

Utah's Executive Branch

Summary

Enduring Understanding:

Students will understand the need for and function of Utah's Executive Branch of government.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the "Executive Branch" of Utah's government?
2. Who and what departments are in the Executive Branch of Utah's government?
3. What is the purpose for having an Executive Branch in Utah's government?

Instructional Procedures

Adapted from the New York Times Learning Network

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Grade: 7

Subjects: Utah Studies, Government

Overview of Lesson Plan: In this lesson, students learn about the departments within the executive branch of the Utah state government and create a trivia game to test their knowledge.

Suggested Time Allowance: 1 hour

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Research and analyze the different departments within the executive branch of Utah's government.
2. Develop thoughtful questions and answers about their researched governmental departments to be used in a class trivia game.

Resources/ Materials:

-slips of paper or index cards, each with one of the following people or Utah state government departments written on it: governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, state treasurer, state auditor, Department of Agriculture and Food, Department of Alcohol Beverage Control, Department of Commerce, Department of Community and Economic Development, Department of Corrections, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of General Services, Department of Health, Department of Human Resource Management, Department of Human Services, Department of Insurance, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation, and Department of Workforce Services.

-tape

-student journals

-pens/pencils

-paper

-classroom blackboard

-resources about Utah state government departments and agencies (computers with Internet access, Utah Studies textbooks, periodicals, library resources, etc.)

-5x7" index cards (three per student)

Activities/ Procedures

1. WARM-UP/DO NOW: Prior to class, create a chart with the heading "Executive Branch" on the board. Upon entering the classroom, have each student select at random a slip of paper with a Utah state government-related person or a state governmental department written on it. Then, one at a time, have students write below each name or title what that person or department does and tape their slip of paper underneath the "Executive Branch" heading. Students should explain the reasons behind their decision to the class. Immediately speak about misconceptions. Once all students have completed this task, as a class, discuss the following: What is the main role of the Executive Branch

of Utah's government? Are there any people and departments that seems to overlap between or among other branches of Utah's government?

2. Explain that students will be working in groups to investigate the departments within the executive branch and then develop a trivia game. Divide students into fourteen equal groups and assign them to the following topics:

Group 1: Department of Agriculture and Food

Group 2: Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

Group 3: Department of Commerce

Group 4: Department of Community and Economic Development

Group 5: Department of Corrections

Group 6: Department of Environmental Quality

Group 7: Department of General Services

Group 8: Department of Health

Group 9: Department of Human Resource Management

Group 10: Department of Insurance

Group 11: Department of Natural Resources

Group 12: Department of Public Safety

Group 13: Department of Transportation

Group 14: Department of Workforce Services

Using all available resources, students research answers to the following questions (written on the board for easier student access)

-When was the department formed?

-Who was governor at the time?

-Why was this department developed?

-What are the major functions of this department?

-How have these functions changed, lessened or expanded over time?

-Who is in charge of the department?

-What agencies or sub-departments are included in this part of Utah's state government?

Students should include any interesting information to help the class understand the development of this department within the context of Utah's history and remember the value that this department adds to our state government.

3. WRAP-UP/HOMEWORK: Using research gathered in class, students will create game cards with questions and answers to develop a trivia game entitled "Executive Branch" to be played in a future class. Each student in the group will receive three large index cards and is responsible for creating nine questions and answers. Each card represents the level of difficulty for the question, such as "Easy," "Moderate," and "Difficult." Students should write three questions for each level on the appropriate card. "Easy" questions will be worth 1 point, "Moderate" questions will be worth 2 points, and "Difficult" questions will be worth 3 points. Though students will write their questions and answers independently, they should make sure that their questions are not repeated by other members of the group. Collect the cards and fact-check them. Then, in a future class, divide students into groups of four and allow time for them to answer all of the questions, either with or without research materials available. The team with the most points wins the game. Alternately, the game can be played in "round robin" style by offering a team a topic, allowing a student in that group to determine the level of difficulty, and asking a question. If the student answers correctly, his team gets the points. If not, any other group can "ring in" to answer it.

Further Questions for Discussion; -How does the history of Utah government affect its current organization?

-On what issues do you think Utah's government should focus to deal with our state's future?

Evaluation / Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on participation in class activities, class and group discussions, thoughtful completion of group research, and thoughtful completion of questions for and participation in the "Executive Branch" trivia game.

Authors

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