

Sample Social Studies Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Rule of Law: Laws are made to keep people safe and explain what the government can and cannot do.

Students will understand the basics of state and national government, as well as the need for rules and laws in society.

Essential Question:

Why do we have rules and laws?

- a. How are the rules at home different from school rules?
- b. Who makes the rules?
- c. How are leaders chosen?
- d. Where do elected officials work and why is that important?

Standard Alignment

SS2CG1 Define the concept of government and the need for rules and laws.

SS2CG2 Identify the following elected officials of the executive branch and where they work:

- a. President (leader of our nation) and Washington, D.C. – White House
- b. Governor (leader of our state) and Atlanta, GA – State Capitol Building
- c. Mayor (leader of a city) and city hall

Connection to Literacy Standards for Social Studies and Social Studies Matrices

ELAGSE2W6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of tools to produce and publish writing, including digital tools and collaboration with peers.

ELAGSE2W7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

ELAGSE2W8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

ELAGSE2SL2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from written texts read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

ELAGSE2SL3: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

ELAGSE2SL4: Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

ELAGSE2SL6: Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

ELAGSE2L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

ELAGSE2L2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

ELAGSE2L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Map and Globe Skills-

6 (use map key/legend to acquire information from historical, physical, political, resource, product, and economic maps)

7 (use a map to explain impact of geography on historical and current events)

Information Processing Skills –

1 (compare similarities and differences)

4 (distinguish between fact and opinion)

5 (identify main idea, detail, sequence of events, and cause and effect in a social studies context)

6 (identify and use primary and secondary sources)

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline and will cross over several days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See bottom of lesson for list of unplugged supplies.

***The power point will need to be updated with the Mayor of your city.**

***Introduce the vocabulary as you teach each section, using the cards provided.**

Launching Government Unit:

Part 1: Laws and Rules

**There are multiple opportunities to explore rules and laws in this session. Use your teacher judgement to decide how many of these your students will need.*

In a live or recorded session, ask students if we need rules and laws. Discuss as a class. Read Clark the Shark written by Bruce Hale and illustrated by Guy Francis or watch it on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgZRMptA0Lk>. Have students think about all the places they go. Are there rules there? Together, complete the Who Makes the Rules? chart.

Ask these guiding questions.

Who makes the rules in the ---? Who enforces the rules? Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes the wrongdoers? What are the consequences for not following rules?

Review classroom rules. Now ask students to think about what the classroom would be like without those rules. Have a few students share. Then ask students to think about the laws for their city/state. Now ask



students to think about what it would be like to live in their city/state without those laws. Have a few students share.

Explain that rules and laws are both important, but they are different. Share slide 2. Discuss. Complete the Rules and Laws bubble chart together.

Read Laws for Kids on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIU1KGAQ8U4>

Ask students to think about what it would be like to live in a place with no rules or laws. Have students share.

Check in with this interactive Rules and Laws Nearpod lesson: <https://nearpod.com/t/social-studies/1st/rules-and-laws-1-L42722859>

Watch rules and laws video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ulcGlwgPg-g>. Create your own class chart with rules on one side and laws on the other. Complete the chart together as a class, listing rules and laws. Review the difference between rules and laws. Have students complete the Rules and Laws sort independently.

Read Why Do We Need Rules and Laws? By Jessica Pegis. (E book is available on Epic, with free subscription <https://www.getepic.com/app/read/45380>.)

Ask students how rules and laws go together. Have students complete the Rules and Laws comparison page. This could be used as a formative assessment.

Share slide 3. Discuss how some things change over time. Share slide 4. Discuss how that law may have come into existence. Is it a good law?

***Unplugged variation** – Provide students with a copy of power point slides 1-4 and vocabulary cards.

Think about where you live and the places you go. Discuss the following questions with a helper: Are there rules there? How do rules help? What would it be like with no rules? Who makes the rules? Who enforces the rules? Are there consequences?

Review slides 1-4. Complete the rules and laws sort activity page.

With a helper, discuss why it is better to live in a community with rules and laws. Complete the Community Rules page or respond to the prompt in your Social Studies journal.

Part 2: What is government?

Laws are created by people we elect. We elect these representatives who make up our government. But what is the government watch and discuss this government video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LV_OOPDyE0

Share and discuss slide 5. Preview vocabulary cards for this unit. Focus on local, state, and country/national. Use a map to help build an understanding of these terms. Have students complete the My City, My State, My Country activity page.

Read The Little Book of Government by Zack Bush and Laurie Friedman, illustrated by Sarah Van Evera (or similar text.) Share and discuss slides 5-10. Have students take notes on the blank Branches of Government chart.



In a live or recorded session, watch and discuss the government video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=BEb5LHhrqRQ>. Create a class anchor chart or use the attached anchor reviewing local, state, national government leaders.

Ask review questions (students could respond orally or on a dry erase board):

What is the difference between a mayor and a governor? Who works with leaders from other countries? What is one job of the mayor? Who is our governor? What is the name of our state? Etc.

***Unplugged variation** – Provide students with a copy of power point slides 5-10, vocabulary cards, Branches of Government chart, and a copy of the completed Branches of Government chart. If possible, include a book about the government.

Talk to an adult about the role of the mayor, governor, and president. Review slides 5-10. Discuss these government officials with a helper. Complete the My City, My State, My Country activity page and take notes on the blank Branches of Government chart.

Cut out the vocabulary cards and review the definitions of city, state, country, president, governor, and mayor.

Create your own chart with one detail for each official: the mayor, governor and president. Note: you may consider having an example on the chart for students to follow.

Part 3: What makes a great leader?

Ask students who they think of when they think of a good leader. Invite them to share what makes that person a good leader. Then ask students to stop and jot (on sticky notes or in their social studies journal) characteristics a good leader should have. Have students share while you jot them down.

Watch this video about leaders: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zol7ou_SpwA What qualities should our elected officials have? Create an anchor chart listing the qualities. Explain to students that we will be learning about the duties of the president, governor, and mayor. When the unit is done, students will be asked to think about which of the three positions they would like to have and why.

President: Read If I Were President by Catherine Stier illustrated by DyAnne DeSalvo-Ryan during a live or recorded session. You can view it here on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nLGZL1JXD4>

Dive deeper with the executive branch by visiting this site. Students can listen to a recording of the page and there is a short quiz at the end. https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_executive_branch.php

During a live or recorded session, read What Does the president do? by Kathleen Connors (available on Epic with free subscription <https://www.getepic.com/app/read/61509>.)

Take students on a virtual tour of the White House. <https://www.360virtualtour.co/portfolio/the-white-house-google-virtual-tour/>

What does the President do? Watch this video to learn more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc3fktrvl6U>

Have students write notes in the president section of the Elected Officials flipbook.

Governor: During a live or recorded session, read Our Government: Governor by Kirsten Chang (available for free on Epic <https://www.getepic.com/app/read/72727>.)

Learn more about the Georgia State Capitol here: <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/georgia-state-capitol>



Explore primary sources of the Georgia Capitol building from the Library of Congress.

<https://loc.gov/search/?in=&q=georgia+capitol&new=true&st=>

Dive deeper to learn more about the Georgia Governor's position here:

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/governor>

Take your students on a tour the Georgia Capitol <https://georgiavirtualtours.com/georgia-state-capitol/#tour>

Have students write notes in the governor section of their flip book.

Mayor: During a live or recorded session, read Community Helpers: Mayors. (Available on Epic with free subscription <https://www.getepic.com/app/read/49268>.)

What happens at City Hall? Read Working at City Hall (available on Epic with free subscription

<https://www.getepic.com/book/14231912/working-at-city-hall>)

Visit your city's city hall website to find the history of the building and the departments housed there.

Atlanta.gov page to learn the history of Atlanta's City Hall

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-design/urban-design-commission/atlanta-city-hall>

Have students write notes in the mayor section of their flip book.

Ask students to again think about what makes a good leader. Have students complete the What Makes a Good Leader activity page. Invite students to share their responses.

***Unplugged variation-** Provide students with a copy power point slides 6-10, vocabulary cards, What Makes a Good Leader activity page, elected official flip book, and the What Does a ___ Do? activity pages. If possible, include copies of primary sources.

With a helper, discuss what makes a good leader. Make a list of the leaders you know in your interactive notebook. Complete the What Makes a Good Leader activity page.

Review slides 4-10. Complete the What Does a ___ Do? activity pages. Record what you learned in your elected officials flip book.

Part 4: You and The Government

During a live or recorded session, ask students if they think kids are citizens. Read What Can a Citizen Do? by Dave Eggers. You can also view it on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lznPba1IZkw>. Create your own class chart, "What do good citizens do?" Have students jot down ideas to share and add to class chart.

During a live or recorded session, read Being a Good Citizen written by Mary Small and illustrated by Stacey Previn. You can also view it on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha_aelWTSFs. Ask students to think about what citizens have to do with our government. How do they help? What role do they play? Discuss.

Voting is part of being a good citizen. Watch and discuss with the free Brainpop video about voting, <https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernment/voting/>. For additional classroom voting ideas, visit author Eileen Christelow's page <https://christelow.com/vote-classroom-connections/>.

Have students cut out vocabulary cards and match the word to the definition.

Now that we have learned about rules and laws, our local officials and the role citizens play in our government, it is decision time! Explain to students that they have been invited to take on a new role. They will decide if they



would like to be president, governor, or mayor. They will write to explain why they made their choice. They will draw a picture of themselves in this role and also share a law they will have in their city/state/country. Students will complete the Think About It activity page. Have students share.

***Unplugged variation-** Provide students with a copy of all power point slides and vocabulary cards.

Talk to an adult about citizens. Do you think kids are citizens? Make a list of things that good citizens do.

Review all power point slides. Cut out cards and match to the correct definition.

Voting is part of being a good citizen. Talk to a helper about things: When do we vote? What is voting like? Why is voting important? Have you read anything about voting? Kids can vote on things too. Have you ever voted?

Discuss with a helper what elected official position you might like to have. Complete the Think About It activity page.

Opportunities for Extension:

- Students could choose to learn more about an American President. Students may use online resources (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/>.) or books to research the president of their choice. When done, students can create a presentation (power point, poster, book, etc.) to teach the class.
- Students could create an infographic explaining the executive branch at the local, state, and national levels including positions, workplace and duties. Infographic should include pictures and words.
- Watch Kid President (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=4z7gDsSKUmU>) and brainstorm a new rule or law you think your city/state/nation needs. Write an opinion piece with at least three reasons explaining why the rule is good idea. Consider mailing your opinion piece to an elected official.

Activities and handouts mentioned in this lesson are [linked here](#).

Slides mentioned in this lesson are [linked here](#).



Student Learning Supports

Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students. If students are able to complete the activities on their own, it would be best to let them do this independently.

- Provide pictures to go with words
- Reread directions in small group or one on one
- Have students draw, write labels or write sentences to match ability level
- Provide paper options for students to meet their writing needs (one line, multi line, etc.)

Unplugged Supplies: copies of all power point slides, copies of all activity pages, copies of primary sources, paper/journal, crayons, scissors, glue stick/glue, pencil

Evidence of Student Success

Information for diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are described within the Instructional Design.

Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: copies of all power point slides, copies of all activity pages, copies of primary sources

Optional materials to support learning not included: blank paper/journal, crayons, scissors, glue stick/glue, pencil



Government Lesson Checklist

SS2CG1 Define the concept of government and the need for rules and laws.

SS2CG2 Identify the following elected officials of the executive branch and where they work:

- a. President (leader of our nation) and Washington, D.C. – White House
- b. Governor (leader of our state) and Atlanta, GA – State Capitol Building
- c. Mayor (leader of a city) and city hall

Note: Vocabulary Cards and information posters are included in your supplies to help explain the vocabulary from each lesson in student friendly language.

*Use power point slides as a guide for the following activities.

Part 1: Laws and Rules

- 1. Think about where you live and places you go. Are there rules there? How do rules help? What would it be like with no rules?
- 2. With a helper, discuss the following questions: Who makes the rules? Who enforces the rules? Are there consequences?
- 3. Review slides 1-4 about laws and rules. Cut and sort the rules and laws onto the correct side of the activity page.
- 4. Think about the importance of rules and laws. Complete the Community rules page or respond to the prompt in your Social Studies journal.

If you have internet access, the following website may be useful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIU1KGAQ8U4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulcGlwgPg-g>

<https://nearpod.com/t/social-studies/1st/rules-and-laws-1-L42722859>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ulcGlwgPg-g>.

Part 2: What is government?

- 1. Talk to a helper about the role of a mayor (elected leader of city,) governor (elected leader of state,) and president (elected leader of nation.)
- 2. Review slides 5-10. Take notes on the Branches of Government activity page. Cut out vocabulary cards. Review the definitions of city, state, country, president, governor, and mayor.
- 3. Complete the My City, My State, My Country activity page.
- 4. Create your own chart introducing the roles of president, governor, and mayor to a friend.

If you have internet access, the following websites may be useful:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LV_OOPDyE0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=BEb5LHhrqRQ>.



Part 3: What makes a good leader?

- 1. With a helper, discuss what makes a good leader. Think about a leader you know. Make a list of leaders you know in your interactive notebook. Complete the What Makes a Good Leader activity page.
- 2. Review slides 6-10. Look at the primary sources documents. Discuss the elected officials with a helper. Record what you learned in your elected officials flip book.
- 3. Complete the What Does a ___ Do? activity pages.

If you have internet access, the following websites may be useful:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zol7ou_SpwA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nLGZL1JXD4>

https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_executive_branch.php

<https://www.360virtualtour.co/portfolio/the-white-house-google-virtual-tour/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc3fktrvl6U>

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/georgia-state-capitol>

<https://loc.gov/search/?in=&q=georgia+capitol&new=true&st=>

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/governor>

<https://georgiavirtualtours.com/georgia-state-capitol/#tour>

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-design/urban-design-commission/atlanta-city-hall>

Part 4: You and the Government

- 1. Talk to a helper about citizens. Do you think kids are citizens? Make a list of things that good citizens do.
- 2. Voting is part of being a good citizen. Talk to a helper about these questions: When do we vote? What is voting like? Why is voting important? Have you read anything about voting? Kids can vote on things too. Have you ever voted?
- 3. Review all slides, 1-10. Match vocabulary words to their definitions.
- 4. Discuss with a family member what elected official position you might like to have. Think about why you would like that position. What law would you have in your city/state/country? Complete the Think About It activity page.

If you have internet access, the following websites may be useful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lznPba1lZkw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha_aelWTsFs

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernment/voting/>

