

Sources of Law - LESSON PLAN

Learning Objective: Students will...

1. Identify the branches of the federal, state, and local government.
2. Analyze the sources of laws from each branch of government.
3. Evaluate the impact laws make on society.

TEKS: 7th Grade Texas History 13A&B, 14A, 8th Grade U.S. History 19C, U.S. Government 7A-E & H, 8B, 13B, CTE Principles of Government and Public Administration 11A-D, G-H

Materials Needed: *Sources of Law* Google Slide Presentation, Copies of Student Notes Handout (Digital or Paper), Internet Access

Vocabulary: statute, case law, ordinance, regulation, executive order, agency, precedent, constitution, codified, bureaucracy, stare decisis

Estimated Time:
45-60 minutes

Teaching Instructions:

Slide 1: Warm-Up Activity Slide: Open the *Sources of Law* Google Slides Presentation. Ask students to complete a ridiculous activity of some sort (i.e. stand on top of their chair to stretch and express how much they love your class, go outside and do 10 jumping jacks, or take a lap around the room, etc.). After students complete the simple activity, direct them to complete the *Warm-Up question on the Student Notes Handout*.

The form asks 2 questions:
Did you complete the directive?
Why or why not?

Answers will vary, but might mention things like: “because you said to, it sounded fun, I wanted a break from class anyway, I didn’t want to be the only one that didn’t do it,” etc. Or maybe they didn’t complete it because they were lazy, didn’t feel like it, and so on.

Slide 2-4: Explain that laws teach us how to behave. Often if an authority figure asks us to comply with a directive, we usually will for various reasons (we respect the authority asking, we don’t want to be seen as a troublemaker, we tend to follow along with what others do, it’s in our best interest, etc.).

Point out that if the “ask” was too burdensome (if you had been asked to run a mile, write a 17 page essay on how much you love this class, etc.) the chances of compliance drop dramatically. When laws negatively impact members of society, you might see the compliance of that law come into question.

Slide 4-5: The focus of these slides is to get students to think about items that are pretty accepted in society (the idea that GREEN means GO, and RED means STOP), but the real question is, why? Why doesn't PURPLE mean stop? The reality is that someone from long ago realized there was a need to create order and dictated that those would be the colors used for traffic safety. Today, we don't even question it, or think that it's a "law." If we start to notice a law from a while ago that is enforcing a belief we disagree with now, we might start to question it through protests, court cases, or encouraging the passage of a new law (i.e. school desegregation, Jim Crow Laws, equality in the workforce, ideas of marriage, etc.)

Continue through the presentation slides as the students follow along on their Student Notes Handout. They will begin filling in the notes on Slide 11. Slides 16, 22, 29, & 31 include links to video clips.

Slides 37-39: This section allows the class to apply what they have learned together to some specific examples. The examples are also on their Student Notes Handout.

Slides 40-43: This section allows the class to discuss and apply what they have learned to an example from the Covid pandemic.

Slide 44: Direct students to answer the Closure Questions on their Student Notes Handout.

Possible Extension Activity: Use the closure questions on the student handout as topics for small group discussion or a Socratic Seminar style discussion in class.