

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 18 – Creating Laws
How does the US government make laws?

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.2, 12.4, 12.8, 12.10

MATERIALS

Current Events Presentation – Student Page
Service Requirement Check-in 2 – Student Page
Schoolhouse Rock, *I'm Just a Bill* – America Rock Video

NOTE: You can find this video in almost any video store (including any Blockbuster or other large video outlet.) Be sure that the video you get contains the song “I’m Just a Bill” and, if possible, “The Preamble” (which you will use in Lesson 18).

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To be able to roughly explain how a bill becomes a law
 - To define the difference between a bill and a law and how political beliefs might effect the process
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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Pass back graded work and have students place in the appropriate section of their binders.
 - 2) **Agenda** – Have students copy the goal, agenda, and homework onto the next clean page in a notebook.
 - 3) Current Events – Collect the overhead transparencies from the Current Events presenters for today. Below the goal/agenda, copy the titles for three current events stories that they have chosen. Have students copy these and prepare to take notes.
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ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Current Events Presentations – Have students come to the front of the class one at a time to present their articles. At the end of each presentation the students should turn in their Current Events Presentation Sheet stapled to a copy of the news article. Grades and comments should be written on the back of the Current Events Presentation Sheet and returned to the students the next lesson. Choose the presenters for the next day that current events are due immediately and give them a copy of the Current Events Presentation Sheet to complete.
2. Service Check-in – Pass out the **Service Requirement Check-in 2** and have students write in NEW service hours completed (that were not included in the last Check-in sheet – i.e. Chalk Activity). When finished, have students turn in this sheet to have their hours officially recorded.
3. Review and Video – Looking back to Unit 1 and what they have so far completed in Unit 2, tell students that they have so far studied democracy (philosophers), US democracy (Constitution and representatives), and political beliefs (liberals and conservatives – remind them here also that their interview homework regarding the chalk questions is due tomorrow). Now, they are going to combine all three to experience HOW democracy works. In order to do this, they first need to understand how our government makes laws and, more specifically, how a bill becomes a law. Later, they will experience this process firsthand. Explain that they will watch a short video on the subject and that they need to write down the seven steps (actually, you can offer

extra credit or some other incentive to anyone who could find an eighth step) for how a law is created. When students are ready, show them the video “I’m Just a Bill” on the America Rock Video.

4. Lecture on Bills – When the video is finished, ask students if anyone can give you all seven steps of a bill becoming a law. Ask if anyone can tell you the first step (someone probably can). Using the video by replaying it slowly, review the seven steps of how a bill becomes a law:
 1. An idea
 2. Bill is written and introduced (by a representative)
 3. Assigned, debated, and voted on in committee
 4. Debated and voted on in floor vote
 5. Assigned, debated, and voted on in committee of other house
 6. Debated and voted on in floor vote of other house
 7. Approved or rejected (vetoed) by President
8. If rejected, goes back to step 3 for potential override of veto.

When finished with these notes, watch the video again and ask the students where in this process political beliefs become important and how (steps 3 through 7). Starting in Lesson 20 students will begin a simulation activity where they will try to pass bills into laws. To do this they will be placed in political parties and have a party platform/agenda of beliefs. In order to participate in this simulation, however, they need to know, in detail, how a bill becomes a law and how political beliefs are involved in that process.

5. Homework – In their notebooks, have students attempt to give you a definition for the terms bill, law, and veto.
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HOMEWORK

1. Define the terms bill, law and veto.
 2. Continue service requirement work.
 3. Find three students in the school who saw the chalk questions and interview them.
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GROUP ROLES

None

DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

Unit 1

Action Plan

Persuasive Essay or Flash Argument: Why should government care...?

American Government Unit 1 Final Exam

Unit 2

Political Beliefs Project