

Our State Government Module Synopsis

Overview of Story

In this module, students will follow some fourth-grade students as they grow to create a government for their grade. This fourth-grade government serves as a representation of the state government, operating within the confines of the federal government--the federal government is represented by the school-wide student government. Over the course of the four-chapter module, the students in the story explore the concepts of affecting change through the political system, direct versus representative government, the process of writing a bill, the Virginia/New Jersey Plan debate and the Connecticut Compromise, term limits, and taxation. All of the concepts are discussed through relevant parallels to the world of the "Fourth-Grade Council." In all, this module will give students great opportunities to be exposed to new government-related concepts and to engage in discussion regarding political issues.

Major Themes

These are the major themes that arise in the module, in chronological order:

- The power to affect change
- The existence and role of state governments
- A bill becoming a law
- Direct and representative democracies
- The Connecticut Compromise, solving the debate between the Virginia and New Jersey Plans
- Bicameralism
- The election process
- Taxation and budgeting

Related GLCE Requirements

Fourth Grade GLCEs:

- C1.0.1 – *Identify questions political scientists ask in examining the United States (e.g., What does government do? What are the basic values and principles of American democracy? What is the relationship of the United States to other nations? What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?)*
- C1.0.2 – *Explain probable consequences of an absence of government and of rules and laws.*
- C5.0.1 – *Explain responsibilities of citizenship (e.g. initiating changes in laws or policy, holding public office versus respecting the law, being informed and attentive to public issues, paying taxes, registering to vote and voting knowledgeably, serving as a juror).*
- C5.0.4 – *Describe ways citizens can work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy.*

List of Characters

Main Characters:

- Garrett – The chapter one narrator who initiates the creation of the FGC while trying to solve a problem with bullying.
- Jason – Garrett’s friend, also the chapter two narrator, who assists Garrett in the writing of the “No Bullying Bill.”
- Virginia – The chapter three narrator who, in an effort to salvage Friday recess time, tries to change the FGC into a representative democracy.
- N.J. – The chapter four narrator who proposes a representative democracy plan in opposition to that of Virginia’s, ultimately solved by the Connor Compromise. She narrates the chapter about elections and taxation.
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Supporting Characters:

- Garrett’s dad – Prompts Garrett and Jason to go about affecting change so they won’t be bullied anymore.
- Orsen – Name of a specific child who bullies Garrett and his friends.
- Mrs. Davis – Garrett’s fourth grade teacher.
- Mrs. Langham – Sixth grade teacher in charge of the Student Council.
- Mr. Ford – Fourth grade teacher in charge of the FGC.
- Garrett’s mom – Helps Garrett and Jason determine what to write in their bill against bullying.
- Mrs. Ricketts – One of five fourth grade teachers, teaches the class Virginia is in.
- Miss Rodriguez – One of five fourth grade teachers.
- Mr. Kimmel – One of five fourth grade teachers, teaches the class N.J. is in.
- Connor – The student who proposes the compromise between the Virginia and N.J. Plans.
- David – The student proposing the tax on fourth graders to pay for new playground balls.
- Brian – The student in the House of Representatives opposing David’s equipment tax.