The Legislative Branch
Twelfth grade American Government

Overview & Rationale
This twelfth grade unit on the Legislative Branch introduces students to the design and complexities of the lawmaking process. Students will examine the purposes, structure, key actors, and influences of and on Congress through a series of activities, simulations, discussions, and reflections. By participating in these explorations, students will come to understand the historical and contemporary importance of the Legislative Branch and its powers. Furthermore, such activities will help students build connections between content material and current events. In this way, students come to understand the overarching significance and relevance of government to their own lives.

In the process of completing this unit, students will have opportunities to practice skills related to state standards involving critical thinking, discussion, perspective recognition, issue evaluation, and formulation and justification of arguments. Additionally, by aligning with Virginia Standards of Learning as well as standards established by National Council for the Social Studies, this unit allows students to trace important themes—such as Power and Governance and Institution Building—as they construct an understanding of the content.

This unit will be taught after students gain a general understanding of constitutional framework and theories of government. It serves as the first of three larger units on the particulars of each branch of government. This will allow students to connect new material to their prior knowledge and experiences, enabling a deeper and holistic understanding of the American democratic process. The unit is planned to use ten ninety-minute class periods.

Goals & Essential Questions

Goals
1. Students will explore the purpose of government, thinking critically about and discussing the structure, purpose, and process of constructing public policy. (GOVT 7.a, 9.b) (NCSS VI)
2. Students will understand how individuals and groups influence the political process in a variety of ways. (GOVT 6.h, 7.b, 7.c, 9.c, 9.e) (NCSS V, VI)
3. Students will discover how the branches of government have responded to changes in the nation, interacting and conflicting in a complex system of checks and balances. (GOVT 7.a, 7.b) (NCSS II, VI)
4. Students will be able to formulate and defend a belief or position on an issue through well-reasoned arguments and appropriate supporting evidence. (GOVT 1.d, 1.g, 18.e) (NCSS X)
5. Students will be able to construct an understanding of the American lawmaking process and public policy procedure through the analysis of documents, through the interaction with others, and through reflective evaluation of issues. (GOVT 1.a, 1.c, 18.e, 18.f) (NCSS VI, X)
**Essential Questions**

1. Does the overall structure of Congress and each of its chambers facilitate the lawmaking process?
2. Is the legislative branch too powerful?
3. What does it mean to represent others?

**Objectives**

Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:

**Academic**

1. Describe the structure of the Legislative Branch—namely the bicameral legislature and that of each chamber—and explain how it facilitates the lawmaking process. (Goal 1) (EQ 1)
2. Identify key players in the lawmaking process, including leadership, committees, staff, and support agencies, and describe the role of each in the creation of public policy. (Goal 2) (EQ1, EQ3)
3. Identify and explain the constitutional provisions by which Congress fulfills its legislative duties, focusing particularly on the commerce and necessary and proper clauses. (Goal 3) (EQ2)
4. Describe and classify examples of the enumerated and informal powers of the Legislative Branch, focusing on key legislative and non-legislative powers. (Goal 3) (EQ 2)
5. Describe at least two ways the Legislative Branch checks the power of other branches of government and how it is balanced by these other branches. (Goal 3) (EQ 2)

**Intellectual**

1. Analyze primary and secondary sources to organize and construct holistic understanding of material. (Goal 5)
2. Collaborate with peers to create deeper understanding of content material through role-play and discussion. (Goal 5)
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating topics of enduring significance in American politics. (Goals 4 & 5)
4. Demonstrate effective discussion skills by using evidence and well-reasoned arguments to defend a position on historical and contemporary issues. (Goal 4)

**Outline of Content**

I. THE ORGANIZATION OF CONGRESS
   a. Bicameral Legislature and Congressional Membership
      i. Structure of the Legislative Branch
      ii. House & Senate Membership
      iii. Representation, Reapportionment, Redistricting
   b. Contrasting Procedures & Leadership of the House and the Senate
      i. The House of Representatives
      ii. Rules, Leadership, Lawmaking
      iii. The Senate
      iv. Lawmaking, Cloture, Filibuster
c. Congressional Committees, Staff and Support Agencies
   i. Committee purposes, types, selection; chairperson’s role
   ii. Congressional staff (personal and committee)
   iii. Support agencies: Library of Congress, CBO, GAO, GPO

II. CONGRESSIONAL POWERS
   a. Congressional Powers
      i. Constitutional Provisions
      ii. Legislative Powers
      iii. Landmark Cases
      iv. Non-legislative Powers
   b. Investigations and Oversight
      i. Process
      ii. Powers and witness rights
      iii. Legislative oversight
      iv. Limits on executive
      v. Independent counsel
   c. Congress and the President (or Congress v. the President)
      i. Checks and balances
      ii. Parties
      iii. Different timetables
      iv. Curbing presidential power
      v. Budget impoundment and control act
      vi. Legislative veto; Line-item veto

III. CONGRESS & PUBLIC POLICY
   a. How a Bill Becomes a Law
      i. Types of bills and resolutions
      ii. Riders
      iii. Why so few become laws
      iv. Introducing a bill
      v. Committee
      vi. Floor action
      vii. Conference committee
      viii. Presidential action
      ix. Clinton v. NYC
      x. Overriding a veto
   b. Taxing and Spending
      i. Ways and means committee
      ii. Appropriating money
      iii. Authorization, appropriation
      iv. Uncontrollable expenditures (social security)
   c. Influencing Congress
      i. Influences on lawmakers
      ii. Voter influence
      iii. Party Influence
iv. Presidential Influence  
v. Interest Group influence  
vi. PAC Influence  

**d. Helping Constituents**  
i. Casework  
ii. Public works legislation  
iii. Pork barrel legislation  

**Assessments & Evaluations**  
- Each lesson, student background knowledge and understanding will be assessed through introductory brainstorming and warm-up writing prompts.  
- Students will be formatively assessed through their participation in class work and small group activities.  
- Students will be formatively assessed through the thoughtful completion of submitted work, including charts, knowledge webs, worksheets, and exit tickets.  
- Students will be formatively assessed through their preparation and participation in large group activities, including role-play, simulations, and reflective whole-class discussions.  
- Students will be summatively assessed by their performance on mid-unit quiz and end of unit test, which will evaluate both content knowledge and skills.  
- Students will also have the opportunity to assess themselves through formative activities and reflection on their participation throughout the unit.  

**Materials & Resources**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Materials &amp; Resources Needed</th>
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| 1   | • Class set of laptops  
    | • WebQuest worksheet  
    | • Recommended sites and resources  
    | • Congressional Representation PowerPoint |
| 2   | • Gerrymandering simulation sheets Images of both House and Senate chambers (for warm-up writing)  
    | • CSPAN and Filibuster clips |
| 3   | • SAC arguments & worksheet |
| 4   | • Prepared positions and texts for role-play activity (one for each student)  
    |   ○ Roles: defense staff, plaintiff staff, judges (for each trial) |
| 5   | • Copies of Quiz (1 for each student)  
    | • List of headlines of Congressional activities (1 for each small group) |
| 6   | • Clips from Iran-Contra Investigations (CSPAN archives and/or file conversion of YouTube clips)  
    | • Copies of compare/contrast activity sheet  
    | • Students will need textbook for anticipation guide activity (possibly use supplementary texts as well)  
    | • Prepared positions on both sides of issues for Take a Stand activity on legislative veto and line item veto |
| Week 7 | School House Rock video  
|        | Materials for lawmaking process flashcards  
|        | “Making a budget” information packets and appropriate budget-making activity worksheets  
|        | Presentation of information of what students’ congressional representatives provide for their constituents, district, and state |
| Week 8 | Copies of simulation rules (one for each student)  
|        | Copies of simulation assignments (one for each student) |
| Week 9 | Copies of SAC procedures (one for each student)  
|        | Copies of SAC evidence for both rounds for each side  
|        | Jeopardy-style review game |
| Week 10| Copies of Unit Test (one for each student) |
# Unit Calendar: The Legislative Branch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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| 1   | Bicameral Legislature & Congressional Representation & Membership | A.1  
I.1  
I.2  
I.3  
I.4  
EQ.1  
EQ.2  
EQ.3 | • Introduction: California Case Study  
• WebQuest Activity  
• Examining the 112th Congress (EQ.3)  
• Introducing Other Essential Questions (EQ.1, EQ.2) | • Formative observation of group work, worksheet completion, and participation in discussions |
| 2   | Contrasting Procedures & Leadership of the House and the Senate | A.1  
A.2  
I.1  
I.2  
EQ.1 | • Gerrymandering Activity  
• Observing Legislation in Action Activity  
• Notes  
• Venn Diagram of differences | • Formative observation through discussion of observations, thoroughness of diagram |
| 3   | Congressional Committees, Staff, & Support Agencies | A.2  
I.1  
I.2  
I.3  
EQ.1  
EQ.2  
EQ.3 | • Notes  
• Mini-SAC on power of congressional staff  
• Writing to Learn exit tickets | • Formative observation through group work, submission of exit tickets |
| 4   | Congressional Powers: Constitutional Provisions and Legislative Powers | A.3  
A.4  
I.2  
I.4  
EQ.2 | • Notes  
• Landmark Cases Role-Play Activity—Preparation & Presentation  
• Class review for quiz | • Formative assessment through ability to take and defend positions in role-play and quiz review |
| 5   | Congressional Powers: Non-legislative Powers | A.3  
A.4  
I.3  
I.4  
EQ.2 | • **Quiz on Chapter 5**  
• Notes  
• Classifying Congressional Powers Activity  
• Think-Pair-Share on most important congressional power | • Summative assessment through quiz results; formative assessment through classification activity and discussion |
| 6   | Investigations and Oversight; | A.4  
A.5 | • Iran-Contra Scandal clips: What is the point | • Formative assessment |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress v. President</th>
<th>I.1</th>
<th>of investigations?</th>
<th>through participation during various discussions, completion of and participation in group activities, completion of exit ticket</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I.2</td>
<td>• Compare and Contrast Group Activity</td>
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<td>I.3</td>
<td>• Congress v. President: Anticipation Guide</td>
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<td>EQ.2</td>
<td>• Take a Stand: Different ways Congress has tried to curb presidential power</td>
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<td>• Essential Question 2 <strong>Culminating Activity:</strong> Exit Ticket on Legislative power</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A.1</td>
<td>• Comparing School House Rock to Actual Process</td>
<td>• Formative assessment through participation during various discussions, completion of and participation in group activities</td>
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<td>How a Bill Becomes a Law; Taxing and Spending Bills; Helping Constituents, Part 1</td>
<td>A.2</td>
<td>• <strong>Culminating Activity:</strong> Discussion on structure of Congress and lawmaking process</td>
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<td>A.4</td>
<td>• Bill-to-Law Flashcards</td>
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<td>• Taxing and Spending: Budget Activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I.2</td>
<td>• “What my congressional representative does for me” Activity</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>A.2</td>
<td>• Congressional Simulation: What Influences Congressional Representatives?</td>
<td>• Formative assessment through participation during simulation and through post-simulation reflective discussion; Summative assessment through completion of exit ticket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influences on Congress</td>
<td>A.5</td>
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<td>EQ.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A.2</td>
<td>• Structured Academic Controversy: Should</td>
<td>• Formative assessment</td>
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<td>Helping Constituents, Part</td>
<td>I.1</td>
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<td>2: Pork-barrel legislation; Unit Test Review</td>
<td>I.2 I.3 EQ.3</td>
<td>Congress outlaw pork barrel legislation? <em>(Culminating Activity on EQ.3)</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Unit Test</td>
<td>• Unit Test on Ch. 5-7</td>
<td>• Summative assessment through test results; summative assessment of skills through student self-evaluation and teacher evaluation of skills developed and demonstrated during unit</td>
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Day 1 Lesson Plan

**Topic: Introduction to Legislative Branch**
- Bicameral Legislature
- Congressional Representation & Membership

**Objectives:**
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

**Academic**
1. Describe how Congress is structured, and explain the functional purpose of a bicameral legislature.
2. Describe current congressional membership for the 112th Congress.

**Intellectual**
1. Work with various sources to identify, organize, and analyze important information.
2. Work together with others to engage in collaborative knowledge construction and making of meaning.

**Materials:**
- Class set of laptops
- WebQuest worksheet (1 for each student)
- Recommended sites and resources
- Congressional Representation PowerPoint

**Activities:**
1. **Hook: Case Study—Californian Representatives**
   - Show students a map of the congressional districts in California, asking them to think about why there are so many.
   - Next, show them the districts of South Central L.A. and Orange County, noting especially the short distance between them.
   - Finally, show a side-by-side comparison of the representatives of each district (with appropriate info about their policies).
   - Pose the question: “If both of these congressmen represent Californians from this specific area, why are they so different?” Use this question and activity to introduce essential questions three: “What does it mean to represent others?”

2. **WebQuest Activity**
   - Explain to students that they will be conducting research on their designated district, using the laptops and resources provided. Students should find information and images that helps them determine what their district is like (i.e. population, demographic info, issues of concern, etc.)
   - Students will use this information to infer how well their congressman represents/reflects the people and interests of his constituency.
3. **Class Comparison of Data**
   - Ask students to share information and images they collected about their district.
     - After all students have presented, have students evaluate how well their Congressman represents their district.
   - Provoke further thought and discussion by asking the following:
     - Would you want the other Congressman representing your district? Why or why not?
     - Why do you think I chose to show you CA?
       - Could you find such diversity in such close proximity in VA?
     - Some states only have member in the House—can they give good representation to the whole state?
       - Show Montana, Wyoming, etc. as examples, and talk about smaller and more homogenous population.
   - Provide brief information on senators of CA.
     - Explain that these people are *each* accountable for people of the entire state, and that all people of the state (LA, O.C., etc.) have the chance to vote for them.
     - Show color-coded map of senators to clarify that two senators does *not* mean one Democrat / one Republican, one east / one west, etc., but rather *both* represent the entire state. (i.e. “Blue represents generally more liberal states,” etc.)
     - Ask students: “What is the goal of having representation in both houses of Congress? Why do we have a bicameral legislature?”

4. **Examining Current Congressional Membership**
   - Still in their groups, have students work together to complete the second part of the worksheet, which examines the demographics of the current Congress, as well as party breakdown, leadership positions, etc.
   - When going over information as a class, compare the data gathered on demographics to that of the country as a whole. Ask students to assess how representative Congress really is.

5. **Introducing Other Essential Questions**
   - As a final part of the class, introduce the students to essential questions one and two.
   - For question one, ask students why Congress is split into two different chambers. Refer back to the previous activities on representation to help students begin to formulate answers to this question.
   - For question two, have students look at several recent or pending congressional laws, representing a variety of issues. Have students think-pair-share about whether Congress should be able to make such laws or whether they have gotten too powerful.
Explain to students that all three essential questions will come up throughout the unit and that they will revisit them several times.

**Assessment:**
Formatively assess students in terms of their participation, completion of the WebQuest activity and worksheet, and contributions to class discussion.
Day 2 Lesson Plan

**Topic: Contrasting Procedures & Leadership of the House and the Senate**

- **Representation, Reapportionment, Redistricting**
- **House & Senate Differences**
  - Number of Members, Representation
  - Qualifications, Terms of Office
  - Lawmaking and Leadership differences

**Objectives:**

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

**Academic**
1. Compare and contrast the organization of the House and the Senate, and analyze how this structure assists the lawmaking process.
2. Identify the major differences in leadership and the lawmaking process of these two bodies.

**Intellectual**
1. Critically observe and pull out essential information from media sources.
2. Organize information in a way that provides for easy comparison.

**Activities:**

1. **Reapportionment and Redistricting: Notes & Short Activity**
   - Ask students what significant civic event happened in 2010 to generate thought and discussion on the purpose of a Census.
   - Through direct instruction and questioning, explain to students the concepts of reapportionment, redistricting and gerrymandering.
   - Have students “try their hand” at gerrymandering by trying to draw districts on provided “states.”

2. **Observing Legislation in Action Activity**
   - Reactivate knowledge from the previous day by asking students to respond to the following question:
     - i. How might the difference in size between the House and Senate affect how they each do business? (This ties into yesterday’s lesson in which students explored the concept of representation.)
     - ii. Display images of both chambers for students to consider as they write.
   - Students will watch a selected clip from CSPAN on the House of Representatives and will write down their observations of the rules, leadership, and committees in action.
   - Students will then observe an example of the filibuster (from *West Wing*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, or an example of Strom Thurmond) and make note of what differences they witness. Think-Pair-Share with the class.
3. **Notes on House and Senate Differences (qualifications, leadership and lawmaking processes)**
   - Build on yesterday’s and previous activity, identifying the House as being in touch with the will of the people, and the Senate as being the more stable, deliberative body. This will incorporate student observations from the previous activity.

4. **Venn Diagram Activity**
   - Students will come up to the front of the room to complete a Venn diagram on the differences between the House and the Senate. (Students can complete for homework if time is short—create Venn diagram on the back of yesterday’s chart to aid in studying.)

**Assessment:**
Formatively assess student understanding through questions and responses during note-taking, by discussing student observations of the two clips, and by their ability to thoroughly complete the Venn diagram.
Day 3 Lesson Plan
Topic: Congressional Committees, Staff and Support Agencies
- Committee purposes, types, selection; chairperson’s role
- Congressional staff (personal and committee)
- Support agencies: Library of Congress, CBO, GAO, GPO

Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

Academic
1. Describe the various types of congressional committees and identify the purpose of each.
2. Explain the role of the committee chairperson and how members are assigned to committees.
3. Summarize the ways in which congressional staff and support agencies assist in the legislative process, and analyze their influence on lawmakers.

Intellectual
1. Develop a knowledge web to organize information on and interrelationships of congressional staff and roles.
2. Apply their understanding to evaluate the power of congressional staff, and define and support an opinion.

Activities:
1. Notes on Committees, Staff, and Supporting Agencies
   - Through direct instruction and questioning, provide students with a foundational understanding of the purpose of committees and the other key congressional players.
   - Offer few examples of Congressmen from different states and ask students what committees they should seek a seat on, depending on state needs. (Ex. Delaware- banking; Iowa- agriculture)

2. Mini-SAC: The Power of Congressional Staff
   - Provide students with information about staff roles and the arguments surrounding the question: Do congressional staff have too much power?
   - Guide students in the various stages of the SAC activity, emphasizing key procedures for effective discussion and debate.
     a. Encourage students to look at evidence from both sides and collaborate to develop and support their own opinions on this issue.

3. Exit Ticket- Writing to Learn
   - After discussing the issue with their groups, each student will compose an exit ticket outlining their position on this issue with evidence from the SAC.

Assessment:
Formatively assess student knowledge of committees, staff, and support agencies by
observing their participation during the notes, walking around during the knowledge web activity to answer questions and evaluate student understanding of interrelationships, and by reviewing exit tickets to see what evidence students used to defend their positions.
Day 4 Lesson Plan

Topic: Congressional Powers
- Constitutional Provisions
  - Expressed, implied, denied powers
- Legislative Powers
  - Taxing & Spending; Commerce; Foreign Policy
  - Landmark Cases: Gibbons v. Ogden, Heart of Atlanta Motel v. U.S.

Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

Academic
1. Identify the various classifications of constitutional powers, and be able to provide an example of each.
2. Describe the importance of landmark cases and their influence on congressional power.

Intellectual
1. Create a matrix through which to organize information on congressional powers.
2. Support and defend a perspective by playing a role in a landmark court case.

Activities:
1. Notes on Constitutional Provisions and Legislative Powers
   - Have students create a matrix in their notes of expressed, implied, and denied legislative and non-legislative powers.
   - Ask students to engage in think-pair-share to create their own definitions and examples of each.

2. Landmark Cases Role-Play Activity (can also be SAC)
   - Have students work together in their appropriate teams to answer essential questions and prepare to present their “facts” to the court.
     a. Teams present their cases, judges deliberate and come to a decision.
   - Facilitate class discussion and reflection as a whole on the simulated versus actual Supreme Court decisions.
     a. Emphasize the precedents of power these cases created—i.e. how did they serve to increase the power of the federal government?

3. Q&A and review for tomorrow’s quiz.

Assessment:
Formatively assess student knowledge of Constitutional provisions through their ability to complete a matrix organizing the information on congressional powers, and through
participation and defense of assigned positions during the role-play activity. Assess student knowledge and provide feedback through reviewing for the quiz (answering questions as need be).
Day 5: Lesson Plan

Quiz on Chapter 5: The Organization of Congress

Topic: Congressional Powers, cont’d
- Non-legislative Powers
  - Presidential Selection; Removal; Confirmation; Ratification; Amendment

Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

**Academic**
1. Identify and describe the non-legislative powers of Congress.
2. Apply understanding of congressional powers to classify real-world examples.

**Intellectual**
1. Evaluate which powers of Congress are the most important and relevant in today’s world, and support their position with evidence.

Activities:
1. **Quiz**
   - Students take a quiz on first three days of information (the organization of Congress).

2. **Notes on Non-Legislative Powers of Congress**
   - Through direct instruction and questioning, provide students with information on the power of Congress to select or remove a president, confirm appointees, and amend the Constitution

3. **Classifying Congressional Powers Activity**
   - Students are provided with a list of real current and historical headlines on Congressional activities.
   - Students must work together in small groups to identify whether each headline is 1) an expressed or implied power; 2) a legislative or non-legislative power; and 3) a power of the House, Senate, or shared.
   - Students will place the headline within a chart/Venn diagram where they think it belongs, providing appropriate justification.
   - The class will then complete the chart at the front of the board, with individuals from each group classifying different headlines and providing justifications for where they think it goes.

4. **Think-Pair-Share Activity**
   - Ask students to reflect on the powers of Congress that have been discussed, and assess which one they think is most important to the purpose of the legislative branch and why.

Assessment:
The quiz is a means (though not the final form) of assessing student understanding of
topics covered in the week thus far; student performance will determine what concepts need to be reviewed and clarified. Formative assessment for this lesson includes observing small-group work on powers classification as well as whole class review and discussion of what powers headlines of congressional action fall under and most important powers of Congress.
Day 6 Lesson Plan

**Topic:** Investigations and Oversight, Congress v. President

- Power to Investigate
  - Investigation Process
  - Congressional Powers and Witness Rights
- Legislative Oversight
  - Limits on Oversight
  - Congressional Limits on Executive Activities
  - Independent Counsels
- Cooperation and Conflict Between Branches
  - Constituents
  - Checks and Balances
  - Party Politics
  - Organization as Cause of Conflict
  - Differing Timetables
- Power Struggles
  - Budget Impoundment and Control Act
  - Legislative Veto
  - Line-Item Veto

**Objectives:**
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

*Academic*
1. Describe why congressional oversight and investigations are important powers of Congress.
2. Compare and contrast congressional oversight powers and powers of investigation.
3. Explain various reasons why the Legislative and Executive branches conflict with each other.
4. Describe what Congress does/has tried to do to curb Executive power.

*Intellectual*
1. Collaborate and discuss with others to construct deeper understandings of topics
2. Support their position on a topic with well-reasoned arguments

**Activities:**

*Essential Question 2, Revisited:*
Students will be reintroduced to essential question two (is the legislative branch too powerful?). The teacher will explain that today’s lesson will give them an opportunity to explore several topics all approach this question.

*Iran-Contra Scandal: What is the point of investigations?*
- Students will watch clips from opening of Iran-Contra investigations, discussing the clips in think-pair-share model, small group discussions, and whole group discussions. Students will attempt to answer the overall questions: What is the point of investigations?

*Compare and Contrast Activity*
After a brief lecture on congressional oversight powers, students will work in groups to determine how powers of investigations remain different and similar to congressional oversight powers. They will complete a compare and contrast group activity worksheet to turn in.

**Congress v. President: Anticipation Guide Activity**

- Students will take part in an anticipation guide activity, answering questions about the reasons for conflict between the Legislative and Executive Branches before using the textbook and other supplementary materials to find the correct answers. Students will reflect on the correct answers.

**Take a Stand: Different ways Congress has tried to curb presidential power**

- After a brief lecture on the budget impoundment and control act, students will be presented with various arguments for and against the legislative veto and the line-item veto. Students will then take part in a “Take a Stand” activity whereby they choose a position on whether one of these congressional methods to maintain power is good or bad overall. The students then stand in a spot designated for their position, using well-reasoned arguments to try to convince the other people to switch sides.

**Essential Question 2 Culminating Activity: Exit Ticket on Legislative power**

- Students will finish the class by completing an exit ticket in which they explain their response to the second essential question (is the legislative branch too powerful?). Students will use the knowledge they acquired up to this point to answer this question.

**Assessment:**
The teacher will formatively assess student understanding through questions and responses during note taking, through participation during various discussion, through completion of the compare and contrast group activity sheet, through participation in the anticipation guide activity, through participation in the “Take a Stand” activity, and through their completion of the exit ticket on legislative power.
Day 7 Lesson Plan

**Topic:** How a Bill Becomes a Law; Taxing and Spending Bills; Helping Constituents

- Types of Bills and Resolutions
  - Private and Public Bills
  - Resolutions—joint, concurrent
  - Riders

- Introducing the Bill
  - How Bills are introduced
  - Committee Actions
  - Committee Hearings
  - Reporting the Bill

- Floor Action
  - Debating and Amending Bill
  - Voting on Bills

- Final Steps in Passing Bills
  - Conference Committee
  - Presidential Action

- Decisions about Taxes
  - House’s Power Over Revenue Bills
  - Senate’s Role

- Appropriating Money
  - Appropriation Committees
  - Uncontrollable Expenditures and Entitlements

- Handling Constituent Problems and District/State Needs
  - Purposes of Casework
  - Public Works Legislation

**Objectives:**

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

**Academic**

1. Describe the process of how a bill becomes a law.
2. Explain how Congress authorizes and appropriates money.
3. Explain how congressional representatives help their constituents and district/state

**Intellectual**

1. Collaborate and discuss with others to construct deeper understandings of topics
2. Evaluate and discuss contemporary issues

**Activities:**

*Comparing School House Rock to Actual Process*

- Students will trace the process of making a bill into a law by watching the classic bill-to-law video from School House Rock. Then, students will discuss the video
in a think-pair-share model and in whole-group discussion. Students will compare the video to the actual law-making process.

Culminating Activity: Discussion on structure of Congress and lawmaking process

- Using information from previous activity, students will discuss essential question one in small groups (does the overall structure of Congress facilitate the lawmaking process?).
- Students will report their ideas to the class, entering a whole-group discussion on essential question one.

Bill-to-Law Flashcards

- After going over all the steps in creating a law, students will use a mixed up list of the various steps to construct flashcards. Students will attempt to put the flashcards in order on their desk, with the teacher checking their progress, telling them which cards are in the wrong spot. The teacher will then quickly go over the process again, so that all students can number the flashcards appropriately and have a study guide.

Taxing and Spending: Budget Activity

- Students will work in small groups to make a budget for the United States, having to justify their decisions to raise/lower spending on issues while also determining whether to raise/lower taxes (also keeping in mind that they cannot touch uncontrollable spending such as entitlement spending). Each group will briefly present their budgets to the class, explaining their reasoning. These presentations will lead the class into a discussion on the difficulties of keeping spending under control when people want more services and as entitlement spending rises.

What my congressional representative does for me

- Students will learn what congressional representatives do for their constituents, districts, and states by looking at different public work projects, grants, contracts, etc. their congressional representatives provide for them. Students will engage in brief whole-group discussion on how this information relates to essential question three (what does it mean to represent others?).

Assessment:
The teacher will formatively assess student understanding through questions and responses during note taking, through participation during various discussion, through participation in the flashcard activity, and through participation in the “taxing and spending budget” activity.
Day 8 Lesson Plan

**Topic:** Influences on Congress

- Influences on Lawmakers
  - Personality, beliefs
  - Staff
- Influence of Voters
  - Public Opinion
  - What Voters Want
  - Elections
- Influence of Parties
  - Party Voting
  - Party Leadership
  - Party Politics
- Influence of President
- Influence of Interest Groups
  - Lobbyists
- Influence of PACs and other money groups

**Objectives:**
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

**Academic**
1. Identify and describe the various factors that influence congressional representatives.
2. Explain how voters, parties, and interest groups are able to evaluate a Congressman’s actions.

**Intellectual**
1. Collaborate and discuss with others to construct deeper understandings of topics.
2. Reflect on prior knowledge and experiences to evaluate and discuss topic.

**Activity:**

*Congressional Simulation: What Influences Congressional Representatives?*

- Students will engage in a congressional simulation designed to teach students the various influences on congressional representatives. The activity will be introduced using essential question three (what does it mean to represent others?).
- In this simulation, the teacher will assign students a congressional persona. Each congressional representative has different goals, based on a variety of factors. Certain factors affect certain congresspersons more than others do. Each student will attempt to fulfill his or her specific goals during the game. Students will receive bonus points if they are able to complete their goals during the game successfully.
- The simulation will be made up of several stages where students have the opportunity to try to convince others to take certain courses of action on different bills or resolutions.
• At the end of the last stage, students will enter a discussion, reflecting on why they made the choices they did during the simulation. These choices will reflect the same factors that influence congressional representatives (see daily content outline for list of influencing factors). After listing the various influences on members of Congress, students will complete an exit ticket reflecting on why they acted the way they did during the simulation and how their actions demonstrate the factors influencing congressional representatives. Students will be asked to name and explain these varying forces.

Assessment
The teacher will formatively assess student understanding through participation during the simulation and the reflective discussion afterwards. The teacher will summatively assess student understanding through the exit ticket each student will provide before leaving the class.
Day 9 Lesson Plan

Topic: Helping Constituents: Pork-Barrel Legislation, Unit Review
- Winning Grants and Contracts
- Other Pork-Barrel Legislation
  - Debate in Contemporary Society
  - Positive and Negative Aspects

Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

Academic
1. Explain how congressional representatives help their constituents, district and state.
2. Explain the arguments for and against pork barrel spending.
3. Understand and discuss the contemporary debate on pork barrel spending in the U.S.

Intellectual
1. Collaborate and discuss with others to construct deeper understandings of topics.
2. Demonstrate effective discussion skills.
3. Support their position on a topic with well-reasoned arguments.

Activities:
Structured Academic Controversy: Should Congress outlaw pork barrel legislation?
- Students will engage in a structured academic controversy, learning and arguing both sides of the issue to construct a fuller understanding the topic.
- After completing the SAC, students will enter into a discussion (small group and whole group discussion) about pork barrel spending in contemporary society. Students will be asked to come up with their own position on the issue, figuring out ways to compromise. This activity will act as a culminating activity for essential question three.

Unit Review
- Students will engage in a Jeopardy-style review game to prepare for the following day’s unit test on chapters five to seven.

Assessment
The teacher will formatively assess student understanding through participation during the SAC and during the discussion afterwards. The teacher will also formatively assess student understanding of the unit through the review game. The teacher will formatively assess the intellectual objectives through observations and feedback during the SAC.
Day 10 Lesson Plan

Topic: Unit Test

On this last day of the unit, students will be summatively assessed through a unit test consisting of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions designed to test student achievement of academic objectives. The questions will address covered topics, especially in regards to the unit’s three essential questions. Furthermore, students will be asked to self-evaluate based on the intellectual objectives of the unit. The teacher will provide feedback in the form of a participation grade based on this self-evaluation and the teacher’s observations of intellectual objective achievement throughout the unit.