

FANTASY GOVERNMENT

A Reference Curriculum

Civics & Government · Grades 7 to 12

C3 Framework for Social Studies, grades 6–8 and 9–12
NCSS National Curriculum Standards · AP U.S. Government & Politics
With a literacy skills crosswalk for your state's ELA standards

Built around the real congressional calendar.
Primarily lawmaking. Secondarily the campaign funding behind it.

FALL 2026 PILOT EDITION · STRICTLY NON-PARTISAN

About these standards

This curriculum maps to three published national frameworks. It deliberately does **not** claim alignment to "state standards," because there is no such single thing: Texas uses TEKS and state law bars its board from adopting Common Core, Virginia uses the SOL, Florida replaced Common Core with B.E.S.T. in 2020, and Nebraska, Alaska and Minnesota never adopted it. What follows instead is the frameworks this genuinely maps to, plus a skills list to match against your own state's requirements.

The C3 Framework for Social Studies (grades 6-8 and 9-12). A voluntary framework published by NCSS with numbered indicators. Where a week cites D2.Civ.5, that is a real indicator you can look up, and a plain-language gloss follows it in parentheses.

NCSS National Curriculum Standards. The ten thematic strands. Also voluntary.

AP United States Government and Politics. The College Board Course and Exam Description, with defined units. The most specific and checkable of the three.

Literacy skills crosswalk

ELA standards vary by state, so rather than claim alignment, here are the skills the graded artifacts develop. Map these to your own state's language.

SKILL	WHERE IT APPEARS
Evidence-based argumentation	Weeks 2, 5, 8, 9
Analysis of informational text (legislative and financial records)	Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Quantitative reasoning from public records	Weeks 4, 5, 6
Argumentative writing with claim, evidence, reasoning	Weeks 5, 9
Informative and explanatory writing	Weeks 6, 7
Formal correspondence conventions	Week 8
Speaking, listening, and structured deliberation	Weeks 1, 2, 5, 7, 9
Committee deliberation with an assigned dissent	Every week, Lineup Committee
Prediction and revision from evidence	Weeks 3, 4, 6

Before you begin

What this is

Nine lesson anchors built around a live classroom league. Your class drafts a team of real Senators and Representatives and competes against your team all season.

This course is **primarily about lawmaking**: roll call votes, bills introduced, committee work, cross-party cosponsorships, amendments, and the rare bill that becomes law. That is the subject, and seven of the nine anchors sit there.

Secondarily it is about campaign funding: who funds these campaigns, how much, from where, and what outside groups spend to influence races the candidates do not control.

The second follows from the first rather than competing with it. A student who can read a roll call vote but not a campaign filing can describe what Congress did without being able to ask why those particular members were there to do it. In an election year the calendar makes the point on its own, because Congress leaves Washington for five straight weeks in October, and campaign funding is the only thing moving while they are gone.

Campaign Funding carries Weeks 4 to 6, which is where those five weeks fall. That is not filler for a quiet period; it is the part of the picture the legislative calendar clears space for, and it hands the season back to lawmaking in Week 7.

What it is not

It is not a replacement for your legislative branch unit. It is a spine that gives that unit a running, current, unpredictable example, so that "how a bill becomes a law" stops being a diagram and starts being something your students are tracking on purpose.

How students access it

Students never create an account. You generate a class code and they open a read-only class view. No email, no sign-up, no profile, no tracking. Nothing they do in the product is recorded anywhere, because there is no place in the database to record it.

That is why this is safe from grade 7 upward. There is no student data to protect, so COPPA, FERPA, and state student-privacy laws are addressed by the architecture rather than by a policy page.

It has a practical consequence for planning: **every graded artifact here is produced outside the product**, on paper or in your LMS. The product supplies the evidence; your classroom supplies the assessment.

You can see the Follow the Money board today. Open it inside your classroom league before October and it shows a sample board with live FEC figures, clearly marked, so you can plan Weeks 4 to 6 now. Selections there are not recorded and earn nothing. The real curated board opens October 5.

The congressional calendar is the syllabus

Read this before you schedule anything. A scoring week happens whenever **either** chamber is in session. Only when **both** are out does the legislative side go quiet.

Fall 2026, as it actually is

WINDOW	WEEKS	WHAT IS HAPPENING
Sept 14 to Oct 4	3	Live. Both chambers working.
Oct 5 to Nov 8	5	Both chambers out. Election Recess.
Nov 9 to Nov 22	2	Live. Lame-duck session begins.
Nov 23 to Nov 29	1	Both out. Thanksgiving.
Nov 30 to Dec 13	2	Live. Season ends Dec 13.

Seven live legislative weeks inside a thirteen-week season, split by a five-week gap.

Where the nine anchors land

ANCHORS	WHEN	WHAT CARRIES THEM
Weeks 1 to 3	Sept 14 to Oct 4	Live floor activity
Weeks 4 to 6	Oct 5 to Nov 8	Campaign funding, via Follow the Money
Weeks 7 to 9	Nov 9 to Dec 13	Floor reopens, the rivalry decides itself

Follow the Money opens October 5 and settles on Election Day, November 3, mapping onto the recess almost exactly. **October is not a gap in this course. It is the campaign funding unit, and the season returns to lawmaking in Week 7.**

Odd years, and springs. Follow the Money runs in even-numbered years only, because there is no federal congressional election in an odd year. Outside an election window, run Week 7 (committees) in the Week 4 slot and stretch it across the quiet stretch; committee and cosponsorship records continue when the floor is empty.

Chamber-by-chamber, for planning

DATES	WHO IS OUT	SCORING
Aug 3 to Aug 30	House district work period	Senate in, scoring continues
Aug 10 to Sept 13	Senate August recess	House in from Aug 31
Sept 7 to Sept 13	House, Labor Day	Senate also out until Sept 13
Oct 5 to Nov 8	Both	No legislative scoring. Follow the Money is live.
Nov 23 to Nov 29	Both, Thanksgiving	No week
Dec 18 onward	Both, holiday recess	Season already ended Dec 13

Choosing your run length

Nine weeks is the reference, not the requirement.

	4-WEEK SPRINT	9-WEEK QUARTER	18-WEEK SEMESTER
Best for	A Congress unit inside a broader course	A full quarter on the legislative branch	AP Government, or a course built around it
Anchors used	1, 2, 4, 9	All nine	All nine
Pacing	Week 1 then draft day, same week	One anchor per week	One anchor every two weeks
Graded artifacts	3	9	9 plus off-week check-ins

The three that cannot be cut: Week 1 (who represents this school), Week 2 (draft day), and Week 9 (what the season taught). Without the first two there is no league; without the last the unit ends on a scoreboard instead of an idea.

In an election year, make Week 4 the fourth. A sprint that skips Follow the Money in an October when Congress is absent has nothing live to show students. Outside an election window, use Week 3 instead.

If you have five or six weeks, add Weeks 5 and 8.

Scheduling a sprint in fall 2026 needs care. Four consecutive live legislative weeks do not exist between September 14 and December 13. Either run September 14 to October 4 and close with Week 9 in early November, or run the whole sprint November 9 to December 4. A sprint that straddles October 5 must lean on Follow the Money for its middle weeks.

Your home delegation, on both teams

Before the roles or the draft, understand the three legislators the league hands you.

Every classroom league locks three members onto BOTH rosters: the Representative for the school's congressional district, and both Senators for the school's state. They are resolved from the school's own address, not the teacher's, so they are the people who actually represent the building your students sit in.

Neither side can draft them, trade them, or drop them. They are removed from the draft pool entirely. Both teams start with the identical three, and the competition runs on the twelve drafted slots only.

That symmetry is the point, and it is worth explaining to students out loud.

Whatever those three do, it helps both teams equally. When your Senator misses a week of votes, both sides lose the same points. When your Representative gets a bill out of committee, both sides gain the same points. There is no way to root for or against them within the game.

So the home delegation is the one part of the roster students can watch without competitive bias. Everywhere else they have a reason to want an outcome. Here they have none, which makes it the only place in the course where they are simply paying attention to their own representation. **That is the civic aim of the entire unit, and the league is built so it cannot be gamed.**

Three ways to use it:

- **Name them, every week.** Put the three on the board in Week 1 and leave them there. Most students cannot name any of them on day one and most adults cannot either.
- **Separate the two questions.** "Is this member scoring well" and "is this member serving us well" are different questions with different evidence. The locked slots are where students can practise telling them apart, because the competitive answer is identical for both teams.
- **Aim Week 8's letter here.** The constituent letter lands harder when written to someone who actually represents the writer.

If the delegation is missing. Assignment depends on the school address resolving to a congressional district at signup. If your league shows no locked members, the address did not resolve. Contact us and we will fix it; the league works either way, but this part is worth having.

The six rotating roles

Assign these weekly so every student cycles through each one. Each produces a small, gradable artifact.

ROLE	WHAT THEY DO	HOW MANY
Lineup Committee	Sets the class team's lineup and defends the call to the class.	A chair, a vice chair, and three or four members
Whip	Predicts the week's vote outcomes in writing, with reasoning.	Several
Committee Analyst	Tracks one congressional committee and writes a one-paragraph brief.	Several, one committee each
Lobbyist	Proposes a trade or waiver move and argues for it.	Several
Press Secretary	Writes the class's three-sentence weekly recap.	Several
Constituent	Writes a formatted letter to an assigned legislator.	Several

The Lineup Committee

The lineup decision runs as a committee rather than an individual, which mirrors how the chamber it is studying actually works.

- **The Chair** runs the meeting, calls the vote, and defends the final lineup to the class. Accountability sits with one named student, as it does with a real chair.
- **The Vice Chair** argues the strongest case against the chair's preferred lineup before the vote. This is an assigned duty, not a personality trait, and it is what stops the committee becoming a rubber stamp.
- **Members** each bring one legislator's numbers and speak once before the vote.

Rotate the whole committee weekly so every student chairs at least once across a nine-week run. In a shorter run, rotate the chair to volunteers and say plainly that not everyone gets a turn.

Why not one student. A single decision-maker is faster and teaches less. The committee version produces a real deliberation with a named person answerable for the outcome, which is the structure students are meant to be learning.

During Weeks 4 to 6 the roles shift. With the floor empty there are no votes to whip and no committees moving, so the Whip becomes the **Funding Whip** (predicting board questions with written reasoning) and the Committee Analyst becomes the **Filing Analyst** (tracking one race's disclosures). The Lineup Committee, Lobbyist, Press Secretary and Constituent continue.

Using this with grades 7 and 8

Every week carries a **Grades 7-8** block. The mechanics never change. What changes is the length of the writing, the scaffolding, and how much analysis you do out loud together.

Shortlist the draft. Pre-select twelve to sixteen candidates, balanced across party and chamber.

Give every writing task a frame. A sentence starter or claim-evidence-reasoning template turns a blank page into a fillable one.

Do the first one together. Model the Whip prediction, the filing analysis, and the constituent letter as a whole class before assigning them.

Scoring, and why each number is what it is

Give students the legislative table in Week 2 and the money rules in Week 4.

Legislative scoring

ACTION	POINTS	WHAT IT TEACHES
Vote cast	+2	Showing up is the baseline duty, not an achievement.
Vote missed	-3	Absence costs more than presence earns.
Bill cosponsored	+1	Most legislative work is joining someone else's effort.
Bill cosponsored across party	+3	Coalitions that cross the aisle are harder and worth more.
Bill introduced	+1 to +10	Scaled by support attracted. Solo bills are cheap.
Broadly supported bill	+8	Building a coalition before filing is the real skill.
Cross-party vote	+5	Breaking with your party carries a cost, so it earns a premium.
Amendment sponsored	+5	Most lawmaking is editing, not authoring.
Amendment adopted	+10	Getting your edit accepted is rarer than proposing it.
Bill passed committee	+15	The first real gate, where most bills die.
Bill passed chamber	+25	The second gate, rarer still.
Signed into law	+50	The whole pipeline, completed. Vanishingly rare.
Committee chair	+5	Institutional power is worth something on its own.

The escalation is the lesson. A law is worth twenty-five times a vote because it is far more than twenty-five times as hard.

Follow the Money scoring

Board questions carry their own points, locked when the question is published. **A correct call earns the full value. A wrong call earns zero, never a penalty.**

That asymmetry is a deliberate design statement and worth putting to students directly: money questions can only *add* to a season total, so a bad week reading filings cannot erase points a legislator earned by actually legislating. Ask them whether that ranking is right. It is a real question about what the game claims to value, and there is a good argument on each side.

Grades 7-8. Give the first four legislative rows only, then reveal the rest in Week 7 when the funnel is the topic. Four values is an argument they can hold; thirteen is a list.

Week 1: Who Represents This School

Required in every run length. *Fall 2026: week of Sept 14. Before draft day.*

Essential question: Who actually represents this school in Congress, and what would make one legislator more valuable to a team than another?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.1** (roles and powers of citizens and political institutions), **D2.Civ.5** (how effectively institutions address public problems) - **NCSS 6** Power, Authority, and Governance · **AP Gov Unit 2 - Literacy:** structured deliberation; prediction from evidence

In the product: Open the league. Both rosters already hold three legislators nobody drafted: your school district's Representative and both of your state's Senators.

Sequence (50 minutes)

1. **Opening, 5 min.** Students write down, without help, the name of their Representative and both Senators. Collect. Do not grade. Return these in Week 9.
2. **The reveal, 10 min.** Show the three locked members already on both rosters. Put the names on the board and leave them there all season. Explain that they were assigned from the school's address, that neither team drafted them, and that neither team can trade or drop them.
3. **Why both teams, 10 min.** Ask why the game would give both sides the same three players. Get to the answer: so nobody can win by luck of geography, and so there is no reason to root against your own representation. Note what follows, that whatever those three do helps both teams identically.
4. **What makes a legislator valuable, 20 min.** Hand out the legislative scoring table. In pairs, students identify the three actions they would most want from a roster member and justify each from the table rather than from opinion.
5. **Close, 5 min.** Announce draft day. Assign the first Lineup Committee.

Artifact: The name recall slip, plus the pair's three justified actions.

Teacher note: Resist explaining the scoring table before they argue about it. The values are an argument about how Congress works, and students who reason their way to "cosponsoring is worth almost nothing on its own" have learned more than students who were told.

Grades 7-8. Essential question becomes "Who speaks for us in Washington?" Cut step 4 to the first four rows of the scoring table. The reveal in step 2 carries the lesson on its own at this age; most students are genuinely surprised that anyone in Washington is specifically theirs.

Week 2: Draft Day

Required in every run length. *Fall 2026: week of Sept 21.*

Essential question: How does a group make a decision when no one is in charge, and the clock is running?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.7** (applying civic virtues and democratic principles), **D2.Civ.9** (using deliberative processes to reach decisions) - **NCSS 10** Civic Ideals and Practices · **AP Gov Unit 2 - Literacy:** evidence-based argumentation; structured deliberation

In the product: One shared snake draft. The Class Team and your Teacher Team draft from the same pool, in the same session, alternating.

How the draft actually runs

The Class Team picks first, overall. The order then snakes:

Class · Teacher · Teacher · Class · Class · Teacher · Teacher · Class ...

Because the order reverses each round, whoever picks last in one round picks first in the next, so your two picks arrive back to back in the middle of the pattern. **Twelve picks each**, since three of the fifteen roster slots are the locked home delegation already on both teams. The locked three are removed from the draft pool and cannot be selected by anyone.

Plan for two class periods, or one long block. Twenty-four picks with any real deliberation does not fit in fifty minutes.

Sequence

1. **Draft board, 5 min.** The Lineup Committee posts the class's target list from Week 1.
2. **The class picks first, 5 min.** They have the first overall selection. Make them use it before you say anything about your own strategy.
3. **Your picks, narrated, throughout.** Every time your turn comes, think aloud. "I am taking this member because she chairs a committee, and chairs move bills." Let them talk you out of a pick at least once. Your reasoning is the instruction; the picks are incidental.
4. **The back-to-back problem, mid-draft.** When the snake gives you two picks in a row, name what that does: it lets one side take a pair of related members before the other can respond. Ask the committee how they would use their own back-to-back turn.
5. **Close, 5 min.** Each side states the one pick they expect to regret.

Artifact: The Lineup Committee's written draft rationale, three sentences per round on why the class took who they took.

Teacher note: Expect them to draft on name recognition and expect it to lose. That failure is the most productive thing that happens in the first month, and it is why you should not rescue them. The scoring rewards volume of ordinary legislative work, not fame, and the gap between those two is the whole lesson of the first month.

Grades 7-8. Shortlist the pool to twelve to sixteen members before class, balanced across party and chamber, and draft from that. Choosing from 535 is paralysing at this age. Give the committee one frame per pick: "We want ____ because the scoring rewards ____."

Week 3: Showing Up

Fall 2026: week of Sept 28. The last live legislative week before the recess.

Essential question: Why is a missed vote worth more than a cast vote?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.3** (how laws and institutions shape governance), **D2.Civ.12** (how people influence and are influenced by political systems) - **NCSS 6** · **AP Gov Unit 2** · **Literacy:** prediction from evidence

Sequence

1. **Standings, 5 min.**
2. **The asymmetry, 15 min.** Cast is +2, missed is -3. Why does absence cost more than presence earns? Push past "to punish them" toward accountability.
3. **Whip work, 20 min.** Predictions presented with reasoning. Critique the reasoning, not the outcome.
4. **Close, 10 min.** Tell them the floor goes quiet next week for five weeks, and ask them to predict what that does to the standings. They will say scores freeze. Let them be half right.

Artifact: Whip predictions with written reasoning.

Grades 7-8. Model one prediction as a class first. Three predictions of one sentence each is a full assignment.

Week 4: Follow the Money Opens

The October spine begins. Even-numbered years. *Fall 2026: week of Oct 5.*

Essential question: Congress has gone home to campaign. Where did the power go?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.6** (relationships among government, civil society and economic markets), **D2.Civ.13** (evaluating public policy and its outcomes) - **NCSS 6** · **NCSS 7** Production, Distribution, and Consumption · **AP Gov Unit 5** - **Literacy:** analysis of financial disclosure records; quantitative reasoning

In the product: The Follow the Money board opens October 5 with questions drawn from public FEC filings: which campaigns hold more cash, whether outside spending in a race passes a threshold, which race draws the most money. Correct calls add to the season total and settle on Election Day.

Sequence

1. **The empty floor, 10 min.** Open the standings. Nothing moved. Ask why before explaining, then show the recess dates: gone October 5, back November 9.
2. **What a filing actually shows, 20 min.** Walk one race's numbers together. Money raised. Cash on hand. Outside spending. Name what each does and does not tell you: cash on hand is not popularity, and outside spending is not the candidate's own money and by law cannot be coordinated with them.
3. **First picks, 15 min.** Work the board as a class. Every answer needs a stated reason before the vote.
4. **Close, 5 min.** Record predictions. They settle November 3.

Artifact: Written reasoning for three board answers, submitted before settlement.

Teacher note: Keep this about magnitudes, not merit. The questions compare quantities drawn from public filings; they are not judgments about who should win. If a student asks whether money buys elections, that is the right question, and the honest answer is that political scientists genuinely disagree and the evidence is mixed.

Grades 7-8. Work the whole board as one discussion. One written reason instead of three. The comparison that lands hardest at this age is what a single House race costs against something they can price: a house, a teacher's salary, the school's annual budget.

Week 5: Two Money Systems

Fall 2026: week of Oct 12. Q3 filings land October 15.

Essential question: A candidate with less money in the bank has more money being spent on their behalf. How?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.6** (government, civil society and markets), **D2.Civ.10** (personal interests and civic virtue), **D2.Civ.14** (means of changing societies) - **NCSS 7** · **AP Gov Unit 5** · **Literacy:** argumentative writing; comparative analysis of records

In the product: Q3 filings post mid-October, so the numbers move this week. Several board races show candidate money and outside money pointing in opposite directions.

Why this week exists. Campaign money and outside money are two different systems with different limits, different disclosure rules, and different actors. A candidate committee is capped in what it can accept from any one donor and must report who gave. An independent expenditure has no such cap, cannot legally coordinate with the campaign, and is often the larger number. Students who conflate the two cannot read a race.

Sequence

1. **The contradiction, 15 min.** Show a board race where the candidate with less cash on hand has more outside support. Ask how that is possible before explaining.
2. **Two systems, 15 min.** Contribution limits and disclosure on one side; independent expenditures and the no-coordination rule on the other. Who is accountable to whom.
3. **Filing Analysts report, 15 min.** Each analyst reports one race's movement since the last filing and offers a theory.
4. **Close, 5 min.** Revise board picks if the new filings changed anyone's mind. Note who changed and why.

Artifact: One paragraph: *Which number tells you more about a race, the money a candidate raised or the money spent on their behalf?* Grade the argument, never the conclusion.

Teacher note: This is the week most likely to drift partisan, because outside spending is politically charged in both directions. Keep returning to the mechanism. The board asks about magnitudes, and a dollar is a dollar regardless of who spent it.

Grades 7-8. Run step 2 as a two-column chart on the board built together. Replace the paragraph with a claim-evidence-reasoning frame: "The number that tells you more is ____ because _____. In the ____ race, _____."

Week 6: The Quiet Period, and What the Money Predicted

Fall 2026: weeks of Oct 19 through Nov 2, then settlement on Nov 3. A three-week stretch.

Essential question: Congress has done nothing for a month. Is that a failure?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.5** (how institutions respond to public needs), **D2.Civ.12** (how people influence political systems), **D4.1** (constructing arguments from evidence) - **NCSS 6** · **AP Gov Unit 2** · **Literacy:** explanatory writing; prediction and revision

In the product: Zero legislative activity. The money board is the only thing moving, and outside spending accelerates hard through late October.

Sequence

1. **Notice, 10 min.** Legislative scores have been flat for weeks. The money board has not. Put both on screen together.
2. **Who sets this calendar, 15 min.** District work periods, casework, town halls, and in October, campaigning. Is that less legitimate than voting? Argue it. Then ask who decides the congressional calendar, and in whose interest a five-week pre-election recess runs.
3. **The acceleration, 15 min.** Compare outside-spending figures now against Week 4. The numbers will have jumped. Why does the money arrive last?
4. **Close, 10 min.** Press Secretary writes a recap of a month where nothing happened on the floor and a great deal happened everywhere else.

Settlement, November 3. Board questions settle on Election Day. Return to them the following session: who called it right, and was their reasoning sound or were they lucky? Separating those two is the entire lesson of the week.

Artifact: The recap, plus a one-line revision on each board pick: what you predicted, what happened, and whether your reasoning held.

Teacher note: Resist rescuing this lesson. A student who concludes "Congress does not do much" has made a real observation and should defend it with the calendar in front of them. The stronger follow-up is asking what the five-week gap is *for*.

Grades 7-8. The calendar comparison carries this on its own. Count congressional session days against school days on the board together. Students find it genuinely surprising.

Week 7: Committees, Where Bills Die

Fall 2026: week of Nov 9. The floor reopens and the lame-duck session begins.

Essential question: If committee passage is worth +15 and introduction is worth +1, what does that tell you about where power sits?

Standards - C3 D2.Civ.4 (how the Constitution distributes power), D2.Civ.13 (evaluating policy outcomes) - NCSS 6 · AP Gov Unit 2 · **Literacy:** analysis of informational text

In the product: Legislative scoring resumes. Follow the Money points have settled into season totals.

A note on how the season ends. There is no playoff bracket, because there are only two teams. Your team plays the class team every single week from draft day onward, and the final week settles it. That is a better shape for a classroom than a bracket: nobody is eliminated, no group stops caring in week six, and every remaining week still matters to the only game being played.

Sequence

1. **Two ledgers, 10 min.** Show the season total split: points from legislating, points from the money board. Which moved more, and does that feel right?
2. **The funnel, 15 min.** Thousands of bills introduced, a fraction out of committee, fewer passed, a handful signed. Draw it. Put the point values on it.
3. **Analyst briefs, 15 min.** Committee Analysts return to their normal role and report on what moved in the first week back.
4. **Close, 10 min.** The Lineup Committee sets the lineup for the run-in, the Vice Chair argues against it, and the Chair defends the final call with season evidence.

Artifact: Committee Analyst brief, one paragraph, graded on specificity. Plus the Chair's written lineup rationale, submitted before results are known.

Grades 7-8. Reveal the rest of the legislative scoring table here. Reduce the brief to three sentences with starters: "The committee I followed is _____. This week it _____. I think that happened because _____."

Week 8: Accountability

Fall 2026: week of Nov 16.

Essential question: You have watched one legislator all season, in Congress and on the campaign trail. What do you now know that a voter would not?

Standards - **C3 D2.Civ.2** (the role of citizens), **D2.Civ.6** (government, civil society, markets), **D4.6** (using evidence to explain problems) - **NCSS 10** · **AP Gov Unit 5** · **Literacy:** formal correspondence; informative writing

In the product: The rivalry is into its closing weeks. Full season data per legislator, including the campaign finance picture from October.

Sequence

1. **Standings, 5 min.**
2. **Evidence gathering, 20 min.** Each student pulls one member's full record: votes, absences, bills, cosponsorships, committee work. Where that member was on a board race, the money picture too.
3. **Writing, 20 min.** A constituent letter citing at least three specific actions. Specificity is the requirement.
4. **Close, 5 min.**

Artifact: The evidence-based constituent letter. The strongest summative artifact here.

Teacher note: Letters that praise and letters that criticize are graded identically. The standard is whether the claims are supported by the record.

Grades 7-8. Provide the letter format as a template with heading, greeting and closing filled in. Two cited actions instead of three.

Week 9: What the Season Taught

Required in every run length. *Fall 2026: week of Nov 30 or Dec 7. The season's final week is Dec 7 to 13.*

Essential question: Has your definition of a good legislator changed since Week 1?

Standards - C3 D4.1 (constructing arguments from evidence), D4.7 (assessing options for action) - **NCSS 10** · **AP Gov Unit 5** · **Literacy:** argumentative writing; deliberation

Sequence

1. **Final standings, 10 min.** Settle it. Class team or your team.
2. **Return the Week 1 slips, 10 min.** Students see what they did not know at the start. Let it land without commentary.
3. **Seminar, 25 min.** What makes a legislator good at the job? Argue from season evidence. Both scoring systems are allowed as evidence and both are allowed to be attacked. Put the design question on the table: the game says a wrong money call costs nothing while a missed vote costs three points. Is that the right ranking of lawmaking against campaign funding?
4. **Close, 5 min.**

Artifact: Final position paper. *Define a good legislator, then evaluate one member of your roster against your own definition.* A student who argues the scoring rewards the wrong things, and supports it, has done the best possible work in this unit.

Grades 7-8. Replace with a structured paragraph: "A good legislator _____. I know this because _____. On my team, _____ did this when _____."

Assessment summary

Weights assume the full nine-week run. For a 4-week sprint, use the required anchors plus Week 4 and weight them 15 / 25 / 25 / 35.

WEEK	ARTIFACT	SUGGESTED WEIGHT
1	Name recall and prediction	Ungraded diagnostic
2	Justified draft target list	5%
3	Whip predictions with reasoning	10%
4	Board reasoning, three questions	10%
5	Two-systems paragraph	15%
6	Quiet period recap plus pick revisions	15%
7	Committee brief and the Chair's lineup rationale	10%
8	Evidence-based constituent letter	20%
9	Final position paper	15%

Weeks 4 to 6 carry 40 percent of the graded work, matching the five weeks of calendar they occupy.

A note on neutrality

This curriculum takes no position on any policy, party, or officeholder. Scoring measures observable actions drawn from public records: Congress.gov, Senate.gov, GovInfo.gov, and for Follow the Money, public FEC filings.

Four commitments worth stating to your students and to any parent who asks.

A member earns identical points for identical actions regardless of party. No adjustment, no multiplier, no thumb on the scale.

Follow the Money asks about magnitudes, not merit. Every question is a comparison drawn from public filings, never a judgment about who should win. Whether money buys elections is a real question on which political scientists disagree, and students should be told that rather than handed an answer.

Race selection is balanced deliberately. The board draws on competitive races across the country, chosen for spending volume rather than for who is favoured, and the question types that carry no partisan answer at all are weighted most heavily.

Students are invited to disagree with the scoring itself, both halves of it. A student who mounts a supported case against the design has understood the unit better than one who accepts it.

