



The House of Representatives | Lesson Plan

How does the House of Representatives embody the principles of democracy and influence the lives of American citizens?

Students will understand the critical role the House of Representatives plays in the legislative process, how it represents the will of the people, and how its actions impact American democracy and everyday life.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the composition and structure of the House of Representatives.
- Explain the electoral process and the significance of direct elections for the House.
- Identify the key responsibilities and powers of the House, including legislative duties and checks on other branches.
- Analyze how the House's actions reflect public opinion and address national issues.

Key Vocabulary:

- **House of Representatives:** The elected body of Congress that proposes and votes for laws and directly represents the will of the people.
- **Legislative Branch:** The branch of government to which the House of Representatives belongs, along with the Senate.
- **Bicameral Legislature:** A two-part Congress consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- **Speaker of the House:** The presiding officer of the House and leader of its majority party, who sets the legislative agenda.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.R.10, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.6, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.SL.5

Academic Subject Areas: Political Science, Civics, America

What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: The House of Representatives* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: The House of Representatives*. (Click [Here](#))

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm Up: (15 minutes)

1. Begin by presenting a scenario that students can relate to: Imagine your school is deciding on new lunch menu options. The student council, with representatives from each grade, collects suggestions from their classmates and votes on the most popular choices. The student council president leads the meeting and ensures that everyone's

Scan to watch episode:



opinions are considered. This mirrors how the House of Representatives gathers public opinion and votes on new laws.

2. Explain that the United States Congress is a bicameral legislature consisting of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Highlight the concept of balancing interests between different groups, similar to how various student representatives might represent different grades or classes.
3. Discuss that the House of Representatives is part of the legislative branch of the federal government and is responsible for making laws.
4. Explain the electoral process and the significance of direct elections. Introduce the concept that members of the House of Representatives are directly elected by the people. Explain that direct elections ensure that representatives are accountable to the voters, just like student council members are accountable to their classmates.
5. Describe the qualifications needed to become a House representative: at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen for at least seven years, and an inhabitant of the state they represent.
6. Explain the main powers of the House, such as proposing and voting on laws.
7. Highlight that since its formation, the House of Representatives has been a cornerstone of American democracy, ensuring that the government remains responsive to the people.
8. Hand out the "Street Smarts: The House of Representatives Worksheet" and prepare the episode for display.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video *Street Smarts: The House of Representatives*. Pause after key segments to discuss and relate to the warm-up topics.
2. Ask students to fill out their worksheets as the video progresses. Utilize pauses to address specifically:
 - The composition and structure of the House of Representatives.
 - The electoral process and the significance of direct elections.
 - Key responsibilities and powers of the House.
 - How the House's actions reflect public opinion and address national issues.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. After the video, have a class discussion to summarize the key points.
2. Invite students to briefly reflect on what they learned about the House of Representatives. Ask them to consider how the House's structure, election process, and responsibilities relate to their understanding of government and democracy.
3. Ask students to identify one way they can actively engage with or learn more about the legislative process. This could be staying informed about local or national elections, discussing legislative issues with family or friends, or understanding the importance of civic duties like voting.
4. Collect the completed worksheets to assess understanding and engagement.

Extension Activity:

For students who are interested in a deeper understanding of the House of Representatives, distribute copies of the Constitution and focus on the relevant sections. Specifically, have students read and analyze Article I and Article II, Section IV. Ask them to highlight or underline the portions that pertain to the House of Representatives. Discuss these sections in class, focusing on the method of selection, qualifications, term lengths, election cycles, and the specific powers granted to the House. This activity will help students connect the practical aspects of the House's role with its constitutional foundation.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.