

Teaching Unit: *Foundations of Government*

Essential Understandings

The ties of government to our lives and relationships are deeply rooted.

Governments have many purposes.

The founders' goal was to create a government that would protect freedom without sacrificing order.

The founders wrestled with the balance between liberty and order.

The English political system profoundly influenced the colonists.

Teaching Unit: *The Constitution*

Essential Understandings

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

The rules of the Constitution are based solidly in important beliefs, customs, and traditions.

Federalism is one of the most important founding principles of the United States.

Federalism has been the most important single source of political conflict in the history of the U.S. government.

Sub Topic:

Knowledge and Skills

Analyze and respond to political cartoons.

Identify services that government provides.

Identify the purposes of government.

Explain the influence of the English government on the early American government.

Sub Topic:

Knowledge and Skills

Identify the basic principles of the Constitution.

Describe the process through which the US Constitution was written and ratified.

Identify the individual rights protected by the Constitution.

Teaching Unit: ***Political Behavior and Participation***

Essential Understandings

Political parties exist in some form in almost every country in the world today.

Political parties form a key connection between people and their governments.

The functions of political parties vary widely.

Competitive elections are an essential component of a democratic society.

Campaigns and elections at all levels form the foundation of the democratic process.

Political participation is a vital part of a strong democracy.

Mass media both reflect and influence public opinion.

The influence of the mass media on politics is tremendous.

Teaching Unit: ***Institutions of National Government***

Essential Understandings

Congress is a cornerstone of the U.S. government.

The Founders intended Congress to lead the judicial and executive branches.

Congress has the power to make laws.

The powers of the president have greatly expanded throughout American history.

The modern presidency bears little resemblance to the office described by the Founders in 1787.

The President has the power to enforce laws.

The Supreme Court has the power to interpret laws.

The U.S. judiciary plays an active role in policy making.

Sub Topic:

Knowledge and Skills

Create their own political party and develop a platform based on important current national issues.

Explain the differences in political parties and political party systems around the world.

Explain how a political ideology is developed.

Describe the influence of the mass media on public opinion.

Explain the importance of voting and an educated electorate.

Sub Topic:

Knowledge and Skills

Describe the purpose and role of each branch of the U.S. government: Legislative, Executive, Judicial.

Teaching Unit: ***We the People***

Essential Understandings

The purpose of government based on the natural rights theory is to preserve our natural rights to life, liberty, and property.

The Renaissance, Reformation, rise of capitalism, rise of nationalism, and the Enlightenment led to the development of modern ideas about individual rights.

Sub Topic:

Knowledge and Skills

Identify the purpose of government

Identify the responsibilities of a citizen

Explain the theories for the origin of government

Explain the role of compromise in creating the government of the United States
