



## OUR LIVING CONSTITUTION AND HOW IT CAN BE CHANGED (K-8)

### OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to:

- Analyze a scenario for change and match it to the level of government where decisions are made.
- Use knowledge of the three levels of government to identify who has the power to address given strategies.
- Discuss and support reasons to explain: “Where do I go when I want to make change?”
- Describe how we can make Constitutional Changes at the Federal Level and at the State Level
- Create ideas and propose an amendment to their classroom rules or school rulebook

### STANDARDS:

- **3.C3.1** Describe the origins, functions, and structure of the Arizona Constitution, local governments, and tribal governments.
- **5.C3.1** Describe the origins, functions, and structure of the United States Constitution and the three branches of government.

### CIVICS EXAM QUESTIONS:

- What does the Constitution do? A: Sets up and defines the government
- What is an amendment? A: A change to the Constitution
- How many amendments does the Constitution have? A: 27

**TIMELINE:** It is recommended to use this lesson plan/activity in the first stages of compiling SPB project ideas and understanding roles of different government levels. This lesson would work well when creating a SPB Constitution or Classroom Rules and Norms or a Classroom Bill of Rights.

**APPROXIMATE LESSON LENGTH:** Two - 55-minute lessons (depending on extensions)

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- AZ Edition Slides: [“Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change?”](#)
- AZ Edition Student Handouts: [“Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change”](#)

- Scissors and Glue or Tape for the Dice activity
- Optional: [Amending the Constitution](#) (ED Video)
- Optional: [CUSD80 Elementary Student Handbook](#)
- Exit Ticket: [“Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change?”](#)

#### VOCABULARY:

- |                      |                    |                         |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ● Amendment/to Amend | ● State            | ● State Legislatures    |
| ● U.S. Constitution  | ● Federal/National | ● Ratification/Ratify   |
| ● State Constitution | ● Article          | ● Majority              |
| ● Federalism         | ● Section          | ● Initiative to Propose |
| ● Local              | ● Congress         | ● Representative        |

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

### DAY ONE

## 1. Engage

---

- Give students time to brainstorm using the prompt: ***Think of something you want to change in your city, town, state, or country. Lead students in a brainstorm and allow time to discuss.***

## 2. Explore

---

- Progress through the “Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change?” slideshow to introduce students to the lesson vocabulary. Pause as needed to check for understanding.
- Provide students with opportunities to practice new vocabulary during and after the lesson. Suggestions include having students create example sentences, discussing new words in pairs or groups, adding terms to the word wall, or engaging in a sort, game, visual depiction, or other similar activity.
- Continue moving students through the slideshow, pausing as needed to check for understanding. The slideshow moves from vocabulary into the main lesson where students are introduced to the concept of levels of power using the school setting as an example.

## 3. Explain

---

- “Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change” AZ Edition Student Handout 1 at slide 24 as well as scissors and glue or tape for each student. Allow time for students to cut and assemble their school tri-folds. Model how to use them.
  - **NOTE:** To use the tri-fold, students should turn the tri-fold so that the answer they select is facing forward on their desk so that the teacher can see it. Scan the tri-folds and check students’ understanding of the concept of levels of power as you move through the next step.

- Continue through each of the scenarios in the slideshow. After each scenario, ask students who has the power to make that change: teacher, principal, or superintendent/school board. Instruct students to display their answer with their tri-folds.
  - **NOTE:** It is important to call on students with both correct and incorrect answers to explain their thinking. Some answers that seem incorrect may make sense when the student explains their thinking. This discussion is the most important part of the day's lesson and lays the groundwork for discussing the levels of government in the next lesson.

## 4. Elaborate

---

- Day one may end well at slide 33 - Revisit this important question: Where can we go if we want to make a change? Students can use a sticky note to write their idea of how they would want to change their school and post it to an idea wall or on the board for the next day's lesson.

## 5. Evaluate

---

- Students can share their sticky note ideas before the end of class. One or two students could begin to take the sticky notes and organize them into similar categories for students to see similar ideas or differing priorities.

### DAY TWO

## 1. Engage

---

- Give students time to brainstorm using the prompt: ***Why is it important to know where to go when you have an idea about an issue?***
- Consider reviewing vocabulary again from the previous lesson and ask for students to provide examples.
- Tell students that they will learn where to go when they want to make a change in their communities, state, or the country. Tell students that in order to do that they will need to learn more about the powers of each level of government.

## 2. Explore and Explain

---

- Distribute “Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change” AZ Edition Student Handout 2 at slide 38 as well as scissors and glue or tape for each student. Allow time for students to cut and assemble the tri-fold. Students should remember how to use the tri-fold from last time, but feel free to model use as needed.
  - **NOTE:** Again, call on students with both correct and incorrect answers to explain their thinking. Highlight evidence in the scenarios and the tri-fold to correct any misunderstandings or misconceptions about which level of government has power.

- Distribute “*Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change*” AZ Edition Student Handout 3 at slide 61. Students may work individually or with a partner to complete the handout.
- Prompt students at slide 63 to answer the mystery question: “Where do I go when I want to make a change?” Encourage the possibility of several correct answers.
- Divide students into groups of four at slide 64. Then distribute one copy of “*Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change*” AZ Edition Student Handout 4 as well as scissors and glue or tape to each group. Allow time for students to cut and assemble the die. It may be helpful to fold the die together with students. Students will create the die to play a game to help them brainstorm ways to make their communities a better place.
- Use slides 65–67 to model for students how to use the die. Reinforce that the government has lots of power to make change, but so do people. If the idea students have for change does not fit the powers on their tri-fold, it may be something students or the community can do on their own.
- Distribute one copy of “*Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change*” AZ Edition Student Handout 5 to each student in the group at slide 69. Show students how to roll the die and record their answers on the graphic organizer in Handout 5. Each student in the group should roll the die at least once. Students should record their and their group members’ ideas on their graphic organizer. Invite students to share their ideas with the class.
  - **NOTE:** Posting student ideas in the classroom and encouraging them to add new ones as they think of them builds excitement for civic engagement in the classroom.

### 3. Elaborate

---

- Continue through slides 70-81 of the slideshow. After each method to change the US or State Constitution, ask students who has the power to make that change: citizens, the government, both, neither. Which constitution is easier to change?
  - **NOTE:** It is important to call on students with both correct and incorrect answers to explain their thinking. Some answers that seem incorrect may make sense when the student explains their thinking. An emphasis should be placed on how both citizens (we the people) and representatives of our government often must work together to change our national constitution, whereas here in Arizona, the citizens and people have much more direct say in how to change our state government.

### 4. Evaluate

---

- Distribute “*Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change*” AZ Edition Student Handout 6 at the end of the slideshow to each student. This may be a good opportunity to provide students with a copy of their student school conduct book or the classroom rules and/or norms. Students can either look through their school

student handbook to help respond to some of the questions, or they can come up with ones of their own.

- Students will create their own CHANGE or AMENDMENT to the school rules, the classroom rules, or they can come up with a RIGHT they would like to see added to the school or their classroom. This could be opened up to a classroom discussion. If the teacher finds it appropriate, the teacher could lead the class through the national constitution requirements to propose and ratify amendments. The teacher could also lead the students through the state constitution changes requirements.

#### FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OR ARTIFACT:

- “Where Do I Go if I Want to Make a Change” AZ Edition Student Handout 6 requires students to come up with their own CHANGE or AMENDMENT to their school rules or their classroom rules. This could be used to generate a classroom set of rights and rules.
- Exit Activity and Formative Assessment: *Where Do I Go If I Want to Make a Change?*

#### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

### CREATING SPB OR CLASSROOM NORMS/RIGHTS/RULES

- Consider starting the class with a “Do Now” activity on the importance of norms. Students can write on and answer the following questions on a sheet of paper:
  - Write down your favorite sport or game. Pick 3 rules that you would take away from the sport or game. How would the game be different? Would it be easier or harder to play? More or less enjoyable? Why?
  - Think of classes you have had that you have enjoyed being in, and those you were uncomfortable being in. Write down 5 reasons, or things about the class that made that class enjoyable, and 5 things that made that class uncomfortable.
- **Divide your classroom.** Divide the class into smaller sub-groups of three to five individuals.
  - Create a list. Ask each sub-group to make a short list of desirable and undesirable classroom behaviors. Provide 3-5 minutes for each group to make their lists. This can also include RIGHTS of students in the classroom if the teacher desires.
  - Share lists and work towards consensus. Encourage each group to share their lists and work to achieve consensus. Talk about the rationale behind each rule and how it impacts the well-being of students in the class. Contrasting viewpoints are encouraged. Norms may also be structured in a list of “shoulds” and “should nots” for classes needing more guidance.
  - Decide on the classroom norms and responses to norm breaking: Work with students to engage in perspective-taking by asking how breaking a norm might affect others in the class and why the person breaking the norm might have done so. Facilitate a conversation on how to respond if a student departs from the norms.

### SAMPLE NORMS FOR A CLASS:

- Be a respectful listener by paying attention to the speaker and avoid interrupting, yelling, and name-calling.
  - Treat your classmates the way you would like to be treated.
  - If you're talking too much, let someone speak. If you haven't contributed at all, speak up—your opinion is important!
  - Work to understand other points of view. Ask yourself, "Why might they have that opinion?"
  - Be a builder of ideas! Think how you might be able to contribute to someone else's idea.
  - Respect one another even through disagreement. If you disagree, think about asking a question to try and understand the other student's perspective.
  - Everyone is a teacher and learner: keep your mind open.
  - (For some schools) Turn your phone off or have on silent.
  - When feeling strong emotions, address them using different techniques like drawing or writing them, practice expressing them using an "I feel" statement, or taking 5 deep breaths.
- Post the SPB or Classroom "Constitution" on the wall or in the classroom for students to continue to refer back to throughout the year.
  - Students can come up with a way to CHANGE/AMEND the rules or ADD to the rules/ rights of the classroom. This can become their amendment process.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

Handout 1

**Directions:** Cut along the dotted lines and fold along the solid lines to make a tri-fold.

**Teacher**

**Principal**

**Superintendent or  
School Board**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

## Handout 2

**Directions:** Cut along the dotted lines and fold along the solid lines to make a tri-fold.

### Local Government

- parks and recreation
- town streets
- police and fire services
- emergency medical services
- marriage licenses
- housing and more

### State Government

- issue driver's licenses
- manage elections
- create **local** governments
- make rules about business inside a **state**
- charter banks and corporations
- run public schools
- provide police and emergency services

### National Government

- print money
- make rules about trade
- declare war
- establish a post office
- provide an army and a navy
- make laws
- decide what units of measure we use





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

## Handout 3

**Directions:** Decide what level of government has the power to address each scenario. In the level box, write “L” for local government, “S” for state government, or “N” for national government. Use your tri-fold to help you.

Scenario	Level
People are dumping trash all over the place. You think it's because the town dump is only open on Monday mornings and Wednesday afternoons when most people are at work. You want to make a change. <b>What level of government can help?</b>	
Your friend's mom is a marine, and there's been talk about war on the news. Your friend would miss her mom if she was deployed again and worry about her safety. You hope countries can come to an agreement without going to war. <b>What level of government can make this change?</b>	
A large region made up of several <b>states</b> is running out of water because a new dam upstream is preventing water from traveling downstream. <b>What level of government can help residents fix the dam?</b>	
Teens should have equal rights! In your <b>state</b> , teen drivers can only drive at certain times, and there are limits on who can be in the car. <b>What level of government could teens go to to make a change?</b>	
You can't swim in the river or eat the fish you catch there because a factory upstream in another <b>state</b> is releasing chemicals into the river. You want change. <b>What level of government do you go to?</b>	
There are signs everywhere in your city that say "NO skateboarding!" Where are kids supposed to ride? Skateboarding is good exercise and fun. <b>What level of government could make new rules?</b>	

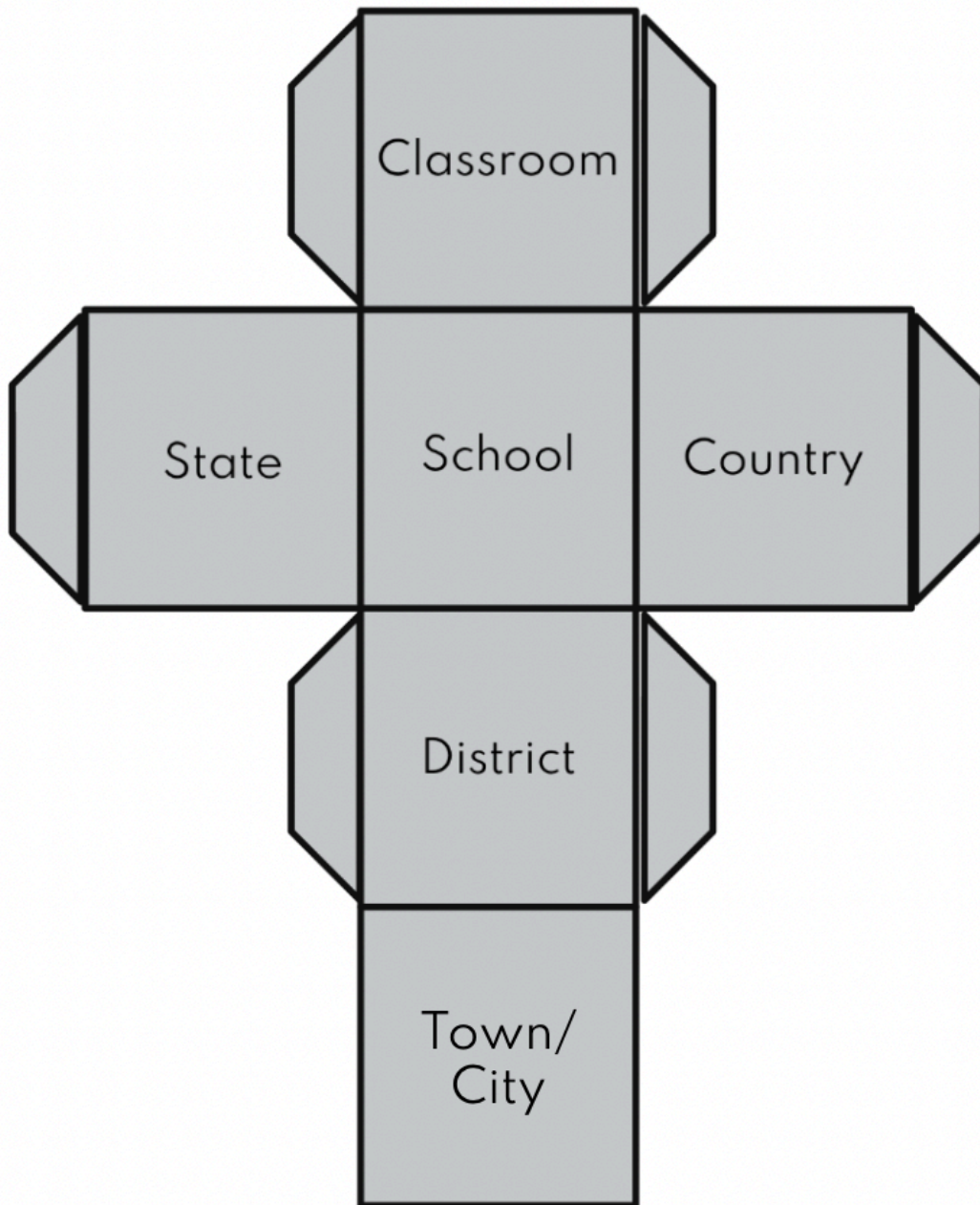


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

Handout 4

**Directions:** Cut around the shape and fold on the inner lines. Then tape or glue the tabs to form a cube die.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

## Handout 5

### Directions:

1. Roll the die. Use the word or phrase that shows up on top to brainstorm ideas that could make that place better for everyone.
2. Write the word or phrase that you roll in the first column.
3. Write the idea you have for making that place better in the second column.
4. List where or who you could go to for help with your idea in the last column.
5. Use your tri-folds to help you. If you're stuck, ask your peers for help. See the example below to help you get started.

<b>What I Rolled</b>	<b>My Idea for Change</b>	<b>Who I Go To</b>
<i>Town/City</i>	<i>Get more trash cans at the park</i>	<i>Mayor/Local Representatives</i>



## Where Do I Go When I Want to Make a Change?

### Handout 6

**Directions:** Think about your school and what rules you have to obey. Do you have a student rules book or a school conduct code? List some of the rules students at your school have to obey:

### ***RULES I Have to Obey at School:***

---

---

---

**What about my rights?** Now think about what RIGHTS you have as a student at your school. If you don't know, you can look in your student handbook! If you do not have one, what RIGHTS do you think students should have at your school?

### ***RIGHTS I Have Protected at My School:***

---

---

---

**TIME to MAKE A CHANGE!** If you could change one rule you have to obey or add one right that should be protected at your school, what CHANGE or AMENDMENT would you propose?

---

# Exit Ticket

## WHERE DO I GO IF I WANT TO MAKE A CHANGE?

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which term means "belonging to the area where you live"? This level of government creates and maintains parks and recreation areas in your town or city.
  - National
  - State
  - Local
2. Which term means "an organized political community that forms part of a country"? This level of government manages elections and issues driver's licenses.
  - National
  - State
  - Local
3. Which term means "something connected to the whole country and all of its people"? Only this level of government has the power to declare war.
  - National
  - State
  - Local
4. Which level of government would you go to if you wanted to add a rule that the entire United States would have to follow?
  - National
  - State
  - Local
5. Which level of government would you go to if you wanted to add a rule that everyone in Arizona would have to follow?
  - National
  - State
  - Local

6. Which level of government would you go to if you wanted to add a rule that everyone in your town or city would have to follow?

- National
- State
- Local

7. How many amendments does our United States Constitution have?

- 10
- 27
- 11,000

8. What is an Amendment?

- A RULE that everyone has to follow
- Any CHANGE to the US Constitution or a STATE Constitution
- A RIGHT that everyone has

9. What's one important thing you learned in class today?

---

---

---

---

10. What is one question that you still have about making changes in our government?

---

---

---

---