

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 23 – Party Platform
How do you create a party platform?

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.3, 12.6, 12.8, 12.10

MATERIALS

Political Party Platform – Student Page
Current Events Presentation – Student Page
Senate Bill – Student Page

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To conduct an election of party leaders and develop a party platform
 - To discuss party strategy and goals during the Model Congress
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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** sheets 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 and give them a copy of the **Current Events Presentation** sheet to complete.
2. Model Congress Review – Using the handouts that were distributed yesterday, review the goals and process of the Model Congress Activity with the students. Explain that today they will be having party meetings, the next couple of lessons they will be going into committee meetings and in Lesson 26 they will begin to conduct floor votes and debates. At this point, have students recall what the seven steps are for a Bill to become a law. Ask them where they are in the process (at the beginning – developing an idea). In the next lesson, they will introduce a Bill (step two) and discuss it in committee (step three). Pass out additional **Senate Bills** (and/or House Bills, depending on how you have set up your model congress) to students as needed and remind them that they need to complete a minimum of two, the first one must be about their GIP issue.
3. Model Congress Activity – The goal for students today is to complete their **Political Party Platform** sheet that they started in the previous lesson. They need to elect leaders (if not already done), create an image or symbol that represents their party, and develop a party platform. If they are able to complete these tasks, then each member of the party should share with the group what Bills they are intending to write and coordinate with other party members on strategies for pushing these Bills through committee and floor votes. Discussion should be facilitated and led by the party leaders. Explain that while these meetings are happening, the Media will be passing out copies of the first newspaper (this student should make about 5 or 6 copies of the newspaper that are

distributed randomly to students each day. Remind students that the media is allowed to sit in on any conversation happening in committee though they cannot participate in discussions. If the media asks a congressperson a question or wants to interview them it is up to the congressperson to decide whether they want to answer them. They do not have to. However, the media then has the right to report that such-and-such congressperson refused to answer questions. That doesn't look good. Starting tomorrow, newspapers should be distributed before or during the warm-up activity), and the Lobbyists will begin to meet with lawmakers. When students understand what they need to do, have them get into their groups and get started.

4. Meetings – While the parties are meeting, the teacher should be working with the Lobbyists, making sure that they know what they need to do and how to do it (they need to be writing a solid and effective bill on their issue and they need to be lining up key individuals' support to push it through congress – i.e. the party leaders). If possible, the teacher should also meet with the party leaders (not the whips – remember the whips main job is to keep the party together, to “whip them into shape” by making sure they vote the party line and stay focused on party goals.) to discuss strategy with them. They need to know how much power they have (they will decide the order of bills to be discussed on floor votes) and how they can use it effectively to get their Bills passed (majority party leaders have tremendous power to pass bills only of their party. Minority party leaders do not have this power but can effectively stall or even kill bills – in committee – to thwart the majority party's dominance. This power of resistance must be used shrewdly and effectively). Impress upon them how important it is to make sure that their party stays cohesive and focused on passing Bills that benefit them (and their grade). Be sure to explain to the leaders that some issues get very heated and some students can take things personally (just like what happens in the real world because people get passionate about the things that they see as part of their belief system). It will be the party leader's job to make sure that their members stay focused on the bill rather than personal agendas and vice versa, not to take things personally that may happen to their own bills.
 5. Homework – With a couple of minutes left before the end of class, remind students of their homework and collect the **Political Party Platform** sheets from the students. Place these in the Model Congress Binder.
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HOMEWORK

1. Write at least 2 Bills for the Model Congress Activity.
 2. Continue service requirement work
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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
Ideological Plan
GIP Question Sheet
Service Requirement Check-Ins