



Unit 1: Inquiry Guide Activity

Strategy: Engage

Pique students' interest and get them personally involved in the lesson by accessing prior knowledge and generating interest. Engage students' curiosity in the compelling question.

Description

In this lesson, students will use the compelling inquiry question, "Why do we need rules or laws?" to analyze the need for rules or laws through discovery, critical thinking, and evaluation.

Utilize this Engage strategy activity in order to enhance students' understanding of Level 3, Unit 1, Lesson 2 or Level 2, Unit 1, Lesson 2.

Alignments

Center for Civic Education

We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution (Level 3)

- [Unit 1, Lesson 2](#): What Ideas about Civic Life Informed the Founding Generation?

We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution (Level 2)

- [Unit 1, Lesson 2](#): Why Do We Need Government?

Civic Skills & Dispositions

- Active learning
- Critical thinking
- Real-world application
- Social awareness

Lesson Objectives

- Analyze life without rules or laws
- Appraise the need for rules and laws

Lesson Assessments

- Use the [Exit Ticket](#) to answer the compelling question



Inquiry Compelling Question

- Why do we need rules or laws?

Texts / Materials

- [India Driving](#) (Video)
- [See, Think, Wonder](#) (Organizer)
- [Thomas Hobbes and John Locke: Ideas that Informed the American Founders, Part 2](#) (Video)
- [Unit 1 Engage: Caption This](#)
- [Exit Ticket](#)
- *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* textbook

Vocabulary

- **consent of the governed** Agreement by citizens to obey the laws and the government they create. Consent is the source of government's legitimacy.
- **human rights** Basic rights and freedoms said to belong to all people everywhere.
- **natural rights** The idea that people have basic rights, such as those to life, liberty, and property in a state of nature. Some writers, especially those influencing the American Founders, argued that certain of these rights are inalienable—a part of being human—and that people create governments to protect those rights.
- **social contract** An agreement among the people to set up a government and obey its laws.
- **state of nature** A situation where people are living without government. This is also known as anarchy.



Teacher Background

At the core of this lesson, students are given an accessible pathway to analyzing natural rights philosophy. This philosophy begins by imagining what life would be like in a state of nature. A state of nature is any situation in which there is no government—that is, no recognized authority to make and enforce rules and manage conflicts.

Different philosophers had different perspectives on the state of nature, and a few philosophers had a large impact on the Founders and Framers. One of the first was Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes argued that a state of nature was inherently dangerous, and without a strong governing entity, what he called “Leviathan,” there would be perpetual violence, and life would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.” Hobbes thought that people entered into “social contracts” where they gave up their freedoms in exchange for a more peaceful life.

John Locke was another philosopher who had a large impact on the founding generation and how many Americans think about government today. In Locke’s view, all people in a state of nature are “free, equal, and rational.” Each person in a state of nature possesses inalienable rights to “life, liberty, and property.” Importantly, Locke thought that to secure these rights, people in a state of nature enter into a “social contract” to form a kind of civil society. Locke argued that it was the government’s role to protect individual rights.

Consequently, several aspects of natural rights philosophy influenced the founding generation and how Americans typically think about the rule of law and the purpose of government. Students should analyze these different perspectives on the state of nature and natural rights philosophy when engaging in this lesson.

Additional resources for teacher background include the following:

- [John Locke and the State of Nature](#) (Video)
- [Thomas Hobbes and “Leviathan:” Ideas that Informed the American Founders, Part 25](#) (Video)
- [The Social Contract](#) (Video)

In this lesson, students will investigate the philosophical ideas behind the state of nature and our individual rights. Teachers should preview all student materials and resources prior to the lesson.



Steps to Implement

1. Welcome students to social studies.
2. Introduce the inquiry question: “Why do we need rules or laws?”
3. Allow students time to make a prediction about the inquiry question as well as offer their own supporting questions.
4. Play the video, [India Driving](#).
5. While students are viewing the video clip, ask students to record their observations using the [See, Think, Wonder](#) organizer.
6. Encourage students to share their initial observations.
7. Facilitate a class discussion by asking the following questions:
 - What happens if there are no traffic laws or rules?
 - Possible answers: Cars can drive any way they want, which might cause traffic problems, and someone could get hurt
 - Why is it important to have traffic laws or rules?
 - Possible answers: To protect people and property from getting hurt, public safety
 - Who enforces laws and rules?
 - Possible answers: Police, the military, government, peer pressure, people themselves feel the obligation to do the right thing
 - What happens to those who do not follow laws and rules?
 - Possible answers: People can get fined or punished, serve jail time, lose their license
 - What happens to freedoms when there are no laws and rules?
 - Possible answers: We lose our freedoms, society is in chaos, people could be hurt
8. Play the video [Thomas Hobbes and John Locke: Ideas that Informed the American Founders, Part 2](#). As students watch, they should listen for one idea from Hobbes and one idea from Locke.
9. Play the video a second time to support comprehension as needed.
10. Allow time for students to share the Hobbes and Locke ideas they learned from the video.
11. Display [Unit 1 Engage: Caption This](#) and provide each student with a sticky note.
12. Working in trio teams, have students create a caption for the cartoon and post on board. You might ask students to phrase their captions as questions. An example of such a caption might be as follows: “How might individuals protect their natural rights in a state of nature?”
13. Allow time for students to view each others’ captions.
14. Students will complete the [Exit Ticket](#) to answer today’s inquiry question: “Why do we need rules or laws?”



Formative Assessment

Students will demonstrate mastery of the need for rules and laws by completing the [Exit Ticket](#) to answer today's inquiry question: "Why do we need rules or laws?"

Alternative Lesson Seeds

Additional class discussion questions may include:

- What would life be like if there were no government, rules, or controls?
- Would people have rights and duties?
- How would rights and duties be enforced?
- Why might people choose to trade some of their freedom to live in society or form a government?