

You and Your Government

Grade Level: 4-12

Time: Day 1: 5-10 minutes. Day 2: 1 hour

Objectives:

- Identify the government's impact/influence on their everyday lives.
- Differentiate the influence of national, state, and local government.
- Understand that they have the power to influence and shape government.

Curricular Connections: Civics, Technology

Materials: Access to research material. You can also utilize the community charts and spheres of influence sheets available in the forms sections as an introduction.

Procedure: This activity works best prior to any formal discussion on the importance of or purpose of government.

- 1) On day #1 give students 5-10 minutes to list as many activities as they can think of in which government plays no role. Encourage the students to be creative.
- 2) Direct the students to take their lists home and ask them to consult with their parents for further ideas. The list will be handed in the next day.
- 3) On day #2 give students five minutes to share ideas and add to personal lists.
- 4) Collect all lists and begin to share items without identifying the author. With each item, the students are encouraged to analyze whether or not government has an impact/influence on that item. Continue until the class realizes that government literally has an impact/influence on every aspect of their existence.
- 5) Although the class should not attempt to achieve closure yet, students should be allowed to state their opinions concerning the amount of power government possesses.
- 6) Students conduct research to discover which level(s) of government are responsible for each item that they now realize is impacted by government.
- 7) Once research is complete discuss research findings and ways that students can influence government.

Reflection:

- Discussion of governmental impact and influencing government.

Assessment:

1. A brief paragraph on the topic, "Governmental Power--- Too Little or Too Much?"
2. Results of research

Source: Adapted from Craig N. Kittelson; Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan #:AELP-GOV0017