

Lessons, activities, and resources for grades 9 – 12

New Hampshire's public high schools have a two-credit civic education graduation requirement, as well as the enormous responsibility to help students develop the skills and knowledge essential for their vital role as citizens. Individual districts have utilized a variety of course selections to meet this requirement, most commonly either creating a one semester course dedicated to civics, or embedding the civics competencies within existing U.S. History courses. Current and engaging resources are essential to adequately address these competencies in any academic setting. The following list includes excellent up to date resources that are available, most often free of charge, to help in this important mission.

American Presidency Project

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu> This website features primary documents on all aspects of the American presidency, including a searchable database of executive orders, transcripts of inaugural addresses, and presidential papers.

Bill of Rights Institute

<http://billofrightsinstitute.org> Educator and student resources at this site consist of a multitude of primary source documents, an "Americapedia" which includes a list of civic values with concise definitions and connections to related topics, interactive games, short explanatory videos, and Smartboard lessons. The Bill of Rights Institute sponsors a "We the Students" Scholarship Contest in the Fall and offers support for interested teachers and students, as well as ongoing professional development workshops in several cities, including Boston.

Center on Congress at Indiana University

<http://www.centeroncongress.org> An excellent website featuring six interactive lessons listed as "elearning modules," appropriate for grades 7-12, as well as a weekly review of legislation before Congress: www.theweekincongress.com

C-SPAN Classroom

<http://www.c-spanclassroom.org> This website provides lesson plans as well as audio and video clips on topics related to the United States government, its structure, and its history. Teachers must register to access the resources and links to oral history interviews with past presidents, Supreme Court oral arguments, and an interactive Supreme Court timeline.

Dream of a Nation

<http://dreamofanation.org> High school teachers can sign up to get free digital resources including essays and lessons with worksheets and project ideas at tjos website.

Harlan Institute

<http://harlaninstitute.org> A Supreme Court "Fantasy League" for high school

students is available through this website, which also features lesson plans about cases pending before the high court.

icivics:Teacher this way!

<http://www.icivics.org/teachers> Enter this site through the "Teacher this Way!" portal to make the best use of the site. Grade 9-12 teachers can choose their state, course or topic, and grade to narrow down the extensive lesson plans available. Interactive games and well-designed Web Quests will engage students in some compelling learning modules. Go back to the home page to access "Drafting Board" a powerful interactive tool that leads students through the process of developing a clearly argued persuasive essay on a variety of Social Studies topics. Get the most out of this site by creating a log in for your class.

Living Room Candidate

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org> Interactive lesson plans at this site coordinate with a collection of videos of political campaign advertisements from 1952-present. The resources provide opportunities for students to compare and analyze campaign advertising trends over time.

National Archives

<http://www.archives.gov> Docs Teach: a series of lesson plans that use primary sources to teach about different periods of U.S. history and the Constitution. This site also provides links to state and regional primary sources and presidential libraries, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers.

National Center for State Courts

<http://www.ncsc.org/services-and-experts/public-outreach-tools.aspx> A series of three graphic novels to educate the public and students about how the courts work and their role in a democratic society. The novels address internet piracy, stolen identity, and jury duty. They may be downloaded online, or are available for purchase with accompanying lesson plans.

OYEZ

<http://www.oyez.org> Recordings, written summaries, and a searchable database of Supreme Court cases since 1955 are available through this site, which provides the tools for high school students to do primary research and for teachers to gather concise information for teaching American case law.

Rock the Vote: Democracy Day

<http://democracyday.com> This site would be most useful in the weeks leading up to an election. The videos and lessons focus on voter registration and the importance of voting. Teachers should preview videos for language and content.

New York Times Learning Network: Civics

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/?s=civics> A collection of current and past *New York Times* articles with comprehensive lessons plans is available at this website. Useful for adding Common Core "informational text" to the high school Social Studies curriculum.

Street Law

<http://www.streetlaw.org/en/home> A resource library includes more than 200 free resources that can be narrowed by type, subject and audience. Many of the resources would appeal to high school students because of their interactivity and the inclusion of podcasts and YouTube videos; an excellent starting point for research projects.

Sunnylands Classroom

<http://www.sunnylandsclassroom.org> This site hosts a multimedia curriculum on the Constitution that includes award-winning documentaries, videos featuring Supreme Court justices, interactive games, and downloadable books. Many of the materials have been close-captioned in 14 languages.

Take Part: Civics in a Minute

<http://www.takepart.com/video-series/civics-minute> Ten short videos explaining everything from the electoral college, to the primary system, to what actually happens at a political convention. The videos are amusing and irreverent and informative. Teachers should be aware that there is advertising before each video and also a direct connection to the other content at Take Part news. Take Part's mission is "To inspire and accelerate social change by connecting content to social action."

US Courts

<http://www.uscourts.gov/EducationalResources.aspx> Court literacy is the focus of this website, which features free, downloadable, in-depth resources to help students understand how the courts work, key constitutional amendments, legal concepts, and more. *Classrooms to Courtrooms* provides teen-relevant scenarios to stage in class, as well as in-court simulations of trials with accompanying scripts. *You Be the Supreme Court* features materials for simulating Supreme Court deliberations.