

Welcome to *Represent!*

Taking on the roles of Congressmen and women, students transform the classroom into the floor of the US House of Representatives by enacting the legislative process. Over a four-week period, students research and deliver speeches arguing for or against certain bills, debate the issues, and finally vote according to political and regional allegiances. A realistic sense of party and constituent pressure informs the proceedings and motivates student representatives to fight for the interests of their supporters. Finally, students aim to win reelection by accruing “votes” based on the legislation they are able to pass. Bills concern current issues such as gay rights, abortion, legalization of marijuana, second amendment rights, and more.



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Note to Teacher

Hello to all you Social Studies Teachers!

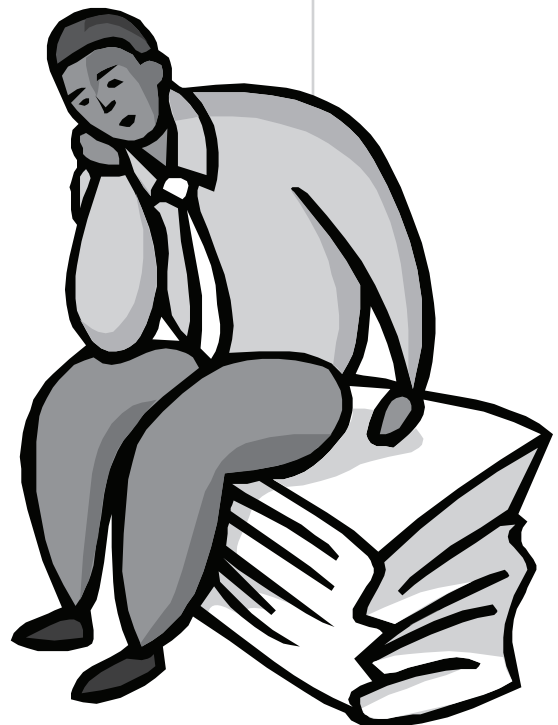
Thank you for using *Represent* in your classroom! I believe that you and your students will really enjoy it. I am sure that all of you are like I was in my American Government classroom in that you are constantly searching for ways to get your students “fired up” about politics and the issues that confront our country. I think that *Represent* will do that for you.

It is not an exact simulation of the House of Representatives. For example, your simulation bills will not go to a committee, and there is no chance to amend a bill before it goes to the House floor. As a professional educator, you may choose to follow this simulation in the way that it is presented here, or you may want to make some adjustments to include committee work or amendments.

This simulation is much different now than what it was when I started. My students played an important role in giving me ideas to modify this classroom experience. All the bills that are included have been written by former students. You may want to have your students do the same as you go from semester to semester. Feel free to use different bills that deal with other issues. The more current the issues, the more you will see your students get involved.

Through the years, I have had former students come back and tell me that *Represent* was the best thing they did in a high school classroom. It is amazing how many students who said that they would never “get into” politics were standing up and debating with all their spirit to get a bill passed or defeated! This simulation will also give your students an opportunity to improve their research skills as well as gain confidence speaking in front of their peers.

I hope that *Represent* is a great experience for you and your students! Good luck!



Purpose

The main purpose of the unit is to engage students in a simulation of the House of Representatives, in which the student “representatives” attempt to pass or defeat bills, to develop their skills of researching, writing, and delivering speeches and critical thinking during debate. Because of time limitations, the entire legislative process is not a part of this activity. However, the students will still gain an excellent idea of the process and difficulty of getting a bill passed. A third purpose is to give the students a chance to debate the important social, economic and political issues of our nation.



● Overview ●

In the way *Represent* is currently structured, it will take about four weeks of class time. For 10 days, students will experience and develop an understanding of what it is like to be a member of the House of Representatives. They will give speeches about bills, debate for or against them, and then vote to pass legislation or defeat it.

There are multiple aspects of this classroom activity that make it exciting and engaging for the students. First of all, this project “simulates” party and constituent “pressure” on our student lawmakers by putting party and region points at stake with every vote they make. Each day, students will know what bill will be discussed and that they will win or lose points based on whether or not that bill is passed.

Secondly, once the speeches for and against the bill are delivered, the floor is open for debate. This part of the simulation is truly the most fun for the students. All of the students now have the chance to debate the bill and attempt to get their classmates to vote for or against it. At the end of the period when a voice vote is taken on the bill, the students will immediately find out how effective their arguments were at influencing other students in the class.

Finally, each student tries to win as many points as possible because they all will want to get “re-elected” at the end of the simulation. The passage or overturning of a bill determines how many points a student wins or loses. The more points a student has at the end of the game increases that student’s odds of being re-elected. It is amazing to watch how motivated many students become as they attempt to convince other students to vote for or against a bill.



Simulation Timeline



Whole class

Day 1

Explain the simulation. Also, explain the “game” points and the “grade book” points.



Whole class

Day 2

At some point before you begin this simulation, you will need to use some type of test or survey to determine where each student stands on the political spectrum. Using that assessment and student input, assign each student to one of the two parties. This way, on Day 2, you can quickly assemble the parties: the Modernists to the left of the podium and the Traditionalists to the right of the podium.

Hand out **Party Descriptions**. Read and discuss with the class.

While the students are seated in their party sections, have them count off by 8's. This will determine what region each student will be in. Each region will then meet in a different area of the room. Hand out the **Poll Results** for each region so that the students will know what their “constituents” think about each bill. The students in each region will fill in column 3 of their **Legislator's Record Form**.



Small group

Day 3

Divide the students into their parties. They should decide who will be their party leader. If more than one student wants to be the leader, the party members will vote. The majority/minority leaders will be in charge of assigning two bills to each student in the party. Students must deliver a speech about each of their designated bills.

There is a form included in this simulation to help in this process. The leaders should write down which students are giving speeches about each bill on the **House Calendar**. (Depending on the size of the class, there will be 2 or 3 students speaking in favor of each bill and 2 or 3 students speaking against each bill.) By the end of this class period, every student should know about what two bills that they will be speaking.

Reelection

Represent ends with each member of the House “running for reelection.” The election is actually each student rolling one die to find out if he or she has been reelected.

After the last bill has been voted on, the teacher will add up each student’s party points and region points to come up with his or her total points. Students are told that winning points in the game means they have pleased their party and the constituents in their region; as a result, the more points students have, the better their chance at getting reelected.” In this simulation, the more points won will mean that the odds of being re-elected are better.

The teacher will read off each student’s party points, region points, and the total points. The student will then roll a die and will be reelected based on the following scale:

- 100 pts or more and rolls a 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6
- 50–99 pts and rolls a 3, 4, 5 or 6
- 0–49 points and rolls a 4, 5 or 6
- -20 – -1 and rolls a 5 or 6
- -21 or less and rolls a 6

If a student is “reelected,” he or she will receive extra credit points—exactly how many will be up to the individual teacher. Obviously, this is not how we elect our leaders. However, during the simulation, the students will understand the difficulty of pleasing both their party and region when voting on a bill. This “reelection” shows the student the difficulty of being reelected if the party and/or the people back home are not happy with how he or she has performed in the House of Representatives. It is also a fun way to end the game!

Description of *Represent*

Simulation of the House of Representatives

Directions

You are about to participate in a legislative simulation game in which you will play the role of a U.S. Representative. As a representative, you will be expected to do many of the things that a member of the U.S. House of Representatives would do.

Your Party

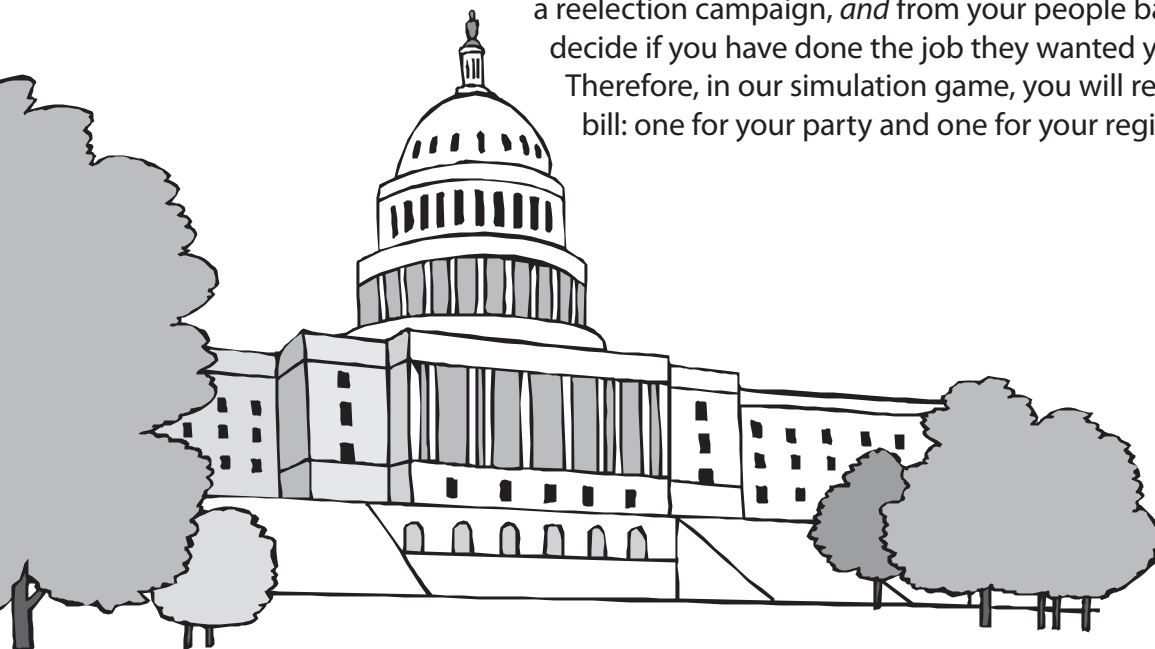
Each person will be assigned to a political party. As a party member, you will be asked to work for or against certain bills, which either agree or disagree with your party's philosophy. Also, each person must act as a specialist on at least two bills. As a specialist, you will be called upon to give a two-minute speech to persuade the rest of the House to vote either for or against each of the bills.

Your Region

As a representative, you will also have a specific region to represent. You will receive an opinion sheet for your region. This opinion sheet will tell you how the people you represent feel about each bill. Also, each bill is rated on this sheet according to its importance for your region. The more important bills have the lower numbers in the rating column of your regional opinion sheet.

Scoring

Like any other legislator, your main goal must be to get reelected because if you are not reelected, you cannot hope to have much to say about the legislation you would like to see enacted in the future. In order to get reelected, you must have the support of your party, which can help to finance a reelection campaign, *and* from your people back home, who will decide if you have done the job they wanted you to do for them. Therefore, in our simulation game, you will receive two scores for each bill: one for your party and one for your region.



Bill #1

The Abolition of Capital Punishment

Sponsored by the American Modernist Party

Because there are no methods of capital punishment that are not “cruel and unusual” and because life in prison without parole is the appropriate punishment for a very serious crime such as murder, we believe that the use of capital punishment should be abolished.

We certainly believe that murderers should be punished severely. However, we believe that it is inhumane for our state governments to punish by killing, no matter what that person may have done. Capital punishment does not deter future murders and it does not bring back the victims. In a civilized society, governments should not kill criminals. Therefore, we propose to abolish capital punishment in all states.

Provisions of this bill:

1. Capital Punishment will be banned in all states.
2. Any state government that allows the death penalty will be fined a minimum of \$10,000, payable to the federal government.
3. All prisoners currently on death row will be transferred to a maximum security prison for life without parole.



Legislator's Record Form

Name: _____ Group # _____

Your Party: _____ Your Region: _____

AMP—American Modernist Party

ATP—American Traditionalist Party

Sponsoring Party	Bill	Poll Results in Your Region	Action on the Bill Passed/Defeated
AMP	1. Capital Punishment	Rating: _____ % For: _____ % Against: _____ % IDK: _____	
ATP	2. Concealed Carry of Weapon	Rating: _____ % For: _____ % Against: _____ % IDK: _____	
Bipartisan	3. Campaign Finance	Rating: _____ % For: _____ % Against: _____ % IDK: _____	
AMP	4. Death with Dignity	Rating: _____ % For: _____ % Against: _____ % IDK: _____	
ATP	5. Drug Testing for High School Students	Rating: _____ % For: _____ % Against: _____ % IDK: _____	