

The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary for the American Government/Civics Social Studies Course.

<b>American Government/Civics - Unit Number 1- Connecting Themes</b>	
<b>Elaborated Unit Focus</b>	This unit provides students with the building blocks and vocabulary to be successful in American Government/Civics. Students will examine the concepts of Beliefs and Ideals, Conflict and Change/Conflict Resolution, Distribution of Power, Governance, Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, and Rule of Law.
<b>Connection to Connecting Theme/Enduring Understandings</b>	This Unit serves as an introduction to American Government/Civics. Over the course of the year, students will expand on the knowledge this unit introduces as the connecting themes are more fully developed throughout the course.
<b>GSE for Social Studies (standards and elements)</b>	This Unit serves as introduction for American Government/Civics. It introduces students to concepts that will be needed to understand the GSE Standards in subsequent units.
<b>Connection to Literacy Standards for Social Studies (reading and/or writing)</b>	<p>This unit will utilize the following skills:</p> <p><b>L9-10RHSS4-</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.</p> <p><b>L9-10RHSS5-</b> Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.</p>
<b>Connection to Social Studies Matrices (information processing and/or map and globe skills)</b>	<p><b>This unit will utilize the following Information Processing Skills:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare similarities and differences</li> <li>2. Organize items chronologically</li> <li>3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternate solutions</li> <li>14. Formulate appropriate research questions.</li> </ol> <p><b>This unit will utilize the following Map and Globe Skills:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Compare and contrast categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps</li> <li>12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.</li> </ol>

## Essential Questions and Related Supporting/Guiding Questions

<b>Enduring Understanding 1- Beliefs and Ideals</b>	<p>How do beliefs and ideals of a society influence the social, political, and economic decisions of that society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do family and friends influence an individual's beliefs and ideals?</li> <li>• How does an individual's values or beliefs influence the friends they choose?</li> <li>• How do politics and government influence an individual's beliefs and ideals?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding 2- Conflict and Change</b>	<p>How are legal procedures, force, and compromise used in societies to resolve conflicts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do family members and friends resolve conflict?</li> <li>• What advantages and disadvantages are there to different forms of conflict resolution?</li> <li>• How do governments/countries approach conflict resolution?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding 3- Distribution of Power</b>	<p>How do documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs influence the distribution of power in the United States?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is power structured within families?</li> <li>• What are the advantages and disadvantages of having power distributed versus having one person/entity making all decisions for a country?</li> <li>• How does the United States' Constitution outline the distribution of power?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding 4- Governance</b>	<p>What is the most effective way to govern?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are school's governed?</li> <li>• How are families governed?</li> <li>• How did federalism and a system of checks and balances develop as central elements of the United States' governing process?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding 5- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions</b>	<p>How do the decisions of individuals, groups, and institutions impact a society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can an individual's decisions differ when they are alone versus when they are in a group?</li> <li>• How does societal pressure influence the decisions of individuals, groups, and institutions?</li> <li>• How do an individual's decisions impact those around them?</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Understanding 6 - Rule of Law</b>	<p>How does the rule of law in a democracy influence society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are laws accepted by society even though they at times limit the actions of individuals?</li> <li>• What are some advantages and disadvantages to having your rules and laws written?</li> <li>• How do you think that rules and regulations influence the decisions that you make?</li> </ul>

## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Beliefs and Ideals

Using primary documents, students will understand how the beliefs and ideals of the founding fathers created a framework for American beliefs and ideals.

<b>GSE Standards and Elements</b>	n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.
<b>Literacy Standards</b>	<p><b>L9-10RHSS4 –</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.</p> <p><b>L9-10RHSS5 –</b> Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.</p>
<b>Social Studies Matrices</b>	<p><b>Map and Globe Skills:</b></p> <p>4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps</p> <p>12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.</p> <p><b>Information Processing Skills:</b></p> <p>1. Compare similarities and differences</p> <p>2. Organize items chronologically</p> <p>3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions</p> <p>14. Formulate appropriate research questions.</p>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s)</b>	Beliefs and Ideals

**ACTIVITY:**

Students will research primary documents, including the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, and Petition of Rights, to discover early philosophies that eventually became the foundation of the United States Constitution.

After reviewing the primary documents, students will develop a chart that organizes the early principles of democracy that the Founding Fathers incorporated, from each of the three documents, into the Constitution.

The following websites offer access to primary documents for this activity:

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/1215-magna-carta>

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/england.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/england.asp)

<http://www.constitution.org/eng/petright.htm>

<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Constitution.html>

## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Conflict & Change and Conflict Resolution

Using online research and resources, students will identify the different methods used to resolve conflicts; they will gain an appreciation for the value of effective communication in resolving conflicts.

**GSE Standards and Elements**

n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.

**Literacy Standards**

**L9-10RHSS4 –**  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**L9-10RHSS5 –** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**Social Studies Matrices**

**Map and Globe Skills:**

4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps

12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.

**Information Processing Skills:**

1. Compare similarities and differences

2. Organize items chronologically

3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions

14. Formulate appropriate research questions.

**Enduring Understanding(s)**

Conflict & Change  
Conflict Resolution

Activity:

1. Ensure that students understand the vocabulary.

Students first need to understand the nuts and bolts of communication before they can apply their skills. Some kids might not experience healthy communication at home and will need to be taught the different forms and strategies on paper before being able to recognize and employ them in real-life scenarios.

2. Have them watch an example of conflict resolution.

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/personalhealth/conflictresolution/>

3. Have them write and perform their own conflict resolution skits.

As a class, brainstorm conflicts relevant to high schoolers—which can involve friends, parents, teachers, or siblings—and then split the class into groups. (Side note: Randomly assigning these groups helps students strengthen their communication skills by speaking with peers they might not know very well.)

Together, students will write and rehearse “before-and-after” style skits that demonstrate an ineffective way of dealing with a problem, followed by a more ideal, effective solution.

<http://choices.scholastic.com/blog/teaching-teens-how-communicate-resolve-conflict>

## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Distribution of Power

Using charts, students will investigate the distribution of power in a federal structure of government, such as the one in the United States.

**GSE Standards and Elements**

n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.

**Literacy Standards**

**L9-10RHSS4 –**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**L9-10RHSS5 –**

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**Social Studies Matrices**

**Map and Globe Skills:**

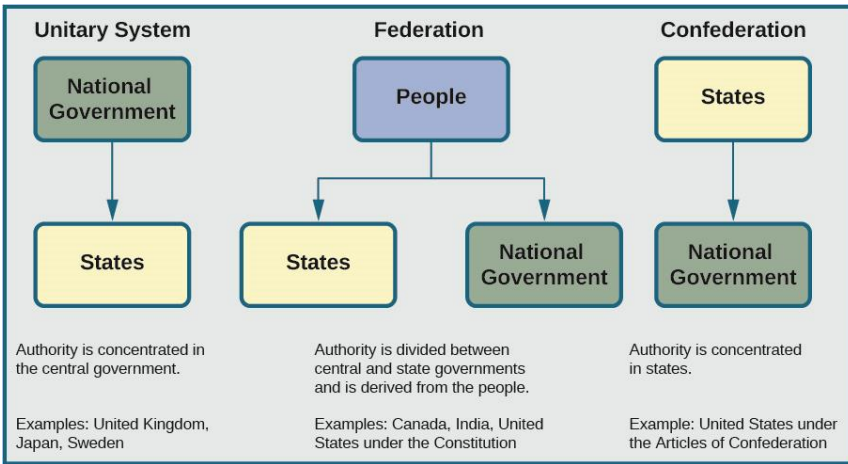
- 4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps
- 12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.

**Information Processing Skills:**

- 1. Compare similarities and differences
- 2. Organize items chronologically
- 3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions
- 14. Formulate appropriate research questions.

**Enduring Understanding(s)**

Distribution of Power



<http://cnx.org/contents/bM6m3W4V@3/The-Division-of-Powers>

Federal Government	State Government	
<p><b>Enumerated Powers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coin money</li> <li>Regulate interstate and foreign commerce</li> <li>Conduct foreign affairs</li> <li>Establish rules of naturalization</li> <li>Punish counterfeiting</li> <li>Establish copyright/patent laws</li> <li>Regulate postal system</li> <li>Establish courts inferior to Supreme Court</li> <li>Declare war</li> <li>Raise and support armies</li> <li>Make all laws "necessary and proper" to carry out responsibilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Powers Denied</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tax state exports</li> <li>Change state boundaries</li> <li>Violate the Bill of Rights</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concurrent Powers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levy and collect taxes</li> <li>Borrow money</li> <li>Make and enforce laws</li> <li>Establish courts</li> <li>Charter banks and corporations</li> <li>Take property for public purpose with just compensation (eminent domain)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reserved Powers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulate intrastate commerce</li> <li>Conduct elections</li> <li>Provide for public health, safety, welfare, and morals</li> <li>Establish local governments</li> <li>Maintain militia (National Guard)</li> <li>Ratify amendments to the Constitution</li> </ul> <p><b>Powers Denied</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tax imports and exports</li> <li>Coin money</li> <li>Enter into treaties</li> <li>Impair obligation of contracts</li> <li>Abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens or deny due process and equal protection of the laws</li> </ul>

<http://cnx.org/contents/bM6m3W4V@3/The-Division-of-Powers#rf-007>

**Based on the charts above,  
students should develop a definition of "Distribution of Power."**

## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Governance

Using journal articles on the topic of governance, students will compare and contrast the different structures of governance for a minimum of three countries.

**GSE Standards and Elements**

n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.

**Literacy Standards**

**L9-10RHSS4 –**  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**L9-10RHSS5 –**  
Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**L9-10WHST4 –**  
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Social Studies Matrices**

**Map and Globe Skills:**

4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps

12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.

**Information Processing Skills:**

1. Compare similarities and differences

2. Organize items chronologically

3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions

14. Formulate appropriate research questions.

**Enduring Understanding(s)**

Governance

Introduce the concept of governance by showing the class the following Crash Course video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrk4oY7UxpQ&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvfffeelTrqvhrz8H>

**Activity:** Students will use the following websites to research journal articles or newspaper websites for this activity:

[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

[www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

[www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)

After conducting research and identifying their sources, students will compose an essay. They will compare and contrast the type of governance for the three countries chosen as part of their research. One country must be the

United States. They may choose the other two countries. The essay will be a minimum of three pages. The following is a rubric that may be used to guide students in the expectations and requirements of this activity:

## Comparison and Contrast Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Purpose &amp; Supporting Details</b>	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is general. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is incomplete. The paper may include information that is not relevant to the comparison.	The paper compares or contrasts, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.
<b>Organization &amp; Structure</b>	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities -to-differences, or point-by-point structure. It follows a consistent order when discussing the comparison.	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities -to-differences, or point-by-point structure but does not follow a consistent order when discussing the comparison.	The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities -to-differences, or point-by-point structure, but some information is in the wrong section. Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
<b>Transitions</b>	The paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas. The paper uses a variety of sentence structures and transitions.	The paper moves from one idea to the next, but there is little variety. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas.	Some transitions work well; but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent.
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling (Conventions)</b>	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.



## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

Using research, students will discover examples of how decisions and actions by individuals, groups, and institutions affect society through intended and unintended consequences.

**GSE Standards and Elements**

n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.

**Literacy Standards**

**L9-10RHSS4 –**  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**L9-10RHSS5 –**  
Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**Social Studies Matrices**

**Map and Globe Skills:**

- 4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps
- 12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.

**Information Processing Skills:**

- 1. Compare similarities and differences
- 2. Organize items chronologically
- 3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions
- 12. Formulate appropriate research questions.

**Enduring Understanding(s)**

Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

**Activity:**

Students will conduct research on how individuals, groups, and institutions can affect society through intended and unintended consequences. Each student will develop his or her own list of examples. After students are provided ample time to conduct the research, they will take turns listing their examples on a chart developed by the teacher; this chart will be on a white board. The teacher may also choose to put up one chart for each of the three categories in different areas of the classroom. The chart headings will be: "Individuals," "Groups," and "Institutions." Based on the results, the teacher will utilize the Socratic Method to engage students in a discussion of the findings and how/why they are relevant to this topic. Some of the expected responses may include:

- Individuals – voting, protesting, running for office
- Groups – lobbyists, protests, campaign contributions
- Institutions – laws, Supreme Court decisions, treaties, military intervention

## Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

### Concepts in American Government: Rule of Law

Using the Rule of Law principles listed below, students will determine how the Rule of Law in the United States is central to our democracy.

<b>GSE Standards and Elements</b>	n/a – This unit teaches terms and vocabulary that will be used to help students understand themes found in the American Government/Civics GSE Standards.
<b>Literacy Standards</b>	<p><b>L9-10RHSS4 –</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.</p> <p><b>L9-10RHSS5 –</b> Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.</p>
<b>Social Studies Matrices</b>	<p><b>Map and Globe Skills:</b> 4. Compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps 12. Use geographic technology and software to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities.</p> <p><b>Information Processing Skills:</b> 1. Compare similarities and differences 2. Organize items chronologically 3. Identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions 12. Formulate appropriate research questions.</p>
<b>Enduring Understanding(s)</b>	Rule of Law

**Activity:**

Students will be divided into groups of three or four. Using the "Rule of Law Principles" listed below, students will create three talking points. After the groups finish their list of talking points, the teacher will ask for each group to present one talking point to the rest of the class. Discussion on each point will be limited to 5 minutes. The teacher will serve to mediate and control the process. If a talking point is duplicated, the next group's talking point will be discussed.

**RULE OF LAW PRINCIPLES**

- Law provides communal order, stability, and restraint
- Law reflects the will of the people and guarantees their civil rights
- Citizens consent to the laws and agree to obey them
- Government and its officials are bound by the law and are answerable to the people for their actions
- The laws are interpreted and applied fairly and equally to all people
- The rule of law is the bedrock for democratic civil societies: Democracy cannot exist without the rule of law
- The principles of the rule of law trace their origins through the philosophies and writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Baron de Montesquieu, and Jean Jacques Rousseau
- Embedded in any definition of the rule of law is the concept of a compact, contract, or agreement between the people and the government that the government will act fairly and equitably to preserve and protect the rights, freedoms, property and liberty of the individual and the community
- There should be an independent judiciary and legal system accessible to all people
- For the rule of law to function effectively, it must be codified in a constitution that sets the limits of government action and provides for a separation of powers to avoid any one branch of the government from exerting too much power over the government and the citizens
- Good government requires citizens to be actively engaged in the democratic process
- The rule of law principles of stability, certainty, and equality are the foundation for economic and commercial freedom
- The concept of self-determination is a basic principle of the rule of law
- Laws should not be retroactive an individual may not be punished for a law that did not exist in the past
- The rule of law acknowledges that individuals are born with certain fundamental rights natural rights that government may not take away from them: Life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
- *Liberty* is defined as individual independence and autonomy; *freedom* is defined as the individual rights people enjoy as members of the community, state, and nation

<http://www.thecenterforruleoflaw.org/teacher-resources.html>