

**UNIT OVERVIEW**

Unit Length	Four 50-minute periods
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	9th Grade Civics
Unit Overview	<p>This inquiry-based unit leads students through an investigation of school curriculum and the role the government plays in curricular decisions. Ideally, this unit should be taught after students have an understanding of federalism and the three branches of government. The compelling and supporting questions engage students through relevant discussions and source work to apply their knowledge of government.</p> <p>The unit is driven by the following compelling and supporting questions:</p> <p>Compelling Question: Should the government mandate school curriculum?</p> <p>Supporting Question 1: What do laws currently say about [standards] and curriculum?          Supporting Question 2: Why are curricular resources controversial?          Supporting Question 3: What is the role of student voice in curriculum?</p> <p><u>Taking Informed Action:</u></p> <p>This unit leverages the <a href="#">Inquiry Design Model</a> from the <a href="#">College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards</a>, students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand: Embedded in the daily lessons</li> <li>● Assess: Deliberate on the impact of curriculum bans</li> <li>● Act: Write an OpEd for your local or school paper OR a letter to your state representative where you discuss your evidence-based argument about government influence on curriculum.</li> </ul>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the concept of school curriculum</li> <li>● Describe how laws and regulations impact school curriculum</li> <li>● Evaluate arguments surrounding curriculum materials</li> <li>● Construct an argument in response to the compelling question using evidence</li> </ul>
Standards	<p><a href="#">College, Career and Civics C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards</a></p>

	<p>D2.Civ.12.9-12. Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.</p> <p>D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.</p> <p><a href="#">Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies</a></p> <p>HS.C.KGO.3 Describe how active citizens can affect change in their communities and Kentucky.</p> <p>HS.C.CP.2 Analyze legislative, executive and judicial branch decisions in terms of constitutionality and impact on citizens and states.</p> <p>HS.C.RR.2 Explain how active citizens can affect the lawmaking process locally, nationally and internationally.</p>
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">The 1619 Supplementary Broadsheet</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">“Guiding Students to Drive Their Curriculum”</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">1619 Kids Infographic</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">The Roles of Federal and State Governments in Education</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">National School Curriculum Standards</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Kentucky Department of Education - Laws and Regulations</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">"What do teens care about? Stanford education researchers uncover top concerns in letters to presidential candidates"</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">USHistory.org Online Textbook</a> or another textbook of your choosing</li> <li>● Teacher-created Daily Slide Decks</li> <li>● Teacher-created Daily Student Packets</li> </ul>
<p>Performance Tasks</p>	<p><u>Construct an Argument</u> Students will take civic action by crafting an argumentative letter addressed to a state or federal legislator (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) in response to the compelling question: <i>Should the government mandate school curriculum?</i> Students should be sure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use specific claims and relevant evidence from historical and contemporary sources</li> <li>● Acknowledge competing views</li> </ul>
<p>Assessment/Evaluation</p>	<p>Responses to supporting questions will serve as formative assessments to ensure students understand each task before attempting the next.</p> <p>The final argumentative composition will serve as the unit's summative assessment and civic action task. In the letter, students will demonstrate an ability to use evidence to support their argument. Ultimately the <i>taking informed action</i> process and final</p>

**School Curriculum and the Government**

Unit by Educators from Scott County Schools,  
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

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	composition offers students the opportunity to engage with the process of civic action.
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## DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

### Lesson 1A: Staging the Compelling Question

#### Lesson Objectives and Compelling Question

##### Compelling Question:

Should the government mandate school curriculum?

##### Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Define the term curriculum
- Explain the purpose of student involvement in civic life

#### Lesson Materials & Resources

- [Staging the Compelling Question Slide Deck \[.pptx\]](#)
- [Staging the Compelling Question Slide Deck \[.pdf\]](#)
- Printed copy of the slide deck as necessary
- Pencil
- Paper (to take notes)

#### Lesson Activities

##### Lesson Overview:

This lesson introduces students to the concept and purpose of curriculum and explores recent efforts by governmental bodies to impose mandates and restrictions on classroom learning. By understanding the definition of curriculum and the impact that curricular choices have on their daily lives, they will prepare to engage in the inquiry-based performance task. The Staging the Compelling Question Slide Deck breaks down the definition of curriculum and introduces students to the methodology driving our culminating project.

##### Lesson Steps:

Work through the Staging the Compelling Question Slide Deck as a whole group.

1. Introduce the compelling question to students (slide 1).
  - a. Tell students that they will work through supporting questions that develop their knowledge so that they may have an informed, evidence-based claim in response to the compelling question.
2. Encourage students to write down words they associate with *curriculum* (slide 2).
  - a. Have students share their word associations in small groups.
  - b. Students may volunteer answers to the whole group. Record student responses in a shared space like a whiteboard or jamboard.
  - c. Have students note and analyze similarities and/or differences in student responses.
3. Review the definition of curriculum from the Merriam-Webster dictionary (slide 3).
4. Bring the conversation back to what curriculum means to students. Encourage students to discuss

examples of curriculum from your classroom.

5. Pose the question: What does that mean to us? Why should we care about curriculum? How does it affect us? Consider guiding this conversation to current events or local instances of the debates around curriculum (slide 4).
6. Provide students with an overview of the compelling and supporting questions as well as the summative performance tasks.

Lesson 1B: What Do Laws Say About [Standards and] Curriculum?

Lesson Objectives and Supporting Question

Supporting Question 1:

What do laws say about [standards and] curriculum?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Describe the difference between laws and regulations
- List and describe the role that different levels of government have in education
- Make connections between their education and state regulations and laws

Lesson Materials & Resources

- [SQ 1 Slide Deck \[.pptx\]](#)
- [SQ 1 Slide Deck \[.pdf\]](#)
- [SQ 1 Role of Government Student Packet \[.pdf\]](#)
- [SQ 1 Role of Government Student Packet \[.docx\]](#)
- Pencil

Lesson Activities

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will examine the impact that laws and regulations have on curriculum by considering the following guiding questions:

- Who influences decision-making about school curriculum?
- What is the difference between a law and a regulation?

Lesson Steps:

1. Introduce the supporting question to students (slide 1).
2. Review the differences between laws and regulations (slide 2).
3. Have students complete the first question in the SQ 1 Role of Government Student Packet that asks them to explain the difference between a law and a regulation.
1. Have students read and complete the first two pages of the SQ 1 Role of Government Student Packet independently or in small groups.
2. Students should complete the graphic organizer on federalism and curriculum on page 4 or the packet.
3. Return to the SQ 1 Slide Deck and review laws and regulations in Kentucky (slides 3 - 5).
4. Write the following prompt on the board: In what ways do these laws and regulations affect you?
  - a. Students should join small groups and discuss the question.
  - b. Provide each group with an expo marker and have them write an answer for their group on the board. Encourage thoughtful, sentence-length answers.

Lesson 2: Why Are Curricular Resources Controversial?

Lesson Objectives and Supporting Question

Supporting Question 2:

Why are curricular resources controversial?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Analyze both sides of the controversy around curricular resources in an objective manner
- Evaluate the role of the government in decision making

Lesson Materials & Resources

- [SQ2 Introduction Slide Deck \[.pptx\]](#)
- [SQ2 Introduction Slide Deck \[.pdf\]](#)
- [SQ2 Curriculum Controversies Student Packet \[.pdf\]](#)
- [SQ2 Curriculum Controversies Student Packet \[.docx\]](#)

*(educator note: the collection of excerpts captured in this packet were taken from [USHistory.org](#) and [The 1619 Supplementary Broadsheet](#). Educators are welcome to use a history textbook of your choosing to replace the excerpts from [USHistory.org](#))*

- Space for written reflection (interactive notebook, google document, composition book, etc)
- Computer device and internet access

Lesson Activities

Lesson Overview:

Students will review narratives of American history by comparing traditional U.S. History textbooks with articles from [The 1619 Supplementary Broadsheet](#). The purpose of this exercise is not to create controversy, but rather to engage in the discussion to better understand the role the government plays in making decisions about curriculum.

Lesson Steps:

1. Introduce the second supporting question to students (slide 1). Ask students to take notes using pen and paper, an interactive notebook, or another space for individual reflection that makes sense for your classroom.
2. Review the differences between laws and regulations (slide 2)
3. Ask students to silently consider the headlines presented (slide 3).
  - a. Ask students: What are these headlines communicating? Have them share their responses out loud.
    - i. Draw on their experiences by questioning what they have heard or experienced.
    - ii. Remind students that curriculum is what they experience each day at school.
4. Continue drawing upon students' understanding of historic events and personal classroom experiences to consider the impact of banning a certain curriculum or topic (slide 4).
5. In small groups, instruct students to research information about banning certain topics or materials in schools using classroom devices with internet access (computers, tablets, etc).

- a. Instruct them to look for bills, legal opinions, or any other state-level information

*Educator note: I split students up into policy issues that were important to them and reflected classroom work we did in the past like sex education, women's rights, critical race theory, etc. You might consider what policy issues your students care about to form these groups)*

6. Review the collection of bills, legal opinions, or any other state-level information about banning certain topics or materials in school (slide 5).
7. As a class or in small groups, read through the materials from [USHistory.org](https://www.ushistory.org) captured in the SQ2 Curriculum Controversies Student Packet.
  - a. Ask students the questions:
    - Why could this be seen as limited?
    - Whose story isn't told?
    - How did the cotton gin negatively impact Black Americans?
8. Introduce and review the excerpts from [The 1619 Supplementary Broadsheet](#) in the SQ2 Curriculum Controversies Student Packet.
9. In a whole group discussion, ask students the following questions:
  - a. What do you see in the documents?
  - b. Why do you think this is controversial?
  - c. How do these documents compare to the online textbook?
10. Ask students to respond to the supporting question in an assigned space for written reflection such as an interactive notebook.

Lesson 3: What Is the Role of Student Voice in Curriculum?

Lesson Objectives and Supporting Question

Supporting Question 3:

What is the role of student voice in curriculum?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Analyze both sides of the controversy around curricular resources in an objective manner
- Evaluate the role of the government in decision making

Lesson Materials & Resources

- [SQ3 Introduction Slides \[.pptx\]](#)
- [SQ3 Introduction Slides \[.pdf\]](#)
- [“What Do Teens Care About?” Reading & Scale Rating Student Packet \[.pdf\]](#)
- [“What Do Teens Care About?” Reading & Scale Rating Student Packet \[.docx\]](#)
- [Standards/Learning Goals Scavenger Hunt Student Packet \[.pdf\]](#)
- [Standards/Learning Goals Scavenger Hunt Student Packet \[.pdf\]](#)
- Pencil
- Paper

Lesson Activities

Lesson Overview:

Today we shift the focus of our discussions to how students can influence and participate in their education. Building upon insights generated from the first two supporting questions, students will renegotiate their concept of curriculum, controversies surrounding materials, and how they might contribute to decisions made.

Lesson Steps:

1. Introduce the third supporting question (slide 1).
2. Pose the question to the class - what is “student voice?” (slide 2).
  - a. Create a class definition and write in on the whiteboard to be able to reference.
3. Have students complete an individual reflection on a time they were able to make a decision about their own learning (slide 3).
  - a. Have students share their answers in small groups
4. Students read a modified copy of Stanford Graduate School’s research study: “What do teens care about?” Reading & Scale Rating Student Packet.
  - a. Students will complete questions in the “As You Read” section. Questions cover data analysis and encourage reflective thinking.
5. Have students complete the scale rating activity on pages 5 and 6 about the topics they care about. This activity is similar to how data was collected in the Stanford project.
6. Have students look at “I can” statements for civics, geography, economics, world history, and US history on the Standards/Learning Goals Scavenger Hunt Student Packet and highlight category

topics.

7. Have students highlight words and phrases that fit into the 20 categories from page 5 of the What Do Teens Care About? Reading & Scale Rating Student Packet.
8. Number students off 1-5 for a jigsaw. Each student will be responsible for a content area (civics, geography, economics, world history, and US history).
9. Have students share their tally numbers with each other to create a "grand total" for the social studies curriculum.
10. Encourage students to discuss the following in their small groups:
  - a. Standards or learning goals that stood out to them
  - b. What they thought was lacking in the documents
  - c. What was present in the state curriculum

Lesson 4: Taking Informed Action

Lesson Objectives and Supporting Question

Compelling Question:

Should the government mandate school curriculum?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Write an argument for or against the government mandates on school curriculum

Lesson Materials & Resources

- [TIA Slide Deck \[.pptx\]](#)
- [TIA Slide Deck \[.pdf\]](#)
- [Letter Writing Guide](#)
- [Rubric](#)
- [Completed SQ 1 Role of Government Student Packet](#) (from lesson 1B)
- All completed student handouts from previous lesson
- Pencil and paper or laptops

Lesson Activities

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students connect their role and responsibility in driving their education to respond to the compelling question: *Should the government mandate school curriculum*. Students will craft an argument for or against mandating curriculum in a letter to either a state or federal legislator.

Lesson Steps

1. Revisit the compelling question: *Should the government mandate school curriculum* (slide 1).
2. Remind students that they will be completing a written assignment (slide 2).
3. Explain the term *constituents* and how that term applies to them (slide 3).
  - a. Discuss how and why student voice and citizen engagement are important.
    - i. Be sure to hone in on the fact that this letter/the students can inspire change.
    - ii. Establish a *why* with the students. Why are they writing a letter to their representative?
    - iii. Remind students that the letter should be more than a collection of thoughts.
4. Review the following documents with students:
  - Rubric
  - Letter Writing Guide
5. Have students retrieve their federalism chart on page 2 of SQ 1 Role of Government Worksheet. This organizer, their opinions and/or desired changes will help them decide whether they should address their letter to a state legislator or a federal legislator.
6. Allow student work time.
  - Frequently circulate
  - Check formatting, purpose, and tone
  - Discuss solutions that would inspire change with students