

Title: “A Government Born,” Fred R. Bloch, St. Mary’s County Public Schools

Content Area: Government

MSDE Goal: Political Systems

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and current status of principles, institutions, and processes of political systems.

MSDE Expectation

1.1: The student will demonstrate understanding of the structure and functions of government and politics in the United States.

MSDE Indicator

1.1.1 The student will analyze historic documents to determine the basic principles of United States government and apply them to real-world situations.

Objective

Students will analyze the origins and development of the United States political system from the late 18th century to the present.

Materials Needed / Resources for Teacher Preparation

- Website: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/demo.htm> you may choose to read through several of the links to become familiar with early documents of American Government.
- Characteristics of a Government worksheet (2 sets)
- Graphic organizer

Student Preparation

You may choose from the below assignments

1. Read text
2. Assigned readings from <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/demo.htm>
3. Define key terms
Government, Democracy, Anarchy, Delegate, Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, Independence Hall

Lesson Development

Students will be creating a mock government. This requires the educator to be a mediator as opposed to active hands-on instructor. The students should be given a wide range of leverage to explore, make mistakes, and find success.

Review/ Motivation

Characteristics of a Government worksheet

Give students five minutes to complete and collect the day before the lesson.

Activity

(Day 1)

Read to students:

“ Welcome to the conference to establish a new government in room _____. It is your goal to write and establish a working, and effective government by the close of the conference on

_____. I am here to answer any questions you might have, but cannot dictate the rules and regulations of your government. The people of _____ are eagerly waiting your results.

You may choose to take on the role of Ben Franklin, but be sure to establish that you are there as the “sage” to offer occasional advice. It may also be helpful at times to conference with key leaders to offer your “sage” advice.

The class now self-organizes into process.
(approximately 30 minutes)

Bring the class together to discuss the process they used.

Summary

1. What was good about the process?
2. What was bad about the process?
3. Do you think your government will be effective? Why or why not?
4. What problems did you face?
5. How did you compromise?
6. Did the class resemble the Continental Congress?
7. What problems did the CC face and how did they compromise?

Conclusion

Characteristics of a Government worksheet, 2nd copy

After completing, pass back first sheet they had handed in previously. Ask students to write a paragraph as to why they changed or kept selections.

Thoughtful Application / Assessment

In small groups do the following activities:

Create a graphic organizer detailing the steps the class took to create government

Using the text book create a graphic organizer detailing the steps the Continental Congress took to create government

Write a RAFT:

Role: Member of Continental Congress

Audience: Constituency

Form: Letter to editor

Topic: Steps taken to establish a new American Government, and why it is important