

Name of Unit: Camp Civilization
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Duration: 6 weeks
Level: Middle School

Core standard and benchmarks:

Standard 6: Students will understand why societies create and adopt systems of governance and how these systems address human needs, rights, and citizen responsibilities.

Benchmarks: 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 6g, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 7e, 7f, 7g. Possibly 2f, 3e, 3f, 3g, 3j, 4b, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8c, 8d (see possible extensions.)

Core topics or themes: types of government, roles and responsibilities of citizens.

Supporting benchmarks and content topics: Benchmarks as above. Content topics: use governments of the ancient world as a basis, focusing on Greek forms of government. Compare with modern governments, particularly those in your region or in countries of student origin. Compare Greek law with Mesopotamian and Roman law.

Driving Questions:

What are forms of government existed in the ancient world? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these forms of government? What are the responsibilities of government? What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens? Optional: How does technology affect society? What is culture, and how can we observe it? How does geography affect society?

Culminating Assessment:

Students should form their own government as a class or as groups of 10 or more within a class, depending on class size. For their culminating assessment, have students obtain leaders and set up a government structure, write laws and plan for law enforcement, then self-govern during a camping trip of one night's duration. They will be graded on their individual journals as well as on how well their government functions as a whole.

Instructional Activities: Week 1: Read about the main forms of government in ancient Greece, including monarchy, tyranny, democracy, and oligarchy (textbook or encyclopedia.) Have students plan costumes and a tableau to represent one form of government; record with a digital camera. Week 2: Use tableau photos as the basis for an informational poster or power point presentation on a form of government- advantages, disadvantages, examples in the modern and ancient world. Week 3: Randomly assign classes or large groups with one form of government and have them determine leadership and other roles/bodies within the government. Each group should have a faculty advisor and a parent to serve as an "elder," in an advisory but non-leadership position. Teach about the structures of ancient governments (textbook.) Week 4: Teach about ancient laws, comparing Hammurabi's law code, Athenian law, and Roman law. Have students create their own laws, and determine a plan for law enforcement. Week 5: Use software such as Tom Snyder's Decisions, Decisions: Town Government, to provide students experience with problem solving and expose them to modern government structures.

Teach about modern government structures using organizational charts and newspapers. Have students obtain shelter for the camping trip. Meet with elders to plan food and supplies for the camping trip, ensuring that no group is self-sufficient in resources. For example, one group should have sandwich fillings, but no bread. One group might only have milk to drink while another group has a surplus of soda. In your analysis, food will represent natural resources. Remember that junk food always represents wealth. Week 6: Discuss the human rights and needs vs. wants of individuals vs. groups. Have students plan how to meet special needs of their groups, such as dietary needs or the needs of handicapped students. Develop rubrics with students on effective governments. Take students camping. Elders should facilitate trade, ensure safety, and take note of behaviors that might affect grades. Students should plan for meetings within their countries and will probably find it necessary to arrange for meetings of heads of state. Have students complete journal questions designed to assess student understanding of the standards, and discuss these concepts as a follow up to the camping trip. Possible extensions to the government concepts being formed include the following: distribute technology such as matches, charcoal, knives, and can openers unevenly, and help students to extrapolate standards related to science and technology. Have governments develop and display a culture so they can extrapolate standards related to culture. In the event of a “natural disaster” such as heavy rain, have students extrapolate about standards related to the international effects of natural disaster. Since some campsites will be more desirable than others, you may have the opportunity to help students make the connection between geography and human events. Allow the possibility of migration to introduce immigration impetus, policies, and procedures. It’s possible to extend this unit to include mathematics by allowing students to budget for their own meals; however, you’d have to find some way to ensure that students misspend or that certain supplies do not arrive so that trade takes place. Basically, extend this unit in any direction to reinforce concepts from previous units or to introduce concepts for future units. Note: It is useful to have the school pay for the camping trip and journals to ensure that everyone can attend and is properly supplied. It’s also useful if students have a background in current events to form a basis of understanding issues related to modern governments. It’s also wise to have certain basic safety guidelines that all participating students must respect, with the punishment being banishment from the camping trip.

Assessment

Journal Entries: The following can be rated with a check, check plus, or check minus. Students should self assess, then meet with the teacher to discuss the final grade. Keep a separate record to determine whether students have met the standards addressed in each question.

_____ I show that I can answer all parts of a question and answer in depth.

_____ I give examples for what I claim.

_____ I can use examples from ancient and modern governments.

_____ I can honestly reflect on my own behavior as well as the behavior of others.

Civilization Grades: It is best to develop a rubric with students on the traits of an effective government. However, it's wise to ensure that the following points are addressed:

_____ The government maintains smooth relations with other governments.

_____ The government has created useful and effective laws, and enforces them fairly.

_____ The government attends to human rights.

_____ The government maintains basic hygiene in the campgrounds.

_____ The government trades effectively.