Strengthening Our Democracy High School Civics Curriculum

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OVERVIEW

Full Curriculum Coming Soon!

*Strengthening Our Democracy: Civic Participation in the 21st Century* is a comprehensive and flexible one-semester curriculum for high school students.
Educators can use the curriculum to help students explore their civic engagement and examine complex topics through an anti-bias lens.

A selection of lessons are featured here now. Check back again for updates.

UNIT 1. A CIVIC MINDSET

Lessons

LESSON PLAN

Civics and the United States of America
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Students examine the many meanings of the word “American” and describe what goes into a successful, engaging, meaningful civics education.
Creating a Brave Space
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn what a brave space is, and pledge an action towards creating and/or participating in a brave space classroom.

Implicit Bias
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Understanding bias and discrimination is integral to civics education because it relates to our civil rights. Students explore implicit bias and self-reflect about situations in which they have experienced or encountered everyday type of bias.
LESSON PLAN

**Dialogue vs. Debate: Philosophical Chairs**

Civics Lesson

HIGH SCHOOL

Students will gain skills for engaging in civil discourse while creating brave spaces for themselves, and those around them.
About Unit 2

Learning Outcomes

Lessons

LESSON PLAN

Amending the Constitution
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn about how the Constitution affected persons who were not of the same demographics as the Founding Fathers. They will also discuss the ease and difficulty of making amendments to the Constitution.

LESSON PLAN

What's a Bill?
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL
Students' understanding of the fundamentals of laws in the U.S. begins with understanding the difference between rules and laws and their pivotal relationship to bills.

LESSON PLAN

Writing a Bill
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Submitting a bill for consideration by the legislature involves writing, revising and sharing bills with a focus on passing them in a Senate hearing. Students brainstorm to identify changes they believe are important for improving their school community.
LESSON PLAN

Gaining Momentum: Lobbying for Change
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn about advocacy and how to effectively lobby for the issues they are passionate about.
Understanding the concept of government is vital for understanding how the world functions. In small groups, students depict one form of government using creativity and imagination to help their classmates understand multiple forms of government.
Students analyze the history of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), marriage equality in the United States, and the repeal of DOMA.

Students compare each form of government and assigned powers, and consider which form of government has the most power to address issues, including those of equity and social justice, in their communities and lives.
What is privilege and how does it impact the criminal justice system? Students reflect on the killing of Michael Brown through the lens of race, privilege and power and examine the various levels of racial disparities in the criminal justice system.
An increasing number of people are calling for an end to the Electoral College. Teach high students about the Electoral College and its origins, as well as the more contemporary movement advocating for the National Popular Vote and the interstate compact that would support it.
After every election, people wonder how many people showed up at the polls to vote. Students learn about strategies and practices for increasing voter turnout by making it more accessible.

One of the most outspoken proponents of the 15th Amendment was Frederick Douglass, a national leader of the abolitionist movement after escaping slavery. Students will analyze Douglass’s speech, "What the Black Man Wants," and his argument for why Black men should have the right to vote.
Students will discover what Universal Human Rights are and make connections to their own communities and experiences.
Students learn about two young activists, Stokely Carmichael and Ruby Bridges, and the contributions they made to the Civil Rights Movement.

Felony disenfranchisement can impact elections and local laws in a variety of ways. High school students learn about felony disenfranchisement, discuss the pros and cons and whether it should remain intact.

**LESSON PLAN**

**Felony Disenfranchisement**

Civics Lesson

HIGH SCHOOL

Felony disenfranchisement can impact elections and local laws in a variety of ways. High school students learn about felony disenfranchisement, discuss the pros and cons and whether it should remain intact.
UNIT 5. IDENTITY & MEMBERSHIP

Lessons

LESSON PLAN

Entering the United States
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Students will learn the various ways people enter the U.S. and will hear first-hand accounts of those with Green Card status.
LESSON PLAN

**Anti-Immigrant Sentiment**

Civics Lessons
HIGH SCHOOL

Teach students about historical and current immigration policies and how anti-immigrant bias, nativism and nationalism have impacted these policies in the United States.
Lessons
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL

Adding Up the Points: Merit-Based Immigration Policy

What is merit-based immigration policy and how does it works? Teach students about merit-based immigration while calculating their points based on Trump's RAISE Act.

UNIT 6. MEDIA LITERACY

About Unit 6

Learning Outcomes

Lessons

#Activism
Civics Lesson
HIGH SCHOOL
Teach students about the benefits and drawbacks of hashtag activism while developing their own position on its effectiveness.

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**LESSON PLAN**

**What is an Algorithm?**

Civics Lesson

HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn what algorithms are, how they work and how they impact our daily lives, and consider questions like: Is an algorithm always reliable when it predicts human behavior? Is it ethical to use an algorithm to make a critical decision about another person's life?
Students curate a digital storyboard using a variety of media sources relating to a social justice issue. The curation will reflect how perspective and bias are seen in various sources on the selected issue.