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GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

Volume 4: Politics

- Political Parties
- Interest Groups
- Voting

Created by Kathleen M. Glusick
Peanut Publishing, LLC

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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 the politics of government, which is covered in all government curriculums.

This volume introduces the basic concepts of political parties, interest groups, and voting. 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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POLITICS & POLITICAL PARTIES

LESSON 1: POLITICAL SYMBOLS

PURPOSE:

- Stimulate prior knowledge of political groups
- Establish a base for examining the political system in the U.S.

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Political Images," page 2
- Overhead of page 2

PROCEDURE:

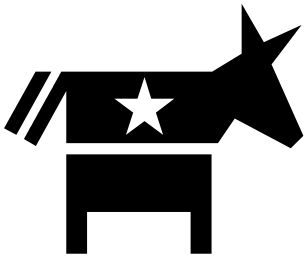
- Break students into groups of 3-5.
- Distribute the student handout, "Political Images," (p. 2).
- Instruct students to brainstorm the significance and meaning behind these political images and write their thoughts down in the area provided.
- When brainstorming is complete, instruct students to discuss their lists and mark the different meanings as positive or negative by placing a "+" sign near the positive comments and a "–" sign near the negative comments.
- Reconvene as a class and have students from each group report their comments to the class. Summarize comments on the overhead for the class to view.
- Go through each comment on the overhead and poll the class as to whether it is a positive or negative statement.

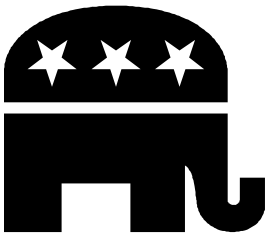
DISCUSSION:

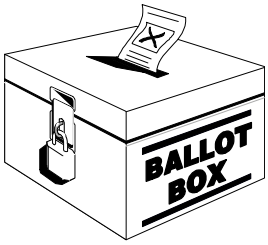
- Discuss how different political opinions impact whether some comments are viewed as positive or negative.
- Discuss where these symbols are most frequently used.
- Discuss when these symbols are most frequently used.
- Discuss the background of the symbols – how they came to be.

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: POLITICAL IMAGES







LESSON 2: POLITICAL PARTY SPECTRUM

PURPOSE:

- Identify major differences between political parties
- Obtain a view of classroom political opinions and standings

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Political Survey," page 4
- Overhead of Political Party Spectrum, page 5

PROCEDURE:

- Show the overhead of the Political Party Spectrum (p. 5) and briefly discuss the terms and political views on the spectrum.
- Distribute the student handout, "Political Survey," (p. 4).
- Instruct students to complete the survey and tally their points to obtain their "Political Standing."
- They should plot their "Political Standing" on the line at the bottom of the survey page.
- There are several options you could do at this point in the activity:
  - Make one giant numerical spectrum on the floor and ask students to stand where the survey put them.
  - Tally student results on an overhead.
  - Break students into groups of four – one from each quadrant of the numerical spectrum and ask them to discuss one of the statements from the survey.
  - Have students move into four groups, each representing a spectrum quadrant. Discuss statements from the survey as a class, getting Republican, Democrat, and moderate opinions on each item.
  - Ask students to have their parents complete the survey and compare results. The next day, discuss whether students and their parents had similar views or different views.
  - Pair students at opposite ends of the spectrum and choose an issue for them to discuss. Have person A talk for one minute, person B talk for one minute, and then allow them to have an open dialogue.

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: POLITICAL SURVEY

Instructions: Carefully read each statement and rate whether you agree or disagree based on the scale below.

4: Strongly Agree 3: Agree 2: Disagree 1: Strongly Disagree

_____ 1. There should be strict limits on who can own a gun.

_____ 2. Spending on social programs for the poor should be increased.

_____ 3. A woman should have the right to choose to have an abortion.

_____ 4. Birth control should be encouraged among teenagers.

_____ 5. Less money should be spent on military programs.

_____ 6. Corporations should not be given tax breaks just to stimulate the economy.

_____ 7. There should be tighter regulations on businesses to prevent pollution.

_____ 8. National forests should be preserved and protected from development.

_____ 9. We should not drill for oil or land that has been preserved as natural land.

_____ 10. Prayer should not be allowed in public schools.

_____ 11. The death penalty should be banned in all states.

_____ 12. There are not enough government programs to help the poor and disabled.

_____ 13. The government should do more to help the lower and middle class.

_____ 14. Minimum wage should be raised to financially assist workers.

_____ 15. The government should assist financially struggling families with day care costs.

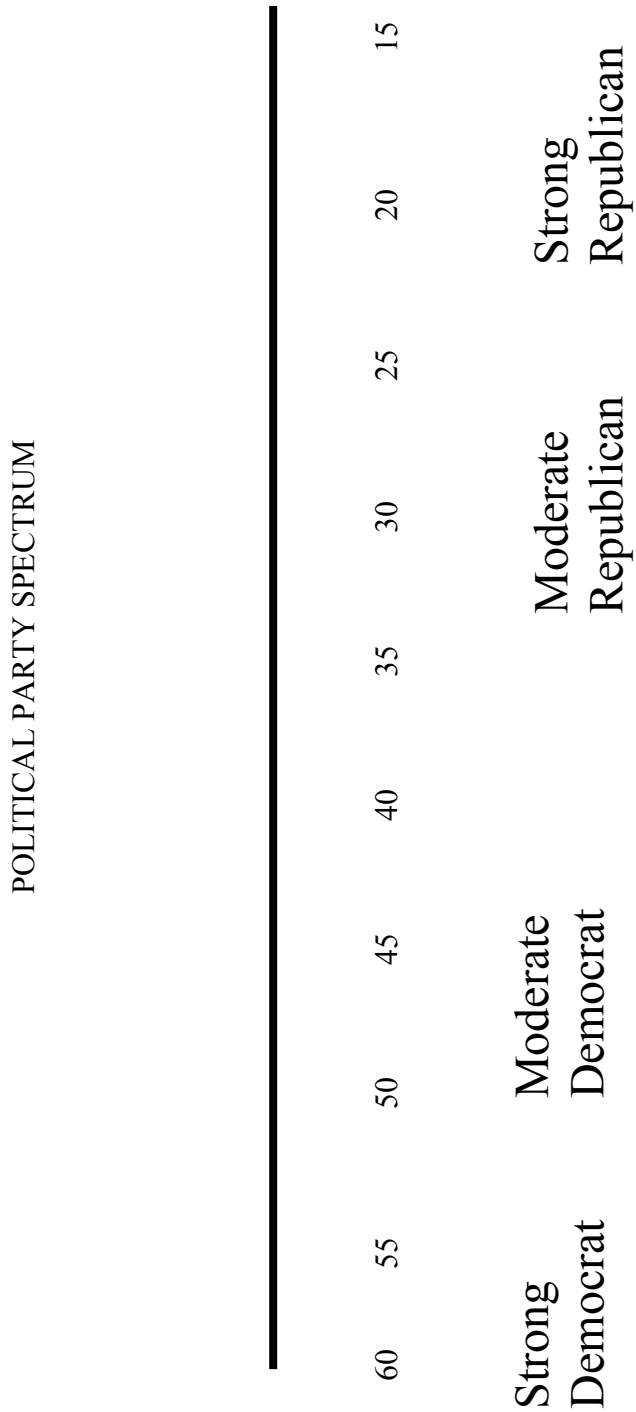
_____ = Your total score (add all the numbers)

Plot your score on the line below.

60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 15

Strong Democrat | Moderate Democrat | Moderate Republican | Strong Republican

POLITICAL PARTY SPECTRUM



LESSON 3: PRE/POST ANSWER SEARCH

PURPOSE:

- Clarify political terms and concepts for introduction or review
- Interact with classmates and share knowledge

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Answer Search," page 7 (✪ see procedure below)

PROCEDURE:

✪ Prior to making copies, complete the last row of questions on the student handout. It is left blank to allow you to add questions specific to your class.

- Distribute the student handout, "Answer Search," (p. 7).
- Explain to students that the goal of this activity is to fill in each box on their sheet with a correct answer; however, they must obtain the answers from their classmates. Students should walk around and ask their classmates the questions and when they get a correct answer, the student giving the answer should sign the box on the sheet and the answer should be written down.
- The contest winner will have the most correct answers by as many different people as possible. (Students should not all flock to the same three people and have them give all the answers, therefore it is important to stress having as many different signatures on your sheet as possible.)
- If running this activity as an activator, encourage students to guess at answers. If running this activity as a review exercise, give students time to write in the answers on their own first to see what they know. Then allow time to obtain answers from others.
- After an appropriate amount of time has been given, reconvene as a class and call on students to give the correct answers.

HINT: Alter the activity to fit your specific curriculum by whiting out the questions you have not covered and writing in your own questions.

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: ANSWER SEARCH

Instructions: Find a classmate who can answer a question in one of the boxes below. Write the answer and the classmate's name in the box. Only use each classmate once.

What is a lobbyist?	Explain how the electoral college works.	What is an interest group?	What are two things a conservative person would agree with?	Define republican.
Who are electors?	Define Democrat.	What role do public opinion polls play in elections?	What is a national convention?	What is negative campaigning?
How does the media influence campaigns?	What is a moderate?	Give three examples of interest groups.	What are the requirements for voting?	What are two things a liberal person would agree with?
What does it mean to be on the "left?"	What is the role of a political party?	What does it mean to be on the "right?"	What is a candidate's "platform?"	What does a person need to do in order to vote?

LESSON 4: POLITICAL INTERVIEW

PURPOSE:

- Examine public involvement in politics over time
- Involve parents/grandparents/community members in the learning process

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Interview Guide," page 9
- Copies of "Student Handout: Reflection," page 10

PROCEDURE:

- Distribute the student handout, "Interview Guide," (p. 9) and inform students that they are going to be interviewing a person about politics and reporting that information to the class.

> **HINT**: To increase the difficulty of this activity, students can be required to interview more than one person and complete the reflection sheet based on their own comparisons. The people they interview should be from different generations.

- Ask students to think of some people they could interview, assuming a reasonable amount of time is given. Assign students someone to interview so that there is a range of ages to be interviewed from college age citizens to senior citizens.
- Review the student handout, "Interview Guide," and explain expectations for the interview.
- After the interviews are complete, there are several activities you could do with the information.
  - Students could be grouped according to the interviewee's age. Similar ages could meet and discuss responses or different ages could meet and discuss responses.
  - Posters representing themes found throughout the interviews could be made and presented to the class.
  - Those with interviewees from the same age bracket could combine responses and give a general summary to the class.
  - Groups could create a "conclusions" list where they write general conclusions they came to after discussing the different responses.
- Distribute the student handout, "Reflection," p. 10 and review the instructions.

> **HINT**: To develop social skills, thank you cards could be written in class to the people who were interviewed. These should be peer edited for errors.

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Instructions: Use the following questions/prompts to interview a family or community member about his/her involvement in politics. Write down the responses as best you can and read the information back to the person you are interviewing to make sure you understood what was said.

① What do you think of when I say the word "politics?"

② What are the main ways you are involved in politics?

③ Were you ever more active in politics than you are now?

④ What influences whether or not you vote in an election?

⑤ Do you usually vote along party lines? Why/why not?

⑥ Have you ever participated in an interest group or thought about joining one?

⑦ Have you ever written your representative to voice your opinion/concerns?

⑧ Finish this statement: "I wish politicians were…"

⑨ How could we increase public participation in politics?

⑩ How would you change our political system?

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: REFLECTION

Instructions: After discussing your interview responses, reflect on what you learned by answering the following questions.

- Is the general feeling about American politics positive or negative?

- How did age/generation seem to play a role in opinions on politics?

- What seem to be contributing factors to opinions on politics? (I.e. living through a war?)

- How does our political system need to change?

INTEREST GROUPS

LESSON 5: INTEREST GROUP DEBATE

PURPOSE:

- Examine two competing sides to a public policy issue
- Prepare arguments in support of a policy position

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Competing Interests," page 12
- Overhead, poster, visual aid supplies

PROCEDURE:

- Distribute the student handout, "Competing Interests," (p. 12). Review the list of interest groups and read through the controversies.
- Divide students into eight groups and assign them an interest group to represent.
- Instruct groups to prepare a brief presentation to the class, as if the class were members of Congress they were trying to lobby for support. The presentation may take the form of an overhead, a poster or some other visual aid.
- After adequate work time, have groups present and explain their visual aid.
- Once both sides have presented, the class should vote on the issue.

HINT: Instead of the issues provided, use more timely issues if there is a local or national event occurring where two or more groups are competing for funds or action. Additional time can be given to extend this to a research activity if students are using current events. Issues can be altered to enable students to look at interest group web sites and find specific and concrete reasons to support their interest group's opinions.

STUDENT HANDOUT: COMPETING INTERESTS

Issue 1: Should there be complete background checks and a 2 week waiting period prior to all gun purchases?

YES: Gun-control Coalition

NO: National Rifle Association

Issue 2: Should there be anti-start devices installed in cars so that a person who is intoxicated would not be able to start, and therefore drive, a car?

YES: Students Against Drunk Driving

NO: American Automobile Association

Issue 3: Should drilling for oil be allowed in nationally preserved land and forests during an oil crisis?

YES: Business Roundtable

NO: Sierra Club

Issue 4: Should criminal profiles and addresses be released to the public upon a convicted person's release from prison?

YES: National Victims' Rights Alliance

NO: American Civil Liberties Union

LESSON 6: FUNDING INTEREST GROUPS

PURPOSE:

- Understand the complexity of dividing funds between needy interest groups
- Develop reasoning and group compromise skills

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Dividing the Funds," page 14
- Overhead of Group Funding Comparison, page 15

PROCEDURE:

- Divide students into groups of 3-5.
- Distribute the student handout, "Dividing the Funds," (p. 14) and read through the different interest groups, adding additional information if needed.
- Allow appropriate time for students to discuss the different groups' goals and divide the funding money.
- Remind students that they should have a clear explanation for why they divided the funds the way they did.
- Reconvene as a class and have students explain their numbers. Write each group's breakdown on the overhead to compare responses.
- Discuss differences in funding breakdowns.

HINT: To make this activity more engaging, have students do additional research on an interest group and prepare a presentation for the class. All students would have $100.00 in play "monopoly" money to divide up and give to the groups once all the presentations were complete. The group with the most money "wins."

Name: _____

STUDENT HANDOUT: DIVIDING THE FUNDS

Instructions: Your group has $100,000 to give out to interest groups. After reading through the descriptions below, determine, as a group, how much money each group should get. (You do not have to fund all groups.)

Amount your group will fund	Interest Group
_____	**Sierra Club (SC):** Attempts to protect and conserve natural resources, save endangered areas and resolve problems with wilderness, clean air and energy conservation.
_____	**American Rivers (AR):** Vows to preserve and protect American rivers, not only for their beauty, but for the habitat they provide for the wildlife.
_____	**Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD):** Vows to reduce the number of deaths caused by drunk drivers through pushing for stricter penalties for drunk driving and lowering the legal limit of alcohol allowed when driving.
_____	**National Rifle Association (NRA):** Promotes rifle, pistol, and shotgun shooting, as well as hunting, gun collecting, and home firearm safety.
_____	**American Association of Retired People (AARP):** Strives to better the lives of the elderly by improving health care, fighting discrimination and researching problems associated with aging.
_____	**Chamber of Commerce:** This is the voice of small businesses throughout the nation. Addresses business concerns at the local, state and federal level.
_____	**American Federation of Labor (AFL):** Labor union fighting for fair wages and safe working conditions for employees.
_____	**National Association for the Advancement of Science:** Lobbies for funding to continue research into new scientific findings and methods. Encourages new development and research in the scientific community.
_____	**American Farm Bureau Federation:** Representing the voice of farmers in legislation that impacts farming practices and regulations on things from pricing to use of pesticides.
_____	**Gun Control Group:** Comprised of many victims of violent crimes who would like to see stiffer gun control laws to make it more difficult to get guns out in the general population.

GROUP FUNDING COMPARISON

Interest Group	Amount of Money Funded by each Group					
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Sierra Club						
American Rivers						
Mothers Against Drunk Driving						
National Rifle Association						
American Assoc. of Retired People						
Chamber of Commerce						
American Federation of Labor						
National Assoc. for Advance. Science						
American Farm Bureau Federation						
Gun Control Group						

SIMULATIONS & PROJECTS

LESSON 7: ELECTORAL COLLEGE SIMULATION

PURPOSE:

- Illustrate how the electoral college system works
- Actively engage students by participating in voting

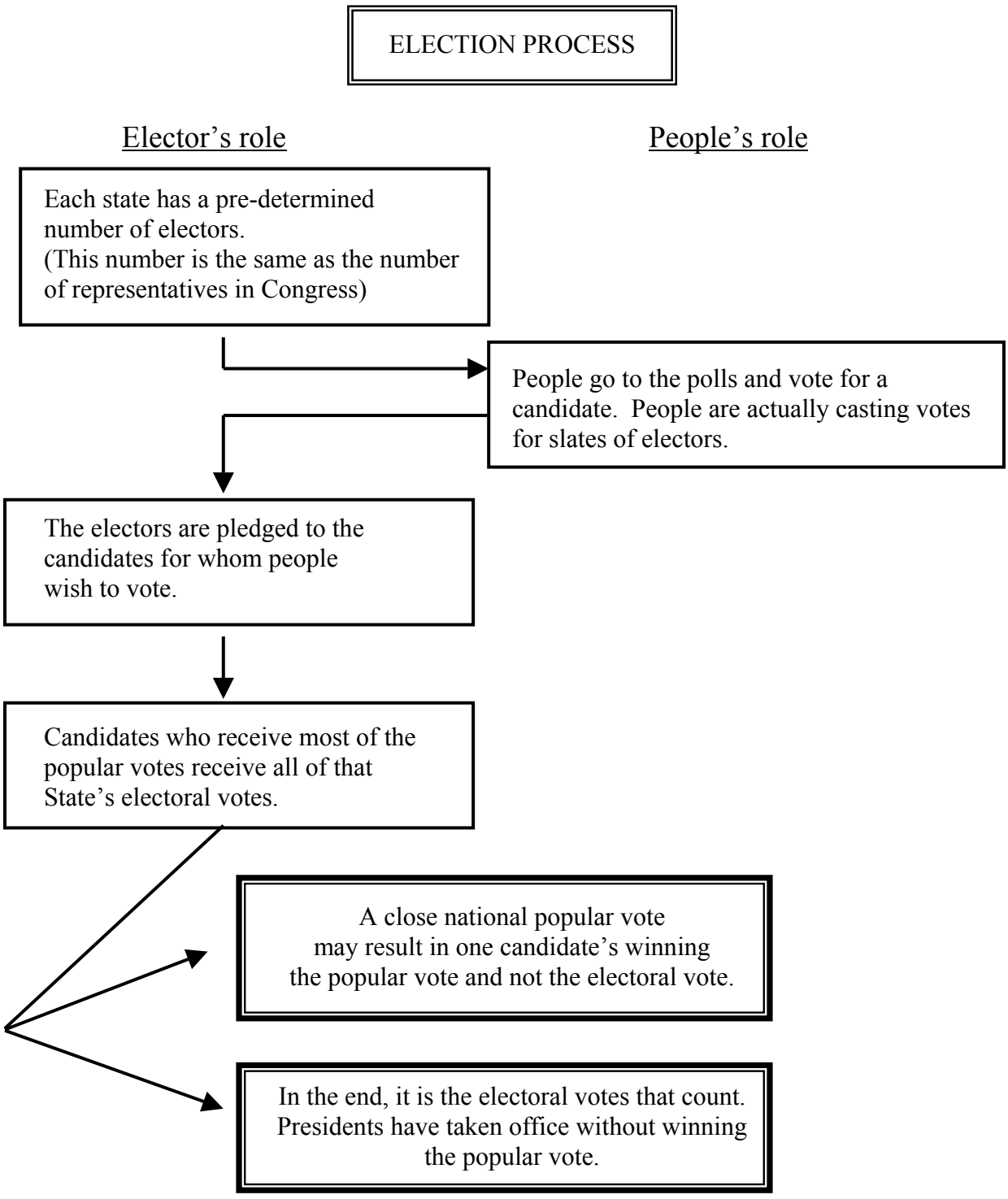
MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Electoral College," page 17
- Overhead of election tally, page 18
- Copies of voting slips, page 19

PROCEDURE:

- Distribute the student handout, "Electoral College," (p. 18) and review the electoral process.
- Explain to students that they will be simulating two elections by casting individual votes and electoral votes.
- Divide the students into four states, having them sit together and identify themselves in some way as a separate state. This activity is set up for a class with 24 students, you can adjust the numbers carefully to fit your class size.
  - State A: 9 students, 4 electoral votes
  - State B: 6 students, 2 electoral votes
  - State C: 5 students, 2 electoral votes
  - State D: 4 students, 1 electoral vote
- The first simulated election will show how the electoral process is intended to work with the popular choice also being the electoral choice. Distribute the following votes to each state:
  - State A: 7 Blue votes, 2 Red votes
  - State B: 5 Blue votes, 1 Red vote
  - State C: 2 Blue votes, 3 Red votes
  - State D: 1 Blue vote, 3 Red votes
- Going state by state, have students verbally give their vote, keeping track on the tally sheet overhead. Award electoral votes after all votes have been tallied. Determine the popular winner and the winner of the electoral vote.
- In the second simulation, the popular vote will not match the electoral vote. Repeat the process with the following votes given to each state:
  - State A: 5 Blue votes, 4 Red votes
  - State B: 1 Blue votes, 5 Red votes
  - State C: 3 Blue votes, 2 Red votes
  - State D: 1 Blue vote, 3 Red votes
- Discuss how it is possible for the popular vote not to be represented by the electoral vote.

STUDENT HANDOUT: ELECTORAL COLLEGE



ELECTION TALLY

ELECTION #1

STATE	POPULAR VOTE			ELECTORAL VOTE		
	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED
A	9			4		
B	6			2		
C	5			2		
D	4			1		
TOTALS	24			9		

POPULAR WINNER: **ELECTORAL WINNER:**

ELECTION #2

STATE	POPULAR VOTE			ELECTORAL VOTE		
	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED	# POSSIBLE	BLUE	RED
A	9			4		
B	6			2		
C	5			2		
D	4			1		
TOTALS	24			9		

POPULAR WINNER: **ELECTORAL WINNER:**

VOTING TICKETS

BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE
BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE
BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE
BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE
BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE	BLUE VOTE

RED VOTE	RED VOTE	RED VOTE
RED VOTE	RED VOTE	RED VOTE
RED VOTE	RED VOTE	RED VOTE
RED VOTE	RED VOTE	RED VOTE
RED VOTE	RED VOTE	RED VOTE

LESSON 8: VOTING PROJECT

PURPOSE:

- Develop research and presentation skills
- Investigate voting behavior

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Voting Project Grading Rubric," page 21
- Copies of individualized instruction sheet

PROCEDURE:

- Prepare an instruction sheet for this project detailing work time, research time, and specific expectations.
- Determine if students will be allowed to work with a partner or in a small group. Pair or group students accordingly.
- Read or distribute copies of the project description below. Distribute the student handout, "Voting Project Grading Rubric," (p. 21) taking time to explain how students will be assessed.
- Answer any questions and clarify expectations.
- Distribute your individualized instruction sheet and review other pertinent information.
- Allow for appropriate class and home work time.
- Assess students' work during class and evaluate on a grading rubric.
- Randomly choose students to present their project to the class.

HINT: Depending on the size of your class, repeat presentations on this topic may become redundant. Consider allowing students to choose this project or one of the next two projects to complete instead of having all students complete each one. This allows for more variety and cuts down on copying.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

For this project, you must do research on who votes, who doesn't vote, and why. Once your research is compiled, you will present a campaign to persuade your audience to get out and vote. Your campaign should be geared toward those your research indicates do not vote often or consistently. You will be graded on your research (compiled in a two to three page explanation) and your presentation. Your presentation must include the following:

1) A radio commercial on an audio tape or a TV commercial on a video tape
2) A magazine ad or a poster
3) An informational pamphlet

Carefully review the grading rubric so you understand what information should be in your research explanation and in your presentation.

STUDENT HANDOUT: VOTING PROJECT GRADING RUBRIC

Categories	Point Values				Total Points
WORK PERIODS					
	Didn't use time well	Used some time well	Used all time well		/6
Day One	0	1	2		
Day Two	0	1	2		
Day Three	0	1	2		
RESEARCH					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/27
One page explanation of voting behavior	0	6	8	10	
One page explanation of ways to increase voting	0	6	8	10	
Organized and through explanation	0	2	3	4	
# of sources used	0	1	2	3	
PAMPHLET					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/26
Explains why people should vote	0	4	6	7	
Explains reasons for not voting	0	4	6	7	
Explains what is needed to vote	0	4	6	7	
Done in a professional style	0	3	4	5	
POSTER/MAGAZINE AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/15
Explains importance of voting	0	3	4	5	
Use of graphics	0	3	4	5	
Persuasive and catchy format	0	3	4	5	
RADIO/TV AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/26
Explains how people register	0	4	6	7	
Explains why people should vote	0	4	6	7	
Explains the problems of not voting	0	4	6	7	
Clear and easy to follow format	0	3	4	5	

PROJECT TOTAL:	/100

LESSON 9: POLITICAL CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN PROJECT

PURPOSE:

- Develop research and presentation skills
- Engage students in political campaigning through actively campaigning

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Campaign Project Grading Rubric," page 23
- Copies of individualized instruction sheet

PROCEDURE:

- Prepare an instruction sheet for this project detailing work time, research time, and specific expectations.
- Determine if students will be allowed to work with a partner or in a small group. Pair or group students accordingly.
- Read or distribute copies of the project description below. Distribute the student handout, "Campaign Project Grading Rubric," (p. 23) taking time to explain how students will be assessed.
- Answer any questions and clarify expectations.
- Distribute your individualized instruction sheet and review other pertinent information.
- Allow for appropriate class and home work time.
- Assess students' work during class and evaluate on a grading rubric.
- Randomly choose students to present their project to the class.

HINT: This project works well when two or more groups of students prepare campaigns against one another as if in an actual election.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

For this project, you must do research on an actual political candidate (for any office). You will present an ad campaign based on who your candidate most needs to obtain votes from. You will be graded on your research (a two to three page explanation) and your presentation. Your presentation must include the following:

1) A radio commercial on an audio tape or a TV commercial on a video tape
2) An informational pamphlet
3) A full page magazine ad

Carefully review the grading rubric so you understand what information should be in your research explanation and in your presentation.

STUDENT HANDOUT: CAMPAIGN PROJECT GRADING RUBRIC

Categories	Point Values				Total Points
WORK PERIODS					
	Didn't use time well	Used some time well	Used all time well		/6
Day One	0	1	2		
Day Two	0	1	2		
Day Three	0	1	2		
RESEARCH					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/26
One page explanation of candidate's background	0	6	8	10	
One page explanation of views on major issues	0	6	8	10	
Organized and through explanation	0	1	2	3	
# of sources used	0	1	2	3	
PAMPHLET					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/25
Explains background of the candidate	0	4	6	7	
Explains why you support the candidate	0	4	6	7	
Explains candidate's views on major issues	0	4	6	7	
Done in a professional style	0	2	3	4	
POSTER/MAGAZINE AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/18
Explains candidate's stand on 2 issues	0	3	4	5	
Explains strengths of candidate	0	3	4	5	
Use of graphics	0	2	3	4	
Persuasive and catchy format	0	2	3	4	
RADIO/TV AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/25
Explains credibility & strengths of candidate	0	4	6	7	
Addresses issues and solutions	0	4	6	7	
Explains differences from other candidates	0	4	6	7	
Done in a serious and professional manner	0	2	3	4	

PROJECT TOTAL:	/100

LESSON 10: INTEREST GROUP PROJECT

PURPOSE:

- Develop research and presentation skills
- Allow students to become active participants in the government

MATERIALS:

- Copies of "Student Handout: Interest Group Grading Rubric," page 25
- Copies of individualized instruction sheet

PROCEDURE:

- Prepare an instruction sheet for this project detailing work time, research time, and specific expectations.
- Determine if students will be allowed to work with a partner or in a small group. Pair or group students accordingly.
- Read or distribute copies of the project description below. Distribute the student handout, "Interest Group Project Grading Rubric," (p. 25) taking time to explain how students will be assessed.
- Answer any questions and clarify expectations.
- Distribute your individualized instruction sheet and review other pertinent information.
- Allow for appropriate class and home work-time.
- Assess students' work during class and evaluate on a grading rubric.
- Randomly choose students to present their project to the class.

HINT: Closely monitor the interest groups students choose to make sure that the groups are appropriate for a school project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

For this project, you must do research on an interest group of your choice. Your research should focus on their background, their positions, arguments, and purpose. You will then contribute to their cause by presenting information about them. You will be graded on your research (compiled in a two to three page explanation) and your presentation. Your presentation must include the following:

1) A letter to a politician expressing your support for this interest group
2) A poster or pamphlet explaining the goals of the interest group
3) A radio commercial on an audio tape or a TV commercial on a video tape explaining what the group is pushing for

Carefully review the grading rubric so you understand what information should be in your research explanation and in your presentation.

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STUDENT HANDOUT: INTEREST GROUP PROJECT GRADING RUBRIC

Categories	Point Values				Total Points
WORK PERIODS					
	Didn't use time well	Used some time well	Used all time well		/6
Day One	0	1	2		
Day Two	0	1	2		
Day Three	0	1	2		
RESEARCH					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/27
One page explanation of group's background	0	6	8	10	
One page explanation of major goals & objectives	0	6	8	10	
Organized and through explanation	0	2	3	4	
# of sources used	0	1	2	3	
PAMPHLET					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/26
Explains the group's beginning & background	0	4	6	7	
Explains why you support this group	0	4	6	7	
Explains group's major goals and objectives	0	4	6	7	
Done in a professional style	0	3	4	5	
POSTER/MAGAZINE AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/15
Explains group's major concerns and goals	0	3	4	5	
Use of graphics	0	3	4	5	
Persuasive and catchy format	0	3	4	5	
RADIO/TV AD					
	Not done	Poorly done	Adequately done	Very well done	/26
Explains purpose and goals of the group	0	4	6	7	
Explains recent activity and actions	0	4	6	7	
Explains how people can help the group	0	4	6	7	
Clear and easy to follow format	0	3	4	5	

PROJECT TOTAL:	/100

GLOSSARY

Glossary

Campaign:
Process of informing and persuading voters to vote for a particular candidate. Methods include speeches, radio/tv ads, magazine ads, billboards, buttons, slogans and illustrations.

Conservative:
Holding traditional values and resisting change.

Democrat:
A major political party in the United States. Members tend to be liberal, poor to middle class, minorities who favor things such as social reform, services for children, elderly, and the disadvantaged.

Elector:
Member of the electoral college.

Electoral College:
Representatives from the 50 states and the District of Columbia who officially elect the president and the vice president of the United States.

Interest Group:
A group whose members hold common beliefs about a cause and attempt to influence government and legislation through lobbying.

Left:
Refering to the liberal side of the political spectrum.

Liberal:
Someone who values change and is open-minded about new ideas and concepts.

Lobbyist:
A person who tries to influence legislation or policymakers.

Moderate:
A person whose political views are not at one extreme end of the political spectrum.

Platform:
A statement of one's position on an issue.

Politics:
The act of governing and expression of what government should and should not do.

Right:
Refers to the conservative side of the political spectrum.

Republican:
A major political party in the United States. Members tend to be more conservative, favoring business and military improvements.

BOOKLET EVALUATION

SEND IN THE COMPLETED EVALUATION BELOW AND

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❑ Government Activities Vol. 1: Basic Government

❑ Government Activities Vol. 2: Rights & Responsibilities

❑ Government Activities Vol. 3: Branches of Government

❑ Government Activities Vol. 4: Politics

❑ Set of Volumes 1-4

Name of class booklets were used in: _____

Grade(s) of students in class: _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Booklet(s) supplemented my textbook	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. Lessons were easy to follow	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. Student handouts were clear and useful	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Students enjoyed the activities	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Format was teacher-friendly	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. Product satisfied my needs	❑	❑	❑	❑

Suggested topics for future *Government Activities* volumes or booklets in other curricular areas: _____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

Would you like more information on other Peanut Publishing Products? ❑ YES ❑ NO

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