

## Sample Social Studies Learning Plan

### Big Idea/ Topic

#### The Seat of Government

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

**Distribution of Power:** The student will understand that distribution of power in government is a product of existing laws and documents combined with contemporary values and beliefs.

Essential Question:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of different government systems?

### Standard Alignment

**SSCG1 Compare and contrast various systems of government.**

- a. Determine how governments differ in geographic distribution of power, particularly unitary, confederal, and federal types of government.

Connection to Literacy Standards for Social Studies and Social Studies Matrices

L9-10RHSS1 – Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of information.

L9-10RHSS2 – Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

L9-10WHST4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Map and Globe skills – 4** (compare/contrast categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps)

**Information Processing Skills–1** (compare similarities and differences) , **5** (identify main idea, detail, sequence of events and cause and effect in a social studies context)

### Instructional Design

**\*This lesson has a flexible timeline and will cross over several days.**

**This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See bottom of lesson for list of unplugged supplies.**

**Part 1:** Ask students to decide if they think people are born inherently good or bad... or are we just a blank slate and learn different behaviors as we grow up? The teacher could use Padlet or another form of technology that allows students to see the responses of other students or the teacher could use the breakout room function of zoom (or other video conferencing apps) to allow students to discuss in small groups. If you use Padlet, you can have students respond to each other or you can verbally have students discuss patterns or differences in opinion.

Next, ask students why we they think they are having this discussion in a government class. This should hopefully lead them down the path that government is designed to keep order, organization, and protect people. Other probing questions to continue the conversation...

- What happens when a government does not do its job? (Potential link to American Revolution and Declaration of Independence)
- Are all governments around the world the same? How are they set up and how is power distributed?
- How do you set up a government so that one person or group of people does not have too much power?
- Etc.

(This will help line up discussions about political philosophies in Standard 2 later in the class)

**\*Unplugged variation** – Provide the questions in the resources attached and allow students to answer them on paper accordingly.

**Part 2:** [Using the PowerPoint provided](#), project the three forms of government that will be discussed in the lesson (unitary, confederal, and federal) and asks students to share if they know how power is distributed in these types of government. After a short discussion, briefly explain the difference between the three forms of government and allow students to ask questions. Next, go through the remainder of the slides that discuss the “chairs” analogies and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

The teacher should go through the first example together and then potentially allow students to go into breakout rooms and work in groups for the rest.

**\*Unplugged variation** – Provide students with a handout of the [printed PowerPoint slides](#) and use the information to do the “chairs” worksheet.

**Part 3:** Show students the “chairs” slide and ask them which one goes with which form of government. Show the rest of the pictures and have students respond using Kahoot or some other form of question/answer system. With each image students will choose which image they think it most closely reflects and be able to explain their reasoning. Have students explain their answers after each round. There can be more than one right answer as long as their rationale makes sense!

Lastly, have students use the draw function of Padlet (or another form of technology) to either draw or find a picture on the internet that represents an analogy of the distribution of power for one of the forms of government and explain their rationale. Have students respond to at least one of their classmate’s posts.

**\*Unplugged variation** – Provide the graphic organizer that allows unplugged students to respond to the pictures and then asks them to choose/draw their own, make a connection, and explain their rationale.



**Part 4:** Summative task- RAFT writing that asks students to make a speech to a country that has newly formed and give them advice on how to distribute power. Make sure students understand each piece of the RAFT before they start (especially the format.) This could definitely be done as “homework.”

## RAFT

- **Role-** Citizen of the new country
- **Audience-** Members of the government convention deciding on the new government for the country.
- **Format-** Speech
- **Topic-** What type of government would you recommend and why?

## New Country Statistics

- The country has about 10.5 million people.
- Is roughly the size of the state of Georgia
- Has varying geographic features including mountains, rolling hills, fertile plains, and access to the sea
- Also has a variety of economic opportunities strongly tied to the geographic features
- Has a relatively diverse make-up with regard to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age

**\*Unplugged variation** – Student does the same activity using the printed version of the RAFT found in the resources below.

## Student Learning Supports

### Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students. *If students are able to complete the activities on their own, it would be best to let them do this independently.*

- Consider filling in one of the examples to show an example with the worksheets/graphic organizers.
- Considering having students do the extra activity at the end of the “chairs” worksheet to get them thinking about the RAFT assignment.
- Considering showing an example of a speech highlighting the Role, Audience, Format, and Topic to make sure students understand the summative task.
- Consider allowing students to record a speech.

### Opportunities for Extension:

- Expand the idea of the geography of power to the geographic location of different governments around the world (example of map <https://www.mapsofworld.com/thematic-maps/types-of-governments.html>)

**Unplugged Supplies:** Lesson checklist, writing utensil, unitary/federal/confederal graphic organizer, “chairs” worksheet, government images graphic organizer, RAFT directions



## Evidence of Student Success

Information for diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are described within the Instructional Design.

## Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, unitary/federal/confederal graphic organizer, “chairs” worksheet, government images graphic organizer, RAFT directions

Materials not included to support unplugged learners: paper, pens/pencils



# Government Lesson Checklist

## **SSCG1 Compare and contrast various systems of government.**

a. Determine how governments differ in geographic distribution of power, particularly unitary, confederal, and federal types of government.

### Part 1:

- Answer the questions about people being good or evil in complete sentences.
  - Are people born inherently good or bad...Or are we just a blank slate and learned different behaviors as we grow up?
  - Why do you think we are discussing this in a government class?
  - What happens when a government does not do its job? (Potential link to American Revolution and Declaration of Independence)
  - Are all governments around the world the same? How are they set up and how is power distributed?
  - How do you set up a government so that one person or group of people does not have too much power?
  - Can you think of other questions like this?

### Part 2:

- Go through the PowerPoint slides provided that explain the unitary, federal, and confederal systems and write down any notes in your class notebook. Your notes can be a mix of text and sketches.
- Do the "chairs" worksheet that discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

### Part 3:

- Look at the chairs example at the top of the Government Analogies graphic organizer.
- Look at the rest of the images and decide which system that image represents and explain your thinking. Don't worry, there can be more than one right answer as long as you explain yourself.
- In the last box (which is blank), draw, paste, or whatever else you can do your own image and explain which system it represents.

### Part 4:

- Do the summative RAFT writing assignment at the end of the resources. Make sure you pay close attention to the format. How might you write a speech differently than an essay or text message to your friend?



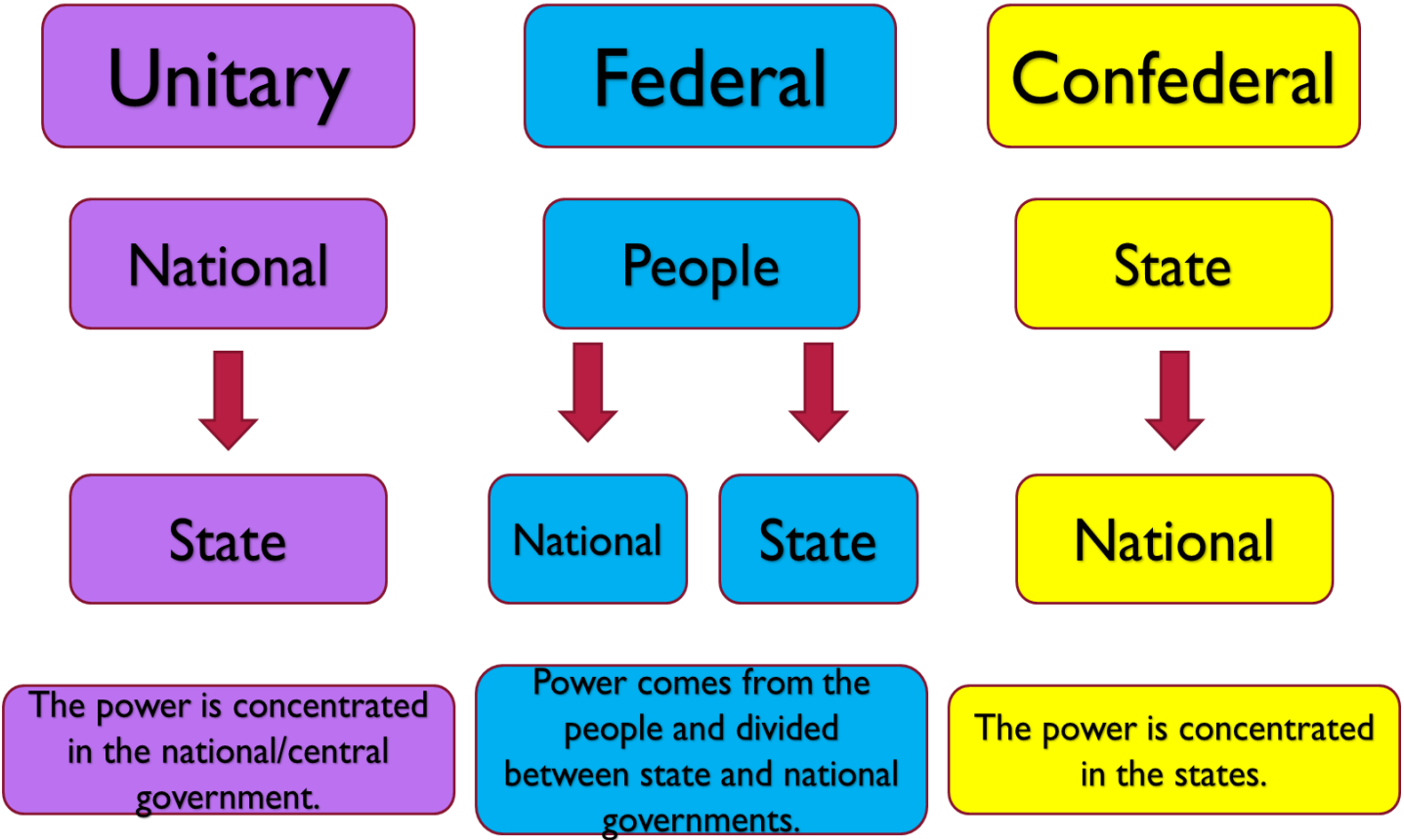




Image	Which form of government?	Rationale (Explain why!)
	Confederal	This represents Confederal because there are different chairs at the table and that could reference the different states making decision.
	Federal	This represents Federal because although there are different seats at the table it shows that each table can make their own decisions similar to states and the national government.
	Unitary	This represents Unitary because there is only one chair towering over everyone symbolizing the national government makes all the decisions.
		
		
		(Picture of the United Nations)
		(Picture of a school)



## Government “Chairs”

**Federal:** “Set of Chairs” A federal form of government splits power between independent states and a central government. The power rests in both places, and each gets its authority from a governing document, like the U.S. Constitution. Independent branches inside the central government may also share power. Mark each characteristic of federalism S if it’s a strength of that type of government and W if it’s a weakness.

- There is national unity, but local governments can act as well
- Citizens have more opportunities to be heard
- Services can be duplicated by different levels of government
- Disputes occur between national power and states’ rights

**Confederal:** “Many Different Chairs” The confederal form of government is an association of independent states. The central government gets its authority from the independent states. Power rests in each individual state, whose representatives meet to address the needs of the group. America tried a confederal system before writing an entirely new constitution. This type of plan didn’t work for us because the states did not give the central government enough power to do its job. Mark each characteristic of a confederal form of government S if it’s a strength of that type of government and W if it’s a weakness.

- Keeps the power of government at the local level
- States cooperate without losing their independence
- Central government may be too weak to be effective
- Laws may differ from state to state; no uniformity

**Unitary:** “One Big Chair” In a unitary form of government, all the power rests in a central government. The country may be divided into states or other sub-units, but they have no power of their own. For example, England depends on its Parliament, a legislative body, to create and enforce the laws in the country. The leader of the nation, the Prime Minister, is a member of the Parliament and does not have any more power than its members. Mark each characteristic of a unitary government S if it’s a strength of that type of government and W if it’s a weakness.

- Uniform laws, policies, and enforcement across the country
- Little conflict between state and national governments
- Government may be slow to meet local problems
- Difficult to meet all the needs of all the citizens the local level

<https://connectplus.pasco.k12.fl.us/ssnead/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/11.-Different-Governments-Federal-Confederal-and-Unitary-.pdf>





## RAFT Summative Task

Imagine you are in charge of creating a government for a brand new country!  
Which system would you choose if... A. FEDERAL B. CONFEDERAL C. UNITARY

- \_\_\_ 1. You want the central government to have the most power?
- \_\_\_ 2. You want laws to be the same throughout the country?
- \_\_\_ 3. You want the central government to have the least power?
- \_\_\_ 4. You want individual states to keep as much independence as possible?
- \_\_\_ 5. You want both national laws and state laws to exist?
- \_\_\_ 6. You don't care whether individual states have any power?
- \_\_\_ 7. You want a balance between power in the states and the central government?
- \_\_\_ 8. You want there to be few, if any, national laws?

**Scenario:** Imagine you are a member of a constitutional convention for a new country. Prepare a short speech on whether or not this new country should adopt a unitary, federal or confederal form of government. Use at least three textual references from the lesson to support your choice. Your speech should be at least 8 sentences or more and follow the RAFT guidelines below.

**Role-** Citizen of the new country

**Audience-** Members of the government convention deciding on the new government for the country.

**Format-** Speech

**Topic-** What type of government would you recommend and why?

### **New Country Statistics**

- The country has about 10.5 million people.
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