

U.S. Civics Curriculum Matrix

Infusing a Global Perspective

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Outline of Major Content Goals (U.S. Civics)

1. Foundations of Citizenship

- Citizenship & Government in a Democracy
- Roots of American Democracy
- Constitution
- Bill of Rights

2. National Government

- Legislative Branch
- Presidency/Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch

3. Political Parties & Interest Groups

- Political Parties & Interest Groups
- Voting & Elections
- Influencing Government

4. State & Local Government

- State Government
- Local Government
- Community Issues

5. The Individual & the Law

- Legal Rights & Responsibilities
- Civil & Criminal Law

6. The U.S. & World Community

- Economic Systems
- Government Systems, NGOs, & Multinational Organizations
- Interdependence & Global Citizenship

High School Civics Class

- 1 semester in length
- Includes lecture, reading, discussion
- Following projects are in addition to normal content coverage
- I did not fill in every square on the curriculum matrix because it would not be feasible to fit that much into the course without overburdening the curriculum.

Unit 1

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
Foundations of Citizenship	Federalist/Anti-federalist Debate: Students read excerpts Hamilton/Clinton debate in NY papers in order to understand how debate continues to this day.		Students compare U.S. & Vietnamese Declarations of Independence to understand how different cultures have interpreted the rhetoric of various natural rights (political vs. economic).	Students do research in groups on a relatively young democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Students then identify certain political and economic factors from the colonial experience of the USA that similarly shaped the African country's transition to democracy.	

Unit 2

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
National Government	In order to understand judicial review, students read excerpts from the Brown Decision and amicus briefs submitted by southern politicians and citizens counsels.	Students do a role-play of a congressional vote on whether or not the US should expand offshore drilling. Each student play a senator with a different constituency. Students must negotiate a policy.		Students learn about the concepts of constituency and representation by researching ethnic violence in democracies where geopolitical constituent units are divided along ethnic lines. Students make a poster and present findings to the class.	Students study the concepts of "separation of powers" and "separate branches sharing powers" by researching the War Powers debate between Congress and the Presidency. Students write an essay explaining possible interpretations of War Powers and take a position in support of one.

Unit 3

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
Political Parties & Interest Groups	Class holds a mock midterm election, or state election (which ever is closer). Students use Project VoteSmart site to understand both party platforms and various policy positions of notable candidates.	Students prepare for a congressional hearing activity which will discuss U.S. energy policy. They are assigned a special interest to represent. Groups must form an interest group, set goals, do research, and formulate policy recommendations.	Class watches a documentary on identity politics and discusses how identity politics changed relationship between the State and the individual.		Class engages in the congressional hearing on U.S. Energy Policy as various special interests advocating, well-researched and formulated visions for the energy future of our nation.

Unit 4

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
State & Local Government	Students interview family farm owners and local organic farmers about GM crops.	At the end of the unit, students write a letter to their senator or representative expressing their opinions on our state Ag. policy and offer policy recommendations	Students read excerpts from articles which discuss European resistance to GM and African support for GM.	Students (in Iowa) study economics of corn (world hunger, subsidies, biofuels, GM) and understand state Ag policies	Students assigned reading on Malthusian theory and discuss as a class what the student's future might look like and what ways this can be avoided.

Unit 5

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
Individual & the Law	Student groups are assigned a civil liberty/right from the Bill of Rights and perform skits to explain to the class what their right is, how it can be violated, and why it should be protected		Students tour a local correction facility and juvenile parole officer or social worker speaks to the class about intersection of crime and poverty in local community	Students watch portions of the documentary "Exit through the Gift Shop" in order to understand issues surrounding international copyrights in addition to readings about how patents are protected in civil court.	Students are assigned a portion of the PATRIOT act controversies to study (warrantless wiretapping, suspending habeas, torture, etc.). Then students get into a group and debate alternatives and give a policy recommendation to the class.

Unit 6

	Perspective Consciousness	"State of the Planet" Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Knowledge of Global Dynamics	Awareness of Human Choices
U.S. & World Community	Students research the pros and cons of US aid sent abroad for public health initiatives in developing countries, such as immunizations for infants, family planning, etc.	Students watch a clip from Guns, Germs, and Steal which discusses the problem of endemic diseases such as malaria in Africa. Students also read article about how Malaysia and Singapore's government eradicated malaria.	Students research attitudes within Sub-Saharan Africa toward global public health initiatives toward vaccination. They create a portfolio of four online articles and write a 1 page reflection that integrates unit concepts	In groups students explore the World Health Organization's website in order and then draw a concept map of world relief efforts.	At the end of the unit, students write a persuasive essay recommending US foreign policy for public health based on the best evidence they have gathered.

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Questions? Comments?