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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 individual rights and responsibilities that are central to all government curriculums.

This volume introduces the basic concepts of the Bill of Rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the rights of the accused. These activities clarify the terms, concepts, and procedures 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.

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LESSON 2: FAIR DIRECTOR

PURPOSE:

- Provide students with real life dilemmas regarding freedom of speech
- Allow students to work in small groups
- Encourage discussion and debate about free speech issues and fairness

MATERIALS:

- Copies of “Student Handout: Dilemmas for the Fair Director,” page 5

PROCEDURE:

- Randomly assign students to groups of 4-5.
- Read this background information to the class.
 - ✍ “Your group is the organization committee for a local fair. The purpose of the fair is to celebrate our American rights and the First Amendment freedoms of expression and association. There are no rules about allowing organizations to set up booths nor are their rules for denying groups access to the fair. Groups use the booths to set up displays advertising their organization and explain what their views and beliefs are. Unfortunately, there have been some problems with participation of certain groups and your committee is faced with a series of dilemmas. You don’t want to unfairly limit the rights of any group, however, you don’t want the fair to face one disturbance and protest after another. Your job as a committee is to determine which groups should be allowed to set up a booth at the fair and make your recommendation to the Fair Director.”
- Distribute the student handout: “Dilemmas for the Fair Director,” (p. 5).
- Instruct groups to assign roles: reader, recorder, reporter, and time keeper.
- Allow adequate time for groups to discuss each situation and reach a conclusion about each dilemma.
- Reconvene as a class and discuss each dilemma. The reporter for each group should explain the group’s decision and reasoning. Discuss important free speech issues as they arise.



HINT: Extra credit can be given if a student does research on case law or through interviews with local law enforcement or attorneys to determine what the legal precedent is for any of the dilemmas described.

STUDENT HANDOUT: DILEMMAS FOR THE FAIR DIRECTOR

Dilemma #1

The American Nazi Party has requested a booth. Because of the Jewish population of the city, there may be some problems. There is a city ordinance that says permits for street meetings or similar gatherings can be refused “to prevent riots and disturbances.” This may provide you with an excuse for not allowing them to set up a booth.

Dilemma #2

The Super Sniffs, a group widely suspected of being drug smugglers and dealers requests a booth. Most people would be very upset if this group were to participate in a fair where children would be present. There are no grounds, legally, to deny them access, but as the organization committee, you have the final say in who can and cannot participate.

Dilemma #3

A request from the Ku Klux Klan makes you all want to quit the committee. One person suggests making them post a \$100,000 bond in order to participate. That kind of money would most likely make them withdraw their request. No other group has had to pay that sort of money to have a booth in the fair.

Dilemma #4

A major issue in your town is the unionization of a local factory that employs 15% of the town. The union requests a booth and you have received several threats by phone that there will be trouble if “those union people” are there. The threats are making you consider denying them a booth.

Dilemma #5

The local chapter of the communist party requests a booth. You allow them space, but right when the fair opens, someone claims that everyone on the committee could go to jail for allowing them to participate. They have pamphlets that indicate the overthrow of the government may be necessary to attain their goals. This is illegal someone claims. Should you close their booth?

Dilemma #6

You have decided to refuse a booth to a very pushy religious group. They are offensive because they never bathe and rarely change clothes. They come anyway and set up a booth. You ask them to leave and they refuse. Your group has to decide whether to involve the police in order to get them to leave.

Dilemma #7

A hostile crowd gathers around the booth of a pro-choice group. The crowd becomes loud and rambunctious. Police advise you that trouble may result. You ask the group to leave their booth for their own safety. When they refuse, the police arrest them for breaching the peace. Was this the best way to handle the situation? Should you have waited to close the booth until someone actually got hurt?