

Democracy Lab: 8th Grade Civics for the 21st Century **Detailed Table of Contents and Sample Lessons**

Active and informed participation in democratic society requires individuals to possess a wide range of skills, dispositions and knowledge. Democracy Lab provides the curricular basis for nurturing the next generation's civic capacities. Designed for Massachusetts social studies classrooms, Democracy Lab's student-centered, inquiry, and issue-oriented approaches to civic learning aim to empower students to think critically, deliberate, and take action. Through thematic interdisciplinary lenses, Democracy Lab harnesses multicultural and global topics and perspectives in the service of fostering students' capacity for thoughtful and meaningful engagement in their communities and the world.

Units:

- 1. Ancient and Global Foundations of the U.S. Political System**
- 2. British and Indigenous Influences on the U.S. Government**
- 3. Development of the U.S. Government**
- 4. A Novel Approach to Power: The Institutions of the U.S. Government**
- 5. Youth Activism, Citizenship and Social Change ([Sample lesson 1](#)) ([Sample Lesson 4](#))**
- 6. Voting and Elections in Principle and in Practice**
- 7. The Supreme Court, 14th Amendment, and Civil Rights**
- 8. Civil Rights and Access to Education ([Sample lesson 8](#))**
- 9. Massachusetts State and Local Government**
- 10. A Free Press and an Informed Community ([Sample lesson 3](#))**
- 11. (Un)covering the World of News Production**
- 12. Generation Citizen Action Civics**

→ [Ancient and Global Foundations of the U.S. Political System](#)

◆ Rationale and Overview

This unit helps students investigate ideas on government that pre-dated the formation of our United States -- both in our own country and across the globe. Some of these ideas, particularly early concepts of democracy and the notion of a Republic drawn from Ancient Greece and Rome, as well as philosophical writings of the Enlightenment, deeply influenced the governmental structures and ideas put forth by the founders of the new American nation. In this unit, students will develop understandings and key concepts of the ancient influences, and will consider various ideas on government from around the world as they hold a spirited role-play discussion considering the age-old question "What is the ideal form of government?" We shall see if they, in the end, agree with Winston Churchill, who in a speech to the British House of Commons in 1947 stated, "...democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time..."

[Back to the first page](#) 1



The unit will begin by defining and explaining key terms referenced in the frameworks. Students will then, working in pairs, research the biographical backgrounds of key political thinkers pre-dating the formation of the United States, and will consider their thinker's views on a variety of questions related to government. The pairs will then role-play the views of their thinker in a whole-class discussion.

Ancient and Global Influence on the U.S. Political System

Lesson 1: Concepts of American Democracy, and Its Strengths and Weaknesses

Lesson 2: Comparative Forms of Government

Lesson 3: Representative vs. Direct Democracy

Lessons 4-7+: Role-Play Considering Early Ideas of Government (pre-United States)

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What is the ideal form of government?
2. What was the influence of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome and the Enlightenment on American democracy?
3. What did scholars from around the world think about government, democracy, and the rights and responsibilities of people and their rulers?
4. What do you -- as a student -- think are the strengths and weaknesses of American democracy?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of American Government.
2. Compare Athenian Democracy, the Roman Republic, and the United States' Government.
3. Research the ideas of thinkers on government and political philosophy from around the world.
4. Argue from the perspective of a historic political thinker.
5. Engage in a philosophical debate and discussion with their classroom peers.

→ **British and Indigenous Influences on the U.S Government**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

This short unit will ask students to investigate the colonial origins of American democracy, focusing on the legacy of steps towards self-governance in the early settlement of the thirteen colonies, and British political thought and its influence on the colonists' behaviors. Additionally, students will explore how the Iroquois Confederacy's structure served as a model for collaboration and compromise between the colonies, and will consider how this influenced the Albany Plan of Union as well as later efforts for cohesion in the fight for independence.

Students will do a deep dive into the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights. Students next explore a stations-based gallery of primary sources where they can learn about multiple dimensions of British colonial rule as these influenced the American political system. The next lesson introduces students to the Iroquois Confederacy's model of government. Students then evaluate the extent to which various factors contributed to self-government, independence, and democracy in our Republic through a "design challenge." Students will choose several of these factors to emphasize in creating

[Back to the first page](#) 2



a monument celebrating early influences on American democracy. The unit ends with a brief consideration of the period of 1763-1776, or the “road to Revolution” in which American colonists became increasingly frustrated with British rule. This unit, which links early American history with concepts of democracy and governance, shows that our nation’s British and indigenous roots had and still have far reaching impact in our political system.

British and Indigenous Influences on the U.S. Government

Lesson 1: Background Terms and Concepts

Lesson 2: British Governmental Traditions: Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights

Lesson 3 & 4: Early Steps Toward Colonial Self-Government

Lesson 5: The Iroquois Model and the Albany Plan of Union

Lesson 6 & 7: Design Challenge!

Lesson 8: Breaking With Our British Tradition

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. How did British colonial rule and traditions inform our concepts of rights, responsibilities, and governance?
2. How did the Iroquois Confederacy serve as a model for American self-government?
3. How can a range of primary source documents from the colonial period inform us about the development of ideas related to American democracy?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Evaluate, discuss, and understand a range of primary source documents in a variety of formats.
2. Connect the influence of British law, governance, and political philosophy on the development of American democracy.
3. Connect the influence of the multi-tribal Iroquois Confederacy on the development of collaboration between the 13 colonies and our American system of state and federal government.
4. Weigh and argue the relative importance of various influences on our political system, expressing their views creatively and visually.

→ **The Development of the U.S Government**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

When asked about the type of government formed at the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin responded, “a republic, if you can keep it.” This commentary captured the fragility of the young nation, the United States. The process of establishing independence from the British Empire and devising a lasting government that simultaneously drew upon and broke from political tradition and theory of governing entailed trial, deliberation, and compromise that attempted to balance the competing demands of order and liberty among government and the governed. This unit encourages students to explore the tensions and struggles that faced British colonials in the 1700s that eventually led to the Revolutionary War, the Declaration of Independence, and attempts to form a cohesive structured government. These lessons expose students to the variety of struggles that occurred on personal, community, and national levels as

[Back to the first page](#) 3



the thirteen colonies worked towards defining sovereignty. In exploring colonial motivations for independence, students are asked to examine a variety of complex perspectives, highlighting rationales behind colonists' support for independence before moving on to examine the fragility of the Articles of Confederation and the process of drawing up a Constitution that reimagined the scope and distribution of federal power while, also, considering personal rights.

The Development of the U.S. Government

Lesson 1: The Complex Road to Independence

Lesson 2: Defining a New Nation's Ideals

Lesson 3: Federalism and the Struggle for Control

Lesson 4: Defining Those With and Without Power

Lesson 5: Contradicting National Ideals

Lesson 6: A Public Debate for the Public Good

Lessons 7 and 8: Constitution and Bill of Rights Mini Project

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What roles do people play in government and politics? How are these roles decided?
2. What conditions promote allegiance to the government by the governed?
3. How can liberty be protected by and from government?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Detail the diverse perspectives of colonists towards the independence movement.
2. Analyze motivations for independence at the personal, community, and national levels.
3. Understand the process of forming a government in the United States as it distributed power and attempted to protect personal liberties.
4. Research and present the manner in which people continue to struggle for rights, in the United States and across the world.

→ **A Novel Approach to Power: The Institutions of the U.S Government**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

Central to informed participation in civic life is an understanding of the institutions of government and the ways in which power circulates and is distributed among the separate, interrelated, and co-equal branches of government. The lessons in this unit allow students to explore the particular functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, emphasizing the system of checks and balances and the historical tensions in regulating the power of the federal government. Additionally, the unit addresses the political spectrum in the United States, the history and evolution of the Democratic and Republican parties, and the way party allegiance affects the functioning of government, particularly the concept of separation of power. Lastly, the unit introduces the concept of bi-partisanship, providing students with the opportunity to investigate the circumstances under which elected officials of different parties have cooperated despite political differences.



A Novel Approach to Power: The Institutions of the U.S. Government

Lesson 1: Understanding Power

Lesson 2: Separation of Powers and the Protection of Individual Rights

Lesson 3: The Legislative Branch

Lesson 4: The Executive Branch

Lesson 5: The Judicial Branch

Lessons 6 and 7: Checks and Balances and the Political Spectrum

Lesson 8: America's History of Political Parties and the Challenge of Bipartisanship

Lesson 9: Bipartisanship in American History

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. How is power distributed among the three branches of the U.S. government?
2. What is the purpose of a system of checks and balances?
3. What is the political spectrum in the U.S. government and how does it influence the government?
4. What do the Republican and Democratic parties stand for today and how have the party platforms evolved over time?
5. What is bi-partisanship and what is its role in the functioning of government?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Describe the purpose and function of each of the branches of the United States government.
2. Describe how each branch can check the power of the others.
3. Explain the political spectrum and its role in how government functions.
4. Describe bi-partisanship and explain its importance in how government functions effectively.

→ **Youth Activism, Citizenship and Social Change**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

From the conflicts leading to American independence in 1776 to youth demands for climate change action today, young people have played a pivotal role in political and social change in the United States from the start. Exploring their contributions is an engaging entrypoint for thinking deeply about the rights and responsibilities of citizens and of all civic actors. What can participation in democratic life mean, even for those too young to practice all aspects of citizenship? This unit depicts how rights to advocate for change are enshrined in our Constitution and demonstrates how the adoption of such rights also transcends our national borders. The lessons here prompt students to consider different channels of political participation, and present an introduction to political protest movements in U.S. history through a mini-research activity. After this introduction, the unit delves deeper into two case studies of youth activism: the Vietnam War protests, and the Parkland-led demands for measures to control gun violence. For both the historical and contemporary case, students explore the motivations, tactics, risks and achievements of their peers as a way of building their knowledge of the mechanisms of change. Finally, the unit seeks to cultivate students' own skills in the practice



of democracy by participating in a convention in which they nominate, debate, and decide upon articles for a “Declaration of the Roles and Responsibilities of Youth in our Democracy.”

Youth Activism, Citizenship, and Social Change

Lesson 1: The Idea of Citizenship ([SAMPLE AVAILABLE](#))

Lesson 2: Citizens and Residents - Understanding Context

Lesson 3: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens and Everyone

Lesson 4: The Role and History of Protest ([SAMPLE AVAILABLE](#))

Lesson 5: The Mechanics of Protest

Lessons 6 and 7: A Spotlight on Student Protest in the Vietnam Era

Lessons 8 and 9: A Spotlight on Student Protest: Parkland and the Movement Against Gun Violence

Lesson 10: Children’s Rights and Global Youth Advocacy

Lessons 11 and 12: Convention to Create a “Declaration on the Roles and Responsibilities of Democratic Youth”

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States?
2. Who do these ideas leave out? Whose rights and responsibilities are circumscribed?
3. What channels of participation exist for all U.S. residents to participate in civic and political life?
4. How does our Constitution allow for protest and change?
5. How have young people participated in political life and fought for change?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Describe how the Constitution and U.S. law defines the rights and responsibilities of citizens
2. Analyze how rights and responsibilities are extended to different groups of people, today and historically
3. Describe the avenues for political participation open to citizens, non-citizens, and youth
4. Portray a “good” citizen of the U.S. and the world
5. Describe and analyze the role of political protest in our democracy
6. List and explain several examples of political protest in U.S. history, up to the present
7. Describe the goals and tactics of political protests led by young people

→ **Voting and Elections in Principle and in Practice**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

At the core of participation in a democratic republic is the right to vote. Voting is a demonstration of political power, influence, and accountability. It epitomizes the ideas of popular sovereignty and consent of the governed. However, voting has been a contested practice in the United States. Struggles among disenfranchised populations have shaped social movements, legal campaigns, and political aspirations for much of U.S. history. The act of voting has also spurred the development of campaign strategies and controversies surrounding the principle of “one person, one vote” and whether it holds true in practice. This unit explores the various historical

[Back to the first page](#) 6



and contemporary factors in elections and campaigning, from the practice of filling out a ballot to the questions surrounding access and fairness in the voting process.

Voting and Elections in Principle and in Practice

Lesson 1: Voting as a Central Practice of Democracy

Lessons 2 and 3: Leadership in a Democratic Republic

Lessons 4 and 5: History of the Vote: Spotlight on Voting-Related Amendments

Lesson 6: How Elections Work, as Seen through a Ballot

Lesson 7: The Mechanics of Voting: Nominating and Evaluating a Candidate for President

Lesson 8: The Mechanics of Voting: The Electoral College

Lessons 9 and 10: Influences on the Electoral Process in the U.S.

Lessons 11 and 12: Interviewing an Elected Official

Lessons 13-15: Developing and Pitching a Proposal to Improve the Voting Process in the U.S.

Unit Extension Ideas

→ **The Supreme Court, 14th Amendment, and Civil Rights**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

This unit addresses the functions and significance of the courts and court decisions in our public and private lives. It also addresses the importance and application of the 14th amendment and, more specifically, equal protection over time. The concept of equal protection under the law is a frequently cited concept in American case law. Specifically, it is the basis for some of the most important civil rights cases in American history, used to address issues ranging from voting rights and affirmative action to the right to marry and the dismantling of segregation. Perhaps most significantly, it helps clarify much of our understanding of civil rights in the United States. Throughout its history, the Supreme Court of the United States has had to interpret the meaning of the equal protection clause and to apply it to myriad cases. Most recently, it has had to apply it to cases involving the right to marry and, more broadly, the rights of LGBTQ people. This unit is intended to offer students an opportunity to look at three important cases that illustrate the role and the wide-ranging impact of the Supreme Court, *Loving v. Virginia*, *Romer v. Evans*, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

The Supreme Court, 14th Amendment, and Civil Rights

Lesson 1: What is the Supreme Court of the United States?

Lesson 2: Oral Arguments: Understanding How the Supreme Court Hears Cases

Lesson 3: How Cases Get to the United States Supreme Court

Lesson 4: *Marbury v. Madison* and the Concept of Judicial Review

Lesson 5: The Historical Roots of the 14th Amendment: *Dred Scott v. Sandford*

Lesson 6: The Historical Roots of the 14th Amendment II: Southern Black Codes and the 1866 Civil Rights Act

Lessons 7 and 8: Due Process, Equal Protection, and the 14th Amendment's Application in the Law and Supreme Court Cases

Lessons 9-13+: An Equal Protection Research Project (Marriage and LGBTQ Rights in History)



◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What is the purpose and function of the Supreme Court of the United States?
2. Why is the Supreme Court such an important institution in American government?
3. What historical circumstances led to the passing of the 14th Amendment?
4. How does the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment protect civil rights in the United States?
5. How has the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment been applied in Supreme Court cases?
6. How do Supreme Court decisions affect the lives of people in the United States?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose and function of the Supreme Court of the United States.
2. Describe the different ways cases can get to the Supreme Court.
3. Explain judicial review and apply and critique its use in different cases.
4. Explain the historical context for the 14th Amendment and, in particular, the Equal Protection Clause.
5. Apply understanding of the Equal Protection Clause to Supreme Court cases.
6. Examine different Supreme Court decisions and evaluate their significance.

→ **Civil Rights and Access to Education**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

The history of the fights for civil rights is often told as a collection of iconic stories. This unit goes beyond those stories to emphasize the legal underpinnings of those struggles and the broader social forces that have led to the expansion of civil rights in theory and practice. It begins with an exploration of civil rights as distinct from human rights, and then presents the history and legal foundation of modern civil rights in the U.S., with a particular focus on schools as an arena in which the struggle for equality has played out. The lessons delve into equality in education by examining case studies involving race, disability, and transgender rights. They are set up for students to turn to the primary sources to gain an understanding of the arguments and actions that have led us to greater equality in education, even as many challenges remain. The lessons also provide opportunities for students to hone their research and argumentation skills as they think more deeply about civil rights and the challenges of bringing those promises to fruition. Finally, the unit culminates in an opportunity for students to synthesize the content they have learned to provide expert testimony in a trial.

Civil Rights and Access to Education

Lesson 1: Introducing Civil Rights

Lesson 2: Human Rights and U.S. Civil Rights Laws

Lesson 3: Three Important Laws: The US Civil Rights Act, Title IX, and the ADA

Lesson 4: Horace Mann and the Idea of Public Schools

Lesson 5: Civil Rights and Educational Access: The *Roberts* and *Mendez* Cases

Lesson 6: *Brown v Board of Education*: A Landmark Supreme Court Case



Lesson 7: The Ruby Bridges Case and the Challenges of School Integration
Lesson 8: Student Protesters Demand Equality in Education in Los Angeles ([SAMPLE AVAILABLE](#))
Lesson 9: *Plyler v. Doe* and Equal Protection for Immigrants
Lesson 10: Disability Rights in Schools
Lesson 11: Grappling With New Challenges to Equal Schooling Today: The *Grimm* Case
Lesson 12: Providing Expert Testimony in a Civil Rights Case

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What are civil rights and how do they differ from human rights?
2. What is the process by which the courts and Congress define civil rights?
3. How has the content and interpretation of the Constitution evolved over time?
4. What civil rights have come to be seen as fundamental? Are there others that have not risen to this level?
5. How has the struggle for civil rights played out in education?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Describe major court cases and explain the historical context and significance of laws enacted by Congress that have expanded civil rights and equal protection for groups based on race, gender, and disability, among other characteristics.
2. Discuss the history of equal access to schooling.
3. Explain how legislative and judicial decisions affected the evolution of civil rights in education.
4. Understand the roles of courts and individuals as agents of social change.

5. Massachusetts State and Local Government

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

One of the founding principles of American government is the concept of federalism, which establishes the division of power among national, state, and local governments. Since the founding, states have been in the vanguard for social change that eventually influenced national policies. In fact, the Massachusetts Constitution, the world's oldest functioning constitution, contained principles that found their way into the U.S. Constitution. This unit explores more closely the structure and function of the Massachusetts state and local governments, which include structures and principles of government that date to the earliest days of the American colonies. In addition, the unit examines how Massachusetts has influenced national attitudes and policies around a range of issues. It will also look more closely at the interplay between local, state and national government, highlighting both the challenges and benefits that come from our federal system.

Massachusetts State and Local Government

Lesson 1: Structure of the Massachusetts Constitution

Lesson 2: History of the Creation of the Massachusetts Constitution

Lesson 3: Massachusetts Declaration of Rights v. U.S. Bill of Rights



Lesson 4: Federalism in the United States - Sanctuary Cities and the Power Struggle Between the National Government and the States

Lesson 5: State and National Governments in Times of Crisis: Working Together

Lesson 6: Catalyst for Change: Massachusetts as a Vanguard

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What is the structure and history of the Massachusetts Constitution?
2. How does the Massachusetts Constitution compare and contrast with the U.S. Constitution?
3. How do states and the national government use their respective powers in how they deal with each other?
4. How has Massachusetts been a vanguard for social change in the United States?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to

1. Describe the structure and history of the Massachusetts Constitution.
2. Compare and contrast the Massachusetts Constitution and the U.S. Constitution.
3. Explain how power is exercised in the relationship between state and national government.
4. Identify and explain examples of how Massachusetts has led the nation in driving social change.

→ **A Free Press and an Informed Community**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

The framers of the United States Constitution recognized the importance of a free press in order for a democracy to succeed. However, it is unlikely that they could have foreseen the evolution of journalism in this country. From newspapers during the revolutionary period up to the creation of the internet, the amount of information and the speed at which it travels have grown exponentially. It has become increasingly difficult for citizens to maneuver their way through the news of the day. Consequently, it has become more of a challenge for those same citizens to make well-informed decisions about their government. The lessons below are intended to help students understand the value of a free press, and learn how to navigate their way through information so they can begin the practice of making authentic, well-informed civic decisions.

A Free Press and an Informed Community

Lesson 1: Establishing Freedom of the Press

Lesson 2: The Trial of John Peter Zenger

Lesson 3: What's Beneath the Surface? Basic Media Literacy Concepts ([SAMPLE AVAILABLE](#))

Lesson 4: Identifying and Untangling Fact and Opinion

Lesson 5: Spanning the Spectrum: Liberal and Conservative Perspectives

Lesson 6: Comedy and Commentary in Political Cartoons



Lesson 7: One Story, Two Sources
Lesson 8: The Medium and the Message
Lesson 9: Digital News Media: What is It?
Lesson 10: Digital News Media: Problems and Possibilities
Lesson 11 & 12: You the Audience, You the Journalist

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What is the relationship between a free press and democratic governance?
2. What skills do news consumers need in order to be active, rather than passive recipients of news media messages?
3. Who controls the creation and distribution of news stories and how does that shape what news consumers see and hear?
4. What are the various types of news sources and what are the benefits and challenges of each?
5. How can young people advocate for quality news?

◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the necessity of a free press to a democracy.
2. Deconstruct news sources for analysis.
3. Analyze various news sources (print, digital, audio) and their benefits and challenges.
4. Demonstrate how news sources can provide competing information.
5. Use the above skills to ensure that students are active recipients of news messages.

→ **(Un)Covering the World of News Production**

◆ **Rationale and Overview**

Responsible and productive participation in civic life requires the ability to be informed and discerning consumers of news and information. Active members of civic communities need to understand complex issues and the healthy functioning of democracy involves a vibrant media that informs and provides the necessary factual basis for civic decision-making. Throughout this unit, students will interact with members of local media and government in order to better understand the processes and standards of journalistic practice in a democratic society. Over the course of this experience, students will deconstruct news coverage and consider alternative narratives and ways of covering local issues. Students will assume the roles and take on the voices of news producers, exploring global issues and their relationship to local community and governmental affairs.

(Un)Covering the World of News Production

Lesson 1: Learning from Student Journalists
Lesson 2: Learning from Local Professional Journalists
Lesson 3: Learning from Elected Officials



Lesson 4: You the Media

◆ **Essential Questions for the Unit**

1. What are standards for responsible journalistic practice?
2. What role does the media play in political accountability?
3. How can the media inform people of the relationship between local and global issues?

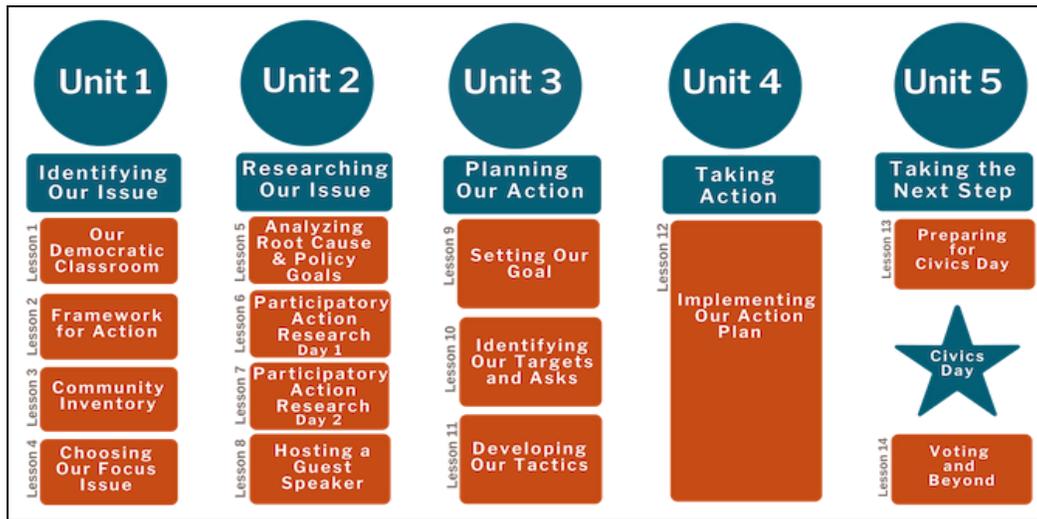
◆ **Learning Objectives for the Unit**

Students will be able to:

1. Practice research skills and comparative reading of news sources.
2. Interview and communicate with members of the media and local government.
3. Develop writing skills across genres with multiple intentions and audiences.
4. Constructively critique media representations.
5. Analyze representations of local community members and issues.
6. Create original news coverage of a global issue and its relationship to the local community.

→ **Generation Citizen Action Civics**

The Generation Citizen curriculum is laid out in a series of lessons, designed to organize the progression of work but intended to be used flexibly depending on the preferences of facilitators, as well as the demands of the specific Focus Issue students choose. We recommend following the lessons in the sequence offered and encourage facilitators to use their discretion on pacing and differentiation. The lessons are designed with a class of 25 students and a 50-minute class period in mind with the understanding that facilitators may extend a lesson to more than one class period. There is ample flexibility and opportunities for differentiation based on the Focus Issue students select, their unique learning styles, and their various learning needs. Generation Citizen offers a variety of options to best fulfill each class' and students' needs from the sidebar tips for additional rigor to the Multilingual Learner Differentiation Strategies.



❖ **Identifying Our Issue**

Unit One: Identifying Our Issue	
<p><u>Lesson 1: Our Democratic Classroom</u> Students will be introduced to Generation Citizen’s purpose and goals before examining their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as the importance of a democratic classroom, and working collectively to construct a Class Constitution.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created a Class Constitution that promotes a democratic classroom environment.
<p><u>Lesson 2: A Framework for Action</u> Students will practice conducting community interviews before interviewing community experts outside of their classroom. They will also read stories about past GC student projects and analyze them according to GC’s framework for action, the Advocacy Hourglass.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practiced conducting community interviews. ● Analyzed examples of community change projects utilizing the Advocacy Hourglass framework for action.
<p><u>Lesson 3: Community Inventory</u> Students will put the guidelines they created for their Classroom Constitution into practice as they brainstorm community assets and issues according to information gathered from their Community Interviews. They will then engage in a class-wide debate to examine their top issues further and narrow their list to two issues.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritized a list of community assets and issues according to information gathered from their Community Interviews. ● Engaged in debate about the strengths and drawbacks of focusing on the various community issues.
<p><u>Lesson 4: Choosing Our Focus Issue</u> Students will compare the merits of voting and consensus building as decision-making strategies that are used in the legislative process. They will then use two Opinion Continuums to assess their class’ interest in the final focus issue options and will build consensus on one issue to focus on during GC.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilized voting and consensus-building to identify a focus issue.

[Back to the first page](#) 13

❖ **Researching Our Issue**

Unit Two: Researching Our Issue	
<p><u>Lesson 5: Analyzing Root Cause and Policy Goals</u> Students will learn about individual and systemic root causes of public problems, analyzing their own focus issue through this lens. They will learn about the basic structures and functions of the legislative and executive branches of government, and how everyday people can affect government decisions (policy goals). Students will then apply these concepts to sample GC projects, and prepare for participatory action research on their own issue during the next several lessons.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distinguished between individual and systemic root causes of public problems. ● Reviewed the basic structures and functions of the executive and legislative branches of local government. ● Analyzed past GC project stories to identify policy goals they might use to affect the decisions of their local or state government.
<p><u>Lesson 6: Participatory Action Research, Day 1</u> Students will be introduced to the concept of “participatory action research,” in which students systematically research their focus issue in teams in order to ultimately identify a policy goal that will help address their issue then meet with their research teams for Day 1 of the research process.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learned about Targets and distinguished between decision-makers and influencers. ● Reviewed the principles of participatory action research, including the four key types of information they will be looking for during the next few lessons. ● Assigned roles within their research teams, and completed Day 1 tasks from their action research plans.
<p><u>Lesson 7: Participatory Action Research, Day 2</u> Students will continue working in small groups to conduct participatory action research, building on the preparation work they did last class and completing the remaining steps described in their Action Research Toolkit packets.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completed the Day 2 action research tasks for their team. ● Compiled and recorded the relevant information learned through action research.
<p><u>Lesson 8: Hosting a Guest Speaker</u> Students will host a guest speaker to learn more about the background and current context of their focus issue.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviewed an expert to learn more about their focus issue.

❖ **Planning Our Action**

Unit Three: Planning Our Action	
<p><u>Lesson 9: Setting Our Goal</u> Students will work together to compile their research, synthesize the results, and agree on a goal for their project.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborated with their research teams to present findings and recommendations to the class. ● Synthesized the results of their all class research to identify the most actionable information.

[Back to the first page](#) 14



<p><u>Lesson 10: Developing Targets and Asks</u> Students will clarify the difference between Decision Makers and Influencers and will identify targets for their own project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified a project goal. <p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguished between decision makers and influencers and identified targets for their project • Developed specific and strategic asks for each of their targets • Anticipated possible responses from their targets and discussed why they should remain motivated.
<p><u>Lesson 11: Developing Tactics</u> Students will work in Target Groups and to examine three categories of tactics before selecting activities to engage their list of target.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzed a target and planned tactics to engage that target in supporting their cause. • Organized their group's action plan.

❖ **Taking Action**

Unit Four: Taking Action	
<p><u>Lesson 12: Implementing Our Action Plan</u> Use this lesson to help structure your class' action periods to support students' productivity, collaboration, and reflection. Note that the action phase extends beyond one class period. You are encouraged to break this up over multiple days and utilize any of the supplementary "During Class" activities to support your class' needs.</p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafted, edited, and published or used materials created to further the class' project. • Explained changes made to their approach, argument, attitude, or actions in response to new information.

❖ **Taking the Next Step**

Unit Five: Taking the Next Step	
<p><u>Lesson 13: Civics Day Preparations</u> Students will have the chance to examine their own and their peers' contribution to the GC process during the semester and identify Civics Day representatives. They will also prepare a visual and verbal presentation for Civics Day or another external audience, including sharing feedback with peers to improve their presentation. <i>Note You are encouraged to break this up over multiple days.</i></p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected on their own and their peers' civic leadership during the semester. • Selected 3-6 representatives for Civics Day. • Designed an element of the class' verbal or visual presentation to an audience. • Offered feedback on students' prepared verbal and/or visual presentation.
<p><u>Lesson 14: Voting and Beyond</u></p>	<p>By the end of this lesson, students will have:</p>



<p>Students will hear stories from Civics Day, reflect on their experience with advocacy and in the GC program, and consider how voting relates to the work that they've been doing and their intentions for continued civic participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examined the development of their civic identity throughout the program. ● Decided on their next steps for civic engagement.
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❖ **Supplements and Toolkits**

- **Toolkits**

The **Action Research Toolkits** will guide the four Participatory Action Research teams in engaging with community members and local research found in articles to learn more about their Focus Issue and how to address it via a Policy Goal.

The **Tactic Toolkit** will support students as they become responsible for choosing the sequence of Tactics that make the most sense for their project and action **plan**. The Tactic toolkit is designed as skill-building segments that can be taught to all or a portion of the class, depending on the needs of different project groups.

- **Assessment Portfolio**

The **Generation Citizen Assessment Portfolio** provides ideas for added in-class or at-home assignments that can help students build and demonstrate their growth in civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions while allowing flexibility in meeting teacher evaluation priorities This portfolio includes both lesson-specific assignments and more in-depth unit assessments, with aligned rubrics to measure students' development of three overarching skills: Define and Analyze, Communicate and Collaborate, and Self-Reflection. We do recommend that facilitators utilize this portfolio an opportunity for students to highlight the individual work they have contributed to the collaborative process while also reflecting on their role in the class collaboration.

- **Online Research Library & Resources**

Through the course of the curriculum, facilitators may encounter lessons that call for outside resources, especially as the curriculum's flexible nature calls for different reading options, action planning resources and state-based research by focus issue, examples of other young people taking part in the democratic process, or additional content knowledge. **For various lessons and phases of the curriculum, Generation Citizen provides online materials to supplement the printed curriculum, including PowerPoint presentations aligned to each lesson plan.**

YOUTH ACTIVISM, CITIZENSHIP, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Lesson #1: The Idea of Citizenship

(Sample Lesson, Not for Distribution)

Supporting Questions

1. What does "citizen" mean - in its origins as a concept, and to you?
2. What practices, dispositions, and knowledge does a good citizen demonstrate?
3. What does the Constitution say about citizenship?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will explore their notions of citizenship by depicting what good citizens know, do, and think (their dispositions)
2. Students will be able to explain what the Constitution says about citizenship

Introducing the Idea of a Citizen

Explain to students that one way Americans have tried to create a stable government – one not ruled at the whim of a mighty ruler – is by defining the relationship between an individual person and the government. This means outlining particular rights and responsibilities, and making clear who can claim them.

The word that captures this relationship goes back centuries: “citizen” originated around 1300, in France. It comes from “citisein,” and it was used to convey the idea of participating in a larger group, and gaining certain dues and privileges.

Project or write the word “**citizen**” and ask students what smaller word they can hear inside it. [“city” from Old French “cite,” c. 1300]

Ask the students why they think this word was originally linked to city-dwellers or town-dwellers. Why would people in these settings need a word to describe themselves and their relationship to their city? [people living together in closer quarters need rules, roles, responsibilities to keep the peace, protect their city, etc.]

Explain that by the late 1300s, the word had gained the additional sense of “member of a state or nation,” excluding those considered to be alien and outside the group.

*The key point is that from the start, the word “citizen” meant both “inhabitant” and “member” – which aren’t quite the same. That tension and the desire to make a role for both groups is still with us as we think about the rights and responsibilities of U.S. residents and official citizens. We’ll look at both later in this lesson.

Representing Citizens Activity

In this exercise, students think through and visually depict their vision of a good citizen.

Ask students for 3 or 4 quick associations they have with the word “citizen,” as a transition into the next activity.

Then, provide students in small groups of 2 or 3 with a piece of chart paper and markers.

Explain that the goal of this warm-up activity is for everyone to think about their concept of citizenship and what makes a good citizen.

Note to teacher: This exercise is also a way of exploring students’ “citizenship identity,” which may be in different stages of development depending on when in the year you teach this topic.

Task for student groups: Take 15 minutes to draw a representation of what you consider a good citizen to be. Try to depict your ideas visually, but you may also use labels as needed. **Think about what a good citizen does and what guides those actions.**

Post students’ drawings around the room and have them briefly explain the key aspects they included. [Sample aspects might include voting, jury duty, military service, community service, patriotism, obeying the law, staying informed of issues, voicing opinions, activism, etc.] As they share, start to categorize their insights:

- **What *practices* emerge?**
- **What *dispositions* underlie good citizenship?**
- **What do good citizens *know*?**
- **Are there *other categories* that express dimensions of this role?**

As you debrief with students for 10 minutes or so, ask them questions that prompt them to think about and explain why they included certain ideas in their drawing. Make note of any questions that arose for them during the exercise.

Did any students depict a *global* citizen, or did they think within U.S. borders? Conclude the activity by exploring how a concept like global citizenship might differ and expand upon citizenship in a nation. (Here is one [definition of global citizenship](#), to get you started.)

What’s the official word on citizenship?: Creating an Illustrated Guide to the 14th Amendment

Now that students have considered their own identities as citizens, they’ll need to grasp what the Constitution says about it. Deciphering and illustrating its clauses is a strategy for making its dense language accessible and memorable. In this lesson, we’ll focus mainly on what it says about the rights of citizens and “all persons.”

Project on a board or whiteboard Section 1 of the [14th Amendment](#). This is the section that addresses citizenship and was ratified in 1868. Make sure the font is large enough to both read and annotate on a board/whiteboard, while leaving space around the edges for pictures to be drawn. (If your board is not large

[Back to the first page](#) 18



enough, tape white butcher paper to the wall and project onto that.) First, ask a student to read Section 1 aloud in its entirety (text available for student use).

“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. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Explain that together, you’re going to take time to examine the language and ideas in each sentence of this dense passage with your students (providing vocabulary support as needed), and that you’re going to ask for their help as illustrators to create “An Illustrated Guide to Section 1 of the 14th Amendment.” Every clause in this amendment has had tremendous significance in the granting of rights to various people in the U.S.!

Going sentence by sentence, follow these steps:

1. **Address the meaning of the individual clauses first (see points below)**
2. **Discuss as a class what sort of drawing will best represent each idea**
3. **Invite a student or students (perhaps tapping artistically-inclined ones) to the board to depict the meaning of each clause with a sketch or cartoon.**

1st sentence: *“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”.*

Possible drawing ideas (position near the underlined idea they represent, no drawing too large)

“All persons born” - baby? cradle?

“or naturalized” - someone swearing an oath? taking a test?

“and subject to the jurisdiction thereof” - Native American image

(ensure that students avoid demeaning stereotypes!), diplomatic license plates?

“are citizens of the U.S. and state where they reside” - a person with an outline of a state and the U.S.?

2nd sentence, part 1: *“No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States;”*

Possible drawing idea

Cartoon of state attached somehow to Bill of Rights, or Bill of Rights weighing more in scales of justice than state’s rights?

2nd sentence, part 2: *“...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”*



Possible drawing ideas:

- “life, liberty, and property” - these (or their denial) should be straightforward to illustrate; key is to link them to a “due process of law” drawing after they are drawn
- “any person” - recent immigrant? someone with green card? child and adult? (point is to capture broadness of this language)
- “due process of law” - row of juror chairs? courtroom? judge?
- “equal protection of the laws” - people of many types engaged in a protected activity (assembling, petitioning, testifying in court, talking to lawmakers)

At the conclusion of this close reading and illustration, take a snapshot of the board that includes all the drawings, and distribute via your class’s sharing platform or as a printed copy to keep.

YOUTH ACTIVISM, CITIZENSHIP, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Lesson #4: The Role and History of Protest

(Sample Lesson, Not for Distribution)

Supporting Questions

1. What has motivated individuals and communities to protest over time?
2. How have different protest movements shaped and communicated their messages?
3. What governmental and non-governmental channels have movements used in navigating and networking for change?
4. What have been the outcomes and legacies of social movements?

Learning Objectives

1. Explore historical and contemporary examples of protest movements that have advocated for the advancement of rights.
2. Analyze social change movements and map the features of their campaigns for change.
3. Model and practice civic communication skills such as dialoguing with people who hold different perspectives, managing and participating in groups, and building consensus.

Barometer on Dissent Exercise

Read an excerpt from Senator J. William Fulbright's 1966 book *The Arrogance of Power*.

Fulbright wrote the book as an elected official as the American involvement in the Vietnam War began to escalate. It is a thorough critique of American foreign policy and interventionism during the Cold War. However, prior to arguing against foreign policy doctrines and offering an alternative vision of the role of the United States in the world, Fulbright defends dissent as a patriotic act. Consider having students engage with this quotation before sharing information about the author and the historical context (text available for student use).

To criticize one's country is to do it a service and pay it a compliment. It is a service because it may spur the country to do better than it is doing; it is a compliment because it evidences a belief that the country can do better than it is doing... In a democracy dissent is an act of faith. Like medicine, the test of its value is not its taste but its effect, not how it makes people feel at the moment but how it makes them feel and moves them to act in the long run. Criticism may embarrass the country's leaders in the short run but strengthen their hand in the long run; it may destroy a consensus on policy while expressing a consensus on values.

After students have read the statement, have them turn and talk to a partner, discussing the following question:
What do you think this statement means?

[Back to the first page](#) 21



Next, create a barometer across a wall of the classroom ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Have students stand up and relocate on the spectrum based on their reaction to the statement. Once students are repositioned, allow them to discuss their reaction to the statement. Share information about Senator Fulbright and the context of the quotation. Emphasize his status as an elected official at the time he authored the text. Ask students if this information changes their opinion and allow them to relocate on the barometer.

Pose questions to students to try to tease out how such a position as Fulbright’s is possible to hold in our democracy. If they need prompting, ask: *How does our Constitution protect him in supporting criticism, and protect those who follow his advice?*

Explain to students how the right to disagree and protest is built into our Constitution! While leaders seldom enjoy criticism of their policies or ideas, our Founders clearly saw criticism as a vital vehicle for improvement, accountability, and change. They made the possibility of protest front and center in their bill of rights that were guaranteed to all, and ensured that it would be a regular feature of American life.

Protest Timeline

Protesting is a way to enact and demonstrate rights, such as those protected by the First Amendment in the United States. They are also an opportunity to call attention to social problems that emerge when rights are infringed upon or denied. There is a rich tradition of protest movements in the United States and across the globe. Diverse communities have protested in order to diagnose social problems, raise awareness, and advocate for social and political change. Depending on the grievance, protests may emerge from within conservative or progressive ideological movements. They may be the vehicle for marginalized communities but also can become the tool for more powerful segments of society.

These movements have adopted a range of tactics and forms of communication, strategizing to bring about change through governmental and non-governmental channels. Not all movements have been successful and some have failed to accomplish their goals of legal or lasting change. Exploring a timeline of protest movements provides an understanding of the scope and frequency of protests throughout history. A timeline of protest movements is helpful in illuminating the regularity of dissent and its impact on social and political realities.

Begin this activity by posting protest movement descriptions throughout the classroom, forming a timeline from the 19th century to the early 21st century. Have students stand in front of one of the protest movements that they elect to study. This could be achieved by random assignment or through student choice of topic.

The timeline (available in the lesson) includes an image and description of each of the following movements:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Abolitionist2. Nativist3. Temperance4. Women's Rights5. Agrarian Populist6. Labor7. Civil Rights8. Anti-War9. Chicano10. LGBTQ	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Moral Majority12. Environmental13. Equal Rights Amendment14. Anti-Nuclear15. Anti-Apartheid16. Occupy (Wall Street)17. Black Lives Matter18. Women's March19. #Metoo20. Criminal Justice Reform
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Ask students to read the description of the movement and respond to the following historical thinking prompts:

- ***What problem did this movement identify?***
- ***What motivated the members of this movement?***
- ***How were youth involved in this movement's tactics?***
- ***What were the outcomes of this movement?***

Have students share out a brief overview of the movement that answers the question:

What was the movement trying to accomplish and did it succeed?

Underscore the social consequences that protest movements can accomplish by having students “remove” a movement from the timeline and speculate on how life may be different today if these protests did not occur and this movement did not exist. Repeat this for a few examples.

Collectively, engage in a discussion about protest movements. Ask students:

- ***What do you notice in the history of protest movements?***
- ***What does the volume of protest movements suggest about the role dissent has played in U.S. history?***
- ***What is the legacy of youth participation in civic life for us today?***

CIVIL RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION
Lesson #8: Student Protesters Demand Equality in Education in Los Angeles
(Sample Lesson, Not for Distribution)

Supporting Questions

1. How have people attempted to make change in the realm of education?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to describe and the purposes, actions, and achievements of the LA Walkouts
2. Students will be able to analyze the tactics used in fighting racial discrimination in education

Warm-up Reflection

Post this quote: “Separate But Equal is Inherently Unequal” (from *Brown v. Board of Education*). Ask students to reflect in a journal/free write the following:

- ***What do you think the Supreme Court imagined would be the impact of its decision?***
- ***What do schools look like today, in terms of their racial makeup?***
- ***What guidelines for integrating schools should be in place today?***

Remind students that this unit is about civil rights laws. We are looking at a narrower application of those laws, the issue of equality in education. *Roberts* and *Mendez* come before *Brown* and show the long history of the fight for equality in education. *Brown* is the keystone in studying equality in education, and the experiences of Ruby Bridges and the Hartford experiment are extensions of *Brown* that illustrate its impact.

The next lesson is about the 1968 Los Angeles School Walkouts. It is a case study in examining the fight for equality in education.

Mini-Lecture and Introduction to the East LA Walkouts

Explain that in 1968 schools in East LA were predominantly attended by Mexican American students. These students protested because of inequalities in the Los Angeles schools.

Show this [LA Times video](#) to give students background on the case. Alternatively, there is an article from the newspaper at the same link. Students should read or watch the video and take notes on the basics of the case (who, what, where, when, why, how), and whatever interests them about the protest.

Check for comprehension by completing a 3-2-1:

- ***Record 3 things you learned from the video/ text***
- ***Record 2 things you found interesting***



- **Record 1 question you still have on the LA Walkouts**

Pass out the [demands](#) made by the East LA students who were protesting. These are listed at the bottom of the article under the heading: **“PROPOSALS MADE BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF EAST LOS ANGELES TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION”**

Ask students to narrow down the 3 most important demands and rewrite them in their own words. *Why did they choose the ones they did?*

A FREE PRESS AND AN INFORMED COMMUNITY
Lesson #3: What's Beneath the Surface? Basic Media Literacy Concepts
(Sample, Not for Distribution)

Supporting Questions

1. What is media literacy?
2. How can being media literate help voters make sound decisions?
3. What is the difference between passive and active media consumers?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will discuss basic media literacy concepts
2. Students will understand basic media literacy concepts
3. Students will practice using media literacy skills

Presenting Media Literacy Concepts

Provide students with a [list of media literacy concepts](#) and their meanings. Allow students to read the concepts independently, underlining words or concepts that are new, unfamiliar, or confusing. Have students use a dictionary to look up underlined words. Next, read the text aloud with entire class.

“Drawing” Upon the Concepts

Now that students have explored basic media literacy concepts, have them translate these terms and their definitions into visuals. Have students draw images that demonstrate the concepts.

Divide class into ten groups, assigning one concept to each group. Encourage students to practice the civic skills of active listening, exchanging ideas, compromising, and reaching consensus as group members as they propose suggestions for visual representations of their concept.

Once members of each group have deliberated and identified their visual translation, have students design a poster that reflects their understanding of the media literacy concept. This can be an iterative process where groups develop a rough draft, circulate between groups, give and receive peer feedback, and revise their posters based on critical and constructive peer review. Once posters are completed, have students display their posters, effectively filling the classroom with their own understandings of basic media literacy concepts.

Applying the Concepts

Once students have thought about media literacy concepts, present the opportunity to examine and analyze examples of media messages using these concepts.

Advertisements can be an entry point into discussing with students the role of media in shaping cultural notions and perceptions of race, class, and gender, among other social categories. Use advertisements to help students critically examine the messages that are broadcast to media consumers.

Consider selecting advertisements that students may have encountered recently in print or digital forms. Begin by using historical examples of advertisements' messaging around race, class, and gender in order to scaffold students' practicing of critical media literacy skills before unpacking recent examples.

As a whole class, examine historical advertisements. Note, these examples feature stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups and introducing this exercise may require advanced preparation and discussion. The 1897 N.K. Fairbanks Co.'s Fairy soap, 1919 Canadian Patriotic Fund, 1950 Crosse and Blackwell, 1952 Van Heusen, and 1991 Harper's Bazaar advertisements.



Begin by projecting one advertisement at a time and posing the following questions to students for each image:

- **Who created this ad?**
- **What is the text (observable parts) of this message? What do you see?**
- **What types of people are represented in this advertisement?**
- **How are these people represented?**
- **How do social categories intersect and interact in these representations?**
- **What might the subtext be? What subtle, unwritten messages might be present?**
- **What values are projected here?**

Once students have critically interrogated advertisements, allow them to reflect on these representations independently through a journal writing exercise. Provide time to process and make connections to students' identities, communities, and contemporary society.