

Youth Summit 2009

Democracy & What's News
What's a Citizen To Do?

**Lesson Plans for
Middle and High School**

a production of
CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT

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Democracy & What's News – What's a Citizen To Do?
Youth Summit 2009

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Dear Teachers:

We have been struck recently about how the news is changing. Twitter was born. Walter Cronkite died. Web sites are growing; newspapers are shrinking. What does it mean? Does it change America's notion of "free press." What do consumers of news need to know? And what does it mean to democracy?

To explore these questions we offer a set of lessons entitled, *Democracy & What's News – What's a Citizen To Do?* Every lesson, in fact, begins with a question. Students will have a chance to weigh in with pros and cons, do moot courts and deliberations, and participate in a wide variety of other activities in their search for answers.

The objective is not that students determine the final word but, rather, that they are engaged in the pursuit of it. In their search for knowledge, they will make connections between democracy, free press and the role of citizens. They will understand that citizens – indeed themselves – play an indispensable role.

Classroom Law Project is proud to offer these curriculum materials and Youth Summit. This program is made available to teachers free of charge thanks to a generous donation from the Multnomah Bar Foundation. We are very grateful for the Foundation's support.

Thank you for supporting the work of Classroom Law Project and for being role models of "civic virtue" as you help to prepare your classes for the Youth Summit.

Sincerely,

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Classroom Law Project is a non-profit organization of individuals, educators, lawyers, and civic leaders building strong communities by teaching students to become active citizens.

Democracy & What's News What's a Citizen To Do?

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Goals

Teachers will have the opportunity to help students:

- understand connections between democracy, free press, and informed citizenry
- engage in informed discussions
- practice *essential skills*
- develop lifetime habits of being an active citizen

Students will:

- analyze the news
- identify links between democracy and free press
- understand that news is an essential part of civic knowledge
- practice *essential skills*.¹

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FFor more information, contact CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT www.classroomlaw.org

¹ *Essential skills* identified by the Oregon State Board of Education and required for high school graduation (implementation years tbd) include: read and comprehend a variety of texts; write clearly and accurately; listen actively and speak clearly and coherently; think critically and analytically; demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills; apply mathematics in a variety of settings; use technology to learn live, and work; demonstrate civic and community engagement; and demonstrate global literacy.

Oregon Department of Education – State Standards**GRADE 8****Civics and Government**

CCG: Understand participatory responsibilities of citizens in the community (voluntarism) and in the political process (becoming informed about public issues and candidates, joining political parties/interest groups/associations, communicating with public officials, voting, influencing lawmaking through such processes as petitions/initiatives).

SS.08.CG.05 Understand how citizens can make their voices heard in the political process.

CCG: Understand how government is influenced and changed by support and dissent of individuals, groups, and international organizations.

SS.08.CG.06 Identify and give examples of how groups and organizations can influence the actions of government.

Social Science Analysis

CCG: Define and clarify an issue so that its dimensions are well understood.

SS.08.SA.01 Clarify key aspects of an event, issue, or problem through inquiry and research.

CCG: Acquire and organize materials from primary and secondary sources.

SS.08.SA.02 Gather, interpret, use, and document information from multiple sources, distinguishing facts from opinions and recognizing points of view.

CCG: Explain various perspectives on an event or issue and the reasoning behind them.

SS.08.SA.03 Examine a controversial event, issue, or problem from more than one perspective.

CCG: Identify and analyze an issue.

SS.08.SA.04 Examine the various characteristics, causes, and effects of an event, issue, or problem.

CCG: Select a course of action to resolve an issue.

SS.08.SA.05 Consider two or more outcomes, responses, or solutions; identify their strengths and weaknesses; then conclude and justify which is the best.

Oregon Department of Education – State Standards, cont'd.**HIGH SCHOOL****Civics and Government**

CCG: Understand participatory responsibilities of citizens in the community (voluntarism) and in the political process (becoming informed about public issues and candidates, joining political parties/interest groups/associations, communicating with public officials, voting, influencing lawmaking through such processes as petitions/initiatives).

SS.CM.CG.05 Understand the civic responsibilities of U.S. citizens and how they are met.

SS.CM.CG.05.01 Identify the responsibilities of citizens in the United States and understand what an individual can do to meet these responsibilities.

CCG: Understand how government is influenced and changed by support and dissent of individuals, groups, and international organizations.

SS.CM.CG.06 Understand how government policies and decisions have been influenced and changed by individuals, groups, and international organizations.

SS.CM.CG.06.01 Understand how U.S. political parties have influenced government policy and decisions.

Social Science Analysis Standards

CCG: Define and clarify an issue so that its dimensions are well understood.

SS.CM.SA.01 Define, research, and explain an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon and its significance to society.

CCG: Acquire and organize materials from primary and secondary sources.

SS.CM.SA.02 Gather, analyze, use, and document information from various sources, distinguishing facts, opinions, inferences, biases, stereotypes, and persuasive appeals.

SS.CM.SA.03 Understand what it means to be a critical consumer of information.

CCG: Explain various perspectives on an event or issue and the reasoning behind them.

SS.CM.SA.04 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon from varied or opposed perspectives or points of view.

CCG: Identify and analyze an issue.

SS.CM.SA.05 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon, identifying characteristics, influences, causes, and both short- and long-term effects.

CCG: Select a course of action to resolve an issue.

SS.CM.SA.06 Propose, compare, and judge multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions; then reach a defensible, supported conclusion.