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Introduction

About This Book

The activities provided in this booklet are created to enrich government classes. They provide hands-on activities and lessons that engage students in exploring basic government concepts that are central to all government curriculums.

This volume introduces the basic concepts of the role of government, the origins of government, the Constitution, and Federalism. These activities clarify the terms, concepts, and structures that students learn about through class lectures and readings.

These government activities were created during the development of a reformatted government course at the high school level. The suggestions provided in textbooks and other supplemental material did not offer complete hands-on approaches sought by the course instructor. As the class was to be taught in a school utilizing block scheduling (ninety and seventy-five minute classes), lessons that kept students active and interested while demonstrating the key components of government were developed. The classroom lessons and materials were used and refined over a two-year period during which six sections of the new government course were taught.

The essential goals for each activity were to make them easy to use, to involve and engage the students, and to clarify key government concepts.

The topics covered in this booklet, and other *Government Activities* volumes, parallel general government textbooks and should be used as a supplemental aid. The activities and demonstrations clarify basic government concepts and allow students to work with material in ways that interest them.

All lessons were created with the teacher and student in mind. The purpose for each lesson is clearly stated and a specific list of materials required for each lesson is provided. Procedures are written in a step-by-step format to allow for easy implementation into a block or typical schedule format. Hints or tips are offered throughout the booklet to assist teachers in adapting lessons to fit their needs or the ability level of students. The Glossary, which concludes each booklet, defines government terms used throughout the lessons. Student handouts include all necessary instructions and directions as well as material to assist in grading. Finally, the material is organized in such a way that incorporating the lessons into an existing curriculum is easy and enjoyable.

Current research indicates that students who are actively engaged in the learning process retain information better than those who are passive participants in the

classroom. *Government Activities* was created with this concept in mind. The hands on approach to Government that this booklet offers will spark and maintain student interest. Being involved in the lessons allows students to become an active part of their own learning. Participation in these activities also provides students with an episodic memory of a classroom experience, strengthening the concepts being taught and therefore improving learning. Most importantly, when students are actively engaged, they have more fun. These activities make the study of government an enjoyable experience for everyone!

About the Author

Kathleen M. Glusick graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison with a Bachelor’s degree in Broad Field Social Studies and a minor in Psychology. She completed her Master’s of Education through Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She taught World Cultures, Citizenship, Sociology, Experimental Psychology, and Government during her high school teaching career. After completing her thesis, *The Impact of Brain-Compatible Physical Structures on Classroom Learning*, Peanut Publishing was created to enhance involvement in the classroom by providing teachers with student centered activities.

While this material is copyright protected, purchasers do have permission to copy and distribute class sets of student handouts for instructional use.

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LESSON 6: CREATE YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT

PURPOSE:

- Actively engage students in understanding how and why government is created
- Stimulate class discussion and opinion formation about the necessary functions of the government
- Encourage creativity and self-expression

MATERIALS:

- Copies of “Student Handout: Create Your Own Government,” page 20
- Copies of “Student Handout: Government Pros and Cons,” page 21

PROCEDURE:

- Distribute the student handout “Create Your Own Government,” page 20.
- Read through and clarify the instructions.
- Randomly assign students to groups of 3-5, or allow students to choose their own groups.
- Allow adequate class time for development of the government and for work on presentations.
- Students should present their government as other groups take notes on the student handout “Government Pros and Con,” page 21.
- After all groups have presented, lead a discussion on the ideas and concepts this activity provoked. The following questions may be used:
 - ✎ Were some concepts/ideas about government similar to or based on our current government?
 - ✎ Were some ideas presented unfair for the majority of people?
 - ✎ Which government presented would have the greatest chance of succeeding? Does that make it the best government?
 - ✎ Was it difficult to agree on concepts/rules/organization of your government?
 - ✎ What was the most difficult part of creating your government?
 - ✎ What was the easiest part of creating your government?
- After a thorough discussion, have students read through their list of pros and cons for the different presentations and vote on the best government by placing an X next to the group they are voting for on their Government Pros and Cons handout. They can not vote for their own group.



HINT: If students have a difficult time working in groups, create a scoring rubric for group work. Students could use a 1-4 rating scale to rate their group members’ performance during the classroom activity. Students can give scores for participation, staying on track, organization, and an overall score. Teachers can set limits of how many scores of 4’s, 3’s, etc. can be given to avoid all group members giving each other all the same score. These ratings do not have to be figured into actual grades.

STUDENT HANDOUT: CREATE YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT

Instructions: Your group is responsible for creating your own government. The different components of your government are listed below and should be completed in the order listed. Check off each item as you complete it. You will be presenting your government to the class so the best government can be voted for. The presentation guidelines are also listed below.

GOVERNMENT CRITERIA

- Determine what form your government will take: democracy, autocracy, dictatorship, monarchy, parliamentary, other?
- Create a list of 10 principles to be the foundation for your government. For example, no taxation without representation.
- Determine the organization: A ruler/leader? Parliament? Congress? House of Representatives? Military? Law making body? Judicial body?
- Determine how positions will be filled: Election? (If so, how long are terms? What are the requirements for running?) Inheritance? Force?
- How will laws be determined?
- What are 5 basic laws that must be followed?
- How will the government be funded? Will there be taxes?
- Explain 3 features that make your government unique.
- Create a flag to symbolize your government.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

The following components should be included in your presentation: (The visual aids will also need a verbal explanation.)

Visual Aids:

- List of 10 principles
- Chart of organization
- List of 5 basic laws
- Flag

Verbal Explanation:

- Explain form of government
- Explain filling positions
- Explain law making
- Explain funding
- Explain unique features

General:

- Good eye contact
- Appropriate volume
- Good inflection/tone
- Appropriate behavior

Name : _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: GOVERNMENT PROS AND CONS

Instructions: During group presentations, note a minimum of three pros and cons about the government being presented. At the end of class, you will use your notes to vote for the best government.

**Group #1**Pros:

1.

2.

3.

Cons:

1.

2.

3.

**Group #2**Pros:

1.

2.

3.

Cons:

1.

2.

3.

**Group #3**Pros:

1.

2.

3.

Cons:

1.

2.

3.

**Group #4**Pros:

1.

2.

3.

Cons:

1.

2.

3.

When instructed, place an X in the box next to the Group presenting the best government.