

## Year 1:

## Unit 5

# "We the People" - Civics and Government Today: Lessons

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## Lesson 1: The Legislative Branch (iCivics Game)

**Central Question:** How does the legislative branch pass laws?

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### Historical Background

The American system of government is made up of three branches: executive, judicial, and legislative. The legislative branch is made up of an upper chamber, the Senate, and a lower chamber, the House of Representatives. Together, these two chambers pass the laws that govern our society. In the game LawCraft, scholars play a representative or senator in the U.S. Congress. They choose an issue and select from a variety of amendments to create a bill, while paying attention to how much support each amendment has among other members. After passing the bill, the player works to compromise with the other chamber — and, if necessary, the president — to create a bill that will be signed into law.

For more background on civics education and content standards and to prepare for this lesson, visit the Center for Civic Education and read “LawCraft Game Guide” on the iCivics website (free login required).

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### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Federal government
- Legislative branch (Congress)
- Senate
- House of Representatives
- Congressional committee

- Bill
- Law/legislation

Scholars understand the power of the U.S. Congress and can explain the system through which legislators in Congress pass laws.

### **Preparation**

- Display the Unit 5 Essential Question on the wall in your classroom for scholars to reference throughout the unit.
- Create a word wall in your classroom with the Unit 5 Key Terms for scholars to reference during class discussion. Hold scholars accountable for using these Key Terms throughout the unit.
- Prior to teaching Lesson 1, assign the article “The Legislative Branch” on the History Channel website as well as the excerpt from Article 1, Sections 1 and 8 of the Constitution on page 3 so scholars are prepared to discuss in the Context portion of the lesson.

### **Do Now — 5 minutes**

- Scholars complete the Unit 5 Lesson 1 Do Now in the Unit 5 Workbook.

### **Context — 10 minutes**

#### **Launch (2 minutes)**

- Introduce the Essential Question for Unit 5: How does the U.S. Constitution limit and distribute power in government?
- Explain that each day, scholars will gather more evidence to answer this question.
- Remind scholars that this unit builds upon past content and that they must constantly make connections to previous periods of history to help them answer this Essential Question.
- Then pose today’s Central Question and invest scholars in launching their study of the distribution of federal power among the three branches of government.

#### **Watch (4 minutes)**

- Watch the video “How a Bill Becomes a Law: Crash Course Government and Politics #9” on YouTube.
  - Begin the clip at the beginning and pause the clip at 3:59 to allow for discussion.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - How does a bill, or proposed law, become an actual law?

#### **Discuss (4 minutes)**

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the video.
  - Why is the legislative branch (Congress) composed of two houses?

- How does the process for creating laws balance power within Congress and across the country?
- Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: How does the Constitution check, or limit, the powers of the legislative branch?

### **iCivics: LawCraft — 20 minutes**

- Explain that scholars now have the opportunity to assume the role of a senator or representative and pass a law of their own! Scholars will better understand the material just by learning to play the game successfully. You do not need to walk them through this process step-by-step ; however, you should set the expectation that scholars read the provided game tutorials, which will enable them to navigate the game fluently.
- Scholars play LawCraft on computers, laptops, or any other internet-accessible devices. Tell scholars that they will be prompted to create an account when they access the game and that they should click “No Thanks” to access the game in class.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars. Ask them:
  - How are you trying to accomplish your legislative goal?
  - To what extent have you compromised with other legislators or the president? How is this process challenging?

### **Discuss — 5 minutes**

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the iCivics game. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - Why must lawmakers compromise in order to pass laws?
  - Why was it either difficult or easy to stick with your chosen value?
  - How does this process ensure balanced representation in lawmaking for the American people?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: What would happen in the lawmaking process if there were no amendment process or veto power?

### **Exit Ticket — 10 minutes**

- **Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:**
  - How does the legislative branch pass laws? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the LawCraft game, the video, and the class discussion.

### **Homework**

- Scholars read the article “The Executive Branch” on the History Channel website as well as the excerpt from Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution on page 5 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook in preparation for the next lesson.

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## Lesson 2: The Executive Branch (iCivics Game)

**Central Question: How do the president and the executive branch affect foreign and domestic policy?**

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### Historical Background

The executive branch carries out and enforces laws. It includes the president; vice president; cabinet; executive departments; independent agencies; and other boards, commissions, and committees. In the game Executive Command, scholars get the experience of being the president of the United States! As president, scholars will be faced with the daily challenges that presidents must balance in running a government and keeping the country safe during one four-year term. They will propose an agenda to Congress, sign bills into law, delegate new laws to the appropriate federal agency, handle international diplomacy, and command the military during times of war.

To prepare for this lesson, read the “Executive Command Game Guide” on the iCivics website (free login required).

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### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Executive branch
- Domestic policy
- Foreign policy

Scholars understand the power of the president of the United States and executive agencies and can explain how the president sets a national agenda, executes laws, and serves as commander-in-chief in order to execute his or her role as chief executive of foreign and domestic policy.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

### Context — 10 minutes

#### Launch (2 minutes)

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today’s Central Question and invest scholars in continuing their study of the distribution of federal power among the three branches of government.

#### Watch (4 minutes)

- Watch the video “Presidential Power: Crash Course in Government and Politics #11,” on YouTube.
  - Begin the clip at 1:45 and pause the clip at 5:50 to allow for discussion.

- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - Why are the president's formal powers limited?

### **Discuss (4 minutes)**

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - How does the president limit the powers of other branches of government?
  - How do the president's informal powers help influence the national agenda?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: How does the Constitution check the power of the president?

### **iCivics: Executive Command — 20 minutes**

- Explain that scholars will now have the opportunity to assume the role of president of the United States and lead their own cabinet! Scholars will better understand the material just by learning to play the game successfully. You do not need to walk them through this process step-by-step; however, you should set the expectation that scholars read the provided game tutorials, which will enable them to navigate the game fluently.
- Scholars play Executive Command on computers, laptops, or any other internet-accessible devices. Tell scholars that they will be prompted to create an account when they access the game and that they should click “No Thanks” to access the game in class.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars' work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars. Ask them:
  - How are you, as president, able to influence legislation?
  - How much choice do you have in how you spend your time as president? How are you deciding how to spend your time in each year of your term?

### **Discuss — 5 minutes**

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the iCivics game. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - How do executive agencies and cabinet leaders help the president exercise his or her power?
  - How does the president affect the lawmaking process?
  - How did foreign events and conflicts influence the ability to focus on your national agenda?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: How are the president's powers limited?

## Exit Ticket — 10 minutes

- Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:
  - How do the president and executive branch affect foreign and domestic policy? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the Executive Command game, the video, and the class discussion.

## Homework

- Scholars read the article “The Judicial Branch” on the History Channel website as well as the excerpt from Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution on page 7 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook in preparation for the next lesson.

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# Lesson 3: The Judicial Branch (iCivics Game)

**Central Question: How does the judicial branch apply the Constitution to interpret law?**

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## Historical Background

Courts decide arguments about the meaning of laws and how they are applied. They also decide if laws violate the Constitution — this is known as judicial review, and it is how federal courts provide checks and balances on the legislative and executive branches. In the game Do I Have a Right?, scholars run a law firm that specializes in constitutional law. When clients show up with complaints, scholars must identify if they “have a right” and match them with an attorney who specializes in the correct constitutional amendment. The more successful matches they make, the more their firm grows with additional attorneys and skills, so the more types of cases they can handle. Will they be able to keep up — or will clients get angry and storm out?

To prepare for this lesson, read the “Do I Have a Right? Game Guide” on the iCivics website (free login required).

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Judicial branch
- Supreme Court
- Judicial review

Scholars understand the power of the judicial branch and can explain how the court uses judicial review to interpret the laws and protect citizens against violations of the Constitution.

## Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

## Context — 10 minutes

### Launch (2 minutes)

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today's Central Question and invest scholars in continuing their study of the distribution of federal power among the three branches of government.

### Watch (5 minutes)

- Watch the video “Judicial Review: Crash Course in Government and Politics #21” on YouTube.
  - Begin the clip at the beginning and pause the clip at 5:00 to allow for discussion.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - How does the judicial branch check, or limit, the powers of the other branches of government?

### Discuss (3 minutes)

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - Why does the Supreme Court strike down congressional laws so infrequently?
  - Why is it important that the Supreme Court seem “impartial and above politics”?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: How does the Constitution check the power of the Supreme Court?

## iCivics: Judicial Branch — 20 minutes

- Explain that scholars will now have the opportunity to assume the role of a constitutional lawyer and choose when and how to argue cases before the Supreme Court! Scholars will better understand the material just by learning to play the game successfully. You do not need to walk them through this process step-by-step; however, you should set the expectation that scholars read the provided game tutorials, which will enable them to navigate the game fluently.
- Scholars play Do I Have a Right? on computers, laptops, or any other internet-accessible devices. Tell scholars that they will be prompted to create an account when they access the game and that they should click “No Thanks” to access the game in class.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trends in scholars' work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars. Ask them:
  - What kinds of cases are particularly challenging to match to an amendment? Why?
  - Have you rejected a client? What kinds of cases would not make sense to bring before the Supreme Court?

## Discuss — 5 minutes

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the iCivics game. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - Considering the types of cases you successfully brought to the Supreme Court, why did the Court agree that a civil right or liberty had been violated?
  - Why were certain cases challenging to act on or match to a constitutional amendment?
  - How would citizens be affected if the Supreme Court did not have the power of judicial review?
  - Make a connection to the Essential Question. Ask: How does judicial review both limit and increase government power?

## Exit Ticket — 10 minutes

- **Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:**
  - How does the judicial branch apply the Constitution to interpret the law? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the Do I Have a Right? game, the video, and the class discussion.

## Homework

- Scholars read the article “Checks and Balances” on the History Channel website in preparation for the next lesson.

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# Lesson 4: Checks and Balances (iCivics Game)

**Central Question: How do the three branches of government balance one another?**

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## Historical Background

The U.S. Constitution divides the federal government into three branches to ensure a central government in which no individual or group gains too much control. The president can veto laws passed by Congress; Congress confirms or rejects the president’s appointments and can remove the president from office; the justices of the Supreme Court can overturn unconstitutional laws and are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. In the game Branches of Power, scholars have the chance to experience the roles of the three branches of government. Rather than simply learning each branch in isolation, scholars play each of the three branches and learn about how they interact. The goal is to move public policy issues from an idea to a fully formed and tested law and to better understand the system of checks and balances along the way.

To prepare for this lesson, read the “Branches of Power Game Guide” on the iCivics website (free login required).



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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand the relationships between the three branches of the federal government and can explain how each branch serves as a check on the others in order to balance the power of the federal government.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

### Context — 10 minutes

#### Launch (2 minutes)

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today's Central Question and invest scholars in continuing their study of the distribution of federal power among the three branches of government.

#### Watch (5 minutes)

- Watch the video “Crash Course in Government and Politics: Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances” on YouTube.
  - Begin the clip at 2:28 and pause the video at 7:45 to allow for discussion.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - Why are checks and balances an important feature of American government?

#### Discuss (3 minutes)

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - How does each branch of government check the power of the other two branches?
  - How does the separation of powers guard against a tyrannical government?

### iCivics: Branches of Power — 20 minutes

- Explain that scholars will now have the opportunity to take hold of all three branches of government to better understand how these branches work together to govern! Scholars will better understand the material just by learning to play the game successfully. You do not need to walk them through this process step-by-step; however, you should set the expectation that scholars read the provided game tutorials, which will enable them to navigate the game fluently.
- Scholars play Branches of Power on computers, laptops, or any other internet-accessible devices. Tell scholars that they will be prompted to create an account when they access the game and that they should click “No Thanks” to access the game in class.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trends in scholars' work.

- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars. Ask them:
  - What is the role of each branch of government? How do these branches interact?
  - How do the three branches work together to create constitutional laws?

### Discuss — 5 minutes

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the iCivics game. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - How do the three branches of government cooperate to check power and ensure that the government behaves constitutionally?
  - How is the lawmaking process affected if the president and Congress have different values? If the Supreme Court disagrees about the constitutionality of legislative or executive actions?
  - Make a connection to the Essential Question. Ask: How do the responsibilities of each of the three branches differ?

### Exit Ticket — 10 minutes

- Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:
  - How do the three branches of government balance one another? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the Branches of Power game, the video, and the class discussion.

### Homework

- Scholars read pages 174 and 175 in the textbook History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism (Teachers' Curriculum Institute: 2002) in preparation for the next lesson.

## Lesson 5: Federalism (Source Analysis)

**Central Question: How do national and state governments distribute power?**

### Historical Background

Federalism is one of the most important and innovative concepts in the U.S. Constitution, although the word never appears there. Federalism is the sharing of power between national and state governments. In the United States, the states existed first and struggled to create a national government. These tensions are ingrained in the U.S. Constitution, and Americans still debate the proper role of the national government versus the states. Chief Justice John Marshall, the longest-serving leader of the Supreme Court, noted that this question “is perpetually arising, and will probably continue to arise, as long as our system shall exist.”

For more background, read “Federalism” on PBS’s website and watch the video paired with this article.

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Federalism
- State government

Scholars understand the major responsibilities of the national government and those of the state governments and can explain how powers are distributed and shared between national and state governments in the federal system.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

### Context — 15 minutes

#### Launch (2 minutes)

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today's Central Question and invest scholars in beginning their study of how powers are shared among federal, state, and local governments.

#### Watch (8 minutes)

- Watch the video “Crash Course in Government and Politics: Federalism” on YouTube.
  - Begin the clip at 0:38 and pause the clip at 8:44 to allow for discussion.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - How has the federal system changed over time?

#### Discuss (5 minutes)

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - How are the powers granted to the national versus state governments similar or different?
  - Why were powers originally divided this way?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: Why does the Constitution establish itself as the “supreme law of the land”? What might happen if this were not the case?

### Investigate — 15 minutes

- Scholars read and annotate Documents A through D on pages 11–13 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook.

- After reading each source, scholars should write a main idea next to the title of the source.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trends in scholars' work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have each scholar tell you the main idea of the document he or she is reading. What is the main idea of this document? How do you know? How does this document help answer the Central Question?
  - Hold scholars accountable for staying focused on the main idea of the document.

### Discuss — 5 minutes

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the documents. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - Why were the powers granted to the national government not also given to state governments?
  - How does the Constitution establish checks and balances between the federal government and the states?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: Why did the framers of the Constitution likely choose not to list the specific powers of the states and the people, as they did for the Congress?

### Exit Ticket — 10 minutes

- **Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:**
  - How do national and state governments distribute power? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from two sources.

### Homework

- Scholars read “Local Government” on pages 14–16 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook in preparation for the next lesson.

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## Lesson 6: Local Government (iCivics Game)

**Central Question: How does local government affect citizens and their communities?**

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### Historical Background

In addition to dividing power between the federal and state governments, the Constitution also allows for the creation of local governments by the states. Local governments might govern towns, cities, or counties and are organized in different ways, depending on the state. Often, local governments play a role in matters that most directly affect the people, such as schools, libraries, and parks. In the game Counties Work, scholars learn about local government by playing a county official responding to citizens' requests. They must keep citizens happy and manage the county's resources responsibly. Are citizens making sensible requests? Which department of the local government has the solution? Do taxes need to

be raised or lowered? How will citizens react — and what's the best action when crisis strikes? Challenges come from all directions in this fast-paced game!

To prepare for this lesson, read the “Counties Work Game Guide” on the iCivics website (free login required).

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## **What Does Success Look Like?**

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Term:

- Local government

Scholars understand the organization and primary responsibilities of local government and explain why local governments have a powerful effect on the daily lives of American citizens.

## **Do Now — 5 minutes**

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

## **Context — 10 minutes**

### **Launch (2 minutes)**

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today's Central Question and invest scholars in continuing their study of how powers are shared among federal, state, and local governments.

### **Watch (5 minutes)**

- Watch 5 minutes of a town hall meeting with your local mayor.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - Why does local government have more direct influence over the lives of citizens than the state and national governments?

### **Discuss (3 minutes)**

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - How can citizens help ensure that their locally elected officials prioritize issues important to them?
  - Why is it important to hold locally elected officials accountable for their promises and policies?

## **iCivics: Counties Work — 20 minutes**

- Explain that scholars will now have the opportunity to assume the role of a county commissioner and manage a local government! Scholars will better understand the material just by learning to play the game successfully. You do not need to walk them through this process step-by-step; however, you should set the expectation that scholars read the provided game tutorials, which will enable them to navigate the game fluently.
- Scholars play Counties Work on computers, laptops, or any other internet-accessible devices. Tell scholars that they will be prompted to create an account when they access the game and that they should click “No Thanks” to access the game in class.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trends in scholars’ work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars. Ask them:
  - What types of decisions does a local government make? What services does your county provide?
  - How does money impact the decisions you make as a county commissioner?

## **Discuss — 5 minutes**

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the iCivics game. Ensure that the discussion leads scholars to answer the Central Question.
  - How did you decide which projects to pursue as county commissioner?
  - How did the chief services and responsibilities of the local government affect the community you managed?
  - Make a connection to the Big Ideas. Ask: Does local government affect citizens’ lives more than federal or state governments? Why or why not?

## **Exit Ticket — 10 minutes**

- **Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:**
  - How does local government affect citizens and their communities? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the Counties Work game, the video, and the class discussion.

## **Homework**

- Scholars read the article “The Responsibilities of U.S. Citizens” on the Kansas Secretary of State’s CyberCivics website in preparation for the next lesson.

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# **Lesson 7: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship (PBL)**

**Central Question: What is the role of a citizen in the American political system?**

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## Historical Background

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” The Constitution talks about many of the rights of citizenship but says little in the way of responsibilities for citizens. The health of our civic state relies on the participation, albeit in different ways, of every citizen.

For more background, read “Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities” on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Citizen
- Citizenship

Scholars understand the role and responsibilities of American citizens in civic society and can plan oral presentations that explain how citizens can make change in the political system.

## Preparation

- To complete this project, before class you must:
  - Create a teacher model of the planning guide and oral presentation.
  - Scholars will work in small groups throughout this project. Select groups strategically in advance of this lesson or set expectations for how scholars will choose groups in class.
  - Ensure that each scholar has the Oral Presentation Planning Guide in the Unit 5 Workbook accessible.
  - Think through systems for scholar note-taking during scholars’ presentation time to ensure that notes are purposeful and scholars are clear on your expectations.

## Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

## Context — 10 minutes

### Launch (2 minutes)

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Pose today’s Central Question and invest scholars in beginning their study of the meaning of the Constitution for Americans in practice.

### Watch (6 minutes)

- Watch the video “President Barack Obama’s Farewell Address” on the NBC YouTube channel.
  - Begin the clip at 30:30 and pause the clip at 36:16 to allow for discussion.
- Tell scholars to think about the following question as they watch the video:
  - Why does President Obama suggest that “we the people” give the Constitution power?

### Discuss (2 minutes)

- Pairs of scholars discuss the question posed at the beginning of the video as well as the questions below. Then call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars answer your questions with claims supported by evidence from the homework and the video.
  - How are the rights of citizenship different from the responsibilities of citizenship?
  - Why doesn’t the Constitution outline the responsibilities of American citizens?
  - Make a connection to the Essential Question. Ask: How do citizens’ rights and responsibilities empower Americans in society?

### Investigate — 10 minutes

- Explain that in the next lesson, scholars will give oral proposals for addressing an issue facing their local, state, or national communities using their knowledge of American government and civics. In this lesson, scholars will educate themselves on various issues and draft their proposals before presenting tomorrow.
- Remind scholars that the purpose of this PBL lesson is to become experts at one topic so they are able to effectively present this topic to their peers. Set the expectations that scholars should be prepared to clearly and concisely create oral presentations on their topics in the following lesson.
- Scholars should be prepared to present about their topic to the class in 2 minutes or less after independent work, including a brief explanation of the issue, its causes, and its effects in the community. Set the intellectual expectation that scholars use their knowledge of the different roles a citizen can take in their community to brainstorm proposals for addressing their issue as they read.
- Divide scholars into groups and assign each group one of the following issues: homelessness and poverty (page 18 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook), personal privacy in the age of surveillance (page 19 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook), pollution and climate change (pages 20–21 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook), public transit and infrastructure (page 22 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook), or voter suppression (page 22 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook). Each group reads and annotates the documents for its assigned topic. After reading, scholars should write a main idea next to the title of the source.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trends in scholars’ work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have each scholar tell you the main idea of the document he or she is reading. What is the main idea of this document? How do you know? How does this document help answer the Central Question?



- Hold scholars accountable for staying focused on the main idea of the document.

### **Planning — 15 minutes**

- Explain that tomorrow, scholars will give group oral presentations on how citizens can take action on the key issue they studied in today's class.
- Tell scholars that their plan must convey a compelling idea supported by strong evidence from today's documents and yesterday's homework reading.
  - Remind scholars that projects, just like written pieces, make arguments, and all arguments require a strong idea with supporting details.
- Groups of scholars use the Oral Presentation Planning Guide to plan their oral presentations, writing their arguments and planning the evidence they will use to support them.
- Scholars will use their plans to create full presentations tomorrow.
- Hold scholars accountable for staying focused on conveying how citizens can take action on their key issues.

### **Mid-Workshop Teach — 5 minutes**

- Share an exemplar presentation plan. Have scholars discuss how the plan illustrates the group's idea with clear and coherent organization.
- Share a non-exemplar presentation plan. Have scholars discuss why the plan lacks a idea and/or clear and coherent organization and how they can fix it.
- Ensure that scholars understand how this feedback is transferable to their own work.
- Scholars articulate to partners how they will revise their presentation plans based on what they have learned.

### **Revise — 5 minutes**

- Scholars revise their presentation plans based on the Mid-Workshop Teach, referring to their research notes and their Oral Presentation Planning Guides as they work.
- While scholars work, actively circulate to reinforce your expectations for strong ideas and persuasive evidence in project work and to determine major trends in scholars' work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Hold scholars accountable for organizing their details clearly around their idea.
  - Hold scholars accountable for implementing your feedback.

### **Homework**

- Scholars study their Unit 5 Key Terms in preparation for the next lesson.

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# Lesson 8: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship (PBL)

**Central Question: What is the role of a citizen in the American political system?**

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars can express their understanding of civic responsibility by drafting and giving oral presentations that explain how citizens can participate in their communities by taking action on a key issue.

### Preparation

- To complete this project, before class you must:
  - Create a teacher model of the planning guide and oral presentation.
  - Ensure that each scholar has the Oral Presentation Planning Guide in the Unit 5 Workbook accessible.
  - Think through systems for scholar note-taking during scholars' presentation time to ensure that notes are purposeful and scholars are clear on your expectations.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars complete the Unit 5 Lesson 8 Do Now in the Unit 5 Workbook.

### Draft — 10 minutes

- Explain that today, scholars will give group oral presentations on how citizens can take action on the key issue they studied yesterday. Remind scholars that their proposal must convey a compelling idea supported by strong evidence from yesterday's documents and homework reading.
- Remind scholars that each group member should have a shared role in planning and delivering the presentation and that 2 to 3 minutes will be allotted for presentation time.
- Scholars use the planning guide to draft their oral presentations in groups.
- Hold scholars accountable for staying focused on clear ideas and evidence about how citizens can take action on their key issue. Ensure that scholars have their presentation drafted within this time to ensure that they have sufficient time to rehearse and present.
- While scholars work, actively circulate to reinforce your expectations for clarity, concision, and strong ideas in project work and to determine major trends in scholars' work.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five groups.
  - Have each group tell you the idea conveyed by their presentation. Can the idea be made stronger? How can the presentation convey the idea more effectively? Is the presentation interesting and compelling?
  - Hold groups accountable for implementing the feedback you've given them.
  - Hold groups accountable for staying focused on conveying how citizens can take action on their key issues.

- Hold groups accountable for assigning each group member a portion of the presentation.
- Hold groups accountable for having their presentation drafted within this time to ensure that they are ready to rehearse and present.

### **Rehearse — 5 minutes**

- Using their drafts, scholars rehearse their oral presentations.
- Tell scholars to ensure that their oral presentations must convey how citizens can take action to address an issue facing their community supported by relevant evidence.
- Tell scholars that their oral presentations should be 2 to 3 minutes long.
- While scholars work, actively circulate to reinforce your expectations for oral presentations that convey ideas and are supported by relevant evidence from their research.
- Ensure that scholars fairly distribute roles such that each scholar has a substantive speaking part.

### **Presentations — 20 minutes**

- Each group takes no more than 2 to 3 minutes to give its presentation to the class (time might need to be adjusted based on the number of scholars in each group).
- Hold presenters accountable for presenting clearly and audibly for their classmates. Strong public speaking is essential to an effective presentation!

### **Exit Ticket — 10 minutes**

- **Write a paragraph of no more than 200 words:**
  - What is the role of the citizen in the American political system? Justify your answer with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from at least two groups' presentations.

### **Homework**

- Scholars read the article “The Constitution: What the Founders Intended” on [The Week](#) website in preparation for the next lesson.

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## **Lesson 9: Constitutional Interpretation (DBQ Writing)**

**Central Question: To what extent is the Constitution a "living document"?**

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### **Historical Background**

What is the nature of the U.S. Constitution? How ought it be interpreted? There are two main competing approaches. In modern constitutional theory, originalism, an approach that attempts to enforce the original understanding of the Constitution, sets itself against the interpretive practice known as living constitutionalism, which gives greater priority to contemporary understandings and society. The debate

between originalists and living constitutionalists is generally considered one of the most important current battles over how the Constitution should be interpreted.

For more background, read “On Originalism in Constitutional Interpretation” on the Constitution Center website, “The Living Constitution” on the University of Chicago Law School website, and “Theories of Constitutional Interpretation” on the University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School website.

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand and can fluently use the following Unit 5 Key Terms:

- Originalism
- Living constitutionalism

Scholars can apply their knowledge of U.S. government to interpret original sources and use these sources to write clear, concise, and compelling claims about competing approaches to constitutional interpretation.

## Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous lesson based on the grade and feedback you gave them.

## Launch — 5 minutes

- Review the Big Ideas from the previous lesson by having scholars quickly share their takeaways from the lesson.
- Build excitement for today’s DBQ and invest scholars in continuing their study of the contested meaning of the Constitution. Tell scholars they will apply all their knowledge as historians to answer a question using new sources that they have not seen before.
- Scholars read the Lessons 9–11 DBQ Historical Context and Task in the Unit 5 Workbook to frame their thinking.
- Ask: What is the DBQ Task asking us to do?
- Pairs of scholars interpret the Task. Call on pairs to share out.
  - As a class, be sure to define the meaning of the phrase “living document.”
  - Ask: What makes something a living document?

## Guided Document Study — 20 minutes

- Set the expectation that scholars must tackle Documents A through D today by writing a main idea next to the title and using the text and their main idea annotations to concisely answer each short-answer question with a clear claim.

### Read and Write (8 minutes)

- Read Document A\* on page 24 of the Unit 5 Sourcebook with scholars. After reading, scholars should write a main idea next to the title and use their understanding of the text to write a claim for the accompanying short-answer question in the Unit 5 Workbook.
  - \*Note: Document A contains complex and difficult ideas. If you anticipate that scholars will struggle more with Document B, C, or D, use one of those documents instead.

### Discuss (10 minutes)

- Have a scholar with an exemplar main idea annotation and/or claim share out. Have scholars discuss 1) how the main idea annotation reflects full understanding of the document and/or 2) why the claim effectively answers this short-answer question.
- Share non-exemplar work. Have the class discuss why the main idea annotation does not reflect full understanding of the document and/or why the claim does not answer the short-answer question.
- Ensure that scholars understand how this feedback is transferable to their own work and know what they must do to improve.

**Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main ideas or claims based on the discussion.**

### Read and Write — 20 minutes

- Scholars read and annotate the remaining documents on pages 24–25 and write a clear and concise answer to each short-answer question in the Unit 5 Workbook. Hold scholars accountable for the clarity and strength of their ideas!
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have scholars explain their thinking. Can their main idea annotations be made stronger? Are their claims simple and clear? Are they revising their writing?
  - Hold scholars accountable for implementing the feedback you've given them.

### Teacher Feedback Guidance

- Before the next lesson, review scholars' short answers and provide feedback on the quality of their work. Prioritize the most important change that scholars must make to improve both the strength of their claims as well as their future writing. Use your study of scholars' work to determine a common trend in scholars' writing.

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## Lesson 10: Constitutional Interpretation (DBQ Writing)

**Central Question: To what extent is the Constitution a "living document"?**

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## What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars can plan and draft clear and compelling written arguments that answer a historical question with strong theses and evidence that supports or proves their theses.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars revise their short answers from the previous lesson based on the feedback you gave them.

### Plan — 15 minutes

- With partners or in small groups, scholars discuss possible answers to the DBQ Task. Ensure that scholars' answers consider the nuance of the "to what extent" question, rather than answering simply yes or no.
- Lead a whole-class discussion on possible answers to this Task. Remind scholars that there is not a single right answer to this question, but they must have evidence to defend their answers!
  - Call on pairs to share out their answers and defend them with evidence from Documents A through D.
  - Have scholars evaluate one another's answers. Scholars should consider whether each idea is compelling and based on evidence from the text.
  - Give scholars feedback on the clarity and quality of their answers. Are their answers precise and succinct? Can their answers be backed up by the text?
- During the discussion, chart strong versus weak answers. Ensure that scholars can explain what makes a particular answer strong versus weak.
- Tell scholars that their answers to this question will become their theses in their final DBQ essays. All of the evidence in an essay must prove this thesis.
- After the discussion, give scholars 2 minutes to determine their own theses on the planning page of the DBQ in the Unit 5 Workbook.
- Ensure that scholars are not just copying an answer that was discussed but are actually formulating their own theses based on the discussion.

### Outline and Draft — 30 minutes

#### Outline (15 minutes)

- Scholars create an outline for their DBQ essays on the planning page of the DBQ by finalizing their theses and determining the three strongest pieces of evidence from Documents A through D that support their theses, based on their work in the previous lesson and the class discussion.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have each scholar explain his or her thesis. Does his or her thesis answer the DBQ Task? Is it compelling? Does the evidence selected actually prove this thesis?
  - If scholars are struggling to choose strong evidence, have them write how each document helps answer the DBQ Task on each document or in their outlines.

### Draft (15 minutes)

- Scholars use their outlines to draft their DBQ essays. As scholars draft, they must focus on proving their theses with strong evidence from at least three different documents.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have scholars explain their writing. Can their writing be made stronger?
  - Ensure that scholars are using relevant evidence to prove their theses in their DBQ essays.
  - Ensure that scholars are revising their writing to make sure it is simple and clear.
  - Hold scholars accountable for rereading their writing and eliminating any typos and errors in basic conventions.
  - Coach scholars on how to implement the feedback you've given them.

### Teacher Feedback Guidance

- Before the next lesson, review scholars' drafts and provide feedback on the quality of their work. Prioritize the most important change that scholars must make to improve both the strength of their theses and supporting evidence in this essay as well as their future writing. Use your study of scholars' work to determine a common trend in scholars' writing.

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## Lesson 11: Constitutional Interpretation (DBQ Writing)

**Central Question: To what extent is the Constitution a "living document"?**

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### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars revise their essays based on individualized teacher feedback to make their essays stronger and clearer and to understand how to use their feedback to grow as writers.

### Preparation

- To complete this revision, before class you must:
  - Choose an exemplar and non-exemplar draft essay from the previous lesson to use in the Launch and Mini-Lesson. If there is no exemplar piece, plan to use your own teacher model piece.

### Do Now — 5 minutes

- Scholars read your feedback on their initial drafts of their DBQ essays and discuss with a partner how they will apply this feedback in their revisions today.

## Launch — 10 minutes

- The launch is your opportunity to provide a whole-class model of excellence and explain the biggest issue that holds scholars back from achieving excellence. The launch should end with scholars describing how this piece of writing exemplifies the Habits of Great Writers.
  - Reread the DBQ Task with scholars: To what extent is the Constitution a "living document"?
  - Then share an exemplar draft from the previous lesson. Have scholars discuss 1) what makes the scholar's thesis compelling and 2) why the evidence selected is effective in proving this thesis.
  - Have scholars articulate to partners how the work study applies to their own writing today.

## Mini-Lesson — 10 minutes

- Choose an anonymous scholar's draft essay that demonstrates a whole-class trend from your study of scholars' work in the previous lesson and show this scholar's line-edited draft to the class.
- Have the class work together to apply your individualized feedback to begin to revise the DBQ essay. Then call on scholars to articulate how this scholar must apply this feedback to all writing moving forward.
- Set your expectations for how scholars will apply their individualized feedback to revise their work today.

## Revise 1 — 10 minutes

- Scholars use their individualized feedback to revise their DBQ essays.
- Set the expectation that scholars should use this entire time to revise their work based on the feedback you have given them. Explain that some scholars may need to start from scratch, and that is OK! Note that this time will only be productive if you have given every scholar individualized feedback.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Have scholars explain the feedback that they have received, as well as their plan to apply it.
  - Coach scholars on how to apply your feedback.

## Mid-Workshop Teach — 5 minutes

- Share an essay that has greatly improved through revision. Have the scholar explain how he or she has applied his or her feedback to effectively revise.
  - If there is a clear whole-class misconception that must be addressed, share an anonymous example of that trend. Have the class discuss how the scholar needs to change his or her approach to revision in order to make more substantial changes.
- Ensure that scholars understand how this feedback is transferable to their own work.
- Scholars articulate to their partner how they will revise their work based on the Mid-Workshop Teach.



## Revise 2 — 10 minutes

- Scholars use the transferable takeaway from the Mid-Workshop Teach to continue revising their essays.
- Set the expectation that scholars should use the entire time to continue revising their essays.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes working with three to five scholars.
  - Help scholars focus on what is most important: a strong thesis and supporting evidence.
  - Coach scholars on how to apply your feedback.

### Teacher Feedback Guidance

- Before the next lesson, give each scholar a final grade on their revised essay, as well as one transferable next step that they must apply to their next piece.

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## Optional Current Events Connection

- Scholars read the following articles on Newsela\*:
  - “Court Agrees Muslim Girl Was Treated Unfairly Because of Her Religion”
  - “Gay Couples Can Now Marry in All 50 States”
- Scholars write a paragraph of no more than 200 words based on both of the articles above in response to the following prompt:
  - How does the Supreme Court apply the Constitution when reviewing cases in the present day?

\*To access all articles on the Newsela website, you must create a free account.

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## Extra Credit

**Prompts:** Scholars may choose one of the following prompts about Big Ideas in American history.

- How does a system of checks and balances prevent tyranny in the federal government?
- Why does the Constitution divide power among federal, state, and local governments?
- Why do Americans debate how to interpret the meaning of the Constitution?

**Project Menu:** Scholars may then choose to respond to the prompt chosen above with one of the formats outlined below.

- **Thematic Essay:** Scholars write a thematic essay that answers one of the extra credit prompts, drawing on evidence both from the unit and from their own independent research.

- **Podcast:** Scholars create an original podcast that answers one of the prompts above. The podcast should be 5–8 minutes long. Podcasts must draw on evidence both from the unit and from scholars' own independent research.
- **“Docudrama”:** Scholars create a “docudrama” that answers one of the prompts above. A docudrama is a dramatized video that tells the story of historic events. The docudrama should be 5–8 minutes long. Docudramas must draw on evidence both from the unit and from scholars' own independent research.
- **Interview:** Scholars record (video or podcast) an interview with a “historian” or a historical figure in order to answer one of the prompts above. The historian or historical figure must be the scholar. A parent, a classmate, or a teacher should be the interviewer. Interviews should be 5–8 minutes long. Interviews must draw on evidence both from the unit and from scholars' own independent research.
- **Propose your own project:** Scholars may propose to do their own project. These projects must still answer one of the extra credit prompts, and any project proposal must draw on evidence both from the unit and from scholars' own independent research.