

Teacher Notes



How a Bill Becomes a Law: The Process of Legislation

Activity 3 Assessing the Legislative Process and Taking Action

Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** Social Studies
- ◆ **Subject Area:** Civics/Government
- ◆ **Category:** The Federal Government
- ◆ **Topic:** How a Bill Becomes a Law
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 9 - 12
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** Students should be familiar with the different branches of government and their role in our society. Students should also understand that these branches of government all share in the responsibility of creating a more fair and democratic society. Students should have a firm grasp on the process of how a bill becomes a law and its advantages and disadvantages.
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 90 minutes

Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus
- ◆ TI External Keyboard
- ◆ LearningCheck™ and NoteFolio™ applications installed on each TI-83 Plus handheld
- ◆ Computers with Internet access
- ◆ TI-Navigator™ Classroom Network (optional)
- ◆ TI Connectivity Cable, unit-to-unit cables
- ◆ Resource File: **Order.edc**
- ◆ Student Work Sheets: **Assessing the Legislative Process**
- ◆ Teacher Guide: **Rubric**

Activity Overview

In this assessment activity, students have two basic requirements. First, they must demonstrate that they comprehend and understand the process of

legislation and they must decide how they could improve our legislative process. Second, students act as informed citizens and write a letter to their local congressmen about smoking in public restaurants. They will base these letters on a persuasive essay that they will complete which looks at multiple points of view in having a ban on smoking in restaurants and bars. These letters will then be reviewed and sent back to the students to create a final copy, which will be mailed to the Congressman or Congresswoman.

Directions

Before the Activity Begins

Make sure each student has a TI-83 Plus loaded with both the LearningCheck™ and NoteFolio™ applications. Transmit the LearningCheck™ file, **Order.edc**, to each student using either the TI-Navigator classroom network or the TI Connectivity Cables and TI Connect™ software. Use the instructions from Activity 1 to do this.

Tip: Make sure that all students have erased the timeline that they created so that it cannot be used on this assessment.

Collect articles about the issue of smoking in public restaurants and bars. The articles should reflect both sides of the issue. Students will read these and formulate their personal position on the issue. They can be found at:

- ◆ Should Restaurants Throughout State be Smoke Free
www.freep.com/voices/columnists/ebecca26_20001226.htm
- ◆ Will California's Bar Smoking ban go up in smoke?
www.cnn.com/US/9801/29/california.smoking.ban/
- ◆ Effects of Second Hand Smoke www.smoke-free.ca/WNTD2001-cdcontents/wntd2001-letscleartheair/Resources/PSC/Q&A-healtheffects.PDF

Make enough copies of the Student Work Sheet, **Assessing the Legislative Process**, for each student.

Review the process of writing a persuasive essay with your students. The teacher should work with the Language Arts instructor to design a format for the letters that the students may already be using.

During the Activity

Explain to the students that this assessment task has two main parts. For Part 1, the students must order the steps of the legislative process using the LearningCheck™ file, **Order.edc**. In this file, students correctly choose the process of legislation and then answer a couple of questions about the process.

When the students have completed Part 1, they should send the file to the teacher using either the TI-Navigator™ system or using TI Connect™ software.

When the LearningCheck™ file has been submitted to the teacher, each student should pick up a copy of the articles about the effects of smoking and views about smoking being allowed in restaurants and bars. Each student should also pick up a copy of the Student Work Sheet, **Assessing the Legislative Process**. Students should begin writing their essay during class.

Students write an essay and a letter to their congressional representative for this second portion of the assessment. To do this they use a new NoteFolio™ file on the TI-83 Plus. They will convert this into a Microsoft® Word file when they have finished.

Circulate and monitor students' progress. If necessary, provide technological assistance to the students.

After the Activity

At the end of the period, review the process of legislation with the students.

Remind the students of the requirements for the second portion of the assessment, and repeat the due date for the essay and the letter.

Note: A suggested rubric for the assessment is included at the end of this activity. Teachers may wish to share this rubric with the class.

Student Data Sheet

Name: _____

Assessing the Legislative Process

Date: _____

Your assignment is to review the articles that I have supplied to you about smoking in public restaurants and the effects of second hand smoke. Using these articles as a starting point, you are to research this area in-depth. Your goal is to find three or more articles that look at this topic from different angles. To be effective in any discussion you must know more than just the side you are arguing for; you also must know the opposing arguments so that you can attempt to refute these claims in your argument.

Once you have located these articles you are to organize these issues into a persuasive essay, which should be no more than two pages in length. In this essay you summarize the arguments from the multiple points of view that you have discovered and then focus on the side that you favor. If you are undecided on which side you should argue for, then I will randomly select one side for you. The purpose of this essay is to allow you to gain a full understanding of the issue and the relevant facts.

Upon conclusion of your persuasive essay, you are to write a letter to your local congressional representative about the issue of banning smoking in public restaurants and bars. This assignment is not simply a role-playing task. Instead, it is a way for you to take part in the governmental process. You can either support or oppose a ban on smoking in public restaurants and bars, but if you decide to oppose this ban, your answer cannot be based upon the premise that "it's cool." Instead, it must focus on an argument based on freedom or some other democratic notion that we have discussed. Furthermore, you should include data from our own public opinion poll in this letter.

Once you have completed all of the tasks above, your letter will be graded for grammatical and syntax errors. It will then be given back to you to correct. Next you will bring in a finalized copy, which I will mail out to our congressional representative. This assignment can be started in class using a NoteFolio™ file on the TI-83 plus. You will have one week to turn in your rough draft.

Teacher Guide**Rubric**

Benchmark	Score			
	1	2	3	4
Students will locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view.	Locates at least one primary source with more than one point of view on smoking in restaurants.	Locates and examines at least two primary sources with multiple views on smoking in restaurants and bars.	Locates and organizes three or more primary resources about smoking in public places and uses this information to create an essay about how this issue can be resolved/	Locates and utilizes more than three resources with multiple points of view, and applies this information to create a method of solving this issue in a well-articulated essay.
Students will examine persistent issues involving the right, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.	Cites at least one source in either the essay or letter to the Congressmen in support or opposition to smoking in restaurants.	Cites more than one source in both the essay and letter for why the government should either support or oppose a ban on smoking in restaurants.	Cites more than two sources in both the essay and letter on why the government should favor or oppose a ban on smoking in restaurants.	Utilizes information from the essay to show that although there are arguments for both sides that one argument weighs heavier and should be adopted.
Students will act in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as members of society.	Identifies at least one reason that Congress should create a law in support or opposition in regards to smoking in restaurants.	Identifies and utilizes at least two reasons that Congress should either support or oppose a law on smoking in restaurants.	Determines that the information that they have researched warrants some form of legislation and creates a draft of a letter to their Congressperson.	Composes a letter to their local Congressperson supporting or opposing a law that would ban smoking in public restaurants and bars.