he works with governments, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and private enterprises to develop rigorous evidence on policies and programs that impact poverty.

Laina Sonterblum is a policy associate at J-PAL North America. She supports the development and implementation of randomized evaluations and synthesizes research findings in order to promote evidence-based social programs and policies.

Looking at the authors' credentials is an important way to judge their authority on the issue and continue to recognize the type of content I'm reading. Judging by their short bios, I can tell they are researchers and can expect to see research and evidence-based sources in the article. I don't know what J-PAL is, so I might want to look that up. Although neither author claims to specialize in homelessness, their work in poverty and social programs will probably include the issue of homelessness.

The Supreme Court's [ruling](#) striking down the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's eviction moratorium has put millions at risk of housing instability and homelessness. If households are unable to receive [emergency rental assistance](#) in time, many may join the [nearly 600,000](#) people who experienced homelessness on a given night in the United States prior to the pandemic. To reverse the growing trend of homelessness, people facing housing instability need effective, evidence-based solutions. Thankfully, decades of rigorous research have shown practitioners and policymakers what can work. And right now, the influx of relief funds offers an opportunity to finally expand these evidence-based programs, but these dollars have to be spent quickly. To truly end homelessness, states and cities must both expand effective solutions in the short term and conduct additional research to bolster sustained stability in the long term.

In this paragraph, I can see the main point of the article: "To truly end homelessness, states and cities must both expand effective solutions in the short term and conduct additional research to bolster sustained stability in the long term." I will be looking to see if the evidence in the article proves this point.

I'm also starting to look at some of the evidence provided by the authors. While you aren't able to click on the link in the paper copy, in the web version, if I click on the link citing the 600,000 people experiencing homelessness, I'm directed to a government site, the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This source compiles information directly from the data the department collects and is not speculating on the issue. It is important to check on linked sources this way if not cited in the text.

"Housing instability" is a term that encompasses both homelessness and factors that increase one's risk of homelessness, such as couch-surfing and eviction. People who are evicted move more frequently, which makes it harder to hold down a stable job, loosens ties to community, and, for the [1.3 million students who experienced homelessness in the 2018-19 school year](#), interrupts education.

Homelessness and housing instability disproportionately affect Black people, members of the LGBTQ community, people with severe mental illness, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, and several other marginalized communities. And that was before the pandemic and the looming eviction cliff.

The authors didn't cite sources for this information; they should have.

Fortunately, there is already strong evidence on numerous effective strategies to end homelessness. At J-PAL North America, a research organization based out of the Department of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, we work with researchers and policymakers to conduct rigorous randomized evaluations on what policies truly lift people out of poverty.

In this paragraph, I get more information on J-PAL and can see it is part of a prestigious institution (MIT). However, critical thinking tells me that the authors are employed by J-PAL and most likely have an interest in presenting their organization in a positive light.

For example, research has shown that subsidizing rent through the Housing Choice Voucher program, commonly known as Section 8, [can reduce homelessness](#). Voucher holders have a [lower incidence of homelessness](#) and an increased likelihood of [living in stable housing](#). Vouchers have also been shown to help beyond just putting a roof over someone's head. They decrease family separation and psychological distress, and increase school attendance and food security. Additional research by J-PAL researchers has shown that [providing comprehensive mobility services](#) and [improving access to neighborhood information](#) in conjunction with vouchers can boost their positive impacts. But only [25 percent of eligible households are able to receive vouchers](#) due to insufficient funding, and applicants spend years on waitlists. (President Biden has [proposed](#) an additional \$5 billion for the Housing Choice Voucher program, which would help another 200,000 eligible families.)

Again, if you were able to click on the links in the text, you could see where these sources are coming from. I'm evaluating these sources and can see that some of them come from J-PAL directly. I can follow up with these sources and see if other research or experts agree with the J-PAL conclusions.

Randomized evaluations have shown the effectiveness of [Housing First](#). For decades, most housing services required people to meet employment or sobriety requirements in order to be housed. Housing First programs do literally what they say: provide housing first, with no preconditions.

Several [randomized evaluations](#) tested Housing First programs and found that individuals in permanent supportive housing spend about half as much time unhoused or in the hospital than those not in the program. Policymakers in Utah then used this research to expand the evidence-based program. The state [became a national model](#) after it adopted a Housing First approach in 2005 and reduced chronic homelessness by 91 percent by 2015.

After examining the many sources provided, I can see that most of them are coming from experts in the field, but there may not be a large diversity—they are either J-PAL affiliates or government agencies. These are not necessarily unreliable sources, but including outside sources would bolster their claims.

Moving on to consider evidence, I can see that most of the evidence is firsthand research, not speculation. As long as this research was done well, it can be seen as credible. Much of this research was published in academic journals (which I can see by clicking on the links) or by government agencies, so I'm going to determine this evidence to be credible.

There is still much to be learned about how to end homelessness, and rigorous randomized evaluations can help. First, further research can provide insights into how to improve programs that we know can work. For example, despite the success of vouchers, they are not a simple “golden ticket.” It is hard to get a voucher and to then find landlords that accept such vouchers, even when [“source-of-income” discrimination is technically illegal](#). Low housing stock and [discriminatory practices](#) make [finding housing arduous](#)—if not impossible—for voucher-holders. We need further research on ways to increase landlord acceptance of vouchers.

Second, randomized evaluations can be used to identify additional evidence-based strategies. While eviction moratoria have offered short-term fixes, researchers are studying potential long-term solutions. There are multiple ongoing studies on the provision of [emergency financial assistance](#) and [legal support services](#) for those facing eviction.

The work of ending homelessness requires a lot of money. The U.S. Department of the Treasury [is encouraging](#) states and localities to use federal relief funds for evidence-based interventions and evaluations “designed to build evidence.” However, American Rescue Plan funds are time-limited and must be spent by the end of 2024. By spending these funds on both evidence-based programs like Housing First and evidence-generating evaluations, stakeholders can simultaneously address immediate needs and foster housing stability in the decades to come.

Now, I'm going to consider whether the evidence proves the main point of the article: “To truly end homelessness, states and cities must both expand effective solutions in the short term and conduct additional research to bolster sustained stability in the long term.” I have seen that this article provides a lot of evidence for short-term solutions that help reduce homelessness. However, while the authors tell the reader that additional research is necessary, they don't really prove that this research leads to long-term sustainability.

Although the authors' interpretation of the evidence is mixed in terms of proving their thesis, the main thing I've noticed is that there are no counterpoints included. No conflicting opinions or research was provided and disproved.

Regarding what might be missing, the authors do include recommendations for further action and explain the problem clearly, but they don't suggest further action for the reader to accomplish their recommendations.

I would rate this article as a reliable source of data and research, given the evidence, sources, and authority of the authors. However, I will continue to look for other sources that might address conflicting opinions and data.



Goals: Students will study examples of storytelling and evaluate its power when persuading others. Students will understand the role and features of persuasive text and be divided into working groups to begin preparing their persuasive essay and accompanying presentation.

Objectives: Students will:

- Analyze examples of storytelling in order to create an individual Story of Self and a group Story of Us.
- Understand the role and features of persuasive text.
- Determine the policy proposals to be recommended in their individual essays.
- Begin developing arguments for their essays.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; at least one computer for each California issue group

Materials: [Session 6 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student)

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (15 minutes)

1. Welcome students to the session.
2. Start with a warm-up discussion of the following questions: **(10 minutes)**
 - When you are undecided on an important issue, what do you look for when seeking to form an opinion?
 - Think of a time you changed your mind on an issue. What convinced you to change your mind?
 - Think of a time you changed someone else's mind or help someone form an opinion. What did you do or say to convince them to see things your way?
3. Go over the day's agenda.

Storytelling (35 minutes)

4. Using the PowerPoint, provide the purpose and goals of storytelling as a way to make change. (Information is derived from Stanford Social Innovation Review.) **(5 minutes)**
5. Play video examples of storytelling. **(10 minutes)**
 - [Video 1](#) (0:00-2:48)
 - [Video 2](#) (the whole thing)
 - [Video 3](#) (0:00-3:06)
6. After each video, give students time to work in groups to answer the following questions as provided in the guidebook: **(additional 15 minutes in total in between videos)**
 - What is the goal of the storyteller(s)?
 - What stood out the most to you?
 - Where did you lose attention?

- What kind of details do you remember best?
 - What else do you want to know?
 - What, if anything, do you feel needs to be done?
7. Reflect on the stories from the videos in a whole-group discussion. **(5 minutes)**
- Which story or stories were the most effective?
 - Why were they more effective than others?

Break (5 minutes)

Story of Self/Story of Us (120 minutes)

8. Using the PowerPoint, introduce and explain the purpose and format of the Story of Self. Go over the checklist that students will use to help them write their own (Attachment 1). **(7 minutes)**
- Play an example of Dr. Victoria Herrmann sharing her Story of Self: [Video](#) (1:11-4:28)
 - Have students use the checklist provided in their guidebooks while watching the video to see how much Dr. Herrmann accomplishes in sharing her story.
9. Hold a whole-group discussion using the following questions: **(5 minutes)**
- What parts of the checklist were represented well in the video?
 - What parts of her story could have been stronger?
10. Direct students to use the organizer in the guidebook to write an individual Story of Self on the California issue they chose in the previous week.
- Give students **20 minutes** to draft their story.
 - Students will then spend **10 minutes** sharing their story with a partner (from any issue group) and getting feedback.
 - Students will then get into groups of three, formed with students in their own issue group, in order to share their story. If possible, these people should not include the partner who helped them edit their Story of Self. **(15 minutes)**
11. Share with students that they will now be completing a Story of Us as a group. Explain its purpose (Attachment 2) and point out the example in the guidebook. **(5 minutes)**
12. Give students **20 minutes** to work in their California issue groups (the entire group, not just the trios from before) to write a Story of Us. Make sure students know that they will be presenting their Story of Us to the group.
13. After students have written their Story of Us, alert them that they will now work to make their story as engaging as possible. Explain that images such as drawings, photos, and animations can make a story more compelling. The visuals they choose will be made into a short PowerPoint/Google Slides presentation. They should not include much text on their PowerPoint, perhaps only to caption images or point out something important in the image. **(2 minutes)**
14. Give students **15 minutes** to work in issue groups to locate 2-4 images that will correspond to the Story of Us.
15. After students have located the visuals, direct them to begin building their presentation in PowerPoint/Google Slides. Have them note on their written Story of Us when they will transition from image to image. **(10 minutes)**

16. Once students have completed their presentations, allow them **10 minutes** to practice presenting out loud in their issue groups. The presentation itself should only take about **3 minutes** in total. After students have practiced, they should send someone to pull up their presentation on the computer with access to the projector/Smart Board in order to speed up transitions between group presentations.

Lunch

Story of Us Presentations (25 minutes)

17. Start presentations, allowing **20 minutes** for every group to present.
18. Reflect in a whole-group discussion: **(5 minutes)**
- What were you hoping to make your audience feel when sharing your Story of Self?
 - How does that differ from the emotions you hoped your audience would feel when presenting the Story of Us?

Role and Features of Persuasive Text (40 minutes)

19. Explain the purposes of persuasive texts using the PowerPoint. List examples of forms that persuasive writing can take: letters to the editor, essays, editorials, political speeches. (Slideshow information derived from University of Minnesota Writing for Success.) **(2 minutes)**
20. Introduce the elements of persuasive writing and speaking with [this video](#). Students will learn the terms ethos, logos, and pathos and the roles they play in persuasive writing.
21. Clarify the Greek translations: trust, logic, emotion.
22. Tie the video to earlier in the day and check for understanding in a whole-group discussion: **(6 minutes)**
- We have seen pathos used the most frequently in storytelling. Why do you think that is?
 - In which persuasive settings might ethos be the most important element to utilize? (A salesperson getting the buyer to trust them, people trying to prove their innocence, people who help individuals make decisions involving care of others like doctors or teachers)
 - In which settings might logos be the most important? (Scientific journals, decisions involving a lot of money, business decisions)
23. Remind students of the work that they did last session. Remind them that they will be writing an editorial for a student newspaper. An editorial is a type of persuasive newspaper article written by or on behalf of an editor that gives an opinion on a topical issue. **(2 minutes)**
- Their editorials will be on their California issue, attempting to persuade their school community to their opinion.
 - They will work together, but each student will write their own text. This will be completed in the next session.
 - They will then work together in issue groups to create a presentation on their issue. They will start in the next session and finish in the last session.
24. Direct students to the example editorial in their guidebooks.
- Lead a whole-group close reading to analyze the text for the elements of a persuasive text. Encourage students to mark up the text in their guidebooks. Be sure to emphasize how these elements differ from the elements of the descriptive text/blog post they wrote (Attachment 3). **(10 minutes)**

- Ask students to determine how persuasive the text is in small-group discussions using the following questions (found in their guidebooks): **(10 minutes)**
 - What element(s) of persuasion are used?
 - Who might be the most convinced by this editorial?
 - Who might not be convinced?
 - Which elements were most persuasive to you? Why?
 - What could be added to make this editorial more persuasive?
- Have students share a few answers to the last question with the whole group. **(3 minutes)**

25. Reflect as a whole group using the following question: **(5 minutes)**

- What factors should authors of editorials consider when choosing the persuasive elements they use in their writing? Why?

Break (5 minutes)

Determining Policy Recommendations (55 minutes)

26. Tell students that in order to be persuasive, they must build their argument for the policy solution they want their audience to support. After identifying that policy, they can choose the most relevant details and the stories they wish to include, frame the problems, and reflect on what their audience might find persuasive. **(2 minutes)**
27. Give students **10 minutes** to review their research from the last session and identify any California or local policies being put forward to address the issue they are exploring. Give a little more time to research policies if necessary. If they find policies outside of California, they should have a reason as to why they should apply and work in the state or local community.
28. After individually identifying the policy or policies from their research, have students get into their California issue groups. Direct students to share the policy solutions they have identified with the others in their whole issue group. Tell students they will determine where they individually stand on the issue through a structured discussion with their issue group. They may agree or disagree with others in the group, but the main point is that each student develops their own opinion so they can argue for that policy solution in their editorial. Allow them to refer back to their research as necessary. Allow **20 minutes** for discussion. Questions in the guidebook to discuss include:
 - Which policies, if any, have been shown to address the problem elsewhere?
 - Which policies will take the most resources? What resources do they need?
 - Which already have a lot of support? Who are the supporters?
 - Which policies address many parts of the issue?
 - What are the values that supporters of each policy hold?
 - Which policy or policies do you personally support? Why? (Students do not have to agree as a group on policies to support.)
29. Students will then begin developing the editorial using the organizer in the guidebook. The organizer will have them: **(20 minutes)**
 - Start by reflecting on the reasons they support this policy or policies.
 - Reflect on the audience they will be writing for. Questions include:
 - How much might they know about the issue?
 - How much might they know about the policy you are promoting?

- What questions or concerns might they have?
- Identify an argument for each of the three persuasive elements.
 - Ethos (Trust): Students can pull from the Story of Us to demonstrate their commitment to the issue or their own expertise/experiences with the issue to show that the reader can trust their opinion.
 - Pathos (Emotion): Students can find a moving personal story or pull from their Story of Self to show the policy they support would help people affected by the issue.
 - Logos (Logic): Students can use a compelling fact or statistic from their research that supports the policy they want to see put in place.
- Students can research as necessary.

Session Reflection (5 minutes)

30. Give students a few minutes to complete an individual written reflection in the guidebook: Based on what you know about your audience and your issue, which persuasive element (logos, pathos, or ethos) will be the most effective in convincing your audience to support your preferred policy solution(s)? Why?
31. Give any notes or reminders for the next session.



Story of Self Purpose

Your Story of Self is one way to help create change, sharing your purpose and commitment to the group you are working with. Each person's Story of Self can be compared to those of their working group to identify group strengths and similarities and to boost the overall group motivation. Stories of Self can be shared with those outside the group selectively in order to build empathy for the cause or to convince others to join in the work.

Story of Self Explanation

Every one of us has a compelling story to tell. We have all made choices that have shaped our life's path—how to respond to challenges we faced as children, whether or not to take leadership in our places of worship and our schools, where we found the hope to take risks, and so on.

The key focus is on choice points, moments in our lives when our values become real when we have to choose in the face of uncertainty. When did you first care about being heard, about abuses of power, about poverty? Why? When did you feel you had to do something? Why did you feel you could? What were the circumstances? The power in your Story of Self is to reveal something of yourself and your values—not your deepest secrets, but the key shaping moments in your life.

We all have stories of pain or we wouldn't think the world needs changing. We all have stories of hope or we wouldn't think we could change it.

Story of Self Checklist

- ☐ Briefly introduces the issue or problem
- ☐ Explains how or when the author/speaker became aware of the issue
- ☐ Provides examples of pivotal moments in the author/speaker's life that explain how the issue became important
- ☐ Uses descriptive language to affect the audience's emotions
- ☐ Expresses hope and/or personal values
- ☐ Expresses the urgency of the situation or issue



Story of Us Purpose

A Story of Us communicates why our community in particular is called to act, and why we in particular have the capacity to lead.

Just as with your Story of Self, the key choice points in the life of the community are those moments that express the values underlying the work your organization does. The key is to focus on telling a story about specific people and specific moments of choice or action that shaped your community. Tell a story that invites others to join you in this community.

**Close Reading of an Editorial****Best Way to Fight Climate Change? Put an Honest Price on Carbon**

Will voters in Washington State breathe new life into the idea of taxing carbon emissions? Plenty of people worried about the earth's future certainly hope so.

Ask students: How does the author get your attention? Introducing the editorial with a question, making the subject seem important by invoking the earth's future.

Climate scientists and economists have long argued that the single best way to slow global warming is to put a price on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and raise that price over time, thus creating a sensible market incentive to reduce emissions and invest in cleaner energy sources. Controlling emissions is important or else the world will begin suffering global warming's worst consequences—including, but not limited to, the displacement of millions of people by drought and sea-level rise—as early as 2040, much sooner than previously forecast.

Ask students: What is the main problem? Who is being affected? Carbon emissions/climate change, millions of people affected by drought and flooding.

Ask students: What words does the author use to convey the seriousness of the issue? Millions, important, suffering, worst consequences, displacement.

Ask students: Which of the three persuasive terms does these details appeal to? Logos by providing statistics that show we must act soon, pathos through the emotional language choices.

Voters in the state of Washington will soon be given the chance to adopt a carbon pricing plan that would charge polluters like refineries a fee for emitting greenhouse gases. In this case, the fee would factor in the now unaccounted for costs of more frequent and intense hurricanes, wildfires, droughts and other natural disasters linked to climate change.

Ask students: What solution is the state of Washington proposing? A tax to charge polluters for the costs of the effects of climate change such as wildfires and droughts.

If the Washington proposal, Initiative 1631, wins—as we hope it does—the result could ripple beyond Washington's boundaries. It could provide a template, or at least valuable lessons, for other states to follow; and (let's dream for a moment) it might even encourage Congress to take action on a national program. The dream among many carbon-pricing enthusiasts is that a smoothly functioning carbon tax will eliminate the need for messy government regulations like those imposed by the Obama administration after Congress failed to pass a cap-and-trade program. Carbon pricing would help, and could do wonders to drive private investment toward cleaner energy.

Ask students: What are four arguments in support of the carbon tax? The idea could spread to other states, encourage national action, remove the need for messy regulations, and help increase private investment.

Ask students: What kind of emotions do you think the author is trying to make the reader feel? Hope, excitement.

As of now, about 40 governments around the world, including the European Union and California, have put a price on carbon, some through cap-and-trade programs, with an average price per ton of \$8. But lately the idea of carbon taxes is showing signs of life in many parts of the world. Portugal launched a carbon tax in 2015, and Chile followed in 2017, and just last week Justin Trudeau, the Canadian prime minister, announced a sweeping plan to tax industrial emitters.

Ask students: What details did the author include to help support their arguments? Other governments are taxing carbon and some are just now launching "sweeping" plans.

Ask students: Why do you think the author included these details? Which of the three persuasive terms do these details appeal to? *Because it shows other important nations and states have decided to enact similar policies; it appeals to ethos because it is portraying these other governments as leaders to be trusted.*

A yes vote in Washington State would add further momentum—and possibly focus a few minds in the other Washington.

Ask students: Why might the author have chosen to end the editorial this way? *A strong and concise summary of the policy and the argument, clarifies the most important point.*

Ask students: How would you describe the person who is being targeted by this editorial? *A person who cares about climate change/the earth/environment, who knows some things about climate change, who keeps up with the news, who cares about what is going on in the country, whom the author believes is swayed by reason and statistics.*



Goals: Throughout the session, students will work in small groups to collaborate on writing a persuasive essay and preparing a presentation using the issues they identified in Session 5. Students will practice public speaking skills in a facilitator-led peer review and feedback activity in order to prepare for the final session.

Objectives: Students will:

- Draft their editorial with their guidebook organizer.
- Edit their essay with peers.
- Present their essay to their California issue group.
- Deliberate with their issue group to determine the policies they wish to include in their final presentations.
- Begin drafting their presentations.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; at least one computer for each California issue group

Materials: [Session 7 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student)

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Welcome students back.
2. Conduct a warm-up discussion using the following questions:
 - What are some of the challenges you usually face when writing an essay?
 - What are some ways you overcome those challenges?
3. Go over the day's agenda.

Drafting the Persuasive Essay (105 minutes)

4. Remind students that in the previous session, they identified the policy solution they will be persuading their audience to support, constructed arguments on the basis of persuasive elements, and considered which of those elements might be the most convincing to their audience. **(1 minute)**
5. Now, they will work on building up the persuasive elements of their essay. Go over the next section of the organizer, which will include: **(3 minutes)**
 - A place to list the element(s) of persuasion that they identified as the best to sway their audience
 - A place to list their policy solution that is specific to California or their local community
 - A place to list two arguments they want to include in their editorial
 - A place to list supporting details under each of those arguments
 - A place to list their sources
6. Allow students time to complete this section of the organizer, researching, brainstorming, and bouncing ideas off of each other as necessary. **(25 minutes)**
7. Transition to the next part of the organizer. Explain that through their research, they have developed an expert understanding of the issue. However, the audience reading the editorial may not be experts. They

need to explain the issue in terms that their audience can understand. They also need to explain that this issue is current and affecting people in California or their local community right now. **(1 minute)**

8. Explain the next part of the organizer, which will include: **(3 minutes)**

- A place to describe the problem in California or their local community that their policy solution is designed to address
- A place to include additional details
- A place to explain any terminology that their audience may need to understand
- A place to list their sources

9. Allow students time to complete this section of the organizer, researching, brainstorming, and bouncing ideas off of each other as necessary. **(25 minutes)**

Break (5 minutes)

10. Explain the last part of the organizer. Editorials need an introduction and a conclusion. These do not need to be long paragraphs. A few sentences that convey urgency or grab the reader's attention make for a strong introduction. A 1-2-sentence paragraph at the end that summarizes the key points in the editorial work well for the ending. **(1 minute)**

11. Give students time to write their introduction and conclusion in the guidebook. **(15 minutes)**

12. After they have finished, explain to students that they will be putting everything together now. Go over the essay checklist with students (see the close reading from Session 6). Give students time to draft their essay using their organizer and notes. **(25 minutes)**

Editing Editorials (70 minutes)

13. Explain to students that it is important to edit their work. They will be using a three-step process in which they themselves first identify the problems or questions they see in their work. Then, they will bring those questions to a peer who can help them troubleshoot and rewrite parts of their work. Finally, they will work with a different peer who will help them edit one more time. **(2 minutes)**

14. Give students time to self-identify problems and trouble areas in their writing. **(7 minutes)**

15. Have them pair up with a peer from their issue group to talk through those issues. Students will then go back and incorporate those edits. **(25 minutes)**

16. Students will then pair up with a different peer from their issue group. Students will read each other's essays and identify areas to edit using questions in the guidebook. **(15 minutes)**

Lunch

17. After the editing process is finished, have students complete the editorial incorporating all edits. **(20 minutes)**

Presenting Editorials (30 minutes)

18. Students will get into their California issue groups. Each student will read their editorial out loud to the group. **(20 minutes)**

19. Have each group appoint a facilitator to lead a reflection discussion. Questions are in the guidebook. **(10 minutes)**

- Which part of the process was most difficult?
- Which part was the simplest or easiest?
- How, if at all, did hearing everyone's essays shape your opinion on the issue?

Break (5 minutes)

Begin Working on Presentations (65 minutes)

20. Explain to students the goals and format of the presentation. Using a slide presentation, student groups will explain their California issue to the class as well as one or two policies they would like to see the local or state government implement to address the issue. They will have up to **5 minutes** to present 2-4 slides. The group will deliberate in order to achieve consensus on the policies they present. Then, they will draft their presentation by writing a script and determining which visuals they need to search for to include while speaking. **(5 minutes)**
21. In their California issue groups, tell students to compile a list of the policy solutions put forward in the editorials and record them in their guidebooks. **(7 minutes)**
22. Issue area groups will have **20 minutes** to determine one or two solutions they want to pursue in their presentation. They will do this through a deliberation using the following guiding questions available in the guidebook:
 - Which of these policies will address this issue broadly?
 - Which of these policies has the potential to have the biggest effect?
 - Which of these policies would be the easiest to implement?
 - Which policy or policies do we want to include in our presentation? (Choose 1-2.)
23. Note: If students do not seem like they will be able to come to a consensus with about **5 minutes** remaining, let them know they can divide into two smaller groups, provided there are at least three people in each group.
24. After the deliberation, give students **30 minutes** to use the guidebook organizer and checklist to begin drafting their presentation. Students should be relying on information, research, persuasion, and personal experience as recorded in the editorials, but they can do some additional research if necessary.
 - Note: The guidebook is a storyboard format, so students can plan out text and images they would like to use in a PowerPoint. (Before searching for images, they should plan out what kind of images they want on each slide instead of searching randomly.)
 - Students will also have space to record the script they wish to say when presenting each slide.
25. Students can begin to work on the PowerPoint if they finish their storyboard and script. Make sure students know the location of their saved work online.

Reflect on the Day (10 minutes)

26. Hold a whole-group discussion using the following questions:
 - How, if at all, has collaboration benefited your writing?
 - What are the benefits and drawbacks of promoting a cause through a written format such as an editorial?
 - What suggestion or piece of advice did you find to be most helpful?
 - How do you anticipate those benefits and drawbacks to differ when promoting your cause through a group presentation?



Goals: In the culminating session of the course, small groups of students will present policy solutions based on their persuasive essays. Through a facilitator-led deliberation, students will consider the role young people play in creating change. They will discuss and reflect on how they can continue to engage in their communities and support each other as they seek to become more active members of a democracy.

Objectives: Students will:

- Complete their presentations.
- Present to the whole class.
- Identify actions suited to address their California issue.
- Deliberate to determine which actions would best address their issue.
- Reflect on the program.

Technology: Computer with internet access for the instructor; projector and screen (or Smart Board) with sound capabilities; at least one computer for each California issue group

Materials: [Session 8 PowerPoint](#); Student Guidebooks (one per student); flipchart; tape; markers

Time: Five hours (300 minutes)

Procedures:

Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Welcome students back for their final session.
2. Conduct a whole-group warm-up discussion using the following questions:
 - What goals do you have for your presentation?
 - How will you know if you have achieved those goals?
3. Go over the session agenda.

Finish Presentations (105 minutes)

4. Give students a total of **90 minutes** to:
 - Finish drafting their script and storyboard in their guidebooks.
 - Create their slide presentation.
5. After students have completed their presentations, give them **15 minutes** to practice their presentations in their groups.

Lunch

Student Presentations (70 minutes)

Alert students that each group has up to **5 minutes** to present. The class has up to **5 minutes** for questions/feedback after each presentation. (**About 60 minutes total**)

6. Reflect on the presentations with a whole-group discussion: **(10 minutes)**
 - What elements of your presentation were catered to an audience of your peers?
 - What might you need to change if presenting to policymakers?

Identifying Actions (35 minutes)

7. Tell students that they will be reading case studies of young people who took action on issues they care about. Let students know that this time, they will be focusing on the actions of the young people (instead of the skills they needed to be effective, as was done in Session 4).
8. Assign students to groups of about 4-5 to read case studies of young activists in their guidebooks. Tell students to respond to the questions at the end of the page, including listing the actions the activist took. **(10 minutes)**
9. Jigsaw students into new groups with each case represented. They will share their case studies and compile a list of actions using the prompts in the guidebook. **(7 minutes)**
10. Have students return to their issue groups, compare lists, and brainstorm any additional actions they can take to make change on the issues. Students can refer back to the profiles they read in Session 4 as well. **(7 minutes)**
11. From the list, in their issue groups, students will determine 2-3 actions they think are the most important and effective to address their specific issue by identifying benefits and drawbacks of the items on the list. **(10 minutes)**

Break (5 minutes)

Deliberation (35 minutes)

12. In the whole group, students will share their chosen actions and which ones they dismissed, but they will not share their reasoning yet. Take notes as students are sharing out in order to facilitate the deliberation to follow. **(10 minutes)**
13. Introduce the whole-group deliberation. Students will deliberate on the most important roles they can play in making change, forming consensus on the types of actions they should be starting to take to make change. **(20 minutes)**
 - If some groups dismissed actions that another group chose, explore why that might be. Help them share the benefits and drawbacks each group considered.
 - If most students agreed on one or more actions, have them explore the resources they would need in order to achieve meaningful change when applying those actions.
 - After students have identified the roles that young people play, help them come to a consensus on which roles are the most important to take on now. Help them consider which roles may be less important and why.
14. Reflect on the deliberation: **(5 minutes)**
 - What consensus was achieved?
 - Where were areas of disagreement still evident?

Final Reflections (35 minutes)

15. Reflect on the session with a start-stop-continue:

- Give students **5 minutes** to write down one thing under each section in their guidebook.
 - One thing I'd like to start doing...
 - One thing I'd like to stop doing...
 - One thing I'd like to continue doing...
- Then, go around the room and have each student share one of their responses to the prompts. **(10 minutes)**

16. Reflect on the program with a carousel.

- Hang pieces of flipchart up around the room with the following prompts:
 - What skills has this program helped you develop?
 - What is one of your most important takeaways from this program?
 - What are you curious to learn more about?
 - What skills do you want to continue to work on?
 - Which component was your favorite part of the program?
- Allow students to write their responses to a few of the prompts on the flipchart. No one has to respond to every prompt. **(7 minutes)**
- After everyone is seated again, note any themes or unique responses you observed. Choose relevant questions from the list below to ask students: **(7 minutes)**
 - Why do you think so many people had the same response to (prompt X)?
 - Why do you think we had so many responses to (prompt Y), but not (prompt Z)?
 - Is there anything you would like to share about your experience in this program that was not covered in the prompts?

17. Congratulate students on their work and allow for any final thoughts or reflections. Wrap up with any announcements and make sure students take their guidebooks with them for further reflection or to show what they learned. **(5 minutes)**