

Lesson Plan Opportunities with CITIZEN

Need: A non-partisan, research-based foundation that merges civics and history learning, and provides a unique, engaging, interactive platform that stimulates interest, inquiry, discovery, understanding, and self-identification as an active participant in Democracy.

A recognized public school civics curriculum leader from one of our country’s largest public school systems spent the recent holiday season playing and studying CITIZEN, and declared it “about as close as you can get to the real thing” in modeling the mechanisms and forces at work in our Legislative process.

CITIZEN content aligns with NCSS themes and standards, as described in the “Educators” tab at citizenthegame.com. CITIZEN’s format meets students where they live, and offers educators significant return on investment as the basis for countless engaging lesson plans and extracurricular opportunities.

Application: Teachers can simplify the game for classroom use by building sequential lessons around the different component elements, integrating them one by one, followed by full play at conclusion (teams and variations are described in the Citizen rule book).

Dissecting and investigating the legislative branch components separately before putting them together for play puts theory into action, and creates a rich, fact-based understanding and critical conversations about the entities and forces at work in the Legislative branch, how they interact, and how as Citizens we can find truth, engage our rights, and exert influence on the process.

“CITIZEN is an outstanding tool that leads to deeper student understanding of how Congress works, where influence is exerted, and the dynamics of power. Every classroom needs to be utilizing this resource!”

Randell Trammell
*CEO, Georgia Center
for Civic Engagement*

THEMES FOR LESSON OPPORTUNITIES

Aligning with CITIZEN card categories

I. Congress Cards (House and Senate)

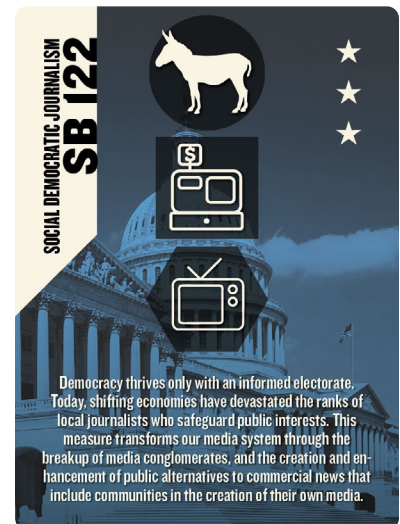
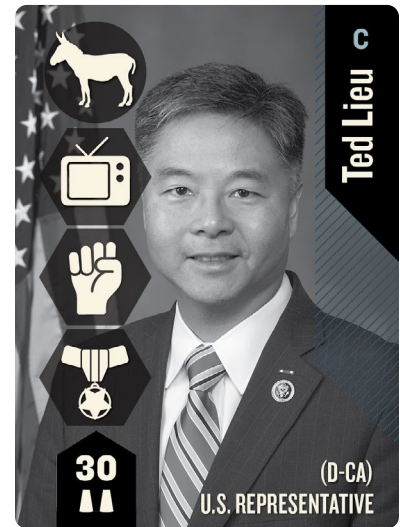
Using the House and Senate decks, students can:

- **Compare and contrast the partisan divide.** What percentage of each chamber votes in a purely partisan way? How does partisanship vary between the Senate and the House? What does this mean for passing laws? Where can you go to discover a member's voting record, seniority, or the industries that supported a member's campaign? How does the impact of today's partisanship and campaign finance compare to earlier congresses?
- **Experience the impact of campaign finance.** What is the relationship between a member's voting behavior and the industries that support her/his election campaigns? How does industry support change from state to state, and House vs. Senate? What are the biggest industries influencing Congress now, and how does that align with our country's big issues? (healthcare/drug costs, student loans, military spending, guns, library censorship, etc.) Where can you go to find accurate campaign finance information?
- **Explore the formation of caucuses.** Students can understand the makeup of each chamber by partisanship, industries of common support or opposition, geography, and seniority to visualize the human beings we have elected, where they fit in the Congressional whole, and how the information for each member demonstrates their power as representatives and their political behavior as legislators. Where can you find out about your Congress members' seniority and influence within Congress?
- **Bring the exploration home.** Students can choose a representative from their own state, do the investigation, and make a research-based card for that representative.

2. Cause Cards

Students can use the Cause card deck to:

- **Explore the pro/con arguments of more than 30 different contemporary issues,** and better understand the history, partisanship, industry, and issue implications of each. Where can students go to learn more about the industries and issues presented in the Cause card library?



- **Students can create their own Cause card** by choosing an issue that matters to them and investigating the facts needed to formulate the research and appropriate impact for their card. How many members are likely to support or oppose your Cause? Why?

Simplified Play Option: Congress in a Vacuum

Students can choose Causes of interest, and take turns at the game board turning over Congress cards in the appropriate chambers to see how many naturally occurring YEA and NAY votes exist for the Causes they play. Players will learn that some Causes are more difficult to pass than others, as Causes that disrupt major contributing industries or that express partisan positions will be the most difficult to pass in a Congress that is insulated from outside influence.

3. Citizen Cards

Citizen cards represent a wide variety of outside forces (people, groups, events, tactics, and traditions) that exert influence over legislative outcomes. The Citizen card deck allows students the opportunity to:

- **Engage lesson opportunities for inquiry, discussion, and inductive reasoning.** In addition to Partisanship, Citizen cards also engage and personify solid, researched examples of the dynamics across the general categories of *Commerce, Governance, Defense, and the rights of the people*.
- **Lessons can be crafted around the interactions between all four of these categories**, i.e.: the ongoing tug of war between corporate rights granted in our society vs. our Constitutional rights as Citizens, the demands and tradeoffs of maintaining the world's most powerful military force, and the Constitutional systems in place for governing ourselves.
- **Pro/con examples of powerful industries and issues** for timely investigation and discussion include:

Education

Gun Rights

Human Rights

Justice

Privacy

Religion

Free Speech

Agriculture

Banking

Fossil Fuel and Environment

Healthcare

Legal Industry

Media

Pharmaceutical

Military Deployment

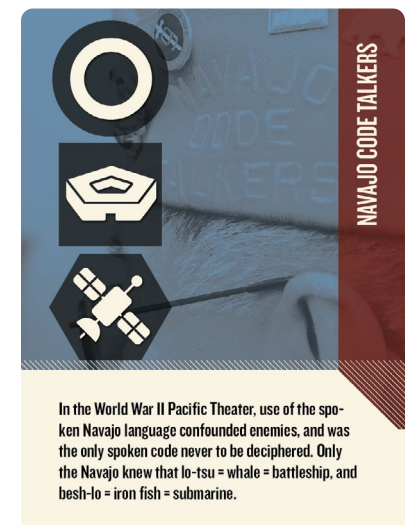
Enlistment

Globalization

Intelligence

Military Contractors

Nuclear Weapons



Veterans Affairs

Elections and Campaign Finance

Political Ethics

Executive Authority

Immigration

Lobbying

Congressional Power and Privilege

Government Transparency

- **Students can research their own examples** of the issues and industries presented in the Citizen card library. What sources did they consult for their information? How do they defend its accuracy? Putting the language in play: how can a student create and defend the impact (icons) they've chosen for their card?

Simplified Play Option: Issues and Industries

Students can sort the Citizen card deck by the Topic position to discover and learn more about people, groups, and events that played a role in how that issue or industry exists in the U.S. today. This exercise also demonstrates the formation of coalitions, common interests, and opposition across our history. How do coalitions form? How can commonalities build community? Who have been history's standard bearers for the issue being explored? Who will carry on the work of shaping these issues in the future?

4. Citizen "Power" Cards

Citizen Power cards represent multiple forms of tactics that can be used to increase leverage over an outcome, including those of ethical and more dubious nature.


- **Power cards can be arranged by type and impact**, and used to demonstrate evolution over time on topics ranging from founder intent vs. modern day, the importance and responsibility of citizens' access to facts, how Yellow Journalism has evolved into "Fake News", the role of legislative tools (Closed Rule, Clean Bill, Veto), and the power of an Amendment
- Students can group Power cards by type for lessons, discussion and investigation about commonality, ethics, founding principles, and common manipulative tactics.

5. Circumstance Cards

Circumstance cards contain real life examples of unexpected and uncontrollable events that changed the course of our legislative process.

- **Students can research the event depicted on each card** to understand the long-term implication of the event. (What happens to the bill that expands drilling rights if there's a major oil spill? What happens to a party's power after a major scandal? What happens to our military spending if Russia threatens to invade a neighbor?)
- What are other examples of disruptive major events? How would a student investigate the event and its impact? What other Circumstance cards can students create?


L2



THE FOURTH ESTATE
GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY

Peabody was a Georgia businessman who made his fortune in the railroad business. He devoted his later life to promoting African-American education in the South. Today, his name can be found on one of journalism's most prestigious awards.

This Power card can be played with a LEVEL 2 hand or higher to earn the next highest impact level.



3V

4V

A CURE FOR POLIO

Thousands of American children were becoming infected with polio. In 1955, Dr. Jonas Salk introduced his vaccine for the polio virus. Salk refused profits from the vaccine, to encourage its wide use.

6. Integration

Integration brings all the pieces together in a dynamic and engaging way. After students experience the concepts of each group of forces (the various card types), game play offers a vivid demonstration of how the pieces fit together and influence each other, with a focus on how engaged citizens can influence our governing process.

Full game play reveals a stimulating “theory into action” set of decision making options unavailable in a text book (advance or hinder, ethical choices, alliance building, and more), that demonstrate the main concept that CITIZEN was created to advance - **Democracy is not a spectator sport!**