

American Government
Unit Plan
By Deanna Bellin

Focus: Students will gain an understanding of the constitution and why and how it was developed. Students will understand what powers the branches of government have and how those powers work for the citizens of the United States of America.

Standards teaching toward: SS.08.CG.07: Understand how actions of the US government affect citizens of both the United States and other countries. SS.08.CG.06: Identify and give examples of how groups and organizations can influence the actions of government. SS.08.CG.01: Understand the purposes of government as stated in the Constitution and the specific provisions that limit the power of government in order to protect the rights of individuals. SS.08.CG.03.02: Identify the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions at each level of government. SS.08.CG.08: Understand various forms of government

Week 1:

Day 1:

- Today will begin with a review of the Articles of Confederation. Students will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation that we discussed in a previous lesson. (“We the People” p. 93-102)
- Students will make a concept foldable. (See attachment #1) The purpose of this foldable is to organize the key concepts of this unit. Students will work on this as we read the unit and will turn in when the unit has concluded.
- Hand out the Paragraph of the Week worksheet (see attachment #2). We will discuss this week’s topic and give instructions and expectations.
- Read pages 105-111 as a class. Any reading that is not finished will be assigned for homework.

Day 2:

- Stamp POTW (Paragraph of the Week) research homework.
- While I am walking around stamping POTW students will be answering the lesson review questions that will be posted on the overhead. They need to use their books to answer these questions. Each answer needs to be a paragraph. A paragraph must have a topic sentence, three supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Students will be the structure of their paragraphs (for Language Arts) as well as content (for Social Studies).
- Students will partner up and discuss their answers to the lesson review questions. Students will take notes on their partner’s answers and add anything to their paragraphs that they have left out.
- Discuss the answers as a class.
- As homework students will write the rough draft of their POTW.

Day 3:

- Stamp POTW, students will be completing SSR (sustained silent reading) while I am stamping their POTW.
- Handout and explain the expectations for the comic strip assignment. Students will be reading pages 113-120. They will create a six-box comic strip to illustrate The Great Compromise in “We the People.” They need to first figure out the dialogue they want to include in their comic strip. Next they will sketch a rough draft, in pencil of their comic strip. Finally they will make a colored final draft of their comic strip. (see attachment #3)

Day 4:

- Stamp POTW editing.
- Continue reading pages 113-120 and working on comic strips. (due tomorrow)

Day 5:

- Turn in final draft of POTW.
- Turn in final draft of comic strip.
- Take a quiz on lessons 12 and 13.
- Correct quiz as a class.
- Watch a portion of “John Adams” that corresponds with the Philadelphia Convention.
- No Homework.

Week 2:**Day 1:**

- Review last week’s concepts by filling in key concepts foldable.
- Prep kids for guest speaker coming in tomorrow (Matt Cox, a Eugene area lawyer)
 - Discuss which branch of government he is a part of
 - Brainstorm questions to ask him
 - Discuss behavior expectations
- Assign POTW

Day 2:

- Guest Speaker: Matt Cox
- HW: 3 paragraph reflection on what you learned from the guest speaker.
- Stamp POTW

Day 3:

- Stamp POTW
- Hand out the “Birth of America Timeline” directions.
- Students will be creating a timeline that covers key dates and events in American history that we have covered previously and are covering in this unit. This serves the purpose of a mid-unit review of what we have learned in the last week and a half and how it connects to previous units. (see attachment #4)

Day 4:

- Read as a class Lesson 14 and discuss.

- Go over lesson review questions as a class and discuss.
- Stamp POTW

Day 5:

- Turn in POTW
- Read Lesson 15 with a partner
- In their note-taking books students will create a “guide to the legislative branch of government.”
- The guide should include:
 - Powers of Congress
 - The limits on power of Congress
 - Vocab words needed to know to understand Congress
 - House of Representatives and the Senate

Week 3:

Day 1:

- Go over this week’s POTW topic and discuss.
- Work day for “guide to the legislative branch of government.”

Day 2:

- Stamp POTW
- Go over their guides to the legislative branch. Discuss what things were included and what should have been included. Students should fill in any missing pieces as we discuss.
- Read as a class lesson 16, pages 137-141, discuss as a class.
- Students will create a guide to the executive branch of government that will include:
 - Powers of the executive branch
 - Limits on power
 - Key vocabulary from this portion of the lesson

Day 3:

- Stamp POTW
- Work day for the guide to the executive branch of government.

Day 4:

- Stamp POTW
- Discuss their guides to the executive branch, have students fill in anything they missed.
- Read the final page of lesson 16 as a class and discuss.
- Create a guide to the judicial branch. I let students choose what to put on this guide. I told them it should be similar to previous guides but that they can choose the way the information is organized.

Day 5:

- Turn in POTW
- Discuss their guides to the judicial branch.

- Hand out study guides (see attachment #5)
- Assign student partners and have students work on their study guides for the final unit test on Tuesday.

Week 4:

Day 1:

- Go over the study guide as a class, discuss all answers.
- Play review jeopardy
- Study for test

Day 2:

- Final Test

Day 3:

- Put together final finished foldable with all elements:
 - Birth of America Timeline
 - Key concepts foldable
 - The Great Compromise comic strip
 - Note-taking book

The End! ☺