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**2015 Teachers of Government**

**Lesson Adapted and Updated from C-SPAN’s Lesson** [**Tracing the Legislative Process**](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Lesson/848/Lesson+Idea+Tracing+the+Legislative+Process.aspx)**.**

**Overview:** Within the AP Government curriculum, students should not only know the process of how a bill becomes a law in detail, but they should also be knowledgeable about key historical legislation and public policy. Students will activate prior knowledge, use the Library of Congress and C-SPAN Bellringers to review the bill to law process generally, and then demonstrate their knowledge of the process by creating a presentation that shows how key historical legislation was formed. As students present, all students can be assessed not only on the legislative process, but also on key historical legislation.

**Objectives**

Students will

* describe the legislative process generally and specifically
* discuss the Constitutional nuances of the legislative process
* discuss how divided government and united government affects the legislative process
* research key legislation and document the process by using video clips from the C-SPAN Video Library
* create a presentation using video clips from C-SPAN's Video Library to teach the class about the key legislation
* demonstrate knowledge about key historical legislation

**Materials**

* Internet access
* Presentation software
* Library of Congress [The Legislative Process](https://www.congress.gov/legislative-process) Videos and Transcripts
* The Legislative Process: USA PATRIOT Act ([Google Slides](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1nmp5pSYYhgqCd3WE3yXw6_iAwTr0ynQx3sOFY2Tf6ps/edit?usp=sharing)) ([Powerpoint](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/pdf/Webquest-USA-PATRIOT-Act.ppt))
* Handout ([Google Drive](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwbAAIABuk50YmNFRWNkZjhvNTQ/edit?usp=sharing)) ([PDF](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/pdf/Handout_Tracing_the_Legislative_Process.pdf))
* C-SPAN Classroom Bellringer: [Origins of Revenue and Spending Bills and Rules for their Passage](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Lesson/1817/Bell+Ringer+The+Origin+of+Revenue+and+Spending+Bills+and+Rules+for+their+Passage.aspx)
* [I’m Just a Bill Schoolhouse Rock](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyeJ55o3El0) Video
* [C-SPAN's Video Library](http://www.c-span.org/search/?searchtype=All&query=)
* [Library of Congress resources](https://www.congress.gov/)

**Procedure**

1. Activate Prior Knowledge: As a fun introduction, show students [I’m Just a Bill Schoolhouse Rock](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyeJ55o3El0) and review the basic legislative process.  Additional discussion questions could include: Is the process really this simple? Why? What types of things affect the legislative process?

Because *I’m Just a Bill* is too elementary, utilize the Library of Congress’ [The Legislative Process](https://www.congress.gov/legislative-process) videos and transcripts.  These could be read/shown in class or assigned as homework. Students could be quizzed on this information or use it as reference as they apply it.

Putting the previous two resources together, students can use the C-SPAN Classroom Bellringer [Origins of Revenue and Spending Bills and Rules for their Passage](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Lesson/1817/Bell+Ringer+The+Origin+of+Revenue+and+Spending+Bills+and+Rules+for+their+Passage.aspx) and use the questions to stimulate class discussion.

1. Setting Up the Activity: Divide students into groups of 3 or 4 and assign each group a different act to research. Explain to students that they are *legislative staffers* and their member of Congress wants a “brief” on the assigned legislation. The goal is for students to trace the legislative process and give your member of Congress (ie. the class and teacher) a solid understanding of the law and how it came to be.

Examples of Legislation that would be helpful for the AP exam (not exhaustive):

* The War Powers Resolution
* The Clean Water Act
* Americans with Disabilities Act
* Family and Medical Leave Act
* The Federal Election Campaign Act
* The Freedom of Information Act
* Clean Air Act
* Congressional Budget Impoundment and Control Act of 1974
* Communications Decency Act
* Patriot Act
* Communist Control Act
* The National Voter Registration Act
* The Social Security Act
* The Gun-Free School Zones Act
* The National Environmental Policy Act
* Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform
* Head Start
* Welfare Reform Act
* Medicare
* No Child Left Behind
* Affordable Care Act
* Pendleton Civil Service Act
* Age Discrimination in Employment Act
* Title IX of Education Act
* Unfunded Mandates Reform Act
* Equal Pay Act
* Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act
* Civil Rights Act of 1964
* Voting Rights Act of 1965
* Dodd Frank

3) Model the Finished Product:  Show students [*The Legislative Process: USA PATRIOT Act*](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/pdf/Webquest-USA-PATRIOT-Act.ppt) created by C-SPAN Classroom as an example of a finished product. This product may be more than you expect from students but you can choose and make clear your expectations to students (ex. the number of slides, the number of video clips used, whether to include discussion questions and if so how many, how many points of view students should use). If you plan to assess students on the legislation after presentations, you could even have each group develop questions as a practice assessment at the end of each presentation.

4) Research: Students should work in their groups to become experts on their piece of legislation.  Encourage students to assign duties for finding historical context and tracing the legislative process of the act. Students should utilize the [C-SPAN's Video Library](http://www.c-span.org/search/?searchtype=All&query=) advanced search to find historical context for the bill, various points of view about the bill, and other steps in the legislative process.  Students should also use [Library of Congress resources](https://www.congress.gov/) to determine the process and timeline their bill went through to become a law. They can also access the full text of the bill and record all congressional actions during the legislative process.

5)    Presentation: Once groups have completed the research, they will put together the presentation to teach the rest of the class about the legislation.

6) Assessment: Following these activities, students can be assessed on the legislative process as well as historical legislation.