

Government in Action (GIA)

STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

Context: Government in Action (GIA)

Immigration reform has become a perennial, and polarizing, issue. In recent years, the state of Arizona passed a law allowing the police to check people’s immigration documents without a warrant. Both former Presidents Bush and Obama hoped to pass comprehensive immigration reform but were unsuccessful as efforts stalled in Congress. Immigration was a flash point issue in the 2016 election and in the early days of the Trump administration. How does the government deal with controversial issues such as immigration? How do public policies get made in the United States, and how can they be changed? How does public opinion/sentiment impact public policy making?

Purpose: Government in Action (GIA)

In this unit, students have been hired by an interest group to create a political action plan and further the group’s policy agenda. The examples in this project cycle highlight immigration reform but could be easily tailored to other broad issues of interest to the student community. Over the course of the project, students learn more about their chosen policy areas and explore how different institutions of government affect policy-making. The purpose of this cycle is to learn how governmental institutions (i.e., the bureaucracy and congressional committees) work together with interest groups to create public policy. The interest groups students advise have specific policy agendas, and students design an advocacy campaign around the groups’ goals. This cycle helps students better understand the executive branch and how issues networks and the iron triangle affect public policy making. It also requires students to analyze the consequences of constitutional principles, such as checks and balances, for the policy-making process as well as to draw on knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course. As they develop their political action plan, students apply looped concepts, such as role of linkage institutions, federalism, limited government, and separation of powers.

Driving Questions

How do the different branches of government work together to implement public policy?
To what extent is the way the government implements public policy beneficial or detrimental to the people?

Alignment: 2018–19 College Board Redesigned Curriculum Framework

Units

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy
Unit 2: Interaction Among Branches of Government

Big Ideas

Primary: Constitutionalism (CON)
Secondary: Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)

Enduring Understanding and Learning Objectives

- ✓ CON-3: The republican ideal in the U.S. is manifested in the structure and operation of the legislative branch.
 - CON-3.A: Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.
 - CON-3.B: Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy-making process.
 - CON-3.C: Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.
- ✓ CON-4: The presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers.
 - CON-4.A: Explain how president can implement a policy agenda.
 - CON-4.B: Explain how the president’s agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.
 - CON-4.C: Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.
 - CON-4.D: Explain how communication technology has changed the president’s relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.
- ✓ CON-5: The design of the judicial branch protects the Supreme Court’s independence as a branch of government, and the emergence and use of judicial review remains a powerful judicial practice.
 - CON-5.A: Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments.
 - CON-5.B: Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the



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Supreme Court's power.

-CON-5.C: Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court's power.

✓ PMI-2: The federal bureaucracy is a powerful institution implementing federal policies with sometimes questionable accountability.

-PMI-2.A: Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.

-PMI-2.B: Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule-making and implementation.

-PMI-2.C: Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.

-PMI-2.D: Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration.

-PMI-2.E: Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

✓ PMI-1: The Constitution created a competitive policy-making process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved.

-PMI-1.A Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.

-PMI-1.B Explain the implications of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system.

✓ PMI-4: Widely held political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies.

-PMI-4.A: Explain how the ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.

-PMI-4.B: Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g. values, attitudes, beliefs) influences and formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.

-PMI-4.C: Describe different political ideologies regarding the role of government in regulating the marketplace.

✓ PMI-5: Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers.

-PMI-5.E: Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest group influence on policy-making.

-PMI-5.F: Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy-making.



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Students will know/Learning Targets (Content):	Students will be able to/ Learning Targets (Skills):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purpose of interest groups and their influence on policy-making. 2. The role(s) of the President. 3. The complex relationship between legislative policies and bureaucratic agencies. 4. The current policy on immigration while considering different priorities and perspectives on the issue. 5. The concept of the iron triangle. 6. The way(s) in which Supreme Court decisions influence policy-making. 7. How the office of the presidency can influence policy-making. 8. The structure and importance of congressional testimony. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take on the role of an interest group to strategize passing desired legislation. 2. Examine the characteristics and functions of each institution—Presidency, Congress, bureaucracy, and the courts. 3. Develop critical thinking skills while taking and supporting a specific position. 4. Write a memo. 5. Choose convincing examples from scenarios as evidence for the need to reform current policies.

College Board Disciplinary Practices

Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context.

- 1.a. Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
- 1.b. Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
- 1.c. Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
- 1.d. Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
- 1.e. Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.

- 3.a. Describe the data presented.
- 3.b. Describe patterns and trends in the data.
- 3.c. Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
- 3.d. Explain what the data imply or illustrate about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
- 3.e. Explain possible limitations of the data provided.
- 3.f. Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.

STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Culminating Challenge:

In this task, students act as advisors called together by the President, who is looking for advice on comprehensive immigration reform for the nation. To represent their clients' agendas, advisors pool all of the information from the various tasks in this cycle and compile it into a final political action plan proposal to be submitted to the President. This proposal details action plans that may include a media plan, a mass action plan, a bureaucratic/congressional lobbying plan, a presidential letter writing campaign, and/or a judicial review process. At the end of the cycle, students evaluate each other's policy plans.

Formative Assessments

- Reading and Vocabulary Quizzes
- Practice Free Response Questions (FRQs)
- Checks for Understanding (exit tickets, bell work, interactive notes, use of student response systems, etc.)
- Task 1: Client research and policy agenda proposal
- Task 2: Media plan
- Task 3: Writing an amicus curiae brief or filing a case
- Task 4: Letter to the President of the United States
- Task 5: Congressional testimony (presentation)

Summative Assessments

- Authentic Assessment: Political action proposal (consists of final versions of all five tasks)
- Unit Exam consisting of 40 multiple-choice questions, two free response questions (College Board AP Exam questions), and a simulation task.



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STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

This project is the primary place that institutions of government, a major focus of the course, are addressed. A number of core concepts are looped in this project cycle if it is the last one, as is currently recommended in the curriculum. Furthermore, this project cycle allows students to develop a sense of agency as actors who could impact the political system. This project provides a framework that teachers could use for many different policy areas in addition to immigration. In the past, teachers have also used criminal justice reform, health care and National Security Agency surveillance as driving issues. This project also provides the most promising framework for a one-semester version of the class since it incorporates a lot about the workings of government.

Task 1: Interest Groups

In Task 1, students “meet” their clients. Students learn more about the interest groups they have been assigned to advise and develop policy agendas based on their clients’ needs. In this way, they also educate themselves on the core issue and differing policy perspectives on the issue.

Task 2: Understanding Bureaucratic Agencies

Task 2 introduces students (as advisors) to immigration scenarios to respond to from the perspectives of their interest groups. Each member of the firm becomes an expert in one of the scenarios. Task 2 requires students to answer questions in a press conference about the involvement (or lack of involvement) of various bureaucratic agencies in the different scenarios. In this task, students learn about powers and structures of the bureaucracy and how the “revolving door” impacts policy-making.

Task 3: Judicial System

In Task 3, students use the information they have collected thus far to help their clients decide how to use the court system to further their agendas. Students help their clients decide between filing an amicus curiae brief on an existing case or helping someone file a new case in the courts. As each task builds, students learn more about the role, relationship, benefits, and limitations of each institution of government in the policy-making process.

Task 4: The Office of the President

In Task 4, students write letters to the President on behalf of their clients. Through this process students learn about the role, powers, and limitations of the presidency.

Task 5: Congressional Hearings and Testimony

In Task 5, drawing on their experience in the Congress cycle and the rest of this cycle, students prepare and give congressional testimony on behalf of their clients. By the end of the cycle, students should have a nuanced understanding of how public policy is created and how various aspects of political process and institutions affect one another. Students will have developed significant expertise in one policy area, which can be a benefit when responding to FRQs on the exam. Most importantly, by the end of this cycle, students would have had multiple opportunities to evaluate the role of various institutions of government in the policy-making process.

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2018–19 College Board Redesigned Curriculum Framework

Government in Action Foundational Texts

- *Constitution of the United States*
- Federalist No. 70

-As students learn how different branches of government contribute to policy-making and interact, they should come back to the framing of the federal government set forth in Articles 1-3 of the *Constitution*.

-Teachers should assign abridged Federalist No. 70 as students explore the presidency and should be asked to bring their analysis into Task 4: Letter to the President.

Government in Action Supreme Court Cases

N/A



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