

## CURRENT TOPICS IN CIVICS CURRICULUM



**Grade Level(s):** 10 - 12

**Curriculum Author(s):** Marisa Christoff, Rebecca Trzaski

**Course Description:** Current Topics in Civics is a half year course that provides students with the opportunity to connect local, regional, and national problems with our governmental process. Students will analyze the process of citizenship, branches of government, and the individual's place in a democratic society through a contemporary issues lens. Various viewpoints and perspectives on civic topics and the exploration of active citizenship will be incorporated throughout the course. *This class fulfills the civics requirement for graduation.*  
(Humanities, .5 credit)

## Year At A Glance

| Unit Title                                                                                             | Overarching Essential Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Overarching Enduring Understanding                                                                                                                                                                                      | <a href="#">Vision of A Learner “I Can” Statements</a>                                                                                        |
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| <a href="#">Foundations of American Democracy</a>                                                      | How do the structures and functions of the United States government depend upon the participation and civic engagement of its citizens?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | The U.S. Constitution creates a separation of powers as well as checks and balances in order to protect against tyranny. Civic engagement and citizen participation are crucial to preventing tyranny.                  | <b>TCC2(9-12); TCC4(9-12); CCE1; CCE4 (9-12); AA4 (9-12)</b>                                                                                  |
| <a href="#">Contemporary Issues in the Legislative Branch</a>                                          | What is the most important current issue facing the legislative branch? How should this issue be addressed by elected officials?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | There are many important issues that currently face our elected officials. Elected officials consider their own values as well as how their constituents, donors, and party members feel when considering these issues. | <b>TCC1(9-12); TCC2(9-12); TCC3(9-12); TI1(9-12); TI2(9-12); TI3(9-12); AA4(9-12)</b>                                                         |
| <a href="#">Contemporary Issues in the Executive Branch</a>                                            | What is the most important current issue facing the executive branch? How should this issue be handled by the executive branch?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The executive branch needs to work with their party and Congress to make lasting policy change.                                                                                                                         | <b>TCC1(9-12); TCC2(9-12); TCC3(9-12); TI1(9-12); TI2(9-12); TI3(9-12); AA2(9-12); AA4(9-12)</b>                                              |
| <a href="#">Contemporary Issues in the Judicial Branch and the Final Exam Inquiry Research Project</a> | <p>What is the most important current issue facing the judicial branch? How should this issue be handled by the judicial system?</p> <p>***Students will research a current event and create their own essential question to research for their final exam project. Students will answer their self-created essential question by connecting it to a constitutional issue and using evidence to defend their response.</p> | Each year the Supreme Court decides which cases they will hear during the term. Their rulings, as well as those of other courts, create precedent that impact law throughout the land.                                  | <b>TCC1(9-12); TCC2(9-12); TCC3(9-12); TCC4(9-12); TI1(9-12); TI2(9-12); TI3(9-12); TI4(9-12); AA1(9-12); AA2(9-12); AA3(9-12); AA4(9-12)</b> |



## Unit 1 - Foundation of American Democracy

### Desired Results - Goals, Transfer, Meaning, Acquisition

#### Established Goals:

- **CG.Inq.1.a.** Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the United States Government
- **CG.Inq.3.a.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views and mediums while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value to guide the selection of credible sources.
- **CG.Inq.4.a.** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
- **CG.His.5.a.** Analyze how interpretations of the social contract theory of government influenced the founding of the United States government (e.g., Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke). **CG.Civ.4.a.** Explain how the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution contributed to the establishment of a federal democratic republic (e.g., popular sovereignty, federalism).
- **CG.Civ.4.b.** Describe how the United States Constitution organizes, enumerates, and divides power to create a limited government (e.g., separation of powers, checks and balances, necessary and proper clause, supremacy clause, 10th Amendment).
- **CG.Civ.4.d.** Explain how federalism led to conflict between states and the federal government
- **CG.Civ.2.c.** Analyze the role of individuals, groups, and the media in shaping political participation over time in the United States

#### Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

#### Vision of A Learner Attributes: Students will be able to independently use their learning to... ("I can" statements to be demonstrated)

- **TCC1(9-12):** I can ask purposeful, insightful questions to find a variety of innovative solutions.
- **TCC2(9-12):** I can evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives, and recognize their limitations and implications, in order to justify new conclusions.
- **TCC3(9-12):** I can integrate relevant information to produce multiple valid solutions.
- **TI1(9-12):** I can implement a realistic plan and adapt when necessary to achieve my goals.
- **TI2(9-12):** I can evaluate my objectives and a variety of credible resources to find the best solutions for any challenge.
- **TI3(9-12):** I can formulate and investigate probing questions to further my learning.
- **AA4(9-12):** I can create opportunities to extend my learning by remaining open-minded in any situation.



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| <p><b>Understandings:</b> Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The framers' created a bicameral legislature to ensure careful debate and deliberation within what they saw as the most powerful branch and to limit the impact that the whims of the people could have on the government.</li> <li>• Checks and balances strengthen our government to help ensure its preservation.</li> <li>• State laws follow a similar process to national laws in their creation.</li> <li>• The separation of powers between state and national governments is known as federalism.</li> </ul>                                                                        | <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the framers' purpose in constructing the U.S. government with a separation of power?</li> <li>• To what extent are the checks and balances within the U.S. government still necessary today?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Students will know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What a social contract is and how the enlightenment influenced the framers of the Constitution.</li> <li>• The meaning of the terms liberal, moderate, and conservative</li> <li>• The major sections of the US Constitution</li> <li>• That constitutional interpretation begins with the preamble</li> <li>• That the preamble can also inform federal and state budgets</li> <li>• That separation of powers, check and balances, federalism, and large/small state compromises all help protect against tyranny</li> <li>• How the Bill of Rights protects the individual against the federal government</li> </ul> | <p><b>Students will be able to...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how the American political system provides for choice and opportunities for participation.</li> <li>• Make evidence-based arguments pertaining to constitutional issues in an op/ed piece..</li> <li>• Access periodicals for research pertaining to the Media Bias Activity</li> <li>• Create their own federal budget slideshow and justify spending changes based upon the preamble of the Constitution</li> <li>• Utilize the media bias chart created by AllSides</li> <li>• Explain the difference between strict and broad construction of the Constitution.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Key Vocabulary:</b><br/>Government, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Constitution, Bill of Rights, federalism, constituents, enumerated powers, implied powers, concurrent powers</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

### Assessment Evidence

**Performance Tasks:**

**Summative:** Students choose how to share their ideas and research responding to the questions: How do the structures and functions of the United States government depend upon the participation and civic engagement of its citizens? Options include writing an evidence-based op/ed piece pertaining to a current topic with a Constitutional issue. **TI2, TI3, TCC1, TCC2**

**Other Evidence:**

**Options for two interims include:** Socratic Seminar pertaining to the Bill of Rights, Research one topic across the political spectrum using the media bias chart, or Presentation of the Federal Budget slideshow activity. **TI3, TCC3**

### Learning Plan

- Review of reading strategies (i.e. pre-reading skills, vocabulary, context clues, etc) **TI2**
- US citizenship test (pre-test) **TI1**
- Map of the U.S. and Electoral College **TI1**
- Content-based vocabulary quiz **TI1, AA4**
- Identification and understanding of the political spectrum and AllSides Media Bias Chart **TCC 1, TCC2, TCC3, TI3**
- Develop success criteria for writing **TI3**

**Teacher Resources:** The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights Institute, UpFront Magazine, Newsela, Real Clear Politics, ICivics, The DBQ Project, mimi-DBQ book, 270towin.com, Allsides.com, All Sides Media Bias Chart, theflipside.io, Republican-American, Voices, New York Times, and other news media outlets.

## Unit 2 - Contemporary Issues in the Legislative Branch

### Desired Results - Goals, Transfer, Meaning, Acquisition

#### Established Goals:

##### Connecticut Secondary Social Studies Frameworks

- **CG.Civ.2.b.** Analyze the role and effectiveness of the legislative branch in addressing constituent and societal needs
- **CG.Civ.3.a.** Analyze how elections and the electoral process are executed and maintained by constitutions and laws in the United States
- **CG.Civ.5.a.** Evaluate the relationship between law-making, enforcement, and interpretation in balancing the rights of the individual with the well being of society
- **CG.Civ.13.a.** Evaluate how a regulation or law can create or eliminate systemic inequalities involving race, gender and sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, belief systems, or access to resources
- **CG.His.5.b.** Analyze how historical contexts have shaped and continue to shape the ideologies and platforms of political parties in the United States
- **CG.Civ.10.a.** Determine the extent to which elected officials represent constituent interests and perspectives
- **CG.Civ.2.d.** Analyze trends in access to voting, voter turnout, and voter representation over time
- **CG.His.5.c.** Analyze how social contexts shape personal political beliefs and voting behavior.

##### Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5:** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6:** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

#### Vision of A Learner Attributes: Students will be able to independently use their learning to... ("I can" statements to be demonstrated)

- **TCC1(9-12):** I can ask purposeful, insightful questions to find a variety of innovative solutions.
- **TCC2(9-12):** I can evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives, and recognize their limitations and implications, in order to justify new conclusions.
- **TCC3(9-12):** I can integrate relevant information to produce multiple valid solutions.
- **TI1(9-12):** I can implement a realistic plan and adapt when necessary to achieve my goals.
- **TI2(9-12):** I can evaluate my objectives and a variety of credible resources to find the best solutions for any challenge.
- **TI3(9-12):** I can formulate and investigate probing questions to further my learning.
- **AA4(9-12):** I can create opportunities to extend my learning by remaining open-minded in any situation.

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| <p><b>Understandings:</b> Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws shape and reflect the values of society which are ever-changing, therefore our laws are ever-changing.</li> <li>• There are many important issues that currently face our elected officials. Elected officials consider their own values as well as how their constituents, donors, and party members feel when considering these issues.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do laws both shape and reflect characteristics of society?</li> <li>• What was the framers' purpose in constructing the legislative branch in a bicameral fashion?</li> <li>• To what extent are the checks and balances within the legislative branch still necessary today?</li> <li>• Are deliberation and compromise necessary for political decision-making?</li> <li>• What are some Connecticut state statutes? How did these statutes become law?</li> <li>• To what extent should state governments operate independently from the national government?</li> <li>• What is the most important current issue facing the legislative branch? How should this issue be addressed by elected officials?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Students will know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The historical context of Article I of the Constitution and constitutional compromises</li> <li>• The differences in the roles and responsibilities of representatives and senators.</li> <li>• How to contact relevant Congressional delegates.</li> <li>• The steps of the legislative process.</li> <li>• What considerations influence Congressional voting habits: lobbying, political parties, constituents, values</li> <li>• Checks and balances of the legislative branch</li> <li>• How public opinion is measured and its influence on legislators.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Students will be able to...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the role that deliberation and compromise played, and continues to play, in the lawmaking process in the United States.</li> <li>• Evaluate how laws both shape and reflect characteristics of American society.</li> <li>• Discuss the pros and cons of term limits within the legislative branch.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Key Vocabulary:</b> legislative branch, House of Representatives, Senate, bicameral, separation of powers, checks and balances, current representatives in U.S. Congress, current representatives in the Connecticut General Assembly, census, bill, statute, filibuster, public opinion, polling</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Assessment Evidence

#### Performance Tasks:

- **Summative:** Students choose how to share their ideas and research responding to the questions: What is the most important current issue facing the legislative branch? How should this issue be addressed by elected officials? **TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4**

#### Other Evidence:

- **Options for two interims include:** webquest on the U.S. and/or state government; conducting a legislative simulation involving political parties, party platforms and political communication; contacting your own representative or senator and making a policy suggestion; and/or a Socratic seminar on legislative branch topics. **TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4**

### Learning Plan

- Review of research techniques (databases) **TCC2**
- Content-based vocabulary quiz **TI1, AA4**
- Identification and understanding of the political spectrum and AllSides Media Bias Chart **TCC 1, TCC2, TCC3, TI3**
- Reflect on success criteria for writing **TI3, AA2**

**Teacher Resources:** The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights Institute, UpFront Magazine, Newsela, Real Clear Politics, ICivics, The DBQ Project, mimi-DBQ book, 270towin.com, Allsides.com, All Sides Media Bias Chart, theflipside.io, Republican-American, Voices, New York Times, and other news media outlets.

## Unit 3 - Contemporary Issues in the Executive Branch

### Desired Results - Goals, Transfer, Meaning, Acquisition

#### Established Goals:

##### Connecticut Secondary Social Studies Frameworks

- **CG.Inq.1.c.** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of civic concepts and ideas associated with both compelling and supporting questions.
- **CG.Eco.9.a.** Describe the roles of the executive branch in developing and implementing economic policies in the United States (

##### Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3:** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8:** Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

#### **Vision of A Learner Attributes:** Students will be able to independently use their learning to... ("I can" statements to be demonstrated)

- **TCC1(9-12):** I can ask purposeful, insightful questions to find a variety of innovative solutions.
- **TCC2(9-12):** I can evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives, and recognize their limitations and implications, in order to justify new conclusions.
- **TCC3(9-12):** I can integrate relevant information to produce multiple valid solutions.
- **TI1(9-12):** I can implement a realistic plan and adapt when necessary to achieve my goals.
- **TI2(9-12):** I can evaluate my objectives and a variety of credible resources to find the best solutions for any challenge.
- **TI3(9-12):** I can formulate and investigate probing questions to further my learning.
- **AA2(9-12):** I can assess my past successes and mistakes to change my approach.
- **AA4(9-12):** I can create opportunities to extend my learning by remaining open-minded in any situation.

#### **Understandings:** Students will understand that...

- The executive branch encompasses the president, vice president, and executive agencies and departments.
- Presidential Power has expanded overtime as the national

#### **Essential Questions:**

- What does it mean to be an executive?
- How has presidential power expanded over time?
- What makes a good president?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>government has taken a more active role in the lives of citizens.</li> <li>The president holds many roles and carries many responsibilities.</li> <li>We have had four presidents who have lost the popular votes but won the electoral votes thereby winning the election.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the President only represent the people who voted them in or the entire United States?</li> <li>What is the most important current issue facing the executive branch? How should this issue be handled by the executive branch?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Students will know...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The historical context of Article II of the US Constitution.</li> <li>Important milestones in the history of the Presidency.</li> <li>The evolving popular expectations for the Presidency.</li> <li>The distinctions between the multiple roles of the President.</li> <li>How to identify and collect facts, expert analysis and opinion from a variety of credible sources.</li> <li>The roles and responsibilities of executive departments.</li> <li>Specific as well as general differences and similarities between the US presidency and other chief executives in other states.</li> <li>Checks and balances of the executive branch.</li> </ul> | <b>Students will be able to...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make evidence-based arguments comparing the actions of contemporary presidents and executive branch officers to those of the distant and recent past.</li> <li>Identify key examples, both recent and historical to illustrate the evolving expectations of the US Presidency in a variety of contexts (i.e. political, social, cultural...)</li> <li>Articulate which actions of the contemporary executive fulfill which constitutional responsibilities outlined in Article II of the US Constitution</li> <li>Rate the credibility of multiple sources of news, opinion, and analysis from a variety of media and sources.</li> <li>Identify traits and experience relevant and valuable for presidential candidates.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Key Vocabulary:</b> executive departments, president, cabinet, State of the Union, executive order, diplomacy, veto, electoral college, bipartisanship, impeachment, pardon, clemency, 12th Amendment, 22nd Amendment, 25th Amendment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Assessment Evidence</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Performance Tasks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Summative:</b> Students choose how to share their ideas and research responding to the questions: What is the most important current issue facing the executive branch? How should this issue be addressed by elected officials? <b>TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Other Evidence:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Options for two interims include:</b> project on what makes an effective president; proposal for a new amendment related to the executive branch; and/or a Socratic seminar on executive branch topics. <b>TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Learning Plan</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of research techniques <b>TCC1, TCC2, TCC3</b></li> <li>Reliable or fake news: review of the CRAAP test <b>TCC1, TCC2, TCC3</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

- Create success criteria for visual presentations **TI3**
- Peer review of visual presentations through a gallery walk **AA2, AA4**
- Review and adjust writing success criteria **AA2, AA4**
- Content-based vocabulary quiz **TI1, AA4**

**Teacher Resources:** whitehouse.gov, The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights Institute, UpFront Magazine, Newsela, Real Clear Politics, ICivics, The DBQ Project, mini-DBQ book, 270towin.com, Allsides.com, All Sides Media Bias Chart, theflipside.io, Republican-American, Voices, New York Times, and other news media outlets.



## Unit 4 - Contemporary Issues in the Judicial Branch

### Desired Results - Goals, Transfer, Meaning, Acquisition

#### Established Goals:

##### Connecticut Secondary Social Studies Frameworks

- **CG.Civ.4.c.** Explain how the United States Constitution has been adapted and interpreted in response to societal changes in both historical and contemporary contexts
- **CG.Civ.3.b.** Analyze how federal and state court systems are articulated and maintained by constitutions and laws in the United States

##### Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9:** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10:** By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

#### Vision of A Learner Attributes: Students will be able to independently use their learning to... ("I can" statements to be demonstrated)

- **TCC1(9-12):** I can ask purposeful, insightful questions to find a variety of innovative solutions.
- **TCC2(9-12):** I can evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives, and recognize their limitations and implications, in order to justify new conclusions.
- **TCC3(9-12):** I can integrate relevant information to produce multiple valid solutions.
- **TCC4(9-12):** I can integrate my learning to adapt to experiences in the classroom, career and life.
- **TI1(9-12):** I can implement a realistic plan and adapt when necessary to achieve my goals.
- **TI2(9-12):** I can evaluate my objectives and a variety of credible resources to find the best solutions for any challenge.
- **TI3(9-12):** I can formulate and investigate probing questions to further my learning.
- **TI4(9-12):** I can apply my strengths and anticipate challenges to reach my current and future goals.
- **AA1(9-12):** I can evaluate different approaches and justify the best pathway to success.
- **AA2(9-12):** I can assess my past successes and mistakes to change my approach.
- **AA3(9-12):** I can adjust my expectations and behaviors to succeed in a changing and unpredictable environment.
- **AA4(9-12):** I can create opportunities to extend my learning by remaining open-minded in any situation.

#### Understandings: Students will understand that...

- The Supreme Court has changed their power and relationship

#### Essential Questions:

- How did the power of the Supreme Court change over time?

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| <p>with the states through their rulings over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Supreme Court has the power to restrain and promote democracy through their rulings.</li> <li>• Textualists believe that the Constitution should be interpreted through its original intent, while others believe that it is a living document that needs to be interpreted with modern context in mind.</li> <li>• A passive judiciary does not use the power of the Supreme Court to impact society, while an active judiciary would use its rulings to create policy.</li> <li>• The Supreme Court has gone through phases where they take power away from the states and give it to the national government as well as phases where they limit the power of the national government in favor of granting powers to the states.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Supreme Court more often restrain or promote democracy?</li> <li>• Should the Constitution be interpreted as a living document or through original intent?</li> <li>• Does a passive judiciary or an active judiciary promote liberty more effectively?</li> <li>• How does the relationship between the Supreme Court and the states go through cycles of change over time?</li> <li>• What is the most important current issue facing the judicial branch? How should this issue be handled by the justices?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Students will know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How a person is nominated and confirmed to become a Supreme Court justice.</li> <li>• How a case makes its way through the local, state, and federal court systems.</li> <li>• How a case in the Supreme Court differs from those in lower courts.</li> <li>• How the competing legal philosophies influence judicial decisions.</li> <li>• The significance of landmark Supreme Court decisions and their modern relevance.</li> <li>• Checks and balances of the judicial branch.</li> <li>• What factors influence judicial decisions.</li> <li>• How the Supreme Court's decisions shape the policies of the other branches.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Students will be able to...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the process for nominating and confirming Supreme Court justices.</li> <li>• Trace the course of a landmark Supreme Court decision through the court system.</li> <li>• Articulate the lasting significance of Supreme Court decisions and identify their contemporary consequences.</li> <li>• Construct an evidence based argument for how to apply the Constitution to contemporary controversies.</li> <li>• Conduct a mock Supreme Court hearing.</li> <li>• Research cases currently being heard by the Supreme Court.</li> <li>• Discuss the pros and cons of term limits for judges.</li> <li>• Explain the Constitutional Dimensions of contemporary controversies.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Key Vocabulary:</b> jurisdiction, criminal law, prosecutor, defendant, civil law, plaintiff, guilt, liability, burden of proof, appeal, appellate court, appellant, petitioner, respondent, state courts, federal district courts, circuit courts, Writ of Certiorari, amicus briefs, lobbying, precedent, majority opinion, concurring opinion, dissenting opinion, Article III of the Constitution, <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>, judicial review</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## Assessment Evidence

### Performance Tasks:

- **Summative:** Students choose how to share their ideas and research responding to the questions: What is the most important current issue facing the judicial branch? How should this issue be addressed by the justices? **TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4**
- **Summative:** Socratic seminar on federalism (sample question: To what extent should state governments operate independently from the national government?) **TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4**
- **Final exam project:** Students will research a current event and create their own essential question to research for their final exam project. Students will answer their self-created essential question by connecting it to a constitutional issue and using evidence to defend their response. **TCC1, TCC2, TI1, TI3, AA4**

### Other Evidence:

- **Options for two interims include:** project on landmark Supreme Court cases; mock Supreme Court hearing; assessment on jurisdiction scenarios; and/or a Socratic seminar on judicial branch topics. **TCC1, TCC2, TI3, AA4**

## Learning Plan

- US citizenship test (post-test)
- Content-based vocabulary quiz **TI1, AA4**
- Develop success criteria for socratic seminars
- How to pick a research topic
- Question Formulation Technique
- Review of research techniques (citation formatting)
- Peer feedback of final exam project

**Teacher Resources:** The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights Institute, UpFront Magazine, Newsela, Real Clear Politics, iCivics, The DBQ Project, mini-DBQ book, 270towin.com, Allsides.com, All Sides Media Bias Chart, theflipside.io, Republican-American, Voices, New York Times, and other news media outlets.