

Letter to Congress Module: Argumentation

Information Sheet for Module

Module title:	Letter to Congress
Module description (overview):	In this project-based learning unit, students learn about the Constitution, the legislative process, and key Supreme Court cases. First, they are given a letter from Representative Paul Tonko of New York, in which he asks them to participate in the democratic process by writing a letter to a Congressperson arguing the constitutionality of a particular law. After researching and learning about the history of the Constitution and the Founding Fathers, the Bill of Rights, the process by which a bill becomes a law, and various Supreme Court cases, students outline and draft the letter. As an extension activity, they are tasked with creating a website as part of a grassroots campaign regarding the law. Working in groups, they complete a website for their grassroots campaign. The project culminates in presentations of their work to representatives from the Congressman's office.
Template task (include number, type, level):	Argumentation Analysis, L1, L2, and L3 Task 1: After researching _____ (informational texts) on _____ (content), write a/ an _____ (essay or substitute) that argues your position on _____ (content). Support your position with evidence from your research. L2: Be sure to acknowledge competing views. L3: Give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate and clarify your position.
Teaching task:	After researching fundamental elements of the Constitution, landmark Supreme Court cases, and a modern constitutional issue, write a letter to a member of Congress arguing your position on a constitutional issue of your choosing. Support your position with evidence from your research, by giving examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate, clarify, and support.
Grade/Level:	11th grade
Discipline: (e.g., ELA, science, history, other?)	English and social studies
Course	Integrated English and U.S. history
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Section 1: What Task?

Background to share with students:



October 26, 2011

Dear Students of Tech Valley High School,

Engagement in our nation's political life is the responsibility of every citizen. An engaged and informed citizenry has the power to create a vibrant democracy and preserve our long fought for rights. These rights, as established by our Founding Fathers, have been challenged and redefined over the course of our nation's history, and their validity has almost always been judged in light of the United States Constitution. Whether it has been states' rights, prohibition, women's suffrage, or civil rights for African Americans, nearly all contentious political and social issues in the United States have been shaped by, and interpreted through, the US Constitution. To declare something "constitutional" is to give it society's official seal of approval, so to speak. Today we are faced with a number of important issues that some in our society believe should be supported and upheld by the Constitution. Others, when looking into the same issue, reject it and consider it a departure from our nation's principles as spelled out in that very same document.

I believe it is important for young people like you to get involved with the political process and begin to actively shape society's debates. In order to do that, I would like you to write several congressmen or congresswomen about a current law on the books that you consider unconstitutional, or challenge a recently overturned law, making a case for or against it. Your argument must analyze the intent of our founding fathers against the intent of those who support the law today. In addition to this, you should create a grassroots campaign which explains the history of civic engagement in our country and advocates for your issue. After all, it is often grassroots support which creates real change in society (just look at the Civil Rights movement!). President Obama successfully used these modern methods of communicating (web, twitter, email, social networks, etc.) with the public to create support for his presidency, proving their efficacy specifically with your generation- and I would encourage you to learn how to use the Internet as a democratic tool to increase citizen engagement of your peers.

I or someone from my office will be checking in with you to view your progress and others who participate in the legislative process are very interested to see how you integrate social networking into your issue campaign. Please mail all letters by December, Nov. 21 to coincide with the premiere of your live website.

Good luck and get engaged!

Sincerely,

Congressman Paul D. Tonko, 21st District of New York

Teaching task:

After researching fundamental elements of the Constitution, landmark Supreme Court cases, and a modern constitutional issue, write a letter to a member of Congress arguing your position on a constitutional issue of your choosing. Support your position with evidence from your research by giving examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate, clarify, and support your argument. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

Reading texts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles from independent student research. See text citations.
Extension	Students will create a live website as part of a grassroots movement supporting their point of view.

TEXTS/OTHER USED IN TEACHING TASK

Texts/Other	Citations	Comments
<i>The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union</i>	"The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union." <i>Archiving Early America</i> . http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/articles/text.html	primary source document
<i>United States Constitution</i>	"Constitution of the United States." <i>The Charters of Freedom</i> . http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html .	primary source document
<i>The Federalist Papers</i>	Yale Law School (1998). The Avalon Project. Retrieved from http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp	primary source document
Chapter 6 and 7 of <i>Inventing America: A History of the United States</i>	Meier, P., Merritt, R. S., Keyssar, A., & Kevles, D. J. (2006, April 6) <i>Inventing America: A History of the United States</i> . 2 nd ed. W.W. Norton and Co.	textbook
"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death"	Patrick Henry. Independence Hall Association of Philadelphia. http://www.ushistory.org/documents/libertydeath.htm	primary source document
"Landmark Cases"	Public Broadcasting Service. (2006, December). The Supreme Court: The First 100 Years. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/antebellum/landmark.html	website
Letters Between Abigail Adams and John Adams	The Liz Library. (1998 – 2011). Retrieved from http://www.thelizlibrary.org/suffrage/abigail.htm	primary source document
"Abigail Smith Adams"	Black, A. (2009). <i>The First Ladies of the United States of America</i> . White House Historical Association. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/first-ladies/abigailadams	biography

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

READING STANDARDS FOR ARGUMENTATION	
"Built-in" Reading Standards	"When Appropriate" Reading Standards
<p>1 - Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p> <p>11th grade: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p>	<p>6- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p> <p>11th grade: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.</p>
<p>2 - Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p> <p>11th grade: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>	<p>8 - Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</p> <p>11th grade: Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses).</p>
<p>4 - Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</p> <p>11th grade: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).</p>	<p>9 - Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</p> <p>11th grade: Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.</p>
<p>10 - Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</p> <p>11th grade: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.▲</p>	
WRITING STANDARDS FOR ARGUMENTATION	
"Built-in" Writing Standards	"When Appropriate" Writing Standards

<p>1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>11th grade: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claims, establish the significance of the claims, distinguish the claims from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</p> <p>b. Develop claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.</p> <p>c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claims and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims.</p> <p>d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.</p> <p>e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</p>	<p>6 - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.</p> <p>11th grade: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.</p>
<p>4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>11th grade: same as above</p>	<p>7 - Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p> <p>11th grade: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p>
<p>5 - Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p> <p>11th grade: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p>	<p>8 - Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>11th grade: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.</p>
<p>9 - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>11th grade: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply grades 11–12 reading standards to literary nonfiction</p>	

<p>10 - Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audience.</p> <p>11th grade: same as above</p>	
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CONTENT STANDARDS FROM STATE OR DISTRICT

Standards source:	New York State Social Studies Standards; http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/socstand/home.html
NUMBER	CONTENT STANDARDS
Standard 1.1	Describe the evolution of American democratic values and beliefs as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the New York State Constitution, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other important historical documents.
Standard 1.3	Prepare essays and oral reports about the important social, political, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural developments, issues, and events from New York State and United States history.
Standard 1.4	Consider different historians' analyses of the same event or development in United States history to understand how different viewpoints and/or frames of reference influence historical interpretations.

TEACHING TASK RUBRIC (ARGUMENTATION)

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose. (L2) Makes no mention of counter claims.		Establishes a claim. (L2) Makes note of counter claims.		Establishes a credible claim. (L2) Develops claim and counter claims fairly.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal. (L2) Develops claims and counter claims fairly and thoroughly.
Reading/ Research	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.		Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. (L3) Makes no connections or a connection that is irrelevant to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations. (L3) Makes a connection with a weak or unclear relationship to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. (L3) Makes a relevant connection to clarify argument or claim.		Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. (L3) Makes a clarifying connection(s) that illuminates argument and adds depth to reasoning.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

EXTENSION TASK RUBRIC

	EMERGING (Below Performance Standards)	Developing (Minimal Criteria)	Mastering (High Performance)
Social Studies 40 pts	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays any or displays limited evidence of where American political rights and institutions are derived. Critique any of the following constitutional principles and their application to society today or does it weakly: federalism, civil liberties, avenues of representation, and constitutional change and flexibility. Displays incorrect information or contains many gaps or misconceptions of how a bill becomes a law at the federal level and at what levels the citizenry can be involved. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer than two letters to senators and two letters to members of the House of Representatives <i>or</i> audience chosen is not appropriate for the issue. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays evidence of where American political rights and institutions are derived. Displays only two elements. Identifies the following constitutional principles: federalism, civil liberties, avenues of representation, and constitutional change and flexibility. Does not include all elements or are weakly explained. Displays basic understanding of how a bill becomes a law. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a law of constitutional significance Supports argument with one reference to a past Supreme court case. Produces two letters to senators and two letters to members of the House of Representatives who are not wholly relevant to your cause. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the evolution of American democratic values regarding how to interpret the constitution and your topic. Analyzes the following constitutional principles and their application to society today: federalism, civil liberties, avenues of representation, and constitutional change and flexibility. Displays a clear understanding of how a bill becomes a law at the federal level and at what levels the citizenry can be involved. Identifies the special interest groups relevant to the law in question. Makes arguments for the cause that appeal to the platform of a particular political party. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports with past Supreme Court precedence—at least 2 landmark cases. Two letters to relevant senators <i>and two</i> letters to relevant members of the House of Representatives.
	Resubmit - - - - - 25 - - - - - 27	28 - - - - - 31 - - - - - 34	35 - - - - - 37 - - - - - 40

<p>English 40 pts</p>	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission statement is not connected to the thesis. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 team member writes all of the letters. Lack thesis statement and disregard proper conventions for paragraph writing. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are often weak and incorrect. Show signs that revisions were not done. Is not written in common language. Fewer than 300 words. Does not follow accepted formatting for a business letter. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains a mission statement that does not fully represent the thesis. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2–3 team members write a letter and one letter is sent from the team. Thesis statement is weak or ambiguous and paragraphs partly neglect the conventions of the paragraph writing workshop. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are generally correct, yet contain noticeable errors. Show signs that revisions were only partly done. Ideas are clearly stated in common language, not legalese. Fewer than 300 words. Generally follows formatting for a business letter, yet contains errors in layout. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains a mission statement that fully incorporates the ideas of the thesis. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every team member writes a letter and one letter is sent from the team. Contain a strong thesis and fully follows the conventions of the paragraph writing workshop. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are all, or nearly all, correct. Show signs that revisions were carefully done. Approximately 500–1,000 words each. Follow proper formatting for a business letter; is single spaced, and uses 12-point Times New Roman font.
	<p>Resubmit - - - - - 25 - - - - - 27</p>	<p>28 - - - - - 31 - - - - - 34</p>	<p>35 - - - - - 37 - - - - - 40</p>

<p>Information Literacy 40 pts</p>	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is presented in a scattered unorganized way. Information is irrelevant and unsuccessfully develops a clear answer to the essential question. Supporting data is not researched and relevant to the topic and/or contains many inaccuracies and misconceptions. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows proper formatting for a legal bill. Includes a preamble, body, and enactment clause. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is organized in a somewhat logical way that shows limited evidence of a planned roll-out of information. Information displayed is mostly relevant, timely and successfully develops a clear answer to the essential question. Supporting data is researched and relevant to the topic but may contain very limited inaccuracies or misconceptions. Includes a resource page with multiple annotated resources selected for the purpose of supporting your argument. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the constitutional question at hand clearly. Selects relevant sources to support claims from multiple sources. Organizes the letter into a logical argument for or against the law. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is organized in a logical way that shows evidence of a planned roll-out of information. Information displayed is relevant, timely and successfully develops a clear answer to the essential question. Supporting data is well researched and relevant to the topic. Includes a resource page with multiple annotated resources selected for the purpose of supporting your argument. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the constitutional question at hand clearly. Selects relevant sources to support claims from multiple sources. Organizes the letter into a logical argument for or against the law.
Resubmit ----- 25 ----- 27		28 ----- 31 ----- 34	35 ----- 37 ----- 40
<p>Critical Thinking & Innovation 40 pts</p>	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares only or contrasts only the founding fathers with two civic leaders of today or comparisons are weak or illogical. Include a chart comparing and contrasting citizenry during the 1787 with citizenry in the last presidential, gubernatorial, and local school board elections or does so in a false or inaccurate way. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a case for doing away with, or keeping an existing law is generally weak and lacks a compelling argument. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares and contrasts one of the Founding Fathers ideas with those of two or more civic leaders of today. Includes a chart that compares and contrasts the engagement of citizenry during the 1787 with the engagement of citizenry in the last presidential, gubernatorial, and midterm election of 2010. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a case for doing away with, or keeping, an existing law. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares and contrasts two or more Founding Fathers ideas with those of two or more civic leaders of today. Includes a chart that compares and contrasts the engagement of citizenry during the 1787 with the engagement of citizenry in the last presidential, gubernatorial, and midterm elections of 2010. Explains how the "Culture War" has impacted citizen engagement. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a strong case for doing away with, or keeping, an existing law. Supports argument with a well-researched constitutional interpretation supported by at least 2 historians with authority in that area.

	Resubmit ----- 25 ----- 27	28 ----- 31 ----- 34	35-----37----- 40
Communication 40 pts	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not use images to enhance the story being told. Text cannot be understood without explanation. Did not require all members of the team to present an equal amount of information. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually graded based on the rubric for argumentative writing. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Images are used that may enhance but may also distract from story. Text can be understood but only with some explanation. The amount of information presented by each team member somewhat varies. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually graded based on the rubric for argumentative writing. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Images are used to enhance the story being told. Text can be understood without explanation. All members of the team present an equal amount of information. <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually graded based on the rubric for argumentative writing.
	Resubmit ----- 25 ----- 27	28 ----- 31 ----- 34	35-----37----- 40
Technology Literacy 40 pts	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying ways technology can facilitate citizen engagement. Discussing the implication of social networking sites as a citizen tool. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies way technology can facilitate citizen engagement. Limited references to the implication of social networking sites as a citizen tool. 	<p>Grassroots campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies way technology can facilitate citizen engagement. Directly discusses the implication of social networking sites as a citizen tool. Incorporates a social networking tool to increase awareness of the site.
	Resubmit ----- 25 ----- 27	28 ----- 31 ----- 34	35-----37----- 40
Collaboration 40 pts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is not on time and/or incomplete. Team folder does not reflect organization and time management tools are utilized (i.e., task list, highlighted rubric, etc.). Documentation of team meetings, discussions and assigned work has not been posted in team folder biweekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is on time and complete. Team folder reflects some organization and time management tools are utilized (i.e., task list, highlighted rubric, etc.). Documentation of some team meetings, discussions and assigned work has been posted in team folder biweekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is on time and complete. Team folder reflects organization and time management tools are utilized (i.e., task list, highlighted rubric, etc.). Submits a data source to the class data sheet. Documentation of team meetings, discussions and assigned work has been posted in team folder biweekly.
	Resubmit ----- 25 ----- 27	28 ----- 31 ----- 34	35-----37----- 40

Section 2: What Skills?

Content Literacy Skills

Skill	Definition
Preparing for the Project	
Identifying knows and need to knows	Ability to identify what is already known and what needs to be learned and done in order to complete the task, as outlined in the entry document and rubrics
Gathering Information	
Research skills	Ability to identify and find, as well as gather information from, valid sources on a particular topic
Reading primary source documents	Ability to read primary source documents with comprehension
Note-taking	Ability to identify important information and use appropriate note-taking strategies
Other Content Skills	
Historical context of Constitution and Bill of Rights	Ability to describe the events leading up to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as the effects of the documents' ratification and lasting importance
Understanding of Constitutional principles	Ability to describe the basic principles of the Constitution
Understanding of the Bill of Rights	Ability to describe and apply the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights
Understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases	Ability to describe the decisions in at least two landmark Supreme Court cases and how they relate to a current law
Understanding of legislative process	Ability to describe the process by which a bill becomes a law

Transition to Creating Final Product	
Planning	Ability to create and use an outline
Creating Final Product	
Writing an opening	Ability to write an introduction with a thesis
Development	Ability to correctly use paragraphs to structure and organize writing
Revising and editing	Ability to revise and edit for spelling, grammar, usage, format, and clarity errors
Use of correct format	Ability to correctly use a business letter format and standard font and font size

Learning Outcome Skills

Skill	Definition
Critical Thinking and Innovation	
Making connections	Ability to compare and contrast historical thinking with contemporary thought and ideas
Defending arguments	Ability to make logical arguments and defend them
Communication	
Clarity	Ability to use images and text to communicate clearly to an audience
Information Literacy	
Organization of information	Ability to organize information logically in a variety of genres
Data use	Ability to choose and use appropriate data
Annotated resource lists	Ability to create, format, and annotate a list of appropriate resources
Collaboration	
Delegating and completing tasks	Ability to use various strategies to delegate and divide tasks among group members and check for completion
Technology Literacy	
Technology and the democratic process	Ability to describe how technological tools such as social media can facilitate the democratic process

Section 3: What Instruction?

Mini-task	Group	Complete a know/need-to-know list based on the entry document and rubrics. List your prior knowledge and the questions you need to answer in order to complete the project.	
	Skill Assessed	Ability to identify what is already known and what needs to be learned and done in order to complete the task, as outlined in the entry document and rubrics	
	Criteria for Success	"Know" and "need-to-know" lists are clearly reflective of information in rubric and entry document	
		Instructional Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highlight entry document in two colors—one for what is known, one for what is unknown Rubric jigsaw •"Novel Ideas Only" share, in which groups share their "know" and "need-to-know" lists •Revisit "know" and "need-to-know" lists as phases of project are completed
Mini-task	Individual	Create a research folder to share with your group that includes citations for valid sources and notes on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.	
	Skills Assessed	Ability to describe the events leading up to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as the effects of the documents' ratification and lasting importance Ability to describe the basic principles of the Constitution Ability to describe and apply the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights Ability to describe the process by which a bill becomes a law Ability to identify and find, as well as gather information from, valid sources on a particular topic Ability to read primary source documents with comprehension Ability to identify important information and use appropriate note-taking strategies	
	Criteria for Success	The research folder contains citations for at least six valid sources on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Notes are concise and answer key questions in students' own words.	
		Instructional Strategies (flexible, depending on students' needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Workshop on valid sources ●Curated list of resources for struggling students ●Constitution graphic organizer for note taking ●Guiding questions for research, textbook reading, and note taking ●Analysis of primary source documents, looking at historical context, close reading for intent and impact
Mini-task	Individual	Read about landmark Supreme Court cases, finding evidence to support your position.	
	Skill Assessed	Ability to describe the decisions in at least two landmark Supreme Court cases and how they relate to a current law	
	Criteria for Success	Cited evidence supports position. Constitutional question is defined clearly.	
		Instructional Strategies (flexible, depending on student need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Guided questions for note taking ●Workshop on appropriate resources for struggling students

Mini-task	Individual	Plan and write a rough draft of a letter to a Congressperson with an introduction, a thesis that makes a logical argument, evidence, and paragraphs.	
	Skills Assessed	Ability to write an introduction with a thesis Ability to make logical arguments and defend them Ability to correctly use paragraphs to structure and organize writing Ability to create and use an outline	
	Criteria for Success	Rough draft includes an introduction with a thesis, paragraphs, and evidence.	
		Instructional Strategies (flexible, depending on student need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Workshop on introductions with thesis statements •Workshop on paragraphs using online paragraph resources •Workshop on argumentative writing using tutorial from Colorado State University •Workshop on outlining •Structured outline provided for struggling students •Teach guided analysis of persuasive writing of Abigail Adams and Patrick Henry
Mini-task	Individual/Group	Revise and edit your rough draft. Create a clear, correctly formatted final draft of your letter to your Congressperson.	
	Skills Assessed	Ability to revise for clarity and precision Ability to correctly use a business letter format and standard font and font size	
	Criteria for Success	Final draft is correctly formatted, with appropriate spelling, grammar, and usage.	
		Instructional Strategies (flexible, depending on student need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Peer revision/editing, looking at spelling, grammar, usage, and format •Round Robin share of letters •Consensus around best sections/letters to use in campaign
Mini-task	Group	Create a website that outlines your position, provides evidence, and outlines the specifics of your grassroots campaign.	
	Skills Assessed	Ability to describe the events leading up to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as the effects of the documents' ratification and lasting importance Ability to describe the basic principles of the Constitution Ability to describe and apply the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights Ability to describe the decisions in at least two landmark Supreme Court cases and how they relate to a current law Ability to describe the process by which a bill becomes a law Ability to organize information logically in a variety of genres Ability to compare and contrast historical thinking with contemporary thought and ideas Ability to choose and use appropriate data Ability to create, format, and annotate a list of appropriate resources Ability to use images and text to communicate clearly to an audience Ability to describe how technological tools such as social media can facilitate the democratic process	
	Criteria for Success	Website is organized, and includes a clear and thorough discussion of historical context for contemporary democratic process, and a clear argument for or against a particular law, with evidence. Website includes images and text that clearly communicate message and specific steps for taking action, including using social media to enter democratic process.	

		Instructional Strategies (flexible, based on student needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Analyze models of other websites arguing for or against a particular cause •Compare/contrast matrices for comparing and contrasting historical thought and contemporary ideas •Design workshop on appropriate website design (including graphic design) •Peer evaluation according to project rubric
Mini-task	Group	Complete a group folder (a collection in Google Docs), that includes your group contract, task list, and notes from group meetings.	
	Skill Assessed	Ability to use various strategies to delegate and divide tasks among group members and check for completion	
	Criteria for Success	Group contract includes series of steps in order to hold group members accountable, with evidence of use of steps in notes. Task list divides tasks fairly and includes notes on completion and timeliness.	
		Instructional Strategies (flexible, depending on student need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Team-building sessions •Peer-collaboration assessments using collaboration rubric •Group meetings with teacher to review contract and notes •Workshops on ideal team meetings •Group role divisions, with one member tasked with maintaining group folder •Structured, teacher provided task lists for struggling groups

Section 4: What Results?

STUDENT WORK SAMPLES