



What do Presidents really do?

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Introduction

How do you determine which presidential candidate you should vote for? Do you look at the issues? Do you examine the character of the candidate? Do you think about the challenges of the president's job? Do you vote for the candidate who matches your ethnicity or gender? Do you vote the way your parents or friends are voting?

I teach 5th grade students. I have to teach them how to make a decision to vote for president. What should I tell them? Should they look at the issues or watch a debate? Should they look at character? Should I tell them to do it the way I do it? (How do I do it?) Or should I tell them to use ideals such as honesty, integrity, charitableness, courage, intelligence, and fairness that might be unrealistic? Then do I shake my head when they show disinterest and cynicism for our government?

Many of my students come from lower economic backgrounds. The 2008 Census shows that only 63% of the populations in the Mid-Atlantic United States voted in the 2008 presidential election, and the percentage goes down as the income level and educational levels decrease. 54.9% of Mid-Atlantic voters with a high school diploma voted and only 39.9 % of Mid-Atlantic voters with no high school diploma voted. For those with less than \$10,000 in income, it falls to 38%. ¹ Actually these figures are greater than previous presidential elections and they are not expected to remain as high as they were in 2008. Many of my students have no model of voting in their home. No doubt politics and the role of the president are not discussed there, let alone methods for selecting a president.

I have designated a number of classroom jobs for my students to perform during the school year. I require the students to fill out an application for the jobs they want. Before they do this, we discuss what each job entails—the job description. It would be crazy to apply for a job when you don't know what it involves. The same goes for voting.

Before my students can make a decision to vote in a mock election for president, I want my students to understand the job description for the president. How can they vote, regardless of the method they may choose, if they don't understand the job. There's a partial job description in the Constitution, but that's just a piece of the story. We have to look further. We have to peer at the beginning to see how it all started and then see how the presidents have been developing the job through the years— particularly the most recent years.

The job of the president has changed and will no doubt change more. When we look at the Constitution and the ensuing historical interpretations that the presidents have created, maybe it won't seem so detached and irrelevant. Perhaps the language will make sense to the students as they use it and apply it.

Demographics

I teach 5th grade in a diverse, Title I school, (62.2% low income), just outside of the city of Wilmington, Delaware. While technically we are considered a suburban school, it is a mere three miles from the center of the city of Wilmington, surrounded by strip shopping centers, highways, I-95, and an area of Hispanic gang hangouts. We have students from a range of social economic backgrounds, from middle class to homeless. Our percentage of Hispanic students rises every year, comprising at least 20% of the school, followed by 16.4% black, 58.5% white, and a number of students with mixed backgrounds. Many of my students' parents are not comfortable speaking English, although their children speak both English and Spanish. The most recent standardized test scores have defied the typical demographics by rivaling the more suburban schools in the state.

Fifth grade at my school is still predominantly a self-contained classroom, with all subjects taught by the same teacher and the same heterogenous student groupings. This coming year, my special education students will have full inclusion in my room. They will have additional teacher support during the reading and math periods and possibly during the other periods.

Background Information

Where do we start? We start this journey with the United States, shortly after the Revolutionary War, constructing the Constitution we use today, trying to improve upon the Articles of Confederation, making mistakes, making decisions that will stand the test of time. Why did they have to construct a new Constitution? The country was a mess. There was no uniform currency, no executive branch, no national tax, and no national military. Finally, in 1786, born out of frustration, Shay's Rebellion occurred, and the government had no power or resources to stop it. Change was born of necessity, and the change was not easy.

The framers, as historians have come to call them, met in Philadelphia to write a new Constitution and address the issues that were not addressed in the Articles of Confederation. They discarded the Articles of Confederation and started from scratch. The model of government they knew from before the Revolution was the British Monarchy. Many had very strong feelings that they didn't want that, but yet it was familiar. The men struggled for months to establish the framework for the country, as well as the guidelines they would enumerate in it for the leaders. The result was our present Constitution, largely unchanged except for amendments that have been added. The ideas presented during the Constitutional Convention varied widely. Alexander Hamilton, at one point "...called for a strong executive, very strong indeed. His notes labeled the executive a "monarch," with no limits to his length of service." ² (It's hard to believe that a founder would want

to revert back to the monarchy they had rejected before, but Hamilton believed a strong executive would be necessary to rule such a large and energetic country.) Some of the framers including James Wilson wondered, "Perhaps there should be one man at the top, but why not three or even more, to distribute the burden and limit the potential for abuse?" ³ Nearly four months after the deliberations began the Constitution was born with the basic guidelines for the three distinct branches of government with checks and balances that we have today.

Article II of the Constitution states, "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America."(U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section I). "...the drafters of the Constitution shied away from having Congress dictate the boundaries of presidential action. Instead they left the range of executive powers undefined and ripe for reinterpretation by later presidents." ⁴ Several "powers" are listed later in this article, but others seem to be implied and left for interpretation. And there have been some differing interpretations over the years. We will see how presidents have utilized many more responsibilities than those specifically enumerated as "powers" of the president in the Constitution.

The president is the head of the executive branch of the government. As executive, presidents have executed the laws, or acted as Chief Administrator, in addition, they have acted as Chief of State, Legislative Leader, Chief Diplomat, Chief Economist, as well as Commander in Chief. Of these job descriptions, only Commander in Chief is mentioned in Article II, however the other "powers" listed in Article II fit within some of the other job categories.

Commander in Chief

The first "power" of the president mentioned in the Constitution is that of Commander in Chief. "The president shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States..." (U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2). (Of course states don't have militias anymore- the closest modern day militia is similar to the National Guard.) The president is in charge of all the branches of the United States' military. In addition, the Constitution says that he "shall Commission all the Officers of the United States."(U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 3). Of course this action is largely a ceremonial act. Since most recent presidents have so many duties and many have no military experience, they appoint secretaries, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to help them manage the military, particularly if the military is already involved in action. Most recently, military advisors have helped to define the missions in the Afghanistan War- from troop surges to exit strategies.

Commitments of war, however, have become very controversial. The Constitution says, "Congress shall have power to declare war," (Article I, Section 8). According to Michael Cairo, "The founders clearly divided war powers, but the ambiguity of the Constitution left the door open to conflict. Although Congress is given the sole power to initiate offensive war; this has easily been enlarged." ⁵ However Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland argued in his opinion in *U.S. v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp. et al.*, that "the president is the, 'sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations' and has 'plenary and exclusive' power as president. Congress, he suggested, was meant to play a secondary role in U.S. foreign policy."

It would seem that the Presidents have played the primary role in U.S. foreign policy with increasing frequency. President Roosevelt enacted numerous actions during World War II in the shelter of the war that many Americans would be shocked to discover. In Executive Order 9066, President Roosevelt authorized people of Japanese descent, including Japanese citizens of the United States, as well as some people of German and Italian descent to be confined to camps on the West Coast during World War II. The Order was

upheld by the Supreme Court in *Korematsu v United States* with the rationale that the action was required to limit espionage, since the United States was at war with Japan, Germany, and Italy. Thus the president was given the power to restrain the rights of U.S. citizens in the auspices of war. President Truman committed troops to Korea in 1950, stating, "...the President's power to send Armed Forces outside the country is not dependent on Congressional authority." ⁶ President Johnson committed U.S. troops to engage in military action in 1964. He asked Congress for a resolution to legitimize the action after the fact, which they did.

Congress adopted the War Powers Act of 1973 to try to clarify other instances of military action that a president might be able to initiate. The act clearly limits the power of a president to commit U.S. forces to, "(1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces." (HJ Res. 542, PL 93-148). In addition, specific conditions are specified for reporting to Congress. The initiated action must be terminated within 60 days as well unless Congress agrees to a longer action.

There have been a number of actions initiated by presidents since 1973 that weren't supported by the Act, but the president found ways to justify the actions, thus asserting the power to initiate hostilities without Congressional authorization. Most notably in recent years was the Afghanistan War, initiated by George W. Bush shortly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Bush argued with the United Nations that the attacks constituted an attack on the United States, which would legitimize presidential action according to the War Powers Act of 1973. However the United Nations insisted that the attacks were not attacks against the United States but were terroristic attacks. (Actually, the United Nations had no authority to authorize U.S. military action anyway.) Most recently, President Obama sought to legitimize military action in Libya under the War Powers Act of 1973 however he did not terminate the military action at the 60 day deadline. His lawyers argued that the action was not "hostilities" so it was not restricted by the War Powers Act of 1973. As presidents have expanded these war powers, it seems as if the only check to this power would be for Congress to deny military funding or for Congress to impeach the president if it did not approve of the actions.

Chief Administrator

The next job of the president is similar to the CEO of a company. He is the Chief Administrator of the United States. Since he or she is part of the Executive Branch, it is expected that he or she would execute something. What? The president "... shall take care that the Laws be faithfully executed..." (U.S. Constitution, Article II Section 3). Of course, the president needs staff to help him or her accomplish this. President Roosevelt enlisted an advisement committee to make recommendations for additional Presidential staff in 1936. As a result, the Reorganization Act of 1939 was passed, allocating additional staff positions. The staff the president administers has grown since President Jefferson's 2 staff members, (whom he personally paid) to about 2000 people today. Only a few of these employees require Senate approval.

The Constitution states, "he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint ...other public Ministers, and Consuls..." (U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2). James Madison initiated legislation to clarify the establishment of cabinet offices as well as the power of the president to dismiss them without approval from Congress. "...there should be established for the aid of the chief magistrate in executing the duties of his office the following departments, to wit: a department for foreign affairs...Treasury...[and] war." ⁷ The bill indicated that the president could dismiss Cabinet Secretaries from their duties without Congressional approval. This phrase initiated much debate, before final resolution. The Constitution also notes that the President may, "require the opinion in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the Executive Departments, upon any subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices."(U.S.

Constitution, Article II, Section 2).

In addition, the Constitution makes reference to making appointments when Congress is in recess, "The president shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session."(U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2). While this provision was likely added for expediency since vacancies can occur during Congressional recesses, presidents have used it to get appointments they thought that Congress would not approve. For instance, President Obama used this provision, January 12, 2012, to make several appointments that the Congress had delayed. ⁸ He waited until they recessed and then appointed the secretary. Opponents criticized the action.

Besides the other appointments, the president appoints Supreme Court Judges. Supreme Court Judges are appointed for life. So, whenever a judge dies or decides to retire from the Supreme Court, the president appoints a new judge. This can be viewed as an important power of the president, since the Supreme Court may be called upon to determine Constitutionality of laws that have been passed. While the Justice is not subject to political pressure since he or she is appointed for a life term, most presidents try to appoint justices that they believe will follow their political ideology. Whomever the president appoints is then subject to approval by the Congress. In fact, Congress holds hearings and questions the appointees carefully before approving them.

In addition to the appointments, the president can excuse convicted citizens from their crimes, as stated in the Constitution, "he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in cases of Impeachment."(U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2). Alexander Hamilton explains the purpose for pardons as, "But the principal argument for reposing the power of pardoning...in the Chief Magistrate [president] is this; in seasons of insurrection or rebellion, there are often critical moments when a well-timed offer of pardon to the insurgents or rebels may restore the tranquility of the commonwealth." ⁹ This was evident with the pardoning of Confederate soldiers and leaders after the Civil War. While pardons, "wipe out both guilt and punishment" ¹⁰ , a reprieve merely reduces the severity of punishment. Some notable pardons have been when President Carter and President Ford pardoned Vietnam draft evaders, and when President Ford pardoned President Nixon from prosecution relating to his association with Watergate. This pardoning power exists without Legislative interference. In fact, the Supreme Court has upheld the power of the president to give pardons without Legislative interference. ¹¹ The range of pardons has varied widely from Franklin Roosevelt granting 3,687 to President George W. Bush's 77.

Chief Diplomat

The president is also the Chief Diplomat for the country. "He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided 2/3 of the Senators present concur..."(U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2). Treaties have the authority of the Constitution as law, "...all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land..."(U.S. Constitution, Article VI, Section 2). After the president negotiates a treaty with a foreign country, he or she submits it to the Senate. The Senate may then accept the treaty or add changes to it. If they change it, the president gets to approve the changes before signing it. Most United States Treaties have been approved by the Senate. Presidents may also negotiate Executive Agreements with foreign countries. "An executive agreement is a pact other than a treaty made by the president or representatives of the president with a foreign leader or government." ¹² Executive agreements do not require the approval of the Senate. Consequently, at times presidents will use an executive agreement instead of a traditional treaty to avoid the process of Senate

approval. The Supreme Court ruled that executive agreements without Senate approval are constitutional in *United States v. Belmont*, 1937, thus giving the president another unilateral tool to expand his or her power.

While Congress has the power to create various offices in the Executive Branch, many presidents have used Executive orders to create new offices within the Administration. For example, "In 2001 President George W. Bush created the Office of Homeland Security" ¹³ In addition to using Executive orders, presidents "shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors..."(Article II, Section 2). The Ambassadors are representatives in foreign countries. While Ambassadors may further the political favors of a president, they may also communicate the greater foreign policy goals of the president. In addition to ambassadors, the president may conduct summit meetings with foreign countries. Summit meetings are opportunities to solve international problems by meeting together to discuss the mutual problems.

Legislative Leader

One of the most important duties of the president is to be the legislative leader. The president is not allowed to vote for or against a bill. He can recommend laws or policies to Congress, but he or she can not directly help pass them. Herein lies another one of the aspects that have changed since the Constitution was written. Presidents today can use a wider variety of media, personal appearances or speeches to bring the issues to the general public and ask them to give support for the proposed legislation desired. Given the polarity of the current major political parties, the balance of the parties in the respective Senate and House of Representatives can be paramount for successful passage of legislation. The president may be expected to forge relationships and compromises across party lines to successfully advance his or her agenda of legislation. This all has to occur outside of the Capitol, perhaps at White House breakfasts or meetings. The country has seen huge gridlock in the House of Representatives following the 2010 elections that changed the majority party in the House of Representatives to Republicans, who have often admitted to intentionally blocking any legislation favored by Democratic, President Obama.

Once the Congress has passed a bill, the president must sign the bill, thus creating a law, or he or she may veto it with objections, which sends the bill back to the Congress, or he or she may do nothing. If he or she does nothing, the bill becomes law after 10 days. If the President vetoes the bill and 2/3 of Congress votes to overrule the veto - the veto won't matter- the bill will still become a law.

Chief of Political Party

Some people also like to think of the president as the Chief of their Political Party. As such, they and the political parties are working in coordination to pass particular legislation and to help others in the party get elected. So a president may lend his or her aid to the potential Senator or Representative for election. When a president is seen as having favorable approval ratings, this support is often sought, particularly when the individual election can affect the balance of the party in the particular chamber of Congress. This can determine the effectiveness of the political party and the president to advance legislation.

Chief of State

The next job title is rather broad- Chief of State. This role is the one you see on the television. Since the United States has one Executive, the ceremonial duties and functions are vested in the president. The Constitution states that the president, will take the oath of office, give the State of the Union address, and "shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, [and] he shall receive Ambassadors." (U.S.

Constitution, Article II, Section 3).

Other ceremonial duties that most presidents perform include attending other celebrations at his or her inauguration, as well as other celebratory occasions, voicing regret for significant individuals that have died, giving awards and medals, celebrating holidays- including the annual White House Easter Egg Hunt, and lighting the Christmas tree, participating at sporting events, providing symbolic leadership for the country, television appearances, and even providing cultural and spiritual leadership.

Chief Economist

While the Constitution does not explicitly mention economic power for the president, it implies that he or she will have economic power since the president gives the State of the Union Address, (which addresses the budget and the economic condition of the country as well as other issues for the country), the president negotiates treaties that are often commercial in nature, and the president is involved in the legislative process through which the nation's budget is approved and revised. This power has expanded from the earlier days of the nation as the economics have become more complicated and often intertwined with the ever shrinking world. Clinton Rossiter noted, "The people of this country are no longer content to let disaster fall upon them unopposed. They now expect their government, under the direct leadership of the President, to prevent a depression or panic and not simply wait until one has developed... Thus the president has a new function which is still taking shape, that of Manager of Prosperity." ¹⁴ This trend can certainly be noted in the current presidential campaign with most political pundits pronouncing that the economic situation of the country will be the deciding matter in the upcoming elections.

Over the last 90 years two different groups of economic advisers have been added to the Executive Branch by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic Advisers. In addition to the Executive Branch, the Federal Reserve System was created in 1913. The Federal Reserve System has autonomous control except for any legislation that Congress might pass. The president appoints the members subject to Congressional approval. The Fed can influence the monetary policy, which in turn, can influence the rest of the economy and yet the President has no direct power over this action.

Starting with the passage of the 16th amendment to the Constitution in 1913 Congress was given the power to assess an income tax. (There were a couple temporary income taxes after the Civil War, but in 1895, the Supreme Court had ruled that the income tax was unconstitutional.) But with the income tax, Congress has the power to pass legislature to make changes to the taxes. The government often feels that the tax policies have direct consequences to influence on the Economy. So, tax proposals become part of economic policies. These are often endorsed by political parties and become part of the president's agenda shared in the State of the Union Address. As noted before, Americans of late hold the president accountable for economic conditions in the country and taxes policies that the president endorses are often critiqued.

As world trade has expanded, trade policy with other nations has become more complex, leading to the Trade Agreements Act of 1934, passed by Congress to give the president the power to negotiate trade agreements with other countries. After negotiating the agreements, the president then needs to get them approved by Congress.

Selection of a President

Given the wide range of powers and duties of a president, how then can one evaluate a potential president effectively and responsibly? Presidents have a lot of varied jobs. They have to be a leader of the country, they

must be able to work with Congress to pass legislation, they need to be able to create economic prosperity, they need to be able to negotiate with other countries, and they need to be able to lead the troops and perhaps start or manage a war. They need to be able to attend to the ceremonial functions, and they need to have a vision for the country.

Students should understand that presidents are not elected from the popular vote. In fact, the founding fathers argued about this point extensively at the Constitutional Convention. Each state has an assigned number of electoral votes based on the state's population. People are assigned for each vote. They vote based on the popular vote in the state. The president is elected based on the total number of electoral votes, not the popular vote. There have been voting irregularities in the past, such as the election of President George W. Bush when he opposed Al Gore in 2004. The popular vote in Florida was very, very close. Al Gore's campaign wanted to recount the votes in particular parts of Florida. There were discrepancies in vote counts and finally the Supreme Court ruled that there should not be a recount of the votes and so George Bush won the election. Many people were surprised that the Supreme Court had become involved in the election and many felt the involvement was improper.

In terms of 5th grade students, they will probably not see a lot of campaign advertisements or watch any debates. They will not read magazine or newspaper articles, or watch news shows, or even blog on the computer about the candidates, although some of these can be good habits to try to cultivate. So how will I create an interest and background for the students to evaluate the candidates in order to vote for them?

There is a website that lists the major issues of the day and gives the position that the current candidates have on each of the issues. This website can help isolate the pertinent issues in an elementary way, although, given the audience, some issues should be excluded. In addition, popular character traits can be used to evaluate the candidates. But rather than use the idealistic character traits that very few presidents have possessed, I would suggest a few different categories to discriminate between the two candidates. Steven J. Rubenzer, Ph.D., and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, Ph.D., completed a study where they surveyed leading experts to rank previous presidents. Then they asked them to rank the presidents based on a number of personality traits. They conducted a correlation between the two. They comprised a list of personality traits that successful presidents had demonstrated. Some of the successful characteristics are: achievement striving, (setting goals), impulsiveness, intelligence, excitement seeking, and being self-disciplined. Being conscientious was not exhibited by successful candidates and neither was competence to a great degree. Being particularly cooperative or honest were also not strong traits for successful presidents. In fact stubbornness was a more valuable trait. I think it would be interesting to share this with students to use in addition to the issues to rank the potential candidates. (Ironically, many of the personality traits that were linked with successful presidents are the traits traditionally linked with attention deficit disorder which affects many of my students.)

Strategies

Experiential

I want my students to use experiential activities whenever possible- particularly in Social Studies. Students often feel that they don't relate to historical events and governmental policies. Much of the important

objectives in Social Studies require reflection, not just memorization of historical events. Students will remember much more when they are actively involved in activities- particularly when they enjoy the activity. After the activity students can reflect on the activity. They can reflect on the feelings they had when they had to make decisions or when their bill didn't pass because the other party wanted something else. In addition, I have many students who favor the kinesthetic learning style, and experiential activities are particularly good for them. Brain research tells us that movement and simulations are particularly good for all students.

Writing

Writing is particularly valuable for students to use for reflection, clarification, and evaluation. Writing involves summarization which is a highly effective technique for students to use to incorporate higher order thinking. Pair-share is also incorporated into the writing process, as it is used for brainstorming and peer review. Students formulate their ideas for their writing and later share it with their partner to receive valuable feedback. Finally, oral presentation is incorporated as a means of publication.

Cooperative Learning

Students learn to work together and problem solve when they are involved in cooperative learning. Students gain much more from activities when they have a group to work together. Students will have the opportunity to apply the concepts they are given to new situations and create solutions.

Vocabulary

Students need to incorporate new vocabulary in many ways to master it. I use the VOC strategy to help students learn new vocabulary. Using this strategy, the students separate words they know from those they don't know. Then the students utilize a variety of modalities to illustrate the word such as in a sentence, with synonyms, and in illustrations. Students will not learn vocabulary unless they have the opportunities to work with words many times. With the VOC strategy, they have this opportunity.

Differentiation

Because I have different students in my classroom, with a wide range of abilities, needs, and learning styles, I incorporate differentiation in my classroom. In this particular unit, there are multiple sources and mediums to provide background knowledge. When students write their opinion paper, they will choose the candidate they want to support- differentiating by interest. In addition, the writing assignments will be differentiated in length and scope for those students that have challenges with writing at grade level. Students will work with partners to gather supporting information they will use in their papers. Assessments will also be differentiated as necessary.

Classroom Activities

Lesson One- Background

Objective/ Essential Question: What do I know about the President? What does the government do? Students will identify the powers of the president from the United States Constitution. Students will identify additional

jobs not included in the Constitution that the president performs. Students will identify the powers of the Legislative and Judicial Branches from the Constitution.

In the first lesson, students will examine the first three articles of the Constitution for the background of the unit. First I will give the students an anticipation guide, (see Appendix B). This will set the stage to highlight the misconceptions the students probably have about what the president can and does do. Next I will give the students the vocabulary that will be used in the unit. I will use the VOC strategy to incorporate the students' prior knowledge and concentrate on the vocabulary they don't know. I will give them some background about the government, using a simple cartoon video, and a smart board presentation. Then the students will examine the parts of the Constitution where the powers of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches are listed. Students will work with a partner to try to interpret what the presidential powers listed in the Constitution mean. The class will discuss together.

Assessment: The students will make a diagram of the 3 branches of government and list the job responsibilities from the Constitution.

Lesson Two - A Simulation

Objective/ Essential Question: What does the President do? How do the 3 branches of the government work together? Students will simulate many of the governmental jobs that occur between the President, the Congress, and the Legislature. Students will reflect upon the selection process they used. Students will identify additional jobs that the President performs.

Create 2 or more Countries (This can be between 2 or more classrooms, or if not possible divide one classroom in half.) Countries can create a name and a flag. However, they will all use the U.S. Constitution and U.S. laws to determine their job responsibility and duties. They will use the Student Code of Conduct for their school district, (specifically the rights and responsibilities of students), to interpret whether any laws or treaties that they make are constitutional. Students will be given a list of job duties and responsibilities. There will be 2 Political parties: girls and boys. I will not go into a lot of detail about political parties, but I will let them experience them. (My instinct says that the girls will vote with girls sometimes, depending on the bill and sometimes they will vote with the boys. Actually this is similar to real political parties.) Each country will vote secretly for one of their members to become president. You can use a primary system, using an initial vote, then narrowing the vote to the highest 3 or 4 candidates and voting again. Each president will appoint 1-5 Supreme Court Justices, (Use 1 if you are only using one class, more if you have 2 or more classes). The rest of the country will be Congress. Divide the congress between the House of Representatives and the Senate, assigning more members to the Senate than the House of Representatives. The Congress will vote to approve the student or students the president appoints to the Supreme Court. The Congress will need to approve the appointee or appointees by a majority vote. If the Congress does not approve any of the appointees, the president will have to appoint a new person or persons and repeat the process.

The president will be given a card describing how he or she will act as president. (Later students will critique the way the president performed his or her duties, so this will prevent the student from personal critique.) You could tell one president to always vote with his or her party, and tell the other one to never vote with his or her party, or to always sign the bills the Congress passes or always veto the bills the Congress passes.

The president will create an agenda. The president will meet with other members of his or her party (boys or girls) in his or her country, to discuss the agenda. They will choose 4 rules or procedures to change in the school, such as students may wear hats in school, chew gum in school, or use cell phones. The president will

make a budget. The teacher will give him a figure to use. The president will prepare and give a speech to the congress to present the budget and the proposals, the State of the Union.

Congress will approve, change, or reject the budget. If they reject the budget, they have to make a new one. Congress will decide to vote for the legislation the president proposes and may also create proposals for new school rules. They will vote on the proposals, (bills), in each house.

While the Congresses are working on their budget and proposals, give a card to someone in Country 2 telling them to take something from country 1, such as a pencil.

The president from Country 2 will decide whether to attack Country 1. (The president needs to consult his or her duty card to determine what he or she is allowed to do.)

While Congress is making bills, give the president a card that says he or she needs to go to the other country to talk to their president about how things are going. Later, give the president a card that says he or she needs to go to the office to represent the country at the U.N. The U.N. can be the teacher or the school principal's office.

Each Congress will give their presidents the bills they have passed. The president will decide whether to sign them or not. (If he or she is the president who is voting with the party, they need to find out how his or her party voted to determine whether he or she will sign the bill or veto it.) If the president decides to veto the bill, it goes back to the Congress who can vote to overrule the veto- but they need two thirds of their total to override the veto.

The Supreme Court will be given the bills signed to determine if they are constitutional. Constitutionality will be determined by comparing them with the Student Code of Conduct Rights from the school district. The Supreme Court will meet and make their decisions. They will have to vote, write the decisions, and deliver them to the president.

The president from Country 1 will negotiate a treaty with Country 2, and then both presidents will take the treaty to their congress to approve or not approve. The treaty can be something like how to share something in the room, or how to share a space in the room.

After the simulation, the entire class will discuss the simulation. What were their reactions? How did things go? What impressions did they have? Finally, after the simulation, each student will reflect on how they voted for president, at the beginning of the simulation. What did they consider when they voted? Did they vote for the party (boy or girl)? Did they vote for their friend? Did they vote for something else? How did that work out? What were qualities that were helpful or not helpful? Discuss the actions that were taken by the president and the other roles.

Assessment: The students will revisit the diagram from lesson one and add responsibilities, working with a partner. Students will also write a reflection from the simulation, reflecting on how they voted for president, and how well they thought that worked with the functioning of their country.

Lesson Three - Selecting a President

Objective/Essential Question: How should citizens select presidents? Why should voters vote for a president? Students will select a presidential candidate using a decision grid. Students will write an opinion paper in the form of a candidate's speech for election, using concrete examples based upon how the candidate supports

identified issues and personality qualities the candidate possesses.

The students will be presented with two different ways that could be used to select a president. I will show them the information on the website

<http://2012-presidential-candidates.findthedata.org/compare/1-5/Barack-Obama-vs-Mitt-Romney>. (There are a number of similar websites.) I will show them how to use a decision-making grid to evaluate the candidates based on the information about the issues. Next, I will give them information from the Steven J. Rubenzer, Ph.D., and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, Ph.D book. I will share with them how the authors conducted a study of successful presidents and then compiled a list of personality traits which correlated with the successful presidents. I will give the students the following edited list of traits that correlate with successful presidents: achievement striving, (setting goals), impulsiveness, intelligence, excitement seeking, stubbornness, and being self-disciplined. I will share with them that the authors found that being conscientious, being competent, particularly cooperative or honest were not strong traits for successful presidents. I will share with them that it might be hard to evaluate if a particular candidate has one of these traits, so they should not vote + or - for traits they don't think they can evaluate. The students will use the grid to evaluate the two candidates, using the personality traits. Then I will ask the students to make a presidential selection based on both of the two methods. They will then participate in a mock election.

In years between presidential elections, students may use the same candidates from the previous presidential election, or may choose local gubernatorial, senatorial, or representative elections, modifying as necessary.

After students have selected a candidate to support, they will write an opinion paper to support the candidate of their choice, writing the paper as if they were the candidate. Students will be grouped with a partner who is supporting the same candidate in order to plan their papers together. The students can list and prioritize their supportive reasons and examples before writing their papers. In addition, after writing, students will work with peers to give feedback to improve their papers. Finally, the students will be split into 3 groups. In each group, the students will read their papers out loud, to the group, as if it were a speech. (This will culminate their experiences of an acting president.)

Assessment: The assessment will be the student opinion papers as well as the oral presentations.

Resources

Student Resources

"Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids." *Web 26 July 2012*. <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/government/branches.html>

"Celebrate the Constitution." *Scholastic. Web 26 July 2012*.

Sobel, Syl, and Pam Tanzey. *How the U.S. government works*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's, 1999.

Teacher Resources

"Barack Obama vs Mitt Romney in 2012 Presidential Candidates." *2012 Presidential Candidates Reference. Compare reviews & ratings..N.p., n.d. Web. 26 July 2012*. <<http://2012-presidential-candidates.findthedata.org/compare/1-5/Barack-Obama-vs-Mitt-Romney>>

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Hamilton, Alexander, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Auckland: Floating Press, 2011.

Kelley, Christopher S.. *Executing the Constitution: putting the president back into the Constitution*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Nelson, Michael. *The powers of the presidency*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008.

Nelson, Michael. *The evolving presidency: landmark documents, 1787-2008*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2008.

This is a great book of primary documents.

"President Obama Announces Recess Appointments to Key Administrative Posts." The White House President Barack Obama. www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/04/president-obama-announces-recess-appointments-key-administration-posts (accessed July 16, 2012).

Raphael, Ray. *Mr. President: how and why the founders created a chief executive*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Rossiter, Clinton. *The American Presidency*. [2d ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960.

Rubenzler, Steven J., and Thomas R. Faschingbauer. *Personality, character, and leadership in the White House: psychologists assess the presidents*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2004.

"The Three Branches of Government" *Smart Exchange*. Web 26 July, 2012.

"Three Branches - FREE US Government Powerpoints for K-12 teachers & students." mrdonn.org - Government Lesson Plans, Powerpoints, Games, Videos, more. <http://government.mrdonn.org/powerpoints/3branches.html> (accessed August 1, 2012).

"Voting and Registration - People and Households - U.S. Census Bureau." Census Bureau Homepage. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/> (accessed July 16, 2012).

Appendices

Appendix A

Delaware Civics Standards

DE Civics Standard One: Students will examine the structure and purposes of governments with specific emphasis on constitutional democracy.

Students will understand that the United States government is divided into executive, legislative, and judicial branches, each with specific responsibilities and powers.

DE Civics Standard Four: Students will develop and employ the civic skills necessary for effective, participatory citizenship.

Students will understand that in order to select effective leaders, citizens have to become informed about candidates' qualifications

and the issues of the day.

Common Core Writing Standard

CC5W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

In this unit students will be examine the branches of the United States' Government, (Civics #1), by conducting a simulation of the government. They will conduct a process to select a candidate by examining current issues and personality traits, (Civics #4), and participating in a mock election. Finally, they will address the writing standard, (CC5W 1), by writing an opinion paper to support the candidate they choose to support.

Appendix B

Anticipation Guide

Answer yes or no if you think the United States President has the power to do each of the following actions.

- _____ 1. The president can make speeches to Congress.
- _____ 2. The president can get someone out of jail.
- _____ 3. The president can pass a law.
- _____ 4. The president can decide how much money the U.S. will spend on the military.
- _____ 5. The president can make an agreement with another country.
- _____ 6. The president can appoint someone to be a judge in the Supreme Court.
- _____ 7. The president can start a war with another country.
- _____ 8. The president can meet with a leader from another country.
- _____ 9. The president can reject (veto) a law that Congress has passed.
- _____ 10. The president can raise the price for gasoline.
- _____ 11. The president can decide to make a holiday.
- _____ 12. The president can tell the Army how to plan an attack in a war.
- _____ 13. The president can be president as long as he/she keeps winning elections.
- _____ 14. The president can fire his advisors.
- _____ 15. The president can choose someone to go to other countries to represent the U.S.
- _____ 16. The president can vote for a bill to make it a law.

_____17. The president can keep a secret from the American people or the courts.

_____18. The president can order the military to bomb a country that has attacked the U.S.

_____19. The president can be taken out of office, (fired).

_____20. The president can force a group of people to live in a guarded camp that they cannot leave.

Appendix C

Cards for Simulation

Presidential Jobs:

Meet with your party. Discuss the agenda (see below).

Make agenda- think of laws you want passed.

Make budget- you will have \$ 500.00.

Write a short State of the Union speech. You will give this speech to the Congress, explaining your budget, and agenda.

Make treaties with at least one other country. (This can involve sharing something or a space in the school or room.)

Sign or veto bills that the Congress gives you.

If another country attacks your country you may:

- Ask Congress to wage war.
- Conduct military action as long as it's only for 60 days and you report to Congress.
- Just go ahead and attack and try to explain why later.

Visit other countries to talk about your common interests.

Visit the U.N. or Celebrations, or National Tragedies, or Superbowl, etc.

Conduct celebrations at the White House such as the Easter Egg hunt, lighting the Christmas Tree in the White House.

Supreme Court

You will look at the laws that have been passed and signed and decide if they are Constitutional or not. You will compare them to the Student Code of Conduct to decide. You will vote and then write out your decision along with reasons together and deliver it to the president.

Congress

You will listen to the president's State of the Union Speech.

You will think of at least 4 different rules you would like to see at school. Along with the bills the president has suggested, you will

vote for or against the bills.

You will vote to overrule vetoes if you get one. (You will need to have $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to overrule the veto or else it won't pass.

The Senate will vote to approve the Supreme Court appointees.

Event Cards:

Take something from Country 2 (like a pencil).

President: Visit the office (U.N.).

President: Visit the president of one of the other countries.

President: Meet with your party to discuss proposed bills and budget.

Endnotes

1. "Voting and Registration - People and Households - U.S. Census Bureau." Census Bureau Homepage. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/> (accessed July 16, 2012).
2. Raphael, Ray. *Mr. President: How and why the founders created a chief executive*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
3. Ibid
4. Nelson, Michael. *The powers of the presidency*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008.
5. Kelley, Christopher S.. *Executing the Constitution: putting the president back into the Constitution*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
6. "Authority of the President to Repel the Attack in Korea," Department of State Bulletin (July 31, 1950).
7. Nelson, Michael. *The evolving presidency: landmark documents, 1787-2008*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2008.
8. "President Obama Announces Recess Appointments to Key Administrative Posts." The White House President Barack Obama. www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/04/president-obama-announes-recess-appointments-key-administration-posts (accessed July 16, 2012).
9. Hamilton, Alexander, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Auckland: Floating Press, 2011.
10. Nelson, Michael. *The powers of the presidency*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008.
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
14. Rossiter, Clinton. *The American Presidency*. [2d ed. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960.

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