

“You’re Not the Boss of Me” - LESSON PLAN

Learning Objective: Students will...

1. Analyze how government can shape societal norms.
2. Compare and contrast viewpoints regarding how and when government policies shape behavior.
3. Identify examples of laws and regulations that must balance individual rights with public health and safety.

TEKS: 8th Grade U.S. History 19C, 29C, U.S. Government 7H, 8B, 13A-B, 19E

Materials Needed: Access to “*You’re Not the Boss of Me*”: *Individual Rights Versus Public Health & Safety* reading, and “*You’re Not the Boss of Me*” - *Socratic Seminar* questions

Vocabulary: regulation, department, public health, individual rights, penalties, autonomous, hemp, marijuana, infrastructure, Covid-19, CDC, bureaucracy,

Estimated Time:
45-60 minutes

Engaging Focus:

Distribute copies of “*You’re Not the Boss of Me*”: *Individual Rights Versus Public Health & Safety* reading. Allow students about 5 minutes to read through the article individually.

Hold a class discussion regarding their thoughts on the article. When prompting the students to think of other issues, answers may vary. You may want to use some of the following topics to help get them thinking:

required vaccines for public school attendance, seat belt & helmet laws, marijuana laws, public mask mandates, laws banning cell phone use while driving, laws regarding gun sales, speed limits, etc.

Questions to consider from the reading:

- What other issues, past or present, can you think of that require(d) laws, regulations, or guidelines in order to address public behavior?
- How might these issues sit at an intersection of public health and individual freedoms?
- What recommendations would you make in each of these areas (strengthen the laws or penalties, weaken the laws or penalties, or appeal to the public for voluntary compliance)? NOTE: Voluntary public compliance is not highly effective in changing behavior.
- While there are no easy answers to these questions, it’s important to consider that the local, state, and federal governments each have different considerations and constituents to think about. Which levels of government do you feel are best equipped to handle the issues above?

Teaching Strategy:

Now that students have a collective understanding of how laws impact behavior, place them in small groups to analyze various topics that hold similar issues discussed as a class.

Allow about 15-20 minutes for students to analyze their topic and consider solutions. If a group finishes early, encourage them to conduct additional research, or freely investigate one of the other topics presented.

Once groups finish their analysis, have them share their findings with the class.

Extension:

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