

Sign, Sealed, Delivered You're Theirs

American Federal Government

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Grade Level	11th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	180 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

How do special interest groups affect democracy?

Summary

In this lesson, students will engage in inquiry and literary components to help gain an understanding of and define interest groups, provide examples, and analyze how they affect the political process in the United States.

Snapshot

Engage

Students engage in a Circle Maps activity to define and identify characteristics of interest groups.

Explore

Students explore the concept of interests groups by using a 3 - 2 - 1 activity to analyze their understanding.

Explain

Students complete a First Word Last Word activity to explain the meaning and characteristics of interest groups.

Extend

Students extend their understanding of interests groups by completing a Concept Card mapping activity.

Evaluate

Students are evaluated when they share out about their Concept Card mapping activity with the rest of the class. There will also be an exit ticket, which will give individuals the opportunity to display their levels of mastery.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.1.3: Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the ways governmental power is distributed, shared and structured in unitary, federal and confederal systems in terms of effectiveness, prevention of abuse of power and responsiveness to the popular will.

Attachments

- 3 – 2 – 1 Activity - Spanish.docx
- 3 – 2 – 1 Activity - Spanish.pdf
- 3 – 2 – 1 Activity.docx
- 3 – 2 – 1 Activity.pdf
- Activity Examples.pdf
- Circle Map - Spanish.docx
- Circle Map - Spanish.pdf
- Circle Map.docx
- Circle Map.pdf
- First Word Last Word - Spanish.docx
- First Word Last Word - Spanish.pdf
- First Word Last Word.docx
- First Word Last Word.pdf
- Interest Groups Concept Mapping Cause and Effect - Spanish.docx
- Interest Groups Concept Mapping Cause and Effect - Spanish.pdf
- Interest Groups Concept Mapping Cause and Effect.docx
- Interest Groups Concept Mapping Cause and Effect.pdf

Materials

- Pens, pencils, and colored pencils.
- Rulers, tape, and glue.
- Poster-sized sticky notes
- Standard sticky notes
- Concept Card Mapping Decks
- Article handouts

30 minutes

Engage

Circle Maps Activity

Divide students into groups of 3-4 based on heterogeneous grouping (groups with students at varying academic levels). Give each group a copy of the concept Circle Map (attached above).

Instruct students to write down as many adjective or descriptors for the key term "special interest group." They are also welcome to include nouns and examples that pertain to the term.

Circle Maps Activity Tip #1

Student may not have much prior knowledge for this term. Encourage them to first flush out the meanings of the individual words in the terms, followed by putting them together to establish a meaning. Then, instruct them to think outside the box about the applications it could have to American Government.

After 15 minutes of work time, have a member of each group share out the words that they have placed inside of their circles. Devote 10 minutes to this portion of the activity.

Circle Maps Activity Tip #2

As students are sharing out, use the large sticky pad to create a Circle Map to represent the entire class. It is important to already have placed sticky notes with circles in the middle.

Circle Maps Activity Tip #3

Ask each group to legitimately attempt to write down something new that they learn from another group during share out. Have them circle anything new that they add so that there is differentiation between prior and new knowledge.

4. Have the groups reconvene. Instruct them to come up with a 2-3 sentence summary of what the term "special interest groups" means. This should be written within the square on their circle maps, as well as on the sticky note that you have given them. When they have written their summary on the sticky note, the groups need to arrange sticky notes in a square around the class Circle Map.

Circle Maps Activity Tip #4

Encourage students with good penmanship to write the final sticky note summary on the sticky note.

Circle Maps Activity Tip #5

Save the poster from each class. During the next class period, have students do a Gallery Walk of the Circle Maps from each class for a Bell Ringer activity.

5. Ask students how they would summarize, or define, the term special interest group.

Explore

Have students watch the Crash Course video over interest groups, paying close attention to their circle maps activity. This video is approximately 8 minutes.

Embedded video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOvBA7oIlgc

Refer back to the definition of interest groups that students determined in the Engage activity. Ask students the questions posed in the video:

- Are interest groups good for American government? Why or why not?
- Are interest groups bad for American government? Why or why not?
- What is the relationship between PAC funds and interest groups? How does this impact Congress?

Teacher's Note

Interest groups provide information and research for busy Congressmen about an issue or industry. Depending on your viewpoint, they can shape laws and regulations that contribute positively to society. Large interest groups may exert tremendous pressure or influence on an issue which does not allow for any opposing ideas. PAC money is used to help elect or defeat members of Congress. If interest groups contribute to PACs, then Congressmen may feel some obligation to support their interests in Congress

3 - 2 - 1 Activity (30 minutes)

At the beginning of class, allow students to complete a Gallery Walk of the posters from each of your classes from the previous day. This should take 10 minutes, at the most.

Gallery Walk Tip #1

Encourage students to pay attention to similarities and differences between their Circle Map posters and the ones from your other classes.

Hand out a 3 - 2 - 1 Sheet to each student. Instruct them to answer the questions on the handout based on the previous circle maps activity and the gallery walk from the beginning of class.

3 - 2 - 1 Activity Tip #1

You have the option of taking these up as a daily grade or having students retain them for future reference.

3 - 2 - 1 Activity Tip #2

At the very end of the lesson, have students go back and answer the 2 questions they still had and add 1 thing that they found interesting about their study of special interest groups.

Ask students how they addressed each of the 3 - 2 - 1 questions.

Explain

First Word Last Word Activity (30 minutes)

Place students in groups of 3-4. Instruct student groups to create an acrostic with the term special interests. Tell the groups to construct a group of words, using the letters of "special interest" as the first or last letter in the word (example attached above) that connect to, represent, or help define the term. Students will only be doing the first word side at this time.

First Word Last Word Activity Tip #1

You may revisit the groups from the Circle Map activity or you may construct completely new groups, based on your need for the class on that particular day.

First Word Last Word Activity Tip #2

Students will revisit the last word portion of the activity during the final evaluation stage of the lesson.

Ask students how they assigned descriptors to the term. Also, ask them what prior knowledge they brought to the activity.

Extend

Students will read the CBS News' article, "When it comes to lobbying, one group stands out." As they read, have students jot down on a separate sheet of paper the impact of big business interest groups.

Have a class discussion about the reading.

1. What [did you write down] is the impact of big business interest groups lobbying Congress?
2. Whose voice is not heard in the lobbying efforts?
3. For example if Google is exerting their influence (and spending money) on Congress, what might be a consequence of their efforts?
4. If the ordinary citizen is no longer listened to because of special interest groups, how can they make their voices heard?

Concept Card Mapping Activity (60 minutes)

Teacher's Note

It is very important to express to students that the hypothetical situations presented in this activity are based on real events.

Still in their groups of 3-4, hand out sets of the Concept Mapping Cards (attached above).

Concept Card Mapping Activity Tip #1

Print out a copy of these cards for each group. Laminate them to help preserve them for future use and preserve paper. You may also want to store decks in a sandwich bag or box.

Concept Card Mapping Activity Tip #2

Each deck will consist of cards with details outlining situations that could hypothetically occur in the American political system because of the influence of special interest groups. There will also be arrow cards for students to place between situation cards to represent the cause and effect relationship. There will be a total of 3 situations represented.

Instruct student groups to sort the cards using cause and effect. There will be multiple possible outcomes, so encourage students to be ready to justify their reasoning. It is possible for groups to have similar responses.

Once students have completed each situation, ask them to write 1 positive and 1 negative outcome of each situation.

Ask students how they arrived logically at their conclusions about the hypothetical situations.

Evaluate

Last Word Activity (15 minutes)

Hand out, or have students retrieve their First Word Last Word Activity pages. Instruct them to complete the Last Word side in light of the additional information. Students will turn in the final product when they are completed.

Revisit 3 - 2 - 1 Activity Tip #2

At the very end of the lesson, have students go back and answer the 2 questions they still had and add 1 thing that they found interesting about their study of special interest groups.

Exit Ticket Activity (5 minutes)

Have students fill out the exit ticket slip to answer the question "to what extent do interest groups advance and harm democracy?"

Exit Ticket Activity Tip #1

Depending on the class, you may also wish to ask students to give you examples of how interest groups advance and harm democracy.

Some exit ticket questions may include...

- What role do interest groups have in influencing public policy?
- How has the American tradition of joining organization resulted in a wide range of interest groups?
- How does lobbying bring group pressures to bear on the process of making public policy?

If you need remediation you can reteach the content or refer students to the following website to help them reach mastery.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Circle Maps. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5071a7c
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505a54d
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5059a7b
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell Ringers and Exit Tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505d6f2
- K20 Center. (n.d.). First Word Last Word. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5069e86
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Concept Card Mapping. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/123
- Hays, R. Allen. (2001) Democracy Papers the Role of Interest Groups. Routledge/Political Science University of Northern Iowa. Retrieved from http://www.ait.org.tw/infousa/zhtw/docs/demopaper/dmpaper9.html
- CBS News. (2015). When It Comes to Lobbying, One Group Stands Out. http://www.cbsnews.com/news/when-it-comes-to-lobbying-one-group-stands-out/
- Crash Course (2015) Interest Groups. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOvBA7oIlgc