

Your Guide to Government

A Closer Look at Government

Students' lives are affected by laws, politics, and politicians every day. Consequently, students are curious about how their government works. The *Your Guide to Government Teacher Guide* serves to fuel further exploration of the role of government in the United States. By using this guide, you have an opportunity to tap into high student interest while exposing students to broader social and political issues.

Participation in these lessons will lead students to make global connections and understand higher-level concepts, such as democracy and civic responsibility. Students will become aware of some of the issues involved in democratic elections, law-making, and other governmental decision-making. They will realize that they can make a positive difference through their actions.

The lesson plans in this guide are tailored for grade 4 and address various subjects, such as civics, language arts, and social studies. Each lesson plan is designed to stand alone. As such, they do not need to be presented in sequential order. Helpful reproducible worksheets and rubrics appear at the end of the guide. The book titles referenced in this guide include:

How is a government elected?

How is a law passed?

What are the levels of government?

What is a government?

As students investigate the topics addressed in the guide and become more aware of the U.S. political process, they will sharpen their critical thinking skills to work towards creative solutions to worldwide problems. We invite you to jump in and ask questions with your class as you have fun learning more about the U.S. government.



National Standards Correlation

Lesson Plan Title	Correlation to National Standards
<p>Symbols of Government</p>	<p>Language Arts Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can identify examples of institutions and describe the interactions of people with institutions. The learner can explain the purpose of government.</p>
<p>Government Bingo</p>	<p>Language Arts Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can show how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good, and identify examples of where they fail to do so. The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict.</p>
<p>Whose Job Is It?</p>	<p>Language Arts Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict. The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.</p>
<p>Who Governs Us?</p>	<p>Language Arts Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals. The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.</p>

Lesson Plan Title	Correlation to National Standards
Electing a President	<p>Language Arts Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals. The learner can describe the various forms institutions take and the interactions of people with institutions. The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.</p>
Get Out the Vote	<p>Language Arts Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals. The learner can identify examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens. The learner can explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions. The learner can identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.</p>
Let's Debate	<p>Language Arts Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways. The learner can locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view. The learner can identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.</p>
Becoming a Law	<p>Language Arts Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.</p> <p>Social Studies The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict. The learner can explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions.</p>

For state specific educational standards, please visit <http://www.crabtreebooks.com/>.

Overview and Scope of Lesson Plan Activities

Lesson Plan Title	Subject Areas	Major Concepts
Symbols of Government	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • branches of government • symbolism
Government Bingo	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsibility • parts of government
Whose Job Is It?	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of government
Who Governs Us?	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political representation
Electing a President	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the election process
Get Out the Vote	Language Arts Performing Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civic participation
Let's Debate	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debate
Becoming a Law	Language Arts Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • law-making

Pacing Chart and Vocabulary

One class period is approximately 40 minutes.

Lesson Plan Title	Pacing	Vocabulary	Assessment
Symbols of Government	1 class period	branch executive government judicial legislative symbol	Evaluate student drawings and presentations for understanding of major concepts.
Government Bingo	1 class period	fulfill military responsibility	Monitor student participation and check for accuracy of answers when students declare "Bingo!"
Whose Job Is It?	1 class period	federal local state	Assess student collages for accuracy and understanding of major concepts.
Who Governs Us?	1–2 class periods	community profile representative	Evaluate student profiles for completion and accuracy.
Electing a President	1–2 class periods	declaration election inauguration national convention primary election	Evaluate student posters and reproducibles for accuracy.
Get Out the Vote	2 class periods	citizen requirement vote	Evaluate student performances for participation and understanding of major concepts.
Let's Debate	2 class periods	con debate pro	Monitor student debates for participation and understanding of major concepts.
Becoming a Law	1–2 class periods	bill law	Evaluate student participation for understanding of major concepts.

Symbols of Government

A Lesson on Branches of Government

Content

Students will learn what a government is and find out about the three branches of the U.S. government. They will discuss symbolism and then apply their knowledge by working in pairs to create a symbol for each branch of the U.S. government.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Social Studies

The learner can identify examples of institutions and describe the interactions of people with institutions.

The learner can explain the purpose of government.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Interpersonal



Linguistic



Visual-Spatial

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *What is a Government?* before starting the lesson. Students should review pages 4–5 to reinforce their basic understanding of government and pages 12–13 to make sure they are familiar with the three branches of the U.S. government.

Materials

- *What is a Government?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- student copies of the *Symbols of Government* reproducible
- crayons or colored pencils

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Write the word *government* on the board, and ask students what *government* means. (the person or people in charge of a place) Ask students to describe the U.S. government. (It has a president. We vote for it. It makes laws for us to follow. It has many different parts.) Ask: *Why do you think governing the United States is a big job?* (It's a big country. It has a lot of people in it.)

Class Discussion

Explain that one way to make a big job easier is to break it up into parts. Ask: *How is the United States government broken up into parts?* (Student responses will vary but may include different offices or the division into local/state/national government.) Tell students that the U.S. government is divided into three main parts, or branches. Write the names of the three branches (*legislative, executive, and judicial*) on the board. Then have students use their *What is a Government?* books to identify which branch makes the laws (*legislative*), which branch enforces the laws (*executive*), and which branch decides if laws are fair (*judicial*). Have students refer to pages 12–13 of their *What is a Government?* books to give examples of who or what is in each branch, such as “Police are part of the executive branch because they make sure we obey laws.”

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- explain what a *government* is
- identify and name some characteristics of the three branches of the U.S. government
- explain what a *symbol* is
- work in pairs to create a symbol for the U.S. government

Activity

Part I: Identifying Symbols

Draw a heart (♥) and a smiley face (☺) on the board. Ask: *What do these mean?* (heart: love; smiley face: happiness) Explain that these are *symbols*, or images that represent ideas. Have students identify other symbols they have seen, and have them explain what these symbols mean. Tell students that governments have symbols too. Ask: *What are some symbols of the government of the United States?* (Student responses will vary but may include the U.S. flag, an eagle, the White House, and the U.S. Capitol Building.) Discuss with students the meanings of these symbols, and have students explain why each one is a good representation of the U.S. government.

Part II: Creating Symbols

Divide students into pairs. Give each pair a copy of the *Symbols of Government* reproducible and some crayons or colored pencils. Assign each pair one branch of government: legislative, executive, or judicial. Tell each pair to create a symbol for their branch of government. Encourage students to be creative, but remind them that there should be a clear connection between their symbol and the idea it represents. Encourage students to focus on the characteristics of their branch of government and choose images or ideas that represent those characteristics. Then have students write a sentence or two explaining their symbol on the back of their reproducibles.

Accommodations and Extensions

As a whole class, discuss possible symbols for each branch of government. Then have each pair choose a symbol from the list of class suggestions and draw and explain the symbol on their reproducibles.

As an extension, ask students to find a real-life symbol related to government in an encyclopedia or social studies textbook, or on the Internet. Have them research the meaning behind the symbol and then write a paragraph comparing their own symbol to the real-life symbol they found.

Closure

Have student pairs present their symbols to the class. Students should explain the connection between their symbol and their branch of government.

Assessment

Evaluate student drawings and presentations for understanding of major concepts.

Government Bingo

A Lesson on the Parts of Government

Content

Students will learn about the parts of the U.S. government. They will be able to identify the parts of government and match each part with one or more of its responsibilities.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Social Studies

The learner can show how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good, and identify examples of where they fail to do so.

The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Linguistic



Visual-Spatial

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *What is a Government?* before starting the lesson. They should review the book, paying special attention to the different jobs the government performs.

Materials

- *What is a Government?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- student copies of the *Government Bingo* reproducible
- pens or pencils (1 per student)

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Write the word *responsibility* on the board and ask students to define it. (something that must be done) Have students give examples of their own responsibilities. (Student responses will vary but may include doing their homework, cleaning their bedroom, and doing chores.)

Class Discussion

Explain that the government has responsibilities, too. Ask students to use their *What is a Government?* books to identify some government responsibilities, and write their responses on the board. Ask: *How does the government decide how to fulfill, or complete, its many responsibilities?* (Student responses will vary but may include the idea that the government is divided into branches.) Tell students that each branch of the government has many parts, and that each part has its own specific responsibilities. Have students brainstorm a list of parts of the government, referring to their *What is a Government?* books as a resource. The list might include the military, the Treasury, the post office, Congress, the Supreme Court, police officers, and firefighters. Help students match the responsibilities they mentioned with the part of government that fulfills them, such as “police officers keep us safe.”

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- identify parts of the U.S. government
- identify at least one responsibility of each part of the U.S. government

Activity

Review the list of parts of government. The list may include the following:

- military
- Congress (House of Representatives, Senate)
- Supreme Court
- health care
- postal service/post office
- Treasury
- national parks/National Park Service
- police
- firefighters

Distribute copies of the *Government Bingo* reproducible. Make sure each student has a pen or pencil. Have students write the name of one part of government in each blank square on their card. They will need to use some names more than once.

Review with students the rules for playing bingo. Tell them that you will describe a responsibility. They should find the name of the part of government that fulfills that responsibility and then write the responsibility in that box. If the part of government appears on their card more than once, they should write the responsibility in only one box. If the responsibility is fulfilled by more than one part of government, they should write the responsibility in the box of every part of government that fulfills that responsibility. For example, since both police and firefighters keep us safe, students would write “keeping us safe” in the boxes for both *police* and *firefighters* if “keeping us safe” were named. Tell students they must write only one responsibility in each box. When students have written in four boxes across, down, or diagonally on their cards, they should yell “Bingo!”

One by one, name responsibilities of the different parts of government as they are listed in the *What is a Government?* book (These responsibilities may include the following: keep citizens safe; run schools; build hospitals and clinics; build roads and sidewalks; protect the people in our country and other countries; punish people who break the law; make new laws; decide who is right in a court; test new medicine; deliver letters and packages; protect the environment; print paper money; collect taxes; care for national parks; run zoos.) When a student declares “Bingo!” check his or her answers by having the student read back the parts of government he or she checked off and naming one responsibility for each part. If the student correctly identifies the responsibilities and corresponding parts of government, confirm the “Bingo.” If not, play resumes until a student correctly calls out “Bingo!” After the first student has correctly declared “Bingo!” you may continue the game until more students declare “Bingo!” or until one student has “Black Out” (a completely filled bingo card).

Accommodations and Extensions

Divide students into mixed-ability pairs. Have students play the game as partners.

As an extension, have students use their completed bingo cards as guides to create flashcards that name the part of the government on the front of the card and a list of its responsibilities on the back.

Closure

Ask students why it is a good idea for different parts of government to have different responsibilities. (so that all of the duties get done; so one part isn't responsible for everything) Then have students explain why many different parts might share the same responsibility. (They might do the same thing but on different levels, like state or national government; it might be a very big task that requires a lot of people to get it done.)

Assessment

Monitor student participation and check for accuracy of answers when students declare “Bingo!”

Whose Job Is It?

A Lesson on the Levels of Government

Content

Students will learn about the levels of government (federal, state, local). They will discuss the responsibilities of each level of government and then work in pairs to create collages that represent the responsibilities of each level.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Social Studies

The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict.

The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Linguistic



Visual-Spatial

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *What are the levels of government?* before starting the lesson. Students should review page 4 to make sure they can name the three levels of government.

Materials

- *What are the levels of government?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- student copies of the *Whose Job Is It?* reproducible
- scissors (1 pair per 2 students)
- glue stick or paste (1 per 2 students)
- old magazines (at least 1 per student)

Instructional Procedure

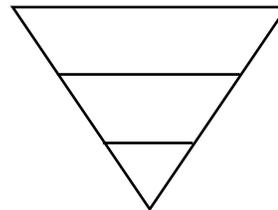
Anticipatory Set

Have students explain what a government does. (It runs, or takes care of, a place or group of people.) Ask students how a government can run or take care of a place as large as the United States. (It divides up responsibilities. It has different parts.) Then ask students to describe examples of their own experiences in which they've split up responsibilities to get a job done. For example, they may have teamed up with a group of classmates to complete a big project for school.

Class Discussion

Explain that the United States has different groups, or levels, to govern it. Ask students to identify some of the levels of government, referring to their *What are the levels of government?* books if necessary. (Student responses may include federal, national, state, local, city, community, and/or district.)

Draw an inverted triangle on the board. Divide it into three horizontal segments, as shown below:



Explain that there are three basic levels of government. The top, and biggest, level governs the whole country.

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- identify the levels of government
- name responsibilities of each level of government
- work in pairs to create a collage that shows the responsibilities of each level of government

Ask: *What is the name of the level that governs the whole country?* (federal or national) In the top section of the triangle, write *federal (national)*. Have students give examples of parts of the federal government. (Congress, the president, Supreme Court, the military, the post office, the treasury, national parks) Explain that the second level of government is *state* government, and write *state* in the middle section of the triangle. Ask students to give examples of parts of state government. (the governor, state legislature, state police) Write *local* in the bottom section of the triangle. Tell students that city, town, community, and district governments are all part of *local* government. Ask students to give examples of other parts or members of local government. (the mayor, the school board, the police, firefighters, the library, city council)

Activity

Explain that sometimes a responsibility is fulfilled by only one level of government. For example, only the federal government leads the military and prints money. Sometimes a responsibility is shared by different levels of government. For example, both state and local governments make decisions about schools. Have students use their *What are the levels of government?* books to identify some responsibilities of each level of government.

Divide students into pairs and give each pair one copy of the *Whose Job Is It?* reproducible. Distribute one pair of scissors, one glue stick, and a few old magazines to each pair. Instruct students to cut out and then paste pictures or words that illustrate responsibilities of each of the three levels. They should find at least two or three images for each level of government.

Accommodations and Extensions

Divide students into groups of three. Assign each group member one level of government and have them find images for only that level of government.

As an extension, have students write a paragraph explaining the responsibilities shown on their collages.

Closure

Ask volunteers to present their collages to the class and to explain the responsibilities they included in their collages. Have students discuss why certain responsibilities belong to certain levels of government, such as making agreements with other countries (federal) or building schools (local).

Assessment

Assess student collages for accuracy and understanding of major concepts.

Who Governs Us?

A Lesson on Political Awareness

Content

Students will learn about some of the government offices that represent their community. They will work in small groups to identify their government officials and learn about one of these leaders.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Social Studies

The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Interpersonal



Linguistic

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *What are the levels of government?* before starting the lesson. Students should review pages 10–23 to become familiar with the different levels of government.

Materials

- *What are the levels of government?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- local newspapers (at least 2 per every 4 students)
- computers with Internet access (at least 1 per every 4 students)
- paper (1 piece per student)
- pens or pencils
- student copies of the *Who Governs Us?* reproducible

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Divide students into small groups. Tell students to imagine that the class is going to get a class pet, and that they need to vote on whether to get a gerbil, a hamster, a turtle, or a lizard. Tell each group to quickly discuss the choices and come up with a group decision. Then ask each group to send one member to the front of the class to announce their group's choice. Record the choices on the board as students share them. Then explain to students that the group members at the front of the room are the groups' *representatives*, because they listened to the group's idea and represented their choice in the class vote.

Class Discussion

Explain to students that the members of our government are the representatives of our *community*. Ask: *Why is it important for us to know who our representatives are?* (because they represent us; so we know if they're doing a good job; so we can vote for or against them in the next election) Remind students that these government members represent us on three different levels: local, state, and national. Using the *What are the levels of government?* book as a resource, work with students to create a list of local, state, and national government offices that represent your community. Write the list on the board. The list might look like this:

Local	State	National
Mayor	Governor	Representative
Alderman or City Council member	State Assembly member	Senator
School Board President	State Senator	President

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- identify local, state, and national government offices
- work in small groups to identify their local, state, and national leaders
- conduct research to learn about one government official

Activity

Part I: Scavenger Hunt

Divide the class into groups of three or four, and make sure each group has at least two newspapers and a computer with Internet access. Tell students to write down the list of government offices from the board. Have each group work together using the newspaper and Internet to find out the names of the people who hold the offices on the list.

Part II: Creating a Profile

Distribute the *Who Governs Us?* reproducible. Explain to students that their job is to create a *profile*, or a list of basic information, about one person from their scavenger hunt. They will create that profile by researching on the Internet or in the newspaper to answer the questions on the reproducible. Review the reproducible to make sure students understand what information they need to find. Assign each group one person from the list about whom to research and create a profile.

Accommodations and Extensions

Divide students into groups of three or four. Assign each group one title from the list on the board, and have the group find the name of only that person. Then assign each group member one or two items from the reproducible to research about that person.

As an extension, ask students to write a paragraph explaining how their group's official has helped fulfill the responsibilities of his or her office and level of government.

Closure

Have each group present their profile to the class. Ask the class to compare and contrast the different leaders.

Assessment

Evaluate student profiles for completion and accuracy.

Electing a President

A Lesson on the Presidential Election Process

Content

Students will learn about the steps in the presidential election process. They will work in groups to create a poster about one step in the process and then work as a class to arrange the steps in order.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Social Studies

The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

The learner can describe the various forms institutions take and the interactions of people with institutions.

The learner can distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Bodily-Kinesthetic



Visual-Spatial

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *How is a government elected?* before starting the lesson. Students should pay special attention to pages 20–27, which describe the presidential election process.

Materials

- *How is a government elected?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- crayons or colored pencils
- 5 pieces of poster board
- pushpins or tape
- student copies of the *Electing a President* reproducible

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Ask students to identify the president of the United States. Ask: *How did he become president?* (He was elected. People voted for him.) Write the word *election* on the board. Explain that an election is the process of choosing a leader by voting. Have students share examples of different kinds of elections they have heard of, such as elections for mayor, for governor, or for student government.

Class Discussion

Ask: *Could I be elected president tomorrow?* (no) *Why not?* (There are a lot of steps you have to go through to become president.) Explain to students that electing a president is a process with many steps and that voting is one of the last steps in that process. Have students list the steps in the presidential election process, using their *How is a government elected?* books as references. As students identify the steps, write them on the board in order. Then briefly identify and explain any steps that students could not name.

Declaration of candidacy and campaigning (Someone announces that he or she is running for president, and then lets voters know about himself or herself.)

Primary elections (Members of each party vote to choose their candidate.)

National conventions (Each party announces its candidate.)

National elections (The whole country votes to choose the president.)

Inauguration (The president is sworn into office.)

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- identify the steps in the presidential election process
- collaborate in a small group to illustrate one step in the election process and work as a class to put the steps of the election process in order

Activity

Part I: Creating Posters

Divide the class into five groups. Give each group one poster board and some crayons or colored pencils. Assign each group one step in the election process. Tell students to create a poster that names and illustrates their step of the election process. Their posters should have the name of their step at the top of the poster, and at least four bullet points describing characteristics of and facts about their step of the election process. Tell students that they should also include at least one illustration on their posters. Have students refer to their *How is a government elected?* books for information about their step.

Part II: Displaying the Posters

After all the groups have completed their posters, erase the original list of steps from the board. Then have the class work together to determine the order the steps should go in to correctly illustrate the presidential election process. Provide pushpins or tape, and help students hang the posters in order, from left to right, on the wall or on a bulletin board.

Once all the posters are hung, distribute the *Electing a President* reproducibles. Have students fill in the steps in the election process by referring to the posters.

Accommodations and Extensions

After students create their posters, don't erase the list of steps from the board. Have students use this as a guide to hang their posters and then work together as a class to complete the reproducible.

As an extension, ask students to create their own graphic organizer that shows all the steps in the election process. Then have students explain why they chose that particular graphic organizer to explain the election process.

Closure

As a class, discuss the displayed posters. Have one volunteer from each group explain the information and illustrations on their posters. Have students describe the importance of each individual step in the overall election process.

Assessment

Evaluate student posters and reproducibles for accuracy.

Get Out the Vote

A Lesson on the Importance of Voting

Content

Students will learn about voting requirements and responsibilities. They will discuss the importance of voting and then work in small groups to create a chant or song to illustrate points from their discussion.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Social Studies

The learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

The learner can identify examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens.

The learner can explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions.

The learner can identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Interpersonal



Linguistic



Musical

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *How is a government elected?* before starting the lesson. Students should pay special attention to pages 4–9 and 16–17 to reinforce their understanding of voting.

Materials

- *How is a government elected?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- paper (1 sheet per student)
- pens or pencils
- student copies of the *Get Out the Vote* reproducible
- video recording equipment (optional, if available)
- television with VCR (optional, if available)

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Write the word *vote* on the board, and ask students what it means. (to make a choice in an election) Have students give examples of times when they or someone they know voted, such as voting for student government or in a presidential election. Ask students to describe their experiences.

Class Discussion

Explain that not everyone can vote. There are *requirements*, or conditions that must be met, for someone to vote. Ask students to identify some of the requirements for voting in the United States, such as being a U.S. *citizen*, being at least 18 years old, and registering to vote. Have students refer to pages 6–7 and 16–17 of *How is a government elected?* for a list of voting requirements. Then explain that in addition to requirements, voters also have responsibilities. Ask students to explain what a responsibility is. (a task someone is supposed to do) Have students brainstorm a list of a voter's responsibilities, such as learning about the candidates and researching issues important to them.

Then ask: *What would happen if nobody voted?* (Leaders would not be elected. Leaders would think they could do whatever they want. Our government wouldn't work.) Guide students as they discuss the importance of voting. Have them refer to pages 7–9 of *How is a government elected?* for ideas. Create a list on the board as students explain the importance of voting and give reasons people should vote.

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- identify voting *requirements* and responsibilities of voters
- explain the importance of voting
- work in small groups to create a chant or song about voting

Activity

Divide students into groups of four or five. Make sure each student has a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Tell students that each group is responsible for writing a short chant, cheer, song, or rap that encourages people to vote. Encourage students to base their songs on a school cheer, popular song, or well-known advertising jingle of their choice. Their lyrics should address the importance of voting. Tell students they may want to include facts about the voting process in their songs or chants. If groups want to include simple choreography or props, encourage them to do so.

Distribute the *Get Out the Vote* reproducible. Tell students to work with their groups to brainstorm ideas for their performance and to write their ideas on the reproducible. Students should refer to the list on the board and their *How is a government elected?* books for ideas. Then have students work together to write the lyrics for their song or chant. Each student should write the lyrics on the back of their brainstorming sheet, since they will turn their lyrics in after their performance. After students have written their chant or song, they should practice it in preparation for their performance.

Then ask each group to perform their song or chant for the class. If video equipment is available, you may want to record the performances and replay them for the class, so students can see their own performances.

Accommodations and Extensions

Assign each group a school cheer, popular advertising jingle, or well-known children's song upon which to base their songs. Provide each group with the lyrics of their assigned song, and help students rewrite the lyrics of their song to encourage people to vote.

As an extension, have students incorporate their song or chant into a skit to illustrate the importance of voting. Remind students to make sure their skit shows the effects of their song (for example, it made people go out and vote).

Closure

Ask students why songs, chants, or cheers like theirs might be helpful. (They could encourage people who haven't voted before to vote.) Have them list some other ways people might encourage others to vote. (ad campaigns, commercials, posters) Then have students brainstorm some reasons these forms might be more effective than other forms of encouragement. (They are more fun; they are catchy; young people pay attention to music and other media.)

Assessment

Evaluate student performances for participation and understanding of major concepts.

Let's Debate

A Lesson on How Laws Are Debated

Content

Students will find out how laws are debated in the government. They will learn simple rules of debate and then practice following these rules in mini debates.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Social Studies

The learner can analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways.

The learner can locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view.

The learner can identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Linguistic



Logical-Mathematical

Prerequisites

Have students read the book *How is a law passed?* before starting the lesson. Students should review pages 24–25 to make sure they have a basic idea of what a debate is.

Materials

- *How is a law passed?* books
- chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers
- student copies of the *Let's Debate* reproducible
- pens or pencils

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Ask students to define the word *discussion*. (talking about something) Explain that even though the rules of a discussion aren't written down, they still exist. Ask students to describe rules of a discussion. (Participants should take turns talking. People in a discussion should listen to each other.) Then write the word *debate* on the board. Explain that a debate is a type of discussion that has special rules. Tell students that in a debate, people speak in a certain order and there are limits to what they can say. Ask students to describe examples of topics they've discussed or debated with friends or family in the past week, including the order of what was said. As students give examples, write out the conversation on the board in two columns so that students can see the back-and-forth nature of a debate. See below for an example of how this might look:

Kara

What should we have for dinner?

I think we should have chicken.

But we're going to have burgers this weekend.

That's true; chicken wouldn't go well with the rolls. Let's have burgers!

Tarrell

I think we should have hamburgers.

We had chicken last night.

Burgers will be delicious with the rolls Mom baked today!

Class Discussion

Explain that the government also has debates about issues, especially when they are coming up with ideas for new laws. The people in a debate take sides on the law. The two sides are *pro* (for) and *con* (against). Explain that each side in a debate

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- explain what a *debate* is and describe simple rules of a debate
- work in small groups to identify an issue's *pros* and *cons*
- participate in a debate

gives reasons to support their position. Reasons can be ideas about what might happen if the law is passed or examples from something that happened in the past.

Help students understand that a debate is made up of a series of pros and cons by returning to the student example you wrote on the board during the Anticipatory Set. Ask students to identify the topic of the debate (in the example: Should we have burgers for dinner?). Then go over each statement and have students decide whether it is a pro or a con. Draw a 2-column chart on the board. Label one column *Pro* and the other *Con*. As students determine whether each statement is a pro or con, rewrite the statements in the appropriate column on the board.

Activity

Part I: Identifying Pros and Cons

Divide the class into groups of four to six students. Distribute the *Let's Debate* reproducible. Write a list of ideas for laws on the board. The laws should be relevant to students' lives, such as "People must be 16 years old to own a cell phone." or "Dogs should always be kept on a leash in public places." Then assign each idea from the list to one student group. Have students work in their groups to list at least 3 pros and 3 cons for their assigned law. Remind students that they should consider past examples or experiences, or potential results of passing the law, when they are coming up with their pros and cons.

Part II: Having a Debate

Explain the rules of debate: The two sides take turns giving their reasons. Everyone must listen as each side speaks. No one may interrupt or ask questions. When speaking, each side must begin by stating their position on the law. For example, the pro side would say "Students should wear uniforms" and the con side would say "Students should not wear uniforms." After stating their position, each side then gives its arguments, or reasons, for or against the law. After both sides have given their reasons, each side will conclude with a closing statement, summarizing their position.

Divide each group in half. Tell one half of each group that they are going to give the "Pro" reasons for their law and the other half, the "Con." Then have each group "debate" their law in front of the class. Help each group abide by the rules of debate, reminding them to start by stating their position, alternate giving reasons back and forth, and conclude with a statement summarizing their position.

Accommodations and Extensions

Work as a class to list pros and cons for each of the proposed laws listed on the board. Then divide the class into groups and assign each group laws and sides for the debates. Have students use the pros and cons that you brainstormed as a class.

As an extension, ask students to find an article in a newspaper or magazine that describes a debate about or discusses a real law. Have students use two different colors to highlight the pros and cons in the article.

Closure

Have students reflect on their debates. Ask them to describe how the rules of the debate made it harder or easier to talk about the idea than if they had just had a regular discussion. Ask: *Why is it important to debate laws?* (so all sides can be heard; so people can express their opinions; to make sure laws are fair)

Assessment

Monitor student debates for participation and understanding of major concepts.

Becoming a Law

A Lesson on How Laws are Made

Content

Students will learn how ideas become laws and will arrange the steps involved in passing a law in order. They will then apply their knowledge by researching laws under consideration in their community.

National Standards

The following standards will be addressed in the lesson:

Language Arts

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Social Studies

The learner can give examples of how government does or does not provide for needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict.

The learner can explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions.

Multiple Intelligences

The following intelligences will be activated throughout the lesson:



Linguistic



Visual-Spatial

Prerequisites

Before starting the lesson, students should read the book *How is a law passed?* to familiarize themselves with basic information about laws.

Materials

- *How is a law passed?* books
- student copies of the *Becoming a Law* reproducible
- scissors (1 pair per 2 students)
- articles about proposed local laws (taken from local newspapers and/or the Internet)

Instructional Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Write the word *law* on the board and ask students to define it. (a special rule made by the community that tells us how to behave) Have students give examples of laws they or members of their families follow every day. (Student responses will vary but may include traffic laws and school attendance laws.)

Class Discussion

Ask: *Where do laws come from?* (Congress, the government) Explain that laws sometimes come from the people, too. Ask: *If I have an idea for a law, what do I need to do?* (tell the legislature; write to Congress; prove that it's a good idea) Have students suggest ways that people might gain support for their ideas for laws, such as circulating petitions or hiring lobbyists. Explain that before a law becomes official, it is called a *bill*. Ask: *Do all bills become laws?* (no) Have students discuss why some bills become laws and some don't. (not enough support for the bill; the bill costs too much money)

Objectives

The student will be able to...

- define *law* and describe how laws are made
- work in pairs to arrange steps in a process
- research a law under consideration in their community

Activity

Part I: How a Bill Becomes Law

Divide students into pairs and give one copy of the *Becoming a Law* reproducible and one pair of scissors to each pair. Tell each pair to cut out the cards on their reproducible. Have them work together using their *How is a law passed?* books to put the cards in order to show how a bill becomes a law. Once all pairs have put their cards in order, review as a class the correct order of the cards.

Part II: Laws in the Community

Write on the board a list of laws being discussed in your state or community, such as raising the sales tax, changing the speed limit, or prohibiting texting while driving. Assign each pair one of the laws from the list, and give each pair an article about their law (could be taken from a newspaper or the Internet). Have them use information from their article, as well as their correctly-ordered cards from Part I, to write a paragraph about their law. The paragraph should describe the topic of the proposed law, how and why the law was proposed, the stage it's currently in, and the steps it followed to get where it is. Remind students that local procedures for making a bill a law may be different from federal procedures listed on their cards. Have students pay special attention to any differences in the steps their local laws have followed.

Accommodations and Extensions

Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group only one card from the reproducible so each group has only one step in the process. Then, as a class, work together to determine the proper order of the steps, and have each group hang their step in order on the bulletin board.

As an extension, ask students to become lobbyists for or against their assigned local law from Part II of the Activity. Have them list 3 or more reasons why the law should or should not be passed. Students should refer to their newspaper or Internet source for ideas.

Closure

Have students present their findings about the local law they researched. If students found differences between the paths their laws followed and the paths outlined in their cards, have them explain the differences. Then ask students to identify which step comes next in the process for that law.

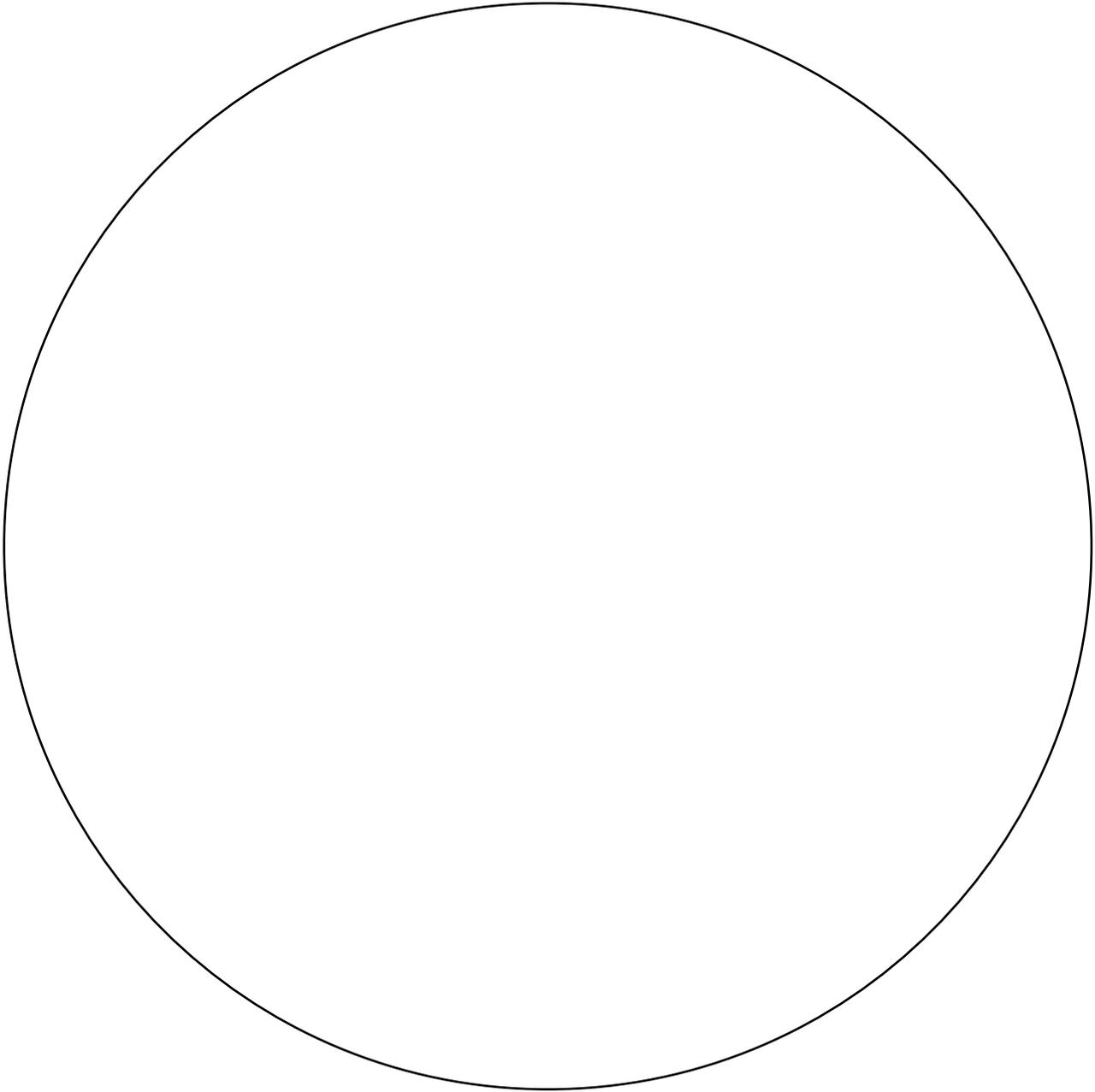
Assessment

Evaluate student participation and presentations for understanding of major concepts.

Name _____ Date _____

Symbols of Government

Directions: Write your assigned branch of government on the line. Then draw a symbol for that branch in the circle. On the back of your paper, explain how your symbol represents that branch of government.



Government Bingo

Directions: Write the name of a part of government on the line in each square. When you hear a responsibility called out, write that responsibility in the boxes of the parts of government that have that responsibility. When you have four in a row across, down, or diagonally, yell "Bingo!"

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Whose Job Is It?

Directions: Cut out pictures or words that illustrate the responsibilities of each level of government. Then glue the cut-outs into the proper boxes.

Local	
State	
Federal	

Name _____ Date _____

Who Governs Us?

Directions: Use a newspaper and/or the Internet to find information about one of your government leaders.

Title _____

Name _____

What level of government does this person work in? _____

How long has this person held this office? _____

Has this person ever held any other government offices? If so, what offices? What other levels of government has this person worked in?

List a few of this person's accomplishments in office.

What are some of this person's goals in office?

Electing a President

Directions: Write the steps of the presidential election process in order on the lines below. Then write one sentence describing each step.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Get Out the Vote

Directions: Work with your group to complete this brainstorming sheet for your song or chant. Then work together to write the lyrics on the other side of the page.

Brainstorming Voting Ideas

Why is voting important?

Facts about voting and the voting process:

Brainstorming Performance Ideas

Popular songs, ads, or cheers we could use:

Words about voting that rhyme:

Ideas for props or choreography:

Let's Debate

Directions: Write your group's proposed law on the line. Then list at least 3 pros and 3 cons for that law.

Law: _____

Pros	Cons
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Becoming a Law

Directions: Cut out the cards. Then arrange them in order.

The president signs the bill.

**A member of Congress
introduces the bill.**

A citizen has an idea for a law.

**A committee discusses and
changes the bill.**

**The House of Representatives
votes on the bill.**

The Senate debates the bill.

The Senate votes on the bill.

**Lobbyists give Congress information
for or against the bill.**