



Lesson Plan

Write an Essay on Government Policy

Grade: High School

Goal: Students think critically about government policy.

Learning Objectives: Students learn about the role of government in their lives and how different policies have affected them directly. Students think critically and do research to find evidence to back up their arguments for or against an issue.

Time: 4-5 classroom periods depending on class size and time available. Students work individually or in groups.

Activity

Teachers may use their own example or the example of federal versus states' policies regarding marijuana. This has been a hot topic for years and high school students will be aware of the unusual nature of policies surrounding the medical and recreational use of marijuana.

Lead class in a discussion of the pros and cons of the policy as well as the creation of the law in their state. If using federal versus state regulations of marijuana, explain the creation of the Drug Schedule and the evolution of drug policy at the federal and local levels in the 2000s.

Have students choose a policy and write an explanatory essay. They may do so in groups or individually. Students will then research and write an essay about the legislation. Have each student include examples of two or three pros and two or three cons about the legislation and how it affects people's lives.

Questions to Consider:

- Choose a policy.
- What were the arguments for and against this policy?
- What were/are the social and political implications of that policy?
- What do you view as some of the pros and cons for the policy?
- What effects has the policy had on the United States and the world today?
- Was this a good policy to enact? Why or why not?
- Provide at least 5 examples to support your argument.



Lesson Plan

Examples of a policy to discuss:

- Changing marijuana laws in students' home states
- Pure Food and Drug Act
- Seatbelt laws
- Legal drinking age
- Legal voting age
- Controlled Substances Act

Evaluation: Educators will ask student groups to present to their peers about what they learned and their essay's.

Recommended Readings:

[Drug Scheduling \(DEA\)](#)

[Drug Scheduling and Penalties \(Campus Drug Prevention\)](#)

[The Controlled Substances Act \(DEA\)](#)

[Drug Abuse \(Get Smart About Drugs\)](#)

[Statement of the Department of Justice Before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health For a Hearing Entitled "Cannabis Policy—For the New Decade," January 15, 2020](#)

[Teens Ask: "Is There a Cure for Addiction?" \(National Institute on Drug Abuse\)](#)

[Marijuana Withdrawal is Real \(National Institute on Drug Abuse\)](#)

[Drug Facts \(National Institute on Drug Abuse\)](#)



Lesson Plan

Standards of Learning:

Common Core

9th-10th Grades

History and Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.



Lesson Plan

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7

Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.A

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.B

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.



Lesson Plan

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.A

Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.B

Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.C

Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.



Lesson Plan

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.3

(See note; not applicable as a separate requirement)

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



Lesson Plan

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

11th and 12th Grades

History & Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.



Lesson Plan

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.



Lesson Plan

Writing

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.A

Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.B

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.



Lesson Plan

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.A

Introduce a topic and organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.B

Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.C

Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic; convey a knowledgeable stance in a style that responds to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation provided (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.3

(See note; not applicable as a separate requirement)

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting,



Lesson Plan

or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.