



Wethersfield Public Schools

WHS Curriculum: Civics

Grade(s)	11-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 1: Foundations and Branches of the U.S. Government
Timeframe	7 weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Collaborator: Students collaborate to research, communicate, and justify ideas as they engage in a team debate on the electoral college.	
Problem Solver: Students participate in a simulation to pass bills in order to enact new laws, facing challenges along the way.	
Communicator: Students communicate the effectiveness of the checks and balances system through real-life scenarios.	
Unit Priority Standards	
CG.Civ.2.a. Analyze how the structures of the United States state and local governments represent different models of democracy (e.g., direct democracy, representative government).	
CG.Civ.4.a. Explain how the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution contributed to the establishment of a federal democratic republic (e.g., popular sovereignty, federalism)	
CG.Civ.4.d. Explain how federalism led to conflict between states and the federal government (e.g., healthcare, suffrage, taxation).	
CG.Civ.4.b. Describe how the United States Constitution organizes, enumerates, and divides power to create a limited government (e.g., separation of powers, checks and balances, necessary and proper clause, supremacy clause, 10th Amendment).	
CG.Civ.2.b. Analyze the role and effectiveness of the legislative branch in addressing constituent and societal needs (e.g., Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, elections, political polling, representation, constituent services).	
CG.Civ.3.a. Analyze how elections and the electoral process are executed and maintained by constitutions and laws in the United States (e.g., voter registration, transfer of power, Electoral College, federalism).	
CG.Civ.1.a. Distinguish between the functions of local, state, tribal, and national governments in response to challenges (e.g., court decisions, executive orders, legislation, sovereignty, states' rights).	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CG.Inq.2.a. Apply disciplinary knowledge and practices to demonstrate an understanding of civics and government content.	
CG.Inq.4.a. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.	
CG.Inq.1.a. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the United States Government.	
CG.Eco.9.a. Describe the roles of the executive branch in developing and implementing economic policies in the United States (e.g., Department of the Treasury, Federal Reserve Board, Internal Revenue Service).	
CG.His.5.a. Analyze how interpretations of the social contract theory of government influenced the founding of the United States government (e.g., Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke).	
CG.Civ.3.b. Analyze how federal and state court systems are articulated and maintained by constitutions and laws in the United States (e.g., District Courts, Circuit Courts, Appellate Court, Supreme Court).	
Essential Questions	
Is government necessary for society?	
Which branch has the most power?	
Does compromise always lead to the best outcome?	



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Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Compare, contrast, and evaluate the effectiveness of different systems and/or levels of government at meeting the needs of their respective peoples. 2. Analyze the structure of the government created by the Constitution. 3. Construct and justify arguments based on evidence.	1. Societies have used various systems to organize themselves throughout history. a. Direct vs. indirect/representative democracy b. Monarchy c. Oligarchy d. Autocracy e. Theocracy 2. Explain how power and responsibility are distributed, shared, and limited in a government to meet the needs of its people. 3. The Constitution organizes the US government and provides the structure to make, enforce, and interpret laws as they pertain to the citizenry. a. Separation of powers: three branches of government, their functions, and powers b. Checks and balances 4. The Constitution is a living document that can be changed to meet the modern needs of society.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
• Discuss the necessity of government as a way to organize society: Why is there a government? • Differentiate and evaluate various forms of government. Students are given scenarios of societal issues and must decide the best form of government to deal with the problem. • Read, explore, and discuss the influences and origins of the American democratic system and early attempts to codify them. ○ Rousseau, Locke, Machiavelli, Blackstone, Montesquieu, Hobbes ○ Fundamental Orders of CT, New England Confederation, Albany Plan of Union, Articles of Confederation • Simplify the Preamble and validate its usefulness today, considering real-life, day-to-day scenarios (e.g., fix potholes, care for veterans, Statue of Liberty reopening) • Read and interpret the Constitution. Explore key ideas through Constitution scavenger hunt. • Assess the branches of government and the checks and balances system with Executive Branch Project and checks and balances real-life scenario	• iCivics Enlightenment Thinkers Documents • iCivics Federalists v. Anti-Federalists • PBS Newshour Daily News Lessons • Liberty Kids 140: We the People • Pro-Con: Electoral College Pro/Cons • Gerrymander game • SchoolHouse Rock: I'm Just a Bill and Three Ring Circus • Preamble to the Constitution • Constitution of the United States • Constitution Scavenger Hunt • iCivics Branches of Power Game • iCivics Lawcraft Game



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Examine how a bill becomes a law with iCivics
Branches of Power Game● Debate on the Electoral College | |
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Grade(s)	11-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 2: Bill of Rights and Amendments to the Constitution
Timeframe	4 weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Collaborator: Students collaborate to interpret and present landmark cases of Constitutional law. Problem Solver: Students identify current societal issues and create a 28th amendment to address their identified problem. Communicator: Students communicate and justify arguments on landmark cases within classroom debate.	
Unit Priority Standards	
CG.Civ.14.a. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of protecting, defending, and promoting constitutional rights in the United States (e.g., law-making, federal court system, Constitutional amendments, Supreme Court decisions, exercising Constitutional rights). CG.Civ.14.b. Analyze advocacy and activism in the United States related to a contemporary human rights issue using the United States Constitution and other historical sources (e.g., youth activism, journalism, social media, whistleblowers, protestors, strikes, boycotts, petitions, resistance). CG.Civ.4.c. Explain how the United States Constitution has been adapted and interpreted in response to societal changes in both historical and contemporary contexts (e.g., amendments, Marbury v. Madison, Brown v. Board of Education, Tinker v. Des Moines, Obergefell v. Hodges). CG.Civ.13.a. Evaluate how a regulation or law can create or eliminate systemic inequalities involving race, gender and sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, belief systems, or access to resources (e.g., gerrymandering, 14th Amendment, Plessy v. Ferguson, poll taxes, Sheff v. O'Neill, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Rehabilitation Act). CG.Civ.5.a. Evaluate the relationship between law-making, enforcement, and interpretation in balancing the rights of the individual with the well being of society (e.g., Bill of Rights, Supreme Court cases).	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CG.Civ.1.a. Distinguish between the functions of local, state, tribal, and national governments in response to challenges (e.g., court decisions, executive orders, legislation, sovereignty, states' rights). CG.Civ.5.b. Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used by an individual, group or institution in addressing a social problem at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level (e.g., social protest movements, get-out-the-vote campaigns, conscious consumerism). CG.His.5.b. Analyze how historical contexts have shaped and continue to shape the ideologies and platforms of political parties in the United States (e.g., factions, partisanship). CG.Inq.1.b. Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how new compelling and supporting questions emerge when engaging sources that represent varied perspectives.	
Essential Questions	
Does writing down rights guarantee them? Are there events or circumstances that should cause the Constitution to be changed? Are individual rights more important than the public good?	
Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Identify and analyze the meaning of the various amendments to the Constitution including the Bill of Rights.	1. The Constitution is a "living" document that can be modified to respond to changes in American culture.



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- Interpret relevant Supreme Court decisions that have helped define our rights. - Apply the rights guaranteed in the Amendments to situations unforeseen by the Founding Fathers. - Examine current Constitutional issues challenging the Supreme Court today.	- Conflict occurs when people disagree about the interpretation and application of rights. - Established rights guarantee freedoms. - Personal beliefs may conflict with the interest of the public good. - The US Supreme Court interprets the Constitution and its amendments.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
- Analyze and interpret the meaning of the Bill of Rights and amendments to the US Constitution - Read cases, analyze salient components of the Constitution, and debate the outcomes before seeing the Supreme Court decision <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> <i>Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier</i> <i>Bethel v. Fraser</i> <i>Santa Fe v. Doe</i> <i>Morse v. Frederick</i> <i>Lee v. Weisman</i> <i>US v. Alvarez</i> <i>Kelo v. New London</i> <i>Miranda v. Arizona</i> <i>Furman v. Georgia</i> <i>Roper v. Simmons</i> <i>Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission</i> <i>Heller v. DC</i> <i>McDonald v. Chicago</i> <i>Mapp v. Ohio</i> <i>Terry v. Ohio</i> <i>Vernonia School District v. Acton</i> <i>Safford Unified School District v. Redding</i> <i>Katz v. United States</i> <i>GC v. Owensboro Public Schools</i> <i>Rodriguez v. United States</i> <i>New Jersey v. TLO</i> - Apply the rights guaranteed in the Amendments to situations unforeseen by the Founding Fathers 28th Amendment Creation task	- Constitution of the United State of America - Bill of Rights - Oyez: Supreme Court Case archive - US Courts.gov: Court cases with activities - Unsuccessful attempts at creating amendment 28 - Pew Research Polls - Quinnipiac Polling - Gallup



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Grade(s)	11-12		
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 3: US Political System		
Timeframe	3 weeks		
Vision of the Graduate			
Collaborator: Students collaborate to create and present original PACs, representing beliefs they think are important.			
Problem Solver: Students identify media bias and ways to avoid its influence.			
Communicator: Students communicate their own political beliefs through classroom discussion.			
Unit Priority Standards			
CG.Civ.2.c. Analyze the role of individuals, groups, and the media in shaping political participation over time in the United States (e.g., interest groups, media bias, political parties).			
CG.Civ.10.a. Determine the extent to which elected officials represent constituent interests and perspectives (e.g., personal and professional experiences, policy positions, party affiliation, voting record).			
CG.Civ.2.d. Analyze trends in access to voting, voter turnout, and voter representation over time (e.g., gerrymandering, reapportionment, redistricting, voter socialization).			
CG.Civ.2.e. Analyze the rights and responsibilities of individuals in the United States (e.g., 4th Amendment, trial by jury, jury service, interacting with law enforcement, voting).			
CG.Civ.5.b. Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used by an individual, group or institution in addressing a social problem at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level (e.g., social protest movements, get-out-the-vote campaigns, conscious consumerism).			
CG.Civ.5.c. Evaluate the role of the media in addressing social and political problems or influencing elections (e.g., fourth estate, media bias, concentration of media ownership).			
CG.His.5.c. Analyze how social contexts shape personal political beliefs and voting behavior.			
CG.Civ.1.b. Distinguish between the powers and responsibilities of local, state, and federal election officials in facilitating free and fair election processes.			
CG.His.5.b. Analyze how historical contexts have shaped and continue to shape the ideologies and platforms of political parties in the United States (e.g., factions, partisanship).			
Unit Supporting Standards			
CG.Inq.1.c. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of civic concepts and ideas associated with both compelling and supporting questions.			
CG.Inq.3.a. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views and mediums while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value to guide the selection of credible sources.			
CG.Inq.4.a. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.			
CG.Inq.4.c. Critique political arguments and explanations while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses given the purpose and audience (credibility, bias, reasoning, sequencing, details).			
Essential Questions			
Do interest groups and political parties have too much power?			
Will the lack of civic participation in the US political system destroy it?			
Are deliberation and compromise necessary for political decision-making?			
Performance Expectations: Skills (what students will do)		Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts	



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	(what students need to <i>know</i>)
1. Analyze the similarities and differences of the Democratic and Republican political parties. 2. Analyze the role of interest groups and political parties in shaping American public opinion and policy. 3. Evaluate the role of the media in shaping public opinion. 4. Describe the election and removal procedures of the government officials. 5. Identify the rights and responsibilities of US citizens in the political process.	1. American government reflects American values, of which civic participation is a core component. 2. Policy agendas and decisions are shaped by individual citizens, interest groups, political parties, and the media. 3. US citizens have certain rights and responsibilities (e.g., 4th Amendment, trial by jury, jury service, interacting with law enforcement, voting)
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
• Self assess position on a political typology quiz • View videos about the changing Republican and Democratic Parties. Synthesize the major differences through class discussion. • Using Open Secrets, students identify the purpose of lobbying, lobbying firms, and political contributions by firms that lobby, including major contributions to specific politicians. Students then analyze the influence that those contributions have on policy. • Compare PACs and Super PACs through video and class discussion, and then create an original PAC. • Read and analyze the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court. • Compare and contrast various media outlets and view articles on similar topics from various sources to analyze the content for bias.	• Pew Research: Political Typology Quiz • Video: Republican Party Origins • Video: Democratic Party Origins • Open Secrets research group • iCivics - Interest groups • Video: PACs v Super PACs • Video: Citizens United Explained • Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart



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Grade(s)	11-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 4: Connecticut State and Local Government
Timeframe	2 weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Collaborator: Students collaborate to identify solutions to problems within our community.	
Problem Solver: Students apply problem-solving skills to address major issues that a community may face.	
Communicator: In a simulation, students communicate the federal, state, and local responses to a natural disaster.	
Unit Priority Standards	
CG.Civ.1.a. Distinguish between the functions of local, state, tribal, and national governments in response to challenges (e.g., court decisions, executive orders, legislation, sovereignty, states' rights).	
CG.Civ.8.a. Identify how the structure of state and local governments promote democratic principles and public participation (e.g., boards of education, Connecticut General Assembly, municipal government).	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CG.Inq.4.e. Analyze the characteristics and causation of local, regional, and global problems issues using a multidisciplinary lens.	
CG.Inq.4.f. Evaluate and implement strategies for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems in classrooms, schools, and out-of school civic contexts.	
CG.Inq.4.d. Present arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and multiple perspectives about political issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print, oral, and digital technologies.	
Essential Questions	
What accounts for regional political differences?	
Why do people run for political office?	
What are the most important qualifications for leadership?	
Does civic involvement at the local level make a difference in the lives of fellow citizens?	
Performance Expectations: Skills	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts
1. Research and develop a position on issues facing our local community 2. Formulate solutions to issues facing the community 3. Identify local, state, and federal representatives and the districts that they serve 4. Explain the organization of Connecticut State Government and the Wethersfield Town Government 5. Collaborate to solve a simulated government crisis	1. Thoughtful and effective participation in public life is necessary for the state and community's well-being. 2. Local elected officials must balance the needs of the state with the needs of their constituents. 3. State and local government impact the daily lives of their citizens.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
• ON the Level: Students read and answer questions to understand federalism and how it works.	• iCivics On the Level • iCivics Counties Work Game • iCivics Tribal Governments



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Counties Works: Students act as a mayor/county official to solve a fictitious community's challenges.● Tribal Governments: Students read and complete an activity on the power, functions, and history of tribal governments in the U.S.● Who Represents Me? Students identify their representatives and how to contact them.● Federalism at Work Project: Students prepare and respond to a natural disaster.● Wethersfield Webquest: Students develop a deeper understanding of local government using the town guide, voting district map, voting district street map, and the Wethersfield CERC Town Profile● Local Government Quotes Walk | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● iCivics Who Represents Me?● iCivics States Rule Webquest● Wethersfield Town Guide● CERC Town Profile● Wethersfield Voting Districts Map |
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Grade(s)	11-12
Unit Title and Purpose	Unit 5: United States and the World
Timeframe	2 weeks
Vision of the Graduate	
Collaborator: Students collaborate to create US responses to foreign policy challenges.	
Problem Solver: Students read and analyze various sources on the effectiveness of US foreign aid policy and use these sources to engage in a debate.	
Communicator: Students participate in a round-table discussion about the goal of the US in foreign relations.	
Unit Priority Standards	
CG.Civ.6.a. Critique geopolitical relationships and their impact on governments, civil societies, and/or economic markets (e.g., North Atlantic Treaty Organization, United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Paris Agreement, World Health Organization).	
CG.Civ.14.c. Analyze the impact of United States policy decisions on other nations (e.g., immigration, trade, arms support, sanctions).	
CG.Eco.7.a. Evaluate a United States trade policy in terms of costs and benefits (e.g., sanctions, subsidies, tariffs, trade agreements, employment).	
Unit Supporting Standards	
CG.Inq.3.b. Organize and prioritize evidence directly and substantively from multiple sources in order to develop or strengthen claims (e.g., detect inconsistencies).	
CG.Inq.4.c. Critique political arguments and explanations while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses given the purpose and audience (credibility, bias, reasoning, sequencing, details).	
Essential Questions	
Should US foreign policy be reactive or proactive?	
To what extent does U.S. intervention in foreign lands compromise the principles of the Constitution?	
Does American economic and culture influence strengthen or weaken our relationship with other nations?	
Performance Expectations: Skills (what students will <i>do</i>)	Performance Expectations: Essential Knowledge/Concepts (what students need to <i>know</i>)
1. Examine the relationship between the US and its neighboring countries 2. Investigate current areas of US involvement and geopolitical relationships around the world 3. Evaluate United States foreign policy initiatives and analyze their impact on other nations 4. Formulate solutions to various issues facing the world	1. The United States influences other governments and international organizations. 2. United States foreign policy priorities reflect American values and interests. 3. The United States has a special relationship with our neighbors in North America.
Student Learning Tasks & Resources	Suggested Teacher Materials & Resources
● Research and analyze foreign policy topics and present to the class.	● Pro-Con debate sources: ○ Cuba Embargo ○ Space Colonization



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● Read and analyze various sources on US foreign aid policy and use these sources to engage in a debate. ● Read and analyze real-life, foreign policy interventions by the US government; participate in roundtable discussion. ● Students examine the United States' role in the United Nations, and the United Nations' role in the world. They provide a written response to evaluate a new structure for the Security Council.	○ Illegal/Legal Immigration ○ DC + Puerto Rico Statehood ○ Drone Strikes ● Brookings Institute: What every American should know about foreign aid ○ Foreign Aid ● Video: Foreign Policy: Crash Course Government and Politics ● Video: United Nations Explained ● Scenarios for foreign policy intervention
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