



4-H Legislature Preparation 1 of 4

Project Skills:

1. Understanding the three branches of government and how a bill becomes a law
2. Understanding formal and informal government structures
3. What is a mock legislature? What is Florida 4-H Legislature?

Life Skills:

1. Learning to learn
2. Decision making

Ages: 14-18

Time: approximately 2 hours

Supplies Needed:

- Laptop/LCD projector
- Access to the internet to view website and to view downloaded videos
- Florida 4-H Legislature Promotional Video
- Copies of Florida 4-H Legislature Manuals I & II (current year or older)
- Whiteboard (or flip chart) & dry erase markers
- Handouts and powerpoint for Separation of Powers Activity

Advance Preparation:

- Read over the lesson plan (including the "Separation of Powers: What's For Lunch?" lesson) and make sure you have all the supplies needed.

BACKGROUND

The Florida 4-H Legislature Program (often pronounced "ledge") is a five day learning laboratory in state government designed to give participants educational experiences such as: learning about the functions of state level government, becoming informed about the state system of government, serving as mock legislators, reporters or lobbyists, meeting in the committee rooms of the House of Representatives as well as the House Chambers, and touring the State Capitol, and/or other State Buildings.

The *Florida 4-H Legislature* program helps participants learn:

1. Learn about state government.
2. Understand formal and informal government structure.
3. Become aware of societal issues and potential solutions.
4. Apply moral and ethical valuing processes to public policy making.
5. Develop confidence in — and dedication to — the democratic process.
6. Gain communication skills.
7. Listen to varying viewpoints.
8. Respect the opinions and rights of others.
9. Learn about career opportunities in government.
10. Be prepared to return to a local community and be an active citizen.

Three Branches of Government

Begin by saying to the participants, "When the U.S. government was established during the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the delegates did not want governing powers to be controlled by just one man or one group. They were afraid that if a small group received too much power, the United States of America would end up under the rule of a dictator or tyrant. To avoid this risk, the group divided the new government into three parts, or branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. Perhaps you've heard of these? What else are each of these



branches called, or who are in these roles?¹” Look for answers like, the president or governor is the executive branch, congress is the legislative branch and the supreme court is the judicial branch.

Continue by saying, “In this first activity, you are going to learn about the three branches of government and how they interact with one another. Through the process of creating a healthy school lunch menu, you will role-play each branch’s responsibility in the law-making process.”

- Model the role of the President by setting the “agenda” for the school lunch menu and deciding whether to approve or veto Congress’ bill.
- Model the role of Congress by writing the text of the menu and, if necessary, voting to override the President’s veto.
- Model the role of the Supreme Court by judging whether the school menu is “healthy” and setting criteria for what that will mean in the future.
- Identify the main role and function of each of the three branches by taking notes about what each part of the role-playing activity represented.

Do “Separation of Powers: What’s For Lunch?²” lesson from here:

<http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/separation-powers-whats-lunch>

REFLECT & APPLY

“What were the most interesting new facts you learned regarding governing bodies?”

How can knowing more about a government body help you or your family, neighborhood or community?

Now that you know all about the divisions of power in a democracy, what are some other examples (besides a school menu) that you could use to teach other 4-H members about local government?”

How a bill becomes a law

Watch 3-minute “Schoolhouse Rock – How a Bill Becomes A Law³” found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEJL2Uuv-oQ>

Say to the participants, “As you saw in the cartoon, the journey a bill takes to become enacted as a law by the legislative branch of our government can be very brief or very long. Many bills that are introduced never become laws. The U.S. Constitution lays out the general process by which a bill becomes law, but many of the details of this process can vary.”

Tell the students to work in pairs and make a list of 5-8 steps that make a bill become a law in either the state or federal government. After 5-10 minutes, watch 3 min 37 second “How a Bill Becomes a Law according to Jean Arthur” from the 1939 *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*⁴ starring Jimmy Stewart and Jean Arthur found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZFRP67sX8o>



After watching the video, ask one pair to report their steps. [Write the step number a few key words from each step on the white board as you go through the steps.] Ask if anyone else has another step to add or rearranging/corrections until all the steps are identified by the group. Below are the steps you are looking for:

Step 1. Although bills may originate in a number of ways, a bill is usually introduced by an individual member of either the Senate or the House of Representatives.

Step 2. After it has been introduced, a bill is assigned to the appropriate House or Senate committee or subcommittee for hearings. After hearings have been held, the committee or subcommittee votes on whether to approve the bill. If it is not approved, the bill dies. If it is approved, it proceeds to the next step.

Step 3. An approved bill is then sent to the whole House or full Senate. Amendments may be made at this time. After discussion, the bill is voted on. If it is not approved, it may be sent back to committee. If a bill is approved, it is sent to the next step.

Step 4. After a bill has been approved by the house of origin, it is sent to the other house for approval.

Step 5. Bills approved by both houses of the legislature must be checked for accuracy. A conference may be called to reconcile minor differences in versions of the bill. If differences cannot be reconciled, the bill may die. If the differences are reconciled, the bill moves on to the next step.

Step 6. Reconciled bills go to the President to be signed. If the President vetoes the bill, it may be sent back to the legislature for another vote to override the veto. If the President signs the bill, it becomes law. If the President does not veto or sign the bill within 10 days, it becomes law.

Step 7. The law is sent to the Archivist of the United States, who assigns it a number.

Step 8. The law is published⁵.

REFLECT & APPLY

“Why is it important to know why a bill becomes a law?”

When might you ever use these steps? Who cares about why a bill becomes a law? Why should you care?

What are some issues you’d like to see become a law that affect you today?”

Florida 4-H Legislature

- Watch short LEG video from several years ago
- During video, pause as necessary to describe what is going on and where the participants are during the scenes. Ask an alumni/return participant to do this narration, if possible.



Review the following topics with the participants:

- What, when, where, how much?
- Explore Florida 4-H Legislature website: <http://florida4h.org/events/leg.shtml>
- Describe the roles for participants: Lobbyist, Legislator, Senator, Reporter
 - o Review past manuals & bill books. Hopefully you can distribute hard copies of manual 1 and/or 2 at this time. Ask the participants to start skimming through Manual 1 and to complete the worksheet: Manual 1 Scavenger Hunt. Review the answers.
- Review Legislature schedule found in Manual 1.
- Expectations at Legislature, including chaperoning
 - o Talk about your counties expectations of its participants during the event.

HOMEWORK/DIGGING DEEPER:

1. Go to <http://www.icivics.org/games> and play the game: "Branches of Power"
2. Watch at least 30 consecutive minutes of a county or city commissioner. Be ready to report what the date of the meeting was, what issue was discussed, who spoke on it and anything else remarkable.
 - o Online meetings can be found here and at many county government websites, including: <http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/admin/agenda/realmeetings.asp>

Sources:

1. "Congress for Kids: [Constitution]: The Three Branches of Government." *Congress for Kids - Interactive, Fun-filled Experiences About the Federal Government*. Ed. Dirkson Congressional Center, 2008. Web. 20 Apr. 2011. http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution_threebranches.htm
2. "Separation of Powers: What's for Lunch?" *ICivics: The Democracy Lab*. Web. 04 Apr. 2011. <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/separation-powers-whats-lunch> .
3. "YouTube - Schoolhouse Rock- How a Bill Becomes a Law." *YouTube - Broadcast Yourself*. 03 Oct. 2006. Web. 04 Apr. 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEJL2Uuv-oQ> .
4. "YouTube - How to Propose a Bill According to Jean Arthur." *YouTube - Broadcast Yourself*. 07 Sept. 2007. Web. 04 Apr. 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZFRP67sX8o>.
5. "Lesson Plan: The Life of a Legislative Bill." *Track the Life of a Legislative Bill*. Microsoft Education. Web. 04 Apr. 2011. <http://www.microsoft.com/education/lifeofabill.msp> .
6. *Exploring Citizenship Unit 6: My Government*, Norma Roberts, Treva Sawatski, Ruth Milton, Robert Soileau, Ben Powell; June 1985; John Rutledge, Joy C. Jordan, Dale Pracht, Germaine Pointer, Karen Henry, Kay D. Brown, Vickie B. Mullins; UF IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL, December 2009.



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**Florida 4-H Legislature
Manual 1 – Policy & Procedures
Scavenger Hunt**

1. Name the seven appointed positions at Florida 4-H Legislature

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____

2. What are the six 4-H legislative committees?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

3. Describe three things a lobbyist can do before attending Florida 4-H Legislature

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. Describe step number six of the first committee meeting.

5. Which committee meeting do lobbyists speak at?

6. Explain the gavel raps at Florida 4-H Legislature



7. What does a legislator do during their closing statement?

8. How much time is allowed for non-debatable/technical questions?

9. Who was Chris Allen?

10. If the Speaker of the House or Senate President asks you the question, "For what reason do you rise," how should you answer?

