

**NOTE – When students enter the class today, they should be sitting in their committees. Have desks/tables arranged accordingly.**

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 29 – Committee Meetings and Floor Action  
*How does democracy work?*

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TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

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ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.3, 12.4

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MATERIALS

Committee Folders – Teacher Created  
Floor Action Poster – Teacher Created  
**Current Events 4** – Student Page

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LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To experience the process of democracy by attempting to pass Bills into law
  - To develop and pursue strategies toward getting a Bill passed into law
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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Collect any newly completed Bills, quickly assign them a committee, and pass them off to the Legislative Clerk to record and distribute them to the appropriate committee. Newspapers should be distributed by the Media. 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) **Journal 8** – Answer the following questions in your binder:
    - a. Do you think the floor actions in Lessons 26 and 27 were fair and democratic? Why/Why not? Give at least 3 reasons.
    - b. If not, how would you have changed them?  
Write at least one full page.
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ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Journal Discussion – Discuss student’s answers to the warm-up question. Be sure to address students’ concerns (if any) about democracy and process. Make this point strongly to the leaders of each party; they need to make sure that their party members feel included and supportive of the party strategy in order to get their bills passed into law and therefore receive a higher grade.
2. Committee Meetings – Depending on how many Bills remain in the committees, today could be the last day for committee meetings. If many Bills remain in committee you could take time at the beginning of Lesson 30 to have committees meet again. Either way, Lesson 30 is the final day for the model congress activity, so it should be at least 50% devoted to floor debates and votes. Make sure that each group receives their Committee Folder (updated by the Legislative Clerk) and is prepared to continue their discussions. Let them know that they have only about 15 minutes to work in committees today.
3. Party/Caucus Meetings – After 15 minutes, tell students that they will have about five to ten minutes to meet in their parties or caucus’ to discuss strategies and Bill order. Remember: caucus’ are extra credit. If students want

to meet as a caucus during party meeting time, that is up to them and their party leaders to negotiate. During this time it is imperative that you work quickly to try to record committee votes on the Official Record of Bills and notify the party leaders, if possible, of what Bills can be discussed on the Floor. This is a difficult task to complete with the time constraint, but do the best you can with help from the Legislative Clerk.

4. Floor Action – With about 30 minutes left in class, have students move the desks/tables into Senate Chambers format and sit in their appropriate seats. Review the Floor Action poster with them and be sure that they have their notebooks open to the Floor Action Record chart. When students are ready, call the class to order – with the gavel! – and ask the Majority Leader which Bill they want to open for discussion. Students at this point may be anxious to start voting on Bill after Bill without discussion or debate. Though this is not illegal, warn students that it does seem questionable and that the Media would be justified to question their motives. Either way, make sure that you stay true to the process and procedures of the floor.
  5. Homework – With about 5 minutes left in class, students should quickly move into their study groups and exchange notes and information to prepare for the test in Lesson 32. Explain the homework assignments. Answer any questions.
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#### HOMEWORK

- 1) Study for model congress test.
  - 2) Continue service work.
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#### GROUP ROLES

None

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#### 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