

Civics

This one-semester course deepens students' knowledge of government, with a particular focus on national, state, and local government in America. Through discussion and writing, they practice making reasoned decisions about matters of public policy. Students engage in investigations, analysis, and arguments about civic life in the United States and the role of the United States in the world. In making reasoned and evidenced-based interpretations, arguments, or decisions, they frame important questions, locate and analyze appropriate evidence and data, consider differing points of view, and apply concepts and principles of American constitutional democracy. Through participating in democratic deliberations around public policy issues, students strengthen their understanding of the legal rights and accompanying responsibilities shared by all citizens.

Units of Study

- I. Foundation of American Government
 - A. Why Do We Need Government?
 - B. Forms of Government
 - C. The Declaration of Independence
 - D. The Constitution
 - E. A Government of Compromises
 - F. Defining Government in the United States
 - G. The Meaning of Citizenship
 - H. Citizens and Civic Engagement
 - I. Citizenship and Civil Disobedience
 - J. When Fundamental Values and Constitutional Principles Conflict
- II. Limited Government
 - A. Enumerated Powers
 - B. Simple Federalism
 - C. Not So Simple Federalism
 - D. Relationships Among State Governments
 - E. State Government
 - F. Direct Democracy and Citizenship
 - G. Your Local Government

- H. The Bill of Rights
- III. The Legislative Branch and Politics
 - A. Article I: The Legislative Branch
 - B. Political Parties, Yesterday, and Today
 - C. The Political Spectrum and Third Parties
 - D. Responsibilities of Government and the Legislative Process
 - E. Bill Creation
 - F. The Legislative Process
 - G. Public Opinion and the Media
- IV. The Executive Branch and World Affairs
 - A. Article I: Constitutional Powers of the President
 - B. Executive Prerogative and Inherent Powers of the President
 - C. Executing the Law
 - D. Checks and Tension Among the Branches
 - E. Presidential Elections
 - F. Presidential Campaigns
 - G. Exploring Demographic Data and Trends
 - H. Evaluating Political Communication
 - I. The Constitution and U.S. Foreign Policy
 - J. Foreign Policy Trends
- V. The Judicial Branch and Law-Making
 - A. The Federal Court System
 - B. How Federal Courts are Organized
 - C. The United States Supreme Court
 - D. Deciding Cases at the Supreme Court
 - E. The Sources of Our Laws
 - F. Types of Laws
 - G. The American Legal System

Length of Unit	Unit Title	Content Standards	Student Outcomes	Essential Questions	Assessment
4 weeks	Foundation of American Government	C1.1.2 C1.1.3 C3.4.2 C1.2.1 C1.2.2 C1.2.3 C1.2.4 C2.1.1 C2.1.3 C2.2.1 C3.2.1 C3.2.3 C2.1.2 C3.2.4 C3.4.1 C1.1.4 C5.1.2 C5.2.1 C5.2.2 C5.2.3 C5.4.2 C5.1.1 C5.4.1 C5.4.3 C5.5.1 C5.5.2 C5.5.3 C6.2.9 C6.2.3 C5.4.2 C2.2.5 C2.2.3	Students will: -explore how different views about human nature influenced political philosophy and beliefs about the purposes of government -examine the forms of government people and societies have adopted. -explore the origins of the ideas found in the Declaration of Independence and the importance of these ideas to our form of government -be introduced to constitutional principles as they begin their examination of the government established by the Constitution -examine the concerns of the Founders and how, through a series of compromises, they designed a limited government, strong enough to perform the duties spelled out in the Preamble, but with adequate protection against tyranny over the states and the people -learn how and why the Framers created a republican form of government and explore some features of American constitutional democracy -learn about citizenship and the naturalization process, and consider the role	How have different views about human nature and the purposes of government resulted in different forms of government? How have ideas about government influenced constitutional principles and fundamental values in the United States? What is meant by government "of the people, by the people, (and) for the people?"	Unit Test

C1.1.4
C2.2.4
C6.2.3
C6.2.5
C6.2.6

of citizens in the United States

-explore their role as citizens and consider the most effective means of civic engagement for different situations

-explore whether civil disobedience is justified in a society in which citizenship is voluntary

-consider a variety of public issues facing Americans and how fundamental values and constitutional principles influence solutions to public issues

Length of Unit	Unit Title	Content Standards	Student Outcomes	Essential Questions	Assessment
4 weeks	Limited Government	C 3.1.5 C 3.1.7 C 3.2.3 C 3.3.1 C 3.1.6 C 3.2.1 C 3.3.6 C 5.1.2 C 3.2.2 C 3.3.1 C 3.3.3 C 2.2.5 C 3.3.2 C 3.3.4 C 3.3.7 C 1.2.4 C 3.3.5 C 1.1.1 C 3.5.8 C 6.1.1 C 6.2.1 C 3.2.4 C 3.2.5	Students will: -explore how the Constitution creates a limited government using the principle of enumerated powers -be introduced to the concept of federalism, and how state, and national governments function in a federal system -consider views of strict and loose constructionists in examining the balance of power between federal government and states' rights -explore the role of states in the constitutional scheme under Article IV -examine major responsibilities of state governments and consider revenue sources and challenges facing state government, including how they affect the lives of their citizens -learn about referendum, recall, and initiative through examples and discussion -identify issues of concern in their community and create action plans to address the problems	How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the American constitutional system of government? How does federalism serve the needs of a diverse citizenry? How can citizens influence state or local public policy or governmental action?	Unit Test

-discuss how the Bill of Rights places a limit on what the federal government

Length of Unit	Unit Title	Content Standards	Student Outcomes	Essential Questions	Assessment
3.5 weeks	The Legislative Branch and Politics	C 2.1.3 C 3.1.1 C 3.2.1 C 1.1.4 C 2.2.5 C 3.5.2 C 2.2.3 C 2.2.5 C 6.1.1 C 3.1.5 C 3.5.1 C 6.2.8 C 3.5.8 C 6.1.2 C 6.1.4 C 6.1.5 C 3.5.4 C 3.5.7 C 6.2.10 C 3.5.3 C 6.2.1 C 3.5.5 C 3.5.9 C 6.2.2	Students will: -use Article I of the Constitution to identify examples of the principles of enumerated powers, popular sovereignty, checks and balances, separation of powers, republicanism, and bicameralism -see how people engage in the political process to promote the greater good, promote self-interest, and advance solutions to public issues and problems -view a political spectrum and see the advancement of third parties in our American society -dissect Article I of the Constitution to see how legislation is introduced to serve one or more of the purposes of government -comprehend how legislation is introduced into Congress and what the goals of Congressmen are -research Congressional issues and propose their own legislation to address the problem -translate how an idea gets proposed into legislation and how long the process can take	How are laws made? How do pressures from individuals, interest groups, the media, political party leadership, and public opinion affect public policy? How effective is the legislative process in addressing the needs of the nation's citizens?	Unit Test

-discover conference committee and discuss bills that need to be worked out by both the House and Senate

-discuss the influences that impact public policy

-view the media influence on public opinion and the impact the media plays in our lives

Length of Unit	Unit Title	Content Standards	Student Outcomes	Essential Questions	Assessment
3.5 Weeks	The Executive Branch and World Affairs	C 3.1.2 C 3.1.5 C 3.2.1 C 2.2.5 C 3.1.4 C 3.5.6 C 6.2.4 C 3.5.7 C 6.1.3 C 4.1.2 C 4.2.4 C 4.2.5 C 4.1.1 C 4.1.3 C 4.1.4 C 6.1.1 C 6.1.2	Students will: -challenge their understandings about the Executive Branch and its powers -identify the Constitutional powers of the president and the limitations of those powers -be introduced to executive prerogative or the right that the executives have to perform some functions without the approval of the legislative branch or the public -explore the seven roles of the president and how the president uses the Cabinet and federal bureaucracy to govern -review the tension among the branches with a specific focus on the powers of the executive branch -introduced to the Electoral College, its roots, and how it has operated in presidential elections -analyze voter demographic data over time to reveal trends in voter turnout and voter preferences -discover and evaluate different forms of	How are the purposes of government and constitutional principles reflected in the powers and structure of the executive branch? How democratic are presidential campaigns and elections in the U.S.? How do economic, political, national security, and cultural issues influence U.S. foreign policy decisions?	Unit Test

political communication

-discuss US foreign policy and the role the president plays in making foreign policy decisions that impact our country

-review US foreign policy positions such as isolationism, imperialism, and world leader

-investigate a foreign policy decision

Length of Unit	Unit Title	Content Standards	Student Outcomes	Essential Questions	Assessment
2 Weeks	The Judicial Branch and Law-Making	C 3.4.1 C 3.4.4 C 3.4.5 C 5.3.4 C 5.4.2	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -explain why the rule of law has a central place in the American economy -describe considerations and criteria that have been used to deny, limit, or extend protection of individual rights -analyze the various levels and responsibilities of courts in the federal and state judicial system and explain the relationships among them -describe the relationship between personal, political, and economic rights and how they can sometimes conflict -describe the importance of citizens civic responsibilities such as obeying the law 	<p>How does the federal court system function?</p> <p>What cases have been handled by federal courts and what are their impacts?</p> <p>What is the role of the Supreme Court in the court system?</p> <p>What are the legal rights and responsibilities of Americans?</p>	Unit Test