# Unit 4: People & Public Policy

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s): **Civics**
Time Period: **Semester 1 & 2**
Length: **4 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

## Standards

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| 6.3.12.CivicsPD.1 | Develop plan for public accountability and transparency in government related to a particular issue(s) and share the plan with appropriate government officials. |
| 6.3.12.CivicsHR.1 | Compare current case studies involving slavery, child labor, or other unfair labor practices in the United States with those of other nations and evaluate the extent to which these human rights violations are a universal problem. |
| | Geography, People, and the Environment: Global Interconnections |
| | Global interconnections create complex spatial patterns at multiple scales that continue to change over time. |
| 6.3.12.GeoGI.1 | Collaborate with students from other countries to develop possible solutions to an issue of environmental justice, including climate change and water scarcity, and present those solutions to relevant national and international governmental and/or nongovernmental organizations. |
| | Economics, Innovation, Technology: Global Economy |
| | Global economic activities involve decisions based on national interests, the exchange of different units of exchange, decisions of public and private institutions, and the ability to distribute goods and services safely. |
| 6.3.12.EconGE.1 | Participate in a simulated meeting (e.g., President's Council, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), research evidence from multiple sources about an economic problem (e.g., inflation, unemployment, deficit), and develop a plan of action. |
| | History, Culture, and Perspective: Historical Sourcing and Evidence |
| | Historical sources and evidence provide an understanding of different points of view about historical events. |
| 6.3.12.HistorySE.1 | Analyze the impact of current governmental practices and laws affecting national security and/or First Amendment rights and privacy (e.g., immigration, refugees, seizure of personal property, juvenile detention, listening devices, deportation, religion in schools). |
| | Evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations can be used to develop a reasoned argument about the past. |
| 6.3.12.HistoryCA.12 | Analyze a current foreign policy issue by considering current and historical perspectives, examining strategies, and presenting possible actions. |

## Enduring Understandings

- In a representative democracy, individuals and groups have the power to influence public policy through various means, including voting, advocacy, protest, and lobbying.
- Public policy is the result of a complex process involving elected officials, interest groups, the media, government agencies, and public opinion.
- Laws and regulations have significant and varied impacts on different communities, often reflecting

societal values, priorities, and conflicts.

- The media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion and framing policy debates.
- Civic engagement is essential for a functioning democracy and can lead to meaningful change at the local, state, and national levels.
- Public policy decisions are often influenced by competing interests and limited resources, requiring negotiation and compromise.

## Essential Questions

1. What is public policy, and how does it affect our daily lives?
2. What are the different types of public policies, and how do they address societal issues?
3. What are the ethical implications of public policy decisions, and how can they affect marginalized communities?
4. How do political ideologies shape public policy implementation and debates?
5. What role does the media play in shaping public perception of policy issues?
6. How can policy evaluation and feedback mechanisms improve the effectiveness of public policies?

## Knowledge and Skills

Students will know:

- The steps in the public policy-making process, from issue identification to policy evaluation.
- The roles of key players in the policy process, including citizens, legislators, interest groups, lobbyists, and bureaucrats.
- How media coverage and public opinion can influence policymaking.
- The functions of political action committees (PACs), advocacy groups, and grassroots movements.
- Real-world examples of public policy in areas such as education, healthcare, the environment, and civil rights.
- The difference between laws, regulations, and executive policies.

Students will be able to:

- Analyze case studies to trace the development and impact of specific public policies.

- Evaluate the influence of media, money, and interest groups on political decision-making.
- Use data and evidence to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of public policies.
- Engage in simulations, debates, or advocacy projects to practice participatory citizenship.
- Identify ways individuals can influence policy, including contacting representatives, voting, organizing, or testifying at hearings.
- Create and propose a public policy solution to a real-world issue using persuasive argumentation and research.

## Transfer Goals

Students will be able to independently use their learning to:

1. Critically evaluate how public policies impact communities and societal well-being, using evidence, empathy, and civic reasoning.
2. Actively engage in the democratic process by using the tools of advocacy, communication, and participation to influence public decision-making.
3. Analyze policy debates and media coverage to understand bias, evaluate credibility, and form well-reasoned opinions on public issues.
4. Navigate political systems and processes to address local, state, or national issues that matter to them or their communities.
5. Collaborate and communicate with others to develop and advocate for informed policy solutions to real-world problems.

## Resources

Digital Sources:

iCivics - Engaging Students in Meaningful Civic Learning

C3 Teaching - College, Career and Civic Life

New Jersey Department of State

US Government Services and Information

Bill of Rights Institute

The Choices Program - Brown University

Civics 101 - Podcast Platform

PBS News Hour

Supplemental Resources:

WH Databases, AI (Gemini, Copilot, Magicshoolai), Pear Deck

News publications, including but not limited to NYTimes, Washington Post. Fox News, MSNBC, CNN

Web-based resources including but not limited to digital media (SIFT method), primary sources, peer reviews, historical documents and writings of historians

## Assessments

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mKgdwpriGuRcVHIVCJUdBEk7lih12Q0ckKSTC4TMUXs/edit

## Modifications

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ODqaPP69YkcFiyG72fIT8XsUIe3K1VSG7nxuc4CpCec/edit