



GeoCivics Lesson: *From Idea to Law: How Rules are Made!*

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Teacher(s): David Sweeney	Lesson Title: From Idea to Law: How Rules are Made!	Grade Level: 4th Grade
Notes: This lesson will take several days to complete.		
Pre-existing Knowledge: Students should understand that rules exist for specific reasons, such as ensuring safety, fairness, and organization, and these rules apply in various settings including home, school, and the community. Students who come from different cultural backgrounds can bring a different take on the same rules and laws.		
Overview of Content: “Laws begin as ideas. First, a representative sponsors a bill. The bill is then assigned to a committee for study. If released by the committee, the bill is put on a calendar to be voted on, debated or amended. If the bill passes by simple majority (218 of 435), the bill moves to the Senate. In the Senate, the bill is assigned to another committee and, if released, debated and voted on. Again, a simple majority (51 of 100) passes the bill. Finally, a conference committee made of House and Senate members works out any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The resulting bill returns to the House and Senate for final approval. The Government Publishing Office prints the revised bill in a process called enrolling. The President has 10 days to sign or veto the enrolled bill.” https://www.house.gov/the-house-explained/the-legislative-process		
Purpose: <i>What will students learn?</i> In this lesson students will explore the origins and development of rules and laws, examining how they are created and why they are essential.		
National & State Social Studies Standard(s): National Social Studies Standards:		

- **Standard 6: Power, Authority, and Governance:** provides essential knowledge about government structures, functions, and the legislative process. It enables students to comprehend the complexities of lawmaking, appreciate the roles of lawmakers, and engage critically with issues of governance and civic responsibility.

Arizona State Social Studies Standards:

- 4.C1 - Analyze civic virtues and democratic principles or lack thereof within a variety of government structures, societies, and/or communities within the Americas.

National & State Geography Standard(s):

National Geography Standards: Standard 4:

- The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places: This theme encourages students to explore how the physical characteristics of a place (such as its terrain, climate, and natural resources) can shape human activities and settlements. In the context of the legislative process, this standard helps students understand how regional differences and resources might influence the types of laws proposed and supported by different regions.

Arizona State Geography Standards:

- **4.G2.1** Compare the diverse ways people or groups of people have impacted, modified, or adapted to the environment of the Americas.

ELA Standards: (To teach/review and support emergent multilinguals (EMLs) English language development):

- 4.RL.7 Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.
- SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- L.4.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).
- W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

ISTE Teacher and/or Student Standard:

TEACHER:

- **Standard 1: Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity-** Teachers can use technology to facilitate discussions, present multimedia resources like videos or interactive simulations of the legislative process, and inspire students to think creatively about how laws impact their lives.

Language Functions: (What language function(s) can be embedded in lesson discussions to build deeper understanding while supporting language development?)

- **Inquiry/Seeking Information:** Students use language to observe and explore the environment, acquire information, and inquire.

- **Summarizing and Informing:** Students use language to identify, report, or describe information
- **Comparing and Contrasting:** Students use language to describe similarities and differences in rules and laws.
- **Justifying and Persuading:** Students will give reasons for an action, decision, or point of view; convince others

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies: (See Rubric below. What strategies will you include in your instructions to make lesson/assignments more culturally responsive?)

- **CONNECTION:** Lesson/Activity incorporates real-life connections and representations from the classroom and life experiences.
- **VOICE:** Lesson/Assignment allows places for students to work together cooperatively or share their learning experiences, strengths, backgrounds, interests, and needs with the instructor and each other.

Objective(s): (Explicit & Measurable - suggested one per standard in each category.):

- SWBAT differentiate between classroom rules and community laws, understanding their purposes and how they are enforced.
- SWBAT communicate understanding of the legislative process through writing, speaking, or multimedia presentations.
- SWBAT describe the importance of civic participation and identify ways students can advocate for changes in laws or policies.

SIOP

	SIOP Elements	
Preparation	Scaffolding	Grouping Option
Adapting content Linking to background Linking to past learning Strategies used	Modeling Guided practice Independent practice Comprehensible input	Whole class Small groups Partners Independent
Integrating Processes	Application	Assessment
Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Hands-On Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Individual Group Written Oral

Evidence of Mastery

Formative - students will have an exit ticket at the end of each stage of the lesson. In their own words they will answer the questions posed in those sections. Students will also be evaluated on their worksheets for content. Did they do the work? Did they support their group and did they help a bill get through the process to become law? Students will go through the process of a bill going through all processes as a group - students will write a summary of what their role was in the bill process.

Summative - Students will present their group's proposal for a new bill. They must identify an issue, purpose of the bill, actions, and impact, and evidence they found, and the presentation quality. Students will work together to share it using a chromebook - Each group must present a part. **Rubric at end of lesson.**

Key vocabulary:

- **Bill** - A proposal for a new law or a change to an existing law that is presented for debate and approval.
- **Law** - A rule made by a government that must be followed by the people it governs.
- **Legislature** - A group of people who have the power to make and change laws (e.g., Congress in the United States).
- **Congress** - The national legislative body of the United States, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- **Senate** - One of the two parts of the United States Congress, where each state is represented by two senators.
- **House of Representatives** - The other part of the United States Congress, where the number of representatives from each state is based on its population.
- **Committee** - A group of people chosen from a larger group to do a particular job, such as studying and making recommendations about bills.
- **Debate** - A formal discussion on a particular topic in a public meeting or legislative assembly, where opposing arguments are put forward.
- **Vote** - A formal expression of preference for a candidate or a decision, such as passing a bill into law.
- **Veto** - The power of a president or governor to reject a bill proposed by the legislature.
- **Legislator** - A person who makes laws; a member of a legislative body.
- **Sponsor** - A member of Congress who introduces a bill and supports its passage.

Materials:

- A copy of a Student Handbook or equivalent
- [School House Video](#) - I'm Just a Bill
- Chart Paper
- notebooks
- Markers, Pencils
- Copies of Group Roles (make copies if needed) - download separately
- Copies of Steps to get to law (hand out appropriate sheets to students) - download separately
- KWL CHART - download separately
- Circle Map - download separately
- Problem Solution Chart - download separately
- Slide deck - download separately

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Majority - More than half of a group; often refers to the number of votes needed for a decision to be made. ● Override - The process by which each chamber of Congress votes on a bill vetoed by the President. To pass a bill over the president's objections requires a two-thirds vote in each Chamber. ● President - The elected head of a republican state; in the context of the U.S., the leader who can approve or veto bills passed by Congress. ● Lobbying - Seeking to influence legislators to introduce or vote for or against a bill. ● Constitution - The fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is governed. ● Democracy - A system of government by the whole population, typically through elected representatives. 	
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Sources:

- [School House Video](#) Feb 14, 2013. Another Schoolhouse Rock classic. Music & lyrics by Dave Frishberg. Vocals by Jack Sheldon. ABC-TV, 1974

Engage

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <p>NOTE: Teacher will need a school/district Handbook or policy to open lesson with.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher will hold up the Student Handbook - and ask guided questions: <i>What is the purpose of the Student Handbook? Why do we need a Handbook? What is one rule in the handbook that we must follow?</i> 2. Create a circle map and list the different rules that students come up with. Have students brainstorm what rules we have. 3. The teacher will revise a rule in the handbook and ask, <i>can I just change the rules in the handbook? Have you ever wondered who creates the rules?</i> 	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will have a class discussion about the handbook. <p>(Preparation: Linking to background) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Grouping: Whole class/Independent)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students will brainstorm in the table group and develop a few rules we must follow. Sharing with the class. 3. The Teacher will ask: <i>are rules the same in every classroom?</i> Students discuss with their group and think of why rules may be different? 4. Students discuss different parts of the Country - why could laws be different in areas due to geographic differences?
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<p>4. The Teacher will ask: <i>We follow rules on our campus, what about in our communities - what do we follow there?</i> (Students should say laws.)</p> <p>5. The Teacher will ask: <i>are rules the same in every classroom?</i> As students why they may differ; can they think of why? (If needed, suggest that other classrooms are different because of age, grade and class size.)</p> <p>6. What about different parts of the Country - Why could laws be different in areas due to geographic differences? (The teacher can use any state they wish - find pictures to support the student's thinking such as arid and dry Arizona vs Washington state, could the water laws be different? In a big city vs a small town ?</p> <p>7. Teacher passes out KWL chart, and students will fill in the "I Know" part.</p> <p>8. Teacher will ask: <i>what are the differences between a rule and a law?</i> Teacher explains there is a process for rules to be made on our campus as well as the laws we follow in our communities. <i>Have you ever thought about how the rules or laws are made?</i></p> <p>9. We are going to learn how laws are made. Teacher will show the School House Video "I'm Just a Bill." Engage class in a discussion about what they learned from the video.</p> <p>10. Teacher will have students answer this question at the end of daily lesson - <i>What is a bill?</i> (A proposed law that is being considered by a legislature.)</p>	<p>5. Students will fill in the I know part of KWL on what they know about rules and laws.</p> <p>6. Class open discussion</p> <p>(Preparation: Strategies used) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Grouping: Whole class/Small group)</p> <p>1. Students will fill in The "I Wonder" part of the KWL chart</p> <p>2. Students will watch video , take note of the steps given From bill to a Law.</p> <p>3. Students will talk at their tables about the video - share understanding, or further questions they may have.</p> <p>(Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Grouping: Whole class Small Group/Independent)</p> <p>4. Students will complete an exit ticket based on the question and a check must be made on both the I wonder and I know portions of the KWL Chart.</p> <p>(Assessment: Individual/Written) (Application: Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)</p>
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Explore

<p>Teacher Will: IQ 1# How does a Bill become a law? (Scaffolding: Modeling/Guided Practice)</p> <p>1. Class discussion - the teacher will use chart paper to list the steps mentioned in the video (students will share the steps first).</p>	<p>Student Will:</p> <p>1. Students will share the list and have discussion on what each step means.</p> <p>2. Students will use the vocab sheet to fill in the missing words (Ells). or Complete the sheet.</p>
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The teacher will use the slide deck, stages of a bill, to reinforce each step to ensure understanding. 3. Teacher will hand out vocabulary list and students will follow and/or fill in space. (providing differentiation of the list) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idea: A bill starts as an idea from a citizen, group, or lawmaker. ● Proposal: The idea is written down as a bill by a member of Congress. ● Committee: The bill is sent to a committee for study and discussion. ● Debate: The bill is debated by both chambers of Congress. ● Vote: The bill is voted on by both the House of Representatives and the Senate. ● Presidential Action: The President signs the bill into law or vetoes it. 4. Teacher will explain that they are going to do a mock version of how a bill becomes law and will assign roles to each student. (President, Senators, Representatives, Speaker of the House). Students research their role and responsibilities. Teacher will assist students - monitor, and check that proper research methods are being used. 5. Teacher will have students answer this question at the end of daily lesson - <i>who Can introduce a Bill?</i> (Any member of Congress) 	<p>(Preparation: Adapting) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Grouping: Whole class/Independent)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Students will be assigned a role 4. Students will research the roles and responsibilities of the person they were given <p>(Preparation: Adapting content) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Grouping: Whole class/Independent)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Students will complete an exit ticket: Who Can introduce a Bill? (Any member of Congress) 6. Teacher will check their worksheet to make sure vocabulary words are explained 100%. <p>Assessment: Individual/Written) (Application: Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)</p>
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Explain - Formative Assessment

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <p>(Scaffolding: Modeling/Guided Practice)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will share their learning by taking a simple bill through the process. The teacher will support the student's reenactment of a bill making its way through the process. 2. Students will Introduce a simple, relatable mock bill (e.g., a bill to have a new stop light at the exit of campus). 	<p>Student Will:</p> <p>Each student will be in the roles they were given:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will share their learning by taking a simple bill through the process. The teacher will support the student reenactment of a bill making its way through the process. 2. Students will Introduce a simple, relatable mock bill (e.g., a bill to have a new stop light at the exit of campus).
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<p>3. Have a small group of students act as the committee to discuss and possibly revise the bill.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The bill is presented to the House of Representatives (rest of the class), debated, and then voted on. If passed by the House, it goes to the Senate for another debate and vote. If passed by both houses, it is sent to the President (one student) to be signed into law or vetoed. <p>4. The Teacher will have students pull out their KWL charts and complete the “What I learned portion”</p> <p>5. The Teacher will have students answer exit tickets - <i>what happens to a bill in Committee?</i></p> <p>(NOTE) Teacher will have the Process on the screen each step of the way. Teacher will visually observe and listen to the students talking and support their needs.</p>	<p>3. Have a small group of students act as the committee to discuss and possibly revise the bill.</p> <p>4. The bill is presented to the House of Representatives (rest of the class), debated, and then voted on.</p> <p>5. If passed by the House, it goes to the Senate for another debate and vote.</p> <p>6. If passed by both houses, it is sent to the President (one student) to be signed into law or vetoed.</p> <p>(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</p> <p>7. Students will complete the “What I learned” portion to complete their chart</p> <p>8. Students will complete an exit ticket: What happens when to a bill in Committee? (It is debated and possibly amended).</p> <p>Assessment: Individual/Written) (Application: Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)</p>
<p>Elaborate</p>	

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <p><i>IQ #2: What is an issue or problem in our community or school that you think needs to be addressed or improved through a new law or rule?</i></p> <p>(Scaffolding: Modeling/Hands on)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher will put students into small groups. Teacher will guide students to think of social issues that possibly need to be addressed for change. Explain to students that they will be working together to propose a bill that addresses a specific issue or problem they have identified in their community or school. Give students time to brainstorm - you may need to support students with possible examples: <i>playground safety, lunch improvements, uniforms, and street safety.</i> <p>(NOTE) Teacher will encourage students to choose something they are passionate about and that affects them directly.</p>	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students will get into small groups In their groups, discuss the guiding question: "What is an issue or problem in our community or school that you think needs to be addressed or improved through a new law or rule?" Brainstorm ideas and potential solutions. Consider the feasibility and impact of each idea. Choose a topic for their bill proposal. Ensure that everyone in the group agrees on the chosen topic and understands its importance.
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Students choose a topic for their bill proposal. Ensure that everyone in the group agrees on the chosen topic and understands its importance. 5. Students outline the details of their proposed bill, including its title, purpose, specific actions it would require, and potential benefits. 6. Students write a short explanation of why their bill is necessary and how it would address the identified issue. 7. Students prepare a brief presentation (3-5 minutes) to present their bill to the class. The presentation should clearly explain the problem, proposed solution, and reasons why their bill should become law. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Outline the details of their proposed bill, including its title, purpose, specific actions it would require, and potential benefits. 6. Write a short explanation of why their bill is necessary and how it would address the identified issue. 7. Prepare a brief presentation (3-5 minutes) to present their bill to the class. The presentation should clearly explain the problem, proposed solution, and reasons why their bill should become law. <p>(Grouping: Small groups) (Preparation: Linking to past learning) (Integrating Processes: Listening/ Speaking/Writing/Reading) (Application: Hands-on /Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)</p>
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Evaluate - Summative Assessment

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher will bring the class back together, and present the structure of how a team will present. Each team will have 20 minutes to prepare and practice delivering their proposal. 2. Depending on the number in each group - each person needs to share out a portion of the proposal. Each proposal will be recorded on a Chromebook. Teacher has already given the list. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They must identify an issue 2. Purpose of the bill 3. Actions 4. Impact 5. Evidence <p>Teacher will grade using the Rubric provided. *Sharing Proposals may take time - plan for it.</p>	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will as a team decide who is presenting which part of the proposal. 2. Students will practice recording their proposal. 3. Students must make sure that each section is covered. 4. Turn in <p>Assessment: (Group/Individual/Oral) (Application: Promotes engagement, Han on/ Linked to Objectives)</p>
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<p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field Trip to the State Capital to see both sides of the Senate ● Invite a Local representative or community leader to listen to students' presentations with possible feedback
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**RUBRIC FOR
PRESENTATIONS**

	Criteria	4 (Exemplary)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Basic)	1 (Below Basic)
Clarity of Purpose	Clearly identifies a specific issue or problem in the community or school that needs addressing through a new law or rule.	Identifies an issue or problem, but the purpose of the bill may lack specificity or clarity	Identifies a general issue or problem, but the purpose of the bill is unclear or vague.	Does not clearly identify an issue or problem that needs addressing.	
Feasibility and Impact	Proposes a bill with clear, feasible actions that directly address the identified issue. Explains the potential positive impact of the proposed bill	Proposes a bill with actions that partially address the identified issue. Discusses some potential impacts of the proposed bill.	Proposes a bill with actions that minimally address the identified issue. Discusses limited potential impacts of the proposed bill.	Proposes a bill with actions that do not address the identified issue. Does not discuss potential impacts.	
Supporting Evidence	Provides compelling evidence and reasoning to support why the	Provides evidence and reasoning to support why the proposed bill is necessary and beneficial. Uses	Provides some evidence and reasoning, but it may be general or lack specificity.	Provides minimal or no evidence or reasoning to support the proposal.	

	proposed bill is necessary and beneficial. Uses specific examples or data to strengthen the argument.	examples or data to support the argument.			
Presentati on Quality	Presents a clear and well-organized presentation that effectively communicates the purpose of the bill, its actions, and potential impacts. Engages the audience with confident delivery and appropriate use of visuals or props.	Presents a mostly clear and organized presentation that communicates the p purpose of the bill, its actions, and potential impacts. Delivery is confident, with some use of visuals or props	Presents a somewhat organized presentation, but may lack clarity in communicating the purpose of the bill, its actions, or potential impacts. Delivery is hesitant, with minimal use of visuals or props.	presents an unclear or disorganized presentation that does not effectively communicate the purpose of the bill, its actions, or potential impacts. Delivery lacks confidence and does not use visuals or props.	