



We the People **The Citizen and the Constitution**

Directed by the Center for Civic Education
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Culminating Activity

The Simulated Congressional Hearing

As you know from studying social studies this year, members of Congress make laws. These laws should protect our rights and promote our welfare. In order to address our nation's problems and pass good laws, members of Congress need to gather information.

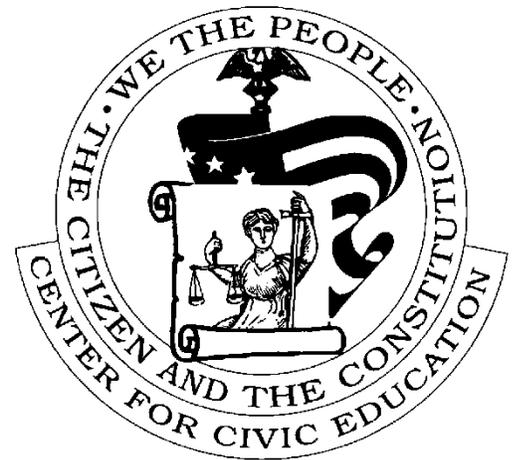
One way that members of Congress get the information they need is by holding congressional hearings. At these hearings, they ask experts to answer questions about important issues related to proposed laws.

For this activity, you will role-play an expert who has been asked to speak in front of a congressional committee at a congressional hearing. Each group of students will act as a team of experts on one of the five units in the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* textbook.

Your group will work to prepare for the simulated congressional hearing. You will work to write a prepared oral statement, practice answering follow-up questions without using notes, and act and look professionally. Most of the information you need to write your prepared oral statement is in the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* textbook. You will also look for appropriate information by examining current events. In some cases, you might want to talk to parents, teachers, and friends for their ideas about government in the United States today. Each member of your group should contribute to the presentation and speak at the hearing.

Each simulated congressional hearing follows this format.

1. The congressional committee (judges) enters the room and everyone in the room stands.
2. The committee members introduce themselves and invite the students to do the same.
3. The committee reads aloud the assigned unit questions.
4. The students have **four minutes** to read their prepared oral statement.
5. The committee asks follow-up questions and students respond to the questions for **six minutes** without using notes.
6. The committee gives the students feedback on their group's performance.
7. Everyone in the room stands as the committee exits.



Simulated Congressional Hearing

Unit Team Roles.

Now that you have formed your teams and everyone in your group has answered the speech question in a rough draft format, it is now time to specialize. Read the descriptions of the roles below. As a team, decide who will assume each role for the next step of your preparation. Later, you may change roles or keep the same one. Your teacher/captain will give you specific requirements and due dates for your work.

- a. **Head Writer:** Responsible for taking the rough drafts of the speech and compiling them into the next version of the speech. Refine the language, combine ideas, make sure all parts of the question are answered, and identify where some outside research is needed for speech.

- b. **Historian:** Finding historical examples including Supreme Court Cases to support the questions in the speech. Making sure the group as a whole understands the historical context of the unit and speech. Uses Student Resource X to organize and submit work.

- c. **Current Events Guru:** Collects news articles relevant to the speech and unit topic. Finds current event information including Supreme Court Cases, new laws, community events and other current events that will help support arguments made in the speech and in follow-up questions. Uses Student Resource X to organize and submit work.

- d. **Constitutional Scholar:** Finds the Constitutional applications for the speech and other parts of the unit. Needs to be able to mention different articles in the Constitution such as Article II for the powers of the president. Uses Student Resource X to organize and submit work.

- e. **Copy Editor:** Takes the Head Writer's draft of the speech and incorporates the research from the other team members into the speech. Edits the speech for grammar and wording.

What do I need to know before the Simulated Congressional Hearing?

Will I be graded?

You will not be graded on your performance during the actual competition. You will however, present your speech and answer follow-up questions in class the week before the competition. You **will** be graded on this. This will help you practice as well as show me what you have learned about your topic. You will also receive grades for various steps in the process of preparing for the Simulated Congressional Hearing.

What do we present during the competition?

The judges will ask you the question you prepared. You and your team will take out the notes for your speech and present it to the judges. After you finish, the judges will ask you follow-up questions. These questions will be related to the speech you just gave and/or to the general topic for your unit.

How much time do we have and what if we go over?

Your speech should be 4 minutes long. At minimum the speech must be 2:30 and at maximum 4 minutes. The entire competition is 10 minutes. You will have the remainder of 10 minutes time, after your speech ends, for the follow-up questions.

Does everyone have to answer every follow-up question?

No. **As many team members as possible should speak**, both in the prepared speech and in the follow-up portion. Not every person has to speak on every question. Resist the temptation to restate what your teammate has already said. Instead, seek to clarify their point, add another argument or provide an example or cite the Constitution. As a team, you need to be aware of who is speaking and be sure to allow less vocal team members a chance to speak if they so desire. Develop a signal system if necessary to ensure that all team members can speak.

What if we don't understand a follow-up question?

If you do not understand a question or need the judge to repeat it, you may ask him/her to repeat it or to clarify it. They will not take points away for this.

What can we have with us during the competition?

You will have your speech in front of you. This should be organized in your folder. Once your speech ends, you replace the speech in your folder and answer questions without notes.

What should I wear?

You and your team should be "dressed to impress." No tank tops, jeans or shorts, t-shirts or sweats for anyone.

- Boys should wear suits if you have one that fits or at minimum slacks with a button down shirt and a tie with dress shoes.
- Girls should wear "Sunday" dress clothes or a suit, pants or skirts are fine. If you wear a skirt, you should wear nylons and dress shoes. Make sure your skirt is long enough for you to feel comfortable sitting. As a team you may want to pick a color theme (i.e. black, gray, navy, etc.) No gum!

WE THE PEOPLE
COMPETITION PREPARATION
SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS
2008-2009
P. SMITH

You may find it necessary at any time to email me with questions or concerns, esp. if there are snow days when your papers are due.

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Getting Started

1. Each person in your group is responsible for answering all 3 questions to your UNIT (research, composition, proofreading, speaking, etc.). Your answer is considered to be your opening statement to the question. Everyone is accountable for all the knowledge used in each phase of preparation.

You will not have to individually write your own personal rough draft to each question, but combine all of your notes and research information to form one group statement that adequately answers each question in your UNIT).

REMEMBER: You are competing as class, not against each other.

2. Each opening statement should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced. I should see ample evidence of your outside research in your writings (i.e. use of quotes, statistics, primary sources, current events, court cases, etc.) *You must go beyond your notes in class and textbooks!*

In your final draft, your opening statement will need to be no more than 4 minutes (reading aloud). You won't need a bibliography as in a standard research paper. ***YOU MUST SHOW CONNECTIONS TO SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE CONSTITUTION***

3. By **Thursday** of each week, you should be finalizing all information into a rough draft. As a group, you will decide how and what parts of each statement will be incorporated, modified, deleted, enhanced, etc.

4. By **FRIDAY** of each week, you will hand in a typed, rough draft copy of your opening statement for a grade. However, ALWAYS keep your individual notes and drafts to refer back to. You will need these—don't throw anything away! Adjustments may be made in the schedule.

I will return the rough draft to you on the following Monday for corrections. A rubric will be attached to your draft(s), which must have each "Yes" circled in order to have your draft finalized by me. If you have a "No", you will then re-submit the corrected draft to me ASAP along with the rubric. Remember, you will be correcting the rough draft as you are working on the next opening statement. Time management is essential!

As I return your re-submitted drafts to you for final correction, you will time your statements. They must be **no longer than 4 minutes read aloud**. Don't worry about writing too much in the beginning. It will be much easier to delete than to add to your statements.

5. During the mock simulation practices, we will go over potential follow-up questions judges may ask. Judges have **6 minutes** to ask you **anything** on your opening statement or in your UNIT (even if it didn't pertain to your question directly).

You WILL NOT be able to use your notes during the 6 minute follow-up session. Other teachers or community members may come in to help with the simulation practices prior to the state competition.

Many of these potential questions come from the "*What Do You Think*" questions in your textbook as well as past and current events. Be very familiar with each of those questions. Bottom line: KNOW YOUR MATERIAL and be able to defend your opinions!

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- Jan. 5 - 9 Prepare Question # 1 (in library)
- 1st Rough Draft due **FRIDAY, JAN 9TH**
- Jan. 12 – 16 Prepare for Question #2 (in library)
- Question #1 Rough Drafts will be returned to you for corrections, editing, and re-submission

- Submit Question #2 Rough Draft – **FRIDAY, Jan 16TH**
- Jan. 19 – 23 Prepare Question # 3 (in classroom)
- Question #2 Rough Draft returned for corrections, editing, and re-submission
- Jan 19th – Martin Luther King, Jr. HOLIDAY – NO SCHOOL
- Submit Question #3 Rough Draft – **FRIDAY, JAN 23RD**
- Jan. 26 – 30 Finish preparation on Questions #1, 2 & 3 in Library

- Begin timing statements
- Feb. 2 – 6 Final Simulation Practices
- Final revisions / Modify Statements
- Wrap up / revise all opening statements
- Practice timing (4 min)
- Mock simulation / practice response questions (4 min / 6 min)
- Sample Score Sheets
- Logistics for Competition (departure, arrival, eating, etc.)
- Final Tips
- Feb. 7 *We the People* State Competition
- Virginia State Capitol, Patrick Henry Executive Office Building - Richmond, Virginia

We the People Unit Team—Peer Evaluation

Confidential—This information is for you to give an honest evaluation of your team members. Please also rate yourself and explain your personal contributions to this team.

Your Name: _____

Rating scale:

A = always, B = most of the time, C = sometimes, D = less than ½ the time, F = never

Names of team members

Names of Team Members	Came prepared personally (brought research & essays, etc.)	Contributed to writing the team essay—stayed on task	Attended practices	Overall grade

1. If you gave someone a C or below, please explain. Be as specific as you can.

2. What grade would you give yourself? Explain why. Be specific about what you personally contributed during your team meetings in and out of class.

SAMPLE

History, Current Events Guru, and Constitutional Scholar
Researcher's Guide

1. Focus Question: (May be a unit question, speech questions or a question from your teacher or group members that will guide your research.)

How does the first amendment protect freedom of religion?

2. Type of Source: (Find a Supreme Court case, Constitutional application, work from an historical figure, historical event, quote from a founding father or politician, Current event, etc.)

Constitutional Application

3. Citation: (Write the full reference citation below. ** You may want to attach a printed copy that includes highlighting and margin notes for future use.)

From: <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/htm>

4. Summary: (What does this case, article, quote, etc. mean? What is the gist?)

Two clauses in the First Amendment guarantee freedom of religion. The establishment clause prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another. It enforces the "separation of church and state." Some governmental activity related to religion has been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court. For example, providing bus transportation for parochial school students and the enforcement of "blue laws" is not prohibited. The free exercise clause prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.

5. Application to Unit: (Explain how your research can be used in your team's speech or follow-up questions.)

This source is a good example of how the government does play a role in religion. Cities can provide bus transportation for religious school students and "Blue Laws" which prohibit drinking on Sundays are not unconstitutional. This is a secondary source that explains the two parts of the freedom of Religion in the first amendment. I think we can use this to help differentiate between the two parts in our speech and for examples of different limits of freedom of religion. (e.g. "Blue Laws" and busses for parochial school kids.)

Historian, Current Events Guru, and Constitutional Scholar Researcher's Guide

1. Focus Question: *(May be a unit question, speech questions or a question from your teacher or group members that will guide your research.)*

2. Type of Source: *(Find a Supreme Court case, Constitutional application, work from an historical figure, historical event, quote from a founding father or politician, Current event, etc.)*

3. Citation: *(Write the full reference citation below. ** You may want to attach a printed copy that includes highlighting and margin notes for future use.)*

4. Summary: *(What does this case, article, quote, etc. mean? What is the gist?)*

5. Application to Unit: *(Explain how your research can be used in your team's speech or follow-up questions.)*

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Simulated Congressional Hearing Research Websites

<http://www.civiced.org/>

Center for Civic Education's web-site that offers helpful hints, calendar information, links, and more.

<http://www.findlaw.com/>

Ability to search by topic or case; offers outstanding annotations of the Constitution; sign up for daily email updates.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/>

Cornell site can be searched by cases, both current and historic, and topic; includes federal and state case law.

<http://www.oyez.org/oyez/frontpage>

Excellent site to search by title or topic; gives one page summary of case that presents facts of case, question presented, and conclusion.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Great source for international and national news. OnPolitics page offers superb federal page in which you can view current Supreme Court docket and happenings within federal government.

<http://www.latimes.com/>

Offers national and international news; politics page has good political sites link.

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

Politics page also offers coverage of campaigns and polls, sign up for free daily email news.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nfront.htm>

News page has coverage of world, states and Washington DC; with links to local and state newspapers.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Library of Congress site offers legislative information including current legislation and committees.

<http://www.aclu.org/>

American Civil Liberties Union site for constitutional issues and current events.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/>

Conservative site for current issues.

<http://www.freedomforum.org/first/>

First Amendment web-site offers news, articles, and commentary.

<http://W3.trib.com/FACT/>

First Amendment Cyber Tribune intended as resource for anyone concerned with First Amendment issues.

<http://www.closeup.org/resource.htm>

Close Up Foundations link to documents and civic sites.

<http://www.constitution.org/>

Constitution Society site for research of constitutional principles.

<http://www.crf-usa.org/links.html>

Constitutional Rights Foundation links page for current events and constitutional issues.

<http://www.usconstitution.net/>

Covers current as well as historical events and documents, including the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Philadelphia Convention.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/election/partysys.html>

Great information on political parties now and throughout history.

<http://www.usconstitution.com/>

UNIT 1 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ What is the purpose of government according to the natural rights philosophers?
- ❑ Where does government get its right to govern, according to the natural rights philosophers?
- ❑ What is a social compact? Do you think this is the best way to create a government? Why or why not?
- ❑ What beliefs about rights were important to the American colonists?
- ❑ What rights do you think people should have?
- ❑ What is republican government?
- ❑ Why did Montesquieu believe that the powers of republican government should be separated among different branches or groups in the government?
- ❑ What was the purpose of balancing the powers among different groups in the government?
- ❑ Why should each group be given ways to check the power of the other groups?
- ❑ Why was Cincinnatus considered a model of civic virtue?
- ❑ Why do you think many people thought that republican government was not possible if the citizens did not have civic virtue?
- ❑ How was civic virtue promoted among the Founders?
- ❑ What is a constitution? What can you learn about a nation's government by studying its constitution?
- ❑ Explain the differences between constitutional governments and autocratic or dictatorial governments.
- ❑ What are the characteristics of the "higher law" of a constitutional government?
- ❑ Describe two areas of citizen's lives with which you think the government should not interfere. Explain why you think the government should not intrude in these areas. What term describes these areas?
- ❑ What branches do many modern constitutional governments have? What are the functions of each branch?
- ❑ Why are powers divided among separate groups?
- ❑ In constitutional governments, one branch is often checked by the other branches. Why? Give examples of some checks.
- ❑ The separation and sharing of powers means that decisions are not made quickly. Explain at least one way that this could be an advantage. Then, explain at least one way it could be a disadvantage.
- ❑ What did the Founders think might happen if there were no government?
- ❑ What are some examples of how our government protects people's rights?
- ❑ Why did the Founders choose a republican form of government?
- ❑ What are some examples of how our government today serves the common welfare?
- ❑ Is the U.S. government a constitutional government? Give examples to explain your answer.
- ❑ How well has the U.S. been able to maintain a republican form of government?
- ❑ Should the U.S. intervene in countries that do not have constitutional governments to protect the rights of the people?

UNIT 2 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ How and why did the feudal kings in England share their power?
- ❑ What were some of the basic ideas included in the Magna Carta?
- ❑ Parliament won a struggle with the king in 1689, when the English Bill of Rights was adopted. Which parts of the English Bill of Rights do you think the Framers might have included in our Constitution? Explain.
- ❑ Four ideas that were very important to the Framers were limited government, representative government, the balance of power, and separation of powers. Give examples of these ideas from English government.
- ❑ Colonial governments illustrated English ideas of good government. Describe the similarities between the colonial governments and the English government?
- ❑ For most of the colonial period, the colonists considered themselves to be loyal subjects of Great Britain. Why do you think they felt this way? What happened to change the feelings of many colonists?
- ❑ What was the purpose of the Declaration of Independence?
- ❑ What is the purpose of government as described in the Declaration of Independence? How is this purpose similar to or different from the purpose of government described by the natural rights philosophers?
- ❑ What does the Declaration say people have a right to do if a government is destructive of their rights? Is this true today? Why or why not?
- ❑ What do you think was meant by the phrase "all men are created equal"? In 1776, who was included? Who was not?
- ❑ Why did most of the state constitutions give most of the power to the legislature?
- ❑ The Massachusetts constitution differed in important ways from those of the other states. Describe these differences.
- ❑ Explain what you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of the Massachusetts constitution compared with the constitutions of the other states.
- ❑ Do you think the property requirements for voting were in conflict with the principles of democracy? Explain your answer.
- ❑ What was the most common occupation in America in 1787? What kind of standard of living did it provide? What attitudes did it create?
- ❑ What differences of race and wealth were there in American society? How do these differences compare with America today?
- ❑ Do you think the diversity of Americans increased their acceptance of people with different beliefs and lifestyles? Why or why not?
- ❑ Why might people from states with smaller populations have been satisfied with the government set up by the Articles of Confederation?
- ❑ Why do you think some people today still oppose a strong national government? Name some issues that states might prefer to decide for themselves.
- ❑ What were some of the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence?
- ❑ How did the framers of the Constitution rectify the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence?
- ❑ What was the biggest strength of the Articles of Confederation?
- ❑ What would life be like today in America if we still had the Articles of Confederation?
- ❑ How did the framers of the Constitution attempt to rectify (fix) the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?
- ❑ Did everyone agree?
- ❑ What are some examples of how the principles (life, liberty, etc.) in the Declaration of Independence are still relevant today?

UNIT 3 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ What was the original purpose for calling a meeting in Philadelphia in 1787? Why was the purpose changed? By whose authority was it changed?
- ❑ In what ways were the delegates representative of the American people? IN what ways were they not representative?
- ❑ Should the topics being debated at the Philadelphia Convention have been reported to the public? Why or why not?
- ❑ Explain the difference between equal representation and proportional representation. Which plan did the states with large populations support? Why?
- ❑ What position would you take on the issue of equal and proportional representation if it were raised today? Why?
- ❑ What important differences of opinion existed between the northern and southern states? Which of these do you think was the most controversial? Why?
- ❑ What fundamental ideas about constitutional government were violated by the compromise reached between the northern and southern delegates?
- ❑ Are there other ways that the issue of slavery would have been resolved at the convention? Explain your position.
- ❑ What experiences of the Framers might have influenced their decision on how much power they should give the national government? Give examples of some of these experiences.
- ❑ Why do you think the Framers devoted so much of the Constitution to the legislative branch?
- ❑ What do you think the purpose of the limitations listed in Article I, section 9 is?
- ❑ How was the Framer's view of the executive branch affected by their knowledge of history and their own experience?
- ❑ According to the Constitution, what is the supreme law of the land? Whose responsibility is it to enforce, or carry out, the laws of the land?
- ❑ Why did the Framers make the executive branch share some of its powers with Congress?
- ❑ Why do you think the Framers wanted to protect the judicial branch from political influence? What might be the advantages and disadvantages of doing this?
- ❑ Describe Benjamin Franklin's attitude toward the Constitution. In your opinion, which of his reasons for signing the Constitution do you think might have been most persuasive to the other delegates?
- ❑ Who were the Federalists? Who were the Anti-Federalists?
- ❑ Why didn't the Federalists answer the criticism that the Constitution gave the federal government too much power?
- ❑ Why didn't the Federalists want the Constitution submitted to the existing Congress or state governments for ratification?
- ❑ The Anti-Federalists lost their battle to prevent the adoption of the Constitution. However, their struggle left a permanent impact on the Constitution. How was this accomplished?
- ❑ Explain what you think were the best reasons for ratification. Then, explain what you think were the best reasons against ratification.
- ❑ Would you have voted to ratify the Constitution as written in 1787? Explain your answer.
- ❑ How were the disagreements over slavery solved at the Convention?
- ❑ Do you think there were any other ways to resolve these disagreements about slavery?
- ❑ What kinds of people were represented at the Philadelphia Convention? What people were not represented?
- ❑ Why were the meetings of the Philadelphia Convention kept secret from the American people? Do you agree with this decision?
- ❑ What basic ideas about our government are included in the Preamble to the Constitution?
- ❑ Why were the framers so hesitant to give the president and the executive branch any powers?

UNIT 4 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ Explain what a federal system is.
- ❑ Explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of a federal system of government. Which responsibilities would you give to the federal government? Which responsibilities would you give to the states?
- ❑ Why did the Framers create a federal system instead of continuing their confederation or creating a unitary system?
- ❑ Define "sovereignty". Who had sovereignty in the United States? Give evidence.
- ❑ How did Congress organize the executive and judicial branches of the government?
- ❑ Do you think it is a good idea to have only one person head the executive branch when today, we have 240 million people in the US, compared to 4 million in the 1780's?
- ❑ What was the purpose of the Bill of Rights? Why was it included in our Constitution?
- ❑ Why might political parties be a special problem to a new government? Are political parties seen as such a problem today?
- ❑ Explain why Jefferson distrusted the necessary and proper clause of the Constitution. Do you agree with Jefferson's position? Why or why not?
- ❑ Which political party today is most like the Federalists? Which party is most like the Republicans? Explain your position.
- ❑ Do political parties today argue about the same issues that followers of Hamilton and Jefferson argued about? Explain.
- ❑ What is judicial review?
- ❑ If judicial review had not been established, how could disagreements over the meaning of the Constitution have been decided?
- ❑ How does judicial review protect the rights of the minority?
- ❑ Do you think that judicial review allows the courts to overrule the will of the people as expressed through their legislatures? Why or why not?
- ❑ If there were no power of judicial review, how could the people be sure members of government obeyed the limitations set upon their powers by the Constitution?
- ❑ How can the Supreme Court decide cases involving subjects, such as wiretapping, which did not exist when the Constitution was written?
- ❑ Why did the Framers think it was necessary to divide the powers of government among three different branches?
- ❑ Do you agree with how the powers are divided between the Federal government and the states?
- ❑ Should the state's powers be listed in the Constitution?
- ❑ Do you think the Supreme Court should have the power to declare a law passed by Congress unconstitutional? Why or why not?
- ❑ Do you think the President has too much power today? Why or why not?
- ❑ Do you think Congress should have the power to pass a bill over the President's veto? Why or why not?
- ❑ How does our federal system limit the powers of the national government?
- ❑ How could we protect the rights of the people if we did not have Judicial Review?

UNIT 5 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ In your own words, restate the sections of the First Amendment that deal with freedom of expression.
- ❑ Under what conditions do you think public school principals should have the right to censor school-sponsored newspapers? Explain your answer.
- ❑ Some religious groups have suggested adding an amendment to the Constitution permitting voluntary prayer in public schools. Would you support such an amendment? Why or why not?
- ❑ Should public schools be permitted to close for Christmas? Why or why not?
- ❑ How would the United States be different today if we had an official national religion? What changes would be good ones? What changes would be bad ones? Explain.
- ❑ List the restrictions on voting rights that have kept various groups from voting.
- ❑ List the ways in which various groups have won the right to vote.
- ❑ Why do you think it took so long for women to win suffrage?
- ❑ Why do you think that action by the federal government was necessary to gain voting rights for some groups of people?
- ❑ What restrictions, if any, do you think states should be able to place on voting rights? Explain your position.
- ❑ When was the 14th Amendment ratified, and what was its purpose?
- ❑ How might the 14th Amendment be used to support the rights of women, the disabled, and others who believe they are not receiving equal treatment?
- ❑ Are there times when your right to equal protection of the law might conflict with another person's right to privacy or property? For example, is it fair for a state to require private men's clubs to admit women as members? Explain both sides of this issue.
- ❑ Why do you think the guarantee of due process is so important?
- ❑ Why are the courts given the responsibility to protect due process?
- ❑ Should adults and juveniles be treated alike when they break laws? Explain your answer.
- ❑ How is freedom of religion protected in the Constitution?
- ❑ When is it acceptable for the government to limit people's practice of their religious beliefs? Give examples.
- ❑ How has the idea of "equal protection of the laws" been used to protect people's rights? Give examples.
- ❑ Are there any groups of people in our nation who are deprived of any basic rights? Explain your answer.
- ❑ Which of the basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution seem the most important to you personally today? Do you think your opinion will change when you are an adult?
- ❑ Does reciting the Pledge of Allegiance violate freedom of religion? If so, what part? Explain both sides.

UNIT 6 PRACTICE Follow-up Questions for Congressional Hearing

- ❑ How is citizen participation related to the purposes of our government? Explain why participating in government is in our own self-interest.
- ❑ List 3 ways of participating in government. For each, tell why it would be an effective way of protecting your basic rights.
- ❑ Suppose you do not choose to vote or participate in any way in government. Should you still be required to obey its laws? Explain your answer.
- ❑ Does a good citizen have a responsibility to work to improve his or her society? Why or why not?
- ❑ Should a good citizen be concerned with improving the lives of those less fortunate? Why or why not?
- ❑ How would you define the common welfare? Explain why you think your decision is the best. Give examples of how it could be used in making decisions about actual political problems, such as keeping the streets safe or the air and water clean.
- ❑ What are some ways a citizen can participate in government?
- ❑ What is civic virtue?
- ❑ How can citizens show civic virtue?
- ❑ Should all citizens be required to pass a citizenship test to vote? Explain.
- ❑ What can the government do to get more young voters to the polls?
- ❑ What can the government do to get more minority groups to the polls?
- ❑ What does it mean to be a sovereign state?
- ❑ How do nation-states enforce international laws?
- ❑ What power does the Constitution give the president to deal with other nations?
- ❑ What power does the U.S. Constitution give Congress to deal with other nations?
- ❑ Who has authority over nation-states?
- ❑ What is government's role in the nation-state?
- ❑ What are some examples of nation-states?
- ❑ In what ways might nation-states agree to cooperate with each other?
- ❑ What is the United Nations and what does it do?
- ❑ What do you think citizens gain from relationships with other countries?
- ❑ What do citizens in other countries gain from their relationship with the U.S.?
- ❑ How have democratic ideals from the U.S. influenced other nations?
- ❑ Do you agree with the belief that democracy is worth risking one's life for?

Simulated Congressional Hearing Service Learning Follow-Up

Throughout the school year you have worked towards the preparation for the Simulated Congressional Hearing. During these last few weeks you have become an expert on one aspect of American history and government. Now having testified before a panel of judges you are ready to advocate for the importance of civic literacy in education.

Write a letter to one of the community leaders who judged your unit.

First, discuss what you learned about government and citizenship as a result of your experience in the Simulated Congressional Hearing. How will your experience help you become a more engaged and active citizen?

Next, reflect on some of the **questions the judges asked** you and discuss what you learned as a result of the questions the judges asked your group.

Next, think about the effort the judges made on your behalf and why it is an example of **civic virtue**. Why is it important for community members to support civic education?

Finally, think about **why the judge should come back** and judge at future Simulated Congressional Hearings.

Now, write a letter to **one** of the community members who judged your unit at the Simulated Congressional Hearing. Be sure to use the proper letter format and sign it at the end. Check for spelling, grammar and syntax.

Simulated Congressional Hearing Reflection

Wow! What an amazing experiences! These last weeks have undoubtedly been an experience unlike any other in your educational career. As a final assignment in this process, you will write a letter to your social studies teacher reflecting on what you have learned. Use the following prompts below to guide your writing being sure to address **thoroughly** each aspect of the Simulated Congressional Hearing experience mentioned.

1. First, think about your role within your unit team. What was it like to work with your classmates in this way? What did you learn about yourself and each other during this process? Be specific and discuss your various roles.
2. Next, think about what you learned about your topic as a result of this experience. Reflect on any new understandings or knowledge you acquired about your unit topic and/or America history and government in general. How was this type of learning different from other types of learning in social studies?
3. Next, describe a specific part of the Simulated Hearing (either the preparation or the event itself) that taught you something you did not know. What made this aspect of the experience so significant for you? Why will you remember it?
4. Next, describe what made this experience different from other social studies projects. How have you changed as a result? What about this experience will you take with you into high school and into society?
5. Finally, give your self a grade for your work during the Simulated Congressional Hearing. This grade should include your preparation and your actual performance. Justify your grade with evidence such as contributions you made to the group speech, research, follow-ups, morale as well as questions you answered during the hearing.

Requirements:

Be sure to reflect fully and elaborately on the questions asked. Be honest.

Type your final letter and submit it to

This assignment is worth **points**.

"We the People..." Mock Congressional Hearing Student Evaluation

Please think about the Mock Congressional Hearing you just completed, and use the scale to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

4=Strongly Agree 3=Agree 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

- _____ I have a deeper understanding of the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution and bill of Rights after having participated in the program.
- _____ The program stimulated my interest in the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and important constitutional issues.
- _____ The program has made me more aware of current issues that relate to the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- _____ Participating in this program gave me a greater understanding of my responsibilities as a citizen.
- _____ Participating in this program increased my ability to express my opinions on important issues.
- _____ As a result of participating in this program, I have increased my understanding of how to influence public policy decisions.
- _____ I would recommend participating in this program to other students
- What was your favorite part of the whole program? Why?

- What was your least favorite part? Why?

- On a scale of 1-10, (1-least, 10-most) what would you rank this experience with regard to:
 - _____ Educational Value
 - _____ Enjoyment
 - _____ Challenge
- What was your overall impression of the program (Text, preparation, competition, schedule etc.)?
- What recommendations would you make to improve the experience for next year's students?