Strengthening Our Democracy: Civic Participation in the 21st Century

*High School Civics Curriculum*

**Chapters**

1. About the Curriculum
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**ABOUT THE CURRICULUM**

We anticipate having the full curriculum available late September 2020. A selection of lessons are featured on an ADL website hosted by Bites Media.

[VIEW LESSON SELECTION]
**Strengthening Our Democracy: Civic Participation in the 21st Century** is a comprehensive one-semester curriculum for high school Civics educators. It includes 80 timely lesson plans that encourage students to understand their role in government and society and to actively engage in their communities. The curriculum meets C3, Common Core and various state standards.

Teach the entire curriculum over a semester or teach individual lessons to supplement other curriculum.

**Why Our Curriculum?**

*Strengthening Our Democracy* is designed to help students deepen their civic participation by understanding and challenging the biases that perpetuate social injustice. The goal of the curriculum is to facilitate productive discussion of controversial or difficult topics while enabling students to explore their civic engagement and identities through an anti-bias and social justice lens. ADL brings a unique and valuable perspective and qualifications to the Civics classroom, stressing the values of respect, diversity and active participation as the pillars of a democratic society. ADL, with our history of civil rights work and principles of anti-bias learning, has a deep understanding of democratic systems and the need for informed participation and respectful dialogue.

**ANTI-BIAS APPROACH TO CIVICS**

**Why combine anti-bias and civics education?**

When the ultimate purpose of civic learning is for students to promote democratic ideals and create a more just world at every level of society, ADL believes that introducing anti-bias education will support teachers and students in reaching that goal.

ADL’s anti-bias education engages students in actively challenging prejudice, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination and fosters an equitable school climate that is safe, inclusive and respectful—a learning environment in which all
community members, including students, seek to understand and appreciate diverse experiences and perspectives. ADL views these principles and practices as foundational to developing empathy and a civic disposition that is open to the experiences and viewpoints of others, and essential in a world that is both increasingly diverse and divided.

ADL believes **civic learning** should:

- Enable students to build **civic knowledge** of government structures and processes in a global context.
- Incorporate SEL to inspire a **civic disposition** characterized by empathy and a sense of civic responsibility.
- Develop essential civic skills such as critical thinking, research, media literacy and communication to support informed **civic participation** and advocacy.
- Explore the complexity of individual and group **identity**.
- Interpret **differences** through the lenses of language and culture.
- Examine and challenge **bias**.
- Understand power, privilege and **systemic discrimination**.
- Take **action** that fosters **equity** and **social justice**.