

**New Jersey Department of Education
2006 Social Studies Standards Implementation Guide (SIG)**

6.2. CIVICS: ALL STUDENTS WILL KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ROLES OF A CITIZEN IN THE NATION AND THE WORLD.

Grade 9-12

6.2.12.C. Constitution and American Democracy

1. Debate current issues and controversies involving the central ideas of the American constitutional system, including representative government (e.g., Electoral College and the popular vote), civic virtue (e.g., increasing voter turnout through registrations and campaigns), checks and balances, and limits on governmental power.
5. Describe the nature of political parties in America and how they reflect the spectrum of political views on current state and federal policy issues.
6. Explain the federal and state legislative process and analyze the influence of lobbying, advocacy groups, the media, and campaign finance on the development of laws and regulations.

Author Information

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Framework97 References

Explain Origins and Key Principles Embodied in the Constitution, pp 61-63
Analyze Balance Between Rights and Responsibilities, pp. 64-65
Analyze Information About Public Issues, pp. 66-67
Analyze Role of the Individual and Government, pp. 68-69
Analyze Functioning of Governmental Process, pp. 70-71

National History Standard

National Standards for Civics and Government

- I. What Are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?
- II. What Are the Foundations of the American Political System?
- III. How Does the Government Embody the Principles of American Democracy?

Content Overview

This section involves analysis of central ideas related to the functioning of the American system including the electoral college, checks and balances, functioning of political parties, elections and “winner take all” in voting; and what

the major responsibilities are of all branches of government. Other topics included are analysis of key Supreme Court cases and comparison of American democracy to other world governmental systems.

Essential Questions

What are the pros and cons of the electoral college?
How does the electoral college protect the majority and the minority in a national election?
What is the meaning of “one man-one vote”?
What are the major elements of a federal domestic policy? A foreign policy?
How does the federal government make and carry out policies in related to basic issue areas of agriculture, education, health care, infrastructure, environment, economic system, and environment?
How do American political parties reflect the political viewpoints of the electorate?
What is the importance of lobbyists in today’s political process?
How can our students learn to critically evaluate the media?
Does the American presidential system serve us better than the system of parliamentary democracies like England and France?
How can we determine the effectiveness of the increase of governmental power over the rights of citizens under the Patriot Act?
Do current campaign finance laws properly regulate and discourage corruption?
How do the major political parties differ on major issues of domestic and foreign policy?
Is any one of the three branches of government more powerful in today’s society than any other?
How do advocacy or special interest groups play a vital role in the evolution of political policy?

Teaching Resources

Get the Student Edition of the *New York Times* or see the daily lesson plan on their website, <http://www.NYTimes.com>.
See the various websites which covers U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The Court has its own page at www.supremecourtus.gov, and Cornell University also has a site which was the first such site found at <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html>

Assessment

Teams of students participate in a debate on the proposition:
“Resolved, the Electoral College should be abolished.”
Grades should be based on quality and thoroughness of arguments, and effectiveness in speaking to the group. Teacher and students develops a rubric would be used in the assessment process.

