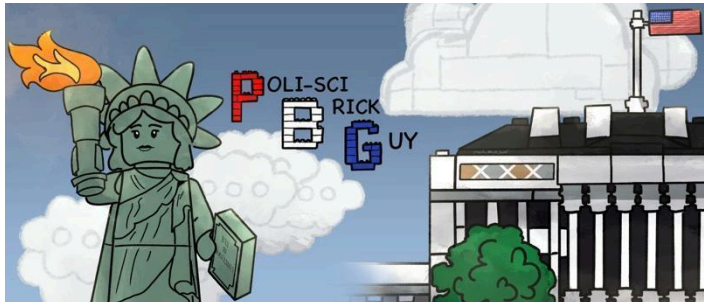




Lesson Plan 2.2 A: Congressional Committees

Prepared by	Ms. Kortney Arveseth, MAE K-12 Gifted Instructor Saint Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, MO
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Overview	In this lesson, students will explore the important role congressional committees play in shaping legislation and managing the work of Congress. Students will learn why committees exist, how they are organized, and how they influence whether bills move forward or stall. Through discussion and a committee simulation, students will experience how hearings, markups, bargaining, logrolling, and pork-barrel spending affect the legislative process. The lesson also includes an optional module (time permitting) to introduce students to Federalist 10 and have them contrast factions with committees in order to learn both concepts better.
Essential Questions	• How and why are congressional committees created, and how does committee leadership shape what legislation advances? • How do chamber-specific rules (House vs. Senate) interact with committee processes to affect the legislative path of a bill? • How do practices like logrolling, pork-barrel spending, filibuster, and discharge petitions influence committee behavior and legislative outcomes?
Lesson Objectives	• Describe how congressional committees are formed and how they function.

	● Explain how chamber rules and procedures (House vs. Senate) influence committee referrals and the legislative process. ● Identify examples of pork-barrel legislation and logrolling and explain their effects on committee and floor outcomes.
Suggested Unit in A.P. Government	Unit 2.2 (Part 1: Congressional Committees)
Core Skills Used	Source Analysis Concept Application Argumentation
Activity Duration	45 minutes
Materials	● Board to display mini-lecture and activity slide decks ● Printed copies (per student) of ○ Sketch notes ○ Student copies of their committee simulation sheet
Procedure	Hook (5 min): Share prompt: "Congress has 535 members (435 in the House of Representatives and 100 in the Senate.) Why might it be difficult for all members to carefully examine every bill before voting?" - Take a few verbal student responses Ask: How might congress then organize itself to work more efficiently? (<i>Committees!</i>)
	Mini Lecture with Sketch Notes (15 min): - Use the Congressional Committees slide deck to discuss the purpose and formation of committees and how it relates to Federalist Paper no. 10 (about factions) - Give students a paper copy of the sketch notes and some coloring supplies (colored pencils, markers, or crayons) to follow along with. This allows the mini-lecture to be more interactive as opposed to a simple "sit and get" scenario. Students remember details when they interact with the material.
	Committee Simulation– Student Activity (20 min): Conduct the Committee Simulation Activity

	i. The slide deck plays as a video to keep the timeframe of the activity going. The video can still be paused or fast forwarded if you need to! Google Drive may reduce the quality of the video. You can increase the resolution if you need to by clicking on the settings gear icon and clicking “quality.” ii. Leave time before the end of class to debrief (see below). A slide for debrief is also worked into the simulation video.
	Debrief (5 min): 1. Did committees make the bill stronger or weaker? 2. Which amendments reflected constituent interests? 3. How did logrolling or pork-barrel politics emerge and affect the bill? 4. Why do congressional committees have so much power over legislation?
	Homework: Have students finish coloring in sketch notes if they didn’t get to it as they were following along with the mini-lecture slides.