

Lesson Plan:

Supreme Court Confirmation: A Look at the Branches Interacting

Author:

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Greely Middle school

Social Studies

Supreme Court Confirmation: A Look at the Branches Interacting

Suggested Grade Level: 8th

Subject Area: Social Studies, Civics

Learning Results/Common Core:

- **MLR**
 - B1- Students understand the basic ideals, purposes, principles, structures, and processes of constitutional government in Maine and the United States as well as examples of other forms of government in the world.
 - d. Explain the concepts of federalism and checks and balances and the role these concepts play in the governments of the United States and Maine as framed by the United States Constitution, the Maine Constitution and other primary sources.
- **Common Core**
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1](#) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#) Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Time Required:

1- 55 minute class period

Learning Objectives:

- Students will use primary sources and video to examine the process of a judge being confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice.
- Students will examine the interaction of all 3 branches of government in a Supreme Court justice confirmation.

Materials and Resources Required:

- Video of Sandra Day O'Connor speaking about her time in the Supreme Court and education. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAQv2rG3pbM>

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- Image from Library of Congress “Sandra O'Connor being sworn in as assoc[iate] justice” <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645423/>
- Sandra Day O'Connor's Confirmation Letter from President Reagan <http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/larger-image.html?i=/legislative/features/images/oconnor-1.jpg&c=/legislative/features/images/oconnor.caption.html>
- Sandra Day O'Connor's Confirmation Senate Floor Vote <http://www.loc.gov/law/find/nominations/oconnor/vote.pdf>

Preparation Required/Preliminary Discussion:

- Previous knowledge:
 - The principles of the Constitution with a focus on checks and balances and separation of powers.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches.
- Essential Question:
 - Examine how a Supreme Court Justice's nomination involves the powers of all 3 branches of government.

Lesson Outline:

- Warm Up:
What qualities do you believe a Supreme Court Justice must possess?
- Lecture:
In a large group, students will review the process, using the Constitution, that a nominee must go through to become a Supreme Court Justice.
- Activity:
In small groups, students will examine the following primary sources the Senate Floor Vote from Sandra Day O'Connor's confirmation hearing, her nomination letter from President Reagan, and the image of her being sworn in. At each “station” the students will find one of the above primary sources. When looking at each primary source, students will be asked to record what branches are working together in a system of checks and balances.
- Discussion:
The class will come back together to share their findings. The whole group will then watch the video of Sandra Day O'Connor being interviewed.

Assessment Summary:

As an informative assessment the students will be asked to reflect on their warm up question which asked “ What qualities do you believe a Supreme Court Justice must possess?” In addition, the students will be asked to reflect on what made Justice O'Connor's appointment unique.

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