

Lesson Title: Laws in Daily Life

Subjects

U.S. Government, Civics, Geography, Economics

Suggested Time

One 50-minute class period + homework

Grade Level

7-12

Essential Question

How do government regulations affect ordinary people's daily lives?

Objective

To help students understand the vast scope of U.S. laws regulating trade, production, and consumption, and the effects of local, state, and national regulations on many aspects of their daily lives.

Overview

The *We The Voters* films “Foreign Entanglements” and “Regulation Song” illustrate the vast number of regulations that govern trade, production, consumption, and usage in the United States. To model the scope of these laws, the class reviews a selection of the trade regulations, manufacturing laws, and food labels that come into play in a can of chili. Students then keep a 24-hour diary that documents the effects of local, state, and national regulations in every aspect of their lives. An extension activity sends students on a home tour to document the imports that fill their homes.

Materials

- *We The Voters* film “Foreign Entanglements”
- *We The Voters* film “Regulation Song”
- Copies of Student Handouts
 - Handout #1: Consider Chili
 - Handout #2: The “State” of Your Life

Procedure

Warm-up Activity: Brainstorm as a class what Americans ate 100 years ago vs. today, for example:

100 Years Ago	Today
Seasonal, local fruits and vegetables	Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables from all around the world
Bakery bread	Packaged, sliced bread
Freshly caught fish	Frozen fish
Etc.	Etc.

Film Viewing: Play the *We The Voters* film “Foreign Entanglements,” which features Canadian comedian David Milchard asking Americans why they care so little about foreign policy, and helping us understand the implication of international relations for life in the U.S. Then, play the *We The Voters* film “Regulation Song,” a music-video tribute to government rules poking bipartisan fun at our contradictory attitudes toward freedom and safety.

Consider Chili Activity: Distribute Handout #1: Consider Chili. Project a graphic of a can of Hormel Chili for the class to look at together, if desired. Then, read through the U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations on the handout. Discuss the questions on page 2 of the handout as a class, projecting your computer screen as you look up the answers to the questions on ingredients from around the world, if desired.

Diary Activity (Homework): Assign Handout #2: The “State” of Your Life, a 24-hour diary that begins right then in the classroom: state education regulations often include the requirement that students take a semester of Government, or a year of U.S. History, to receive their diplomas.

Extension Activity

1. Consider assigning a home scavenger hunt where students photograph the labels on imports in their homes. Photographs of these items (clothing items, foods, electronics, etc.) pinned to a large world map can make a colorful bulletin board.

Standards

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.7-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information

Standards from Social Studies for the Next Generation: the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework

D2Civ.5.9-12 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.

D2Civ.9.9-12 Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings.

D2Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

National Standards for Civics and Government (Center for Civic Education)

Major responsibilities of the national government in domestic and foreign policy: Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy. To achieve this standard, students should be able to:

- explain the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic policy and how domestic policies affect their everyday lives and their community
- explain the major responsibilities of the national government for foreign policy and how foreign policies, including trade policy and national security, affect their everyday lives and their community
- evaluate competing arguments about the proper role of government in major areas of domestic and foreign policy, e.g., health care, education, child care, regulation of business and industry, foreign aid, intervention abroad