Unit 1 - Law and the Legal System

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s):
Time Period: **September**
Length: **11 block classes**
Status: **Published**

Enduring Understandings

Laws are the rules and regulations made and enforced by government that regulate the conduct of people in society. Understand why societies require rules, laws and government. That said, the American government was founded on the principles of fairness, equality and respect for diversity. The Constitution is America's supreme law of the land. It is a living document that helps defines the roles of all its citizens.

Essential Questions

- What are laws?
- How does our Constitution create a framework for a justice system with federalism?
- How are laws created?
- What methods are available to resolve disputes outside of our regular justice system?
- How does the court system compare between levels of government, including local, state and federal courts?
- How do criminal and civil courts compare and contrast?
- How does a trial court compare and contrast to an appellate court?

Skills

- Describe the function of laws.
- Determine how societal values are reflected in laws.
- Analyze the structure of the US Consitituon.
- Analyze how laws are actually made, including the roles of citizens, and the branches of government on the federal, state and local levels.
- Describe and apply three methods of alternative dispute resolution - mediation, negotiation, arbitration.
- Desctibe the structures and functions of the trial and appeals court systes at the federal, state and local levels.
- Evaluate the impact of court ruligs on individuals and on the American society.

Resources

The Constitution of the United States

The Federalist Papers

Street Law: A course in Practical Law textbook & website resources

Media news sources

Standards

- 6.1.12.A.2.a Assess the importance of the intellectual origins of the Foundational Documents (i.e., Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Bill of Rights) and assess their importance on the spread of democracy around the world
- 6.2.12.A.5.e Assess the progress of human and civil rights around the world since the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.
- 6.1.12.A.13.b Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, Brown v. Board of Education, and Roe v. Wade) in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities.
- 6.1.12.A.14.a Evaluate the effectiveness of the checks and balances system in preventing one branch of national government from usurping too much power during contemporary times.
- 6.1.12.A.14.b Analyze how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to define the rights of the individual, and evaluate the impact on public policies.
- 6.1.12.A.14.d Analyze the conflicting ideologies and actions of political parties regarding spending priorities, the role of government in the economy, and social reforms.
- 6.1.12.A.14.e Evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of the process by which national, state, and local officials are elected and vote on issues of public concern.
- 6.1.12.A.14.h Assess the effectiveness of government policies in balancing the rights of the individual against the need for national security.
- 6.3.12.D.1 Analyze the impact of current governmental practices and laws affecting national security and/or individual civil rights/ privacy.
- 6.1.12.D.14.f Determine the influence of multicultural beliefs, products (i.e., art, food, music, and literature), and practices in shaping contemporary American culture.

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