
The Three Branches of Government || Creating a Law

Goals & Objectives

Goal: Students will understand how laws are created and the balance of power between each of the three branches of government.

Objective: Students will complete an online game that simulates the process through which laws are created and has them balance the powers of all three branches of government.

California State Content Standards

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

Common Core Literacy 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.WHST.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using

advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

Driving Historical Question

What does the process of turning a bill into a law consist of?

Lesson Introduction (Anticipatory Set/Hook/Accessing Prior Knowledge) || Time:

Students will be shown a short video, *Schoolhouse Rock: I'm Just a Bill*. This will introduce them to the process of passing a bill in a very simplified form. After the video, students will open their notebooks and write down three important things they learned from the video and then share with a partner.

Vocabulary (Content Language Development) || Time: NA

Students will be given a vocabulary sheet to fill in while they watch the video and while they follow along with the PowerPoint after the game simulation.

Content Delivery (Method of Instruction) || Time: 20 min

The teacher will conduct a tutorial on the game simulation and the students will follow along. In order to get a better understanding of how to play the game and understand the main objectives of the game, students will finish the tutorial before they begin the actual game simulation.

The teacher will then have students begin the game simulation and walk around to facilitate the activity. They will answer any questions students have and help students who are having trouble.

At the end of the assignment, the teacher will reward all of the students who completed the entire game simulation with an extra credit ticket that they can redeem at the end of the semester.

Student Engagement (Critical Thinking & Student Activities) || Time: 40 min

Students will be taken to the computer lab in order to complete an interactive online game simulation. The simulation has them assume power of the three government branches and manage these powers in order to produce bills, which they then turn into laws. This is done through the use of press conferences, town hall meetings, and then taking control of the executive branch and either signing or vetoing the law.

Students must utilize each of the three branches as follows:

- Executive Branch
 1. Hold press conferences
 2. Introduce bills
 3. Sign or veto bills waiting to become law
- Legislative Branch

1. Hold town hall meetings
 2. Deliberate on the bill (introduce new legislation and win over the votes of both Congress and the Senate)
- Judicial Branch
 1. Defend any laws that come under attack
 2. Uphold the current laws

The game is timed. Students will have thirty minutes to win the game and create at least ten laws. The game will be accessed through <https://www.icivics.org/games/branches-power>

Lesson Closure || Time: 15 min

The teacher will present a post-game PowerPoint that students will follow along with. Throughout the presentation, the teacher will pause and ask various questions concerning the game simulation and what students experienced. Students will record these responses in their notebook journals, which will be stamped at the end of class for completion.

Assessments (Formative & Summative)

Formative:

- Video Notes
- Lecture Notes

Summative

- Postgame Presentation
- Presentation Responses in notebook journal

Accommodations for English Learners, Striving Readers and Students with Special Needs

All students will be provided with a Game Guide that includes instructions and tips for the game simulation. A translated copy of this Game Guide can be given to students who require it such as English Learners and students with special needs.

Resources (Books, Websites, Handouts, Materials)

YouTube Video: *Schoolhouse Rock – I’m Just a Bill*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQKiag>

Branches of Power: iCivics Game Simulation
<https://www.icivics.org/games/branches-power>

Branches of Power: Game Guide
https://cdn.icivics.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Guide_BranchesOfPower_0.pdf

Postgame PowerPoint Presentation