Overview
In this lesson, students will discuss what they think life would be like in a state of nature and examine reasons why there is a need for government. They will explore the idea of “natural rights” and discuss how the Founders incorporated rights into the US Constitution. Finally, students will learn about various forms of government and develop and defend their own form of government through a simulation exercise that places them in a state of nature.

Grade
10

North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Civics and Economics
- CE.C&G.1.2 - Explain how the Enlightenment and other contributing theories impacted the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights to help promote liberty, justice and equality (e.g., natural rights, classical theories of government, Magna Carta, Montesquieu, Locke, English Bill of Rights, etc.).
- CE.C&G.1.4 - Analyze the principles and ideals underlying American democracy in terms of how they promote freedom (i.e. separation of powers, rule of law, limited government, democracy, consent of the governed / individual rights – life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, self-government, representative democracy, equal opportunity, equal protection under the law, diversity, patriotism, etc.

Essential Questions
- What is the state of nature?
- What are advantages and disadvantages of living in a state of nature?
- What are natural rights, and where do they come from?
- Which rights do Americans hold most dear?
- What does the “ideal” government look like?
- To what extent should citizens be involved in government?

Materials
- “Forming a Government” activity sheet, attached
- “Forms of Government” handout, attached
- Copy of US Bill of Rights, attached
- Optional Bill of Rights and Law templates, attached

Duration
60-90 minutes

Procedure
“State of Nature” v. Government
1. As a warm-up, ask students to imagine what life would be like without a government. Explain that political theorists call such a scenario the “state of nature.” Individually or in small groups, have students consider the following questions:
   - Do you think life in the state of nature would be bad or good? Why?
   - What might the advantages be to living in a state of nature?
   - What might the disadvantages be?
   - What “natural rights” do people have in the state of nature? What might happen to these rights?

**Natural Rights & the Bill of Rights**

2. Facilitate discussion based on these questions. Note possible disadvantages of living in a state of nature: stronger or smarter people might take away other peoples’ lives, liberty, and property, or weaker people might band together and take away the lives, liberty, and property of stronger or smarter people. Also note advantages: people have unlimited freedom to do whatever they please. Discuss “natural rights.” Ask students what rights they think all people should have. Explain that rights to life, liberty, and property are the natural rights the Founders had in mind when creating American government. Note that many of the Founders believed people received these natural rights from God, while others believed that people had natural rights just because they are human. Discuss:
   - Why do you think the issue of rights were so important to the Framers?
   - In what ways is the issue of individual rights fundamental to American government? What examples can you note that evidences this?

3. Distribute and read the attached US Bill of Rights as a class (or refer students to a copy in their textbook.) Ask students how the Bill of Rights applies in real-life scenarios. Have them assess the importance of the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights and consider which they think are the most important. Finally ask students if they think certain rights are missing.

4. Explain that John Locke, whose political philosophy is the foundation of American government, considered the question of rights and came to the conclusion that it is in everyone’s best interest to give up some of the freedom they would have in the state of nature in exchange for protection and security. He believed that government was necessary in order to protect peoples’ natural rights. Ask students if they agree and discuss their thoughts. Explain that while this sentiment is generally agreed upon, people have differing ideas as to how peoples’ rights should be protected—hence the various forms of government.

**Forms of Government**

5. Ask students to think of different types of government, whether by name or description. Write types on the board as students come up with them. When they have exhausted their knowledge, distribute the “Forms of Government” handout. Read through each form of government as a class, discussing some of the merits and pitfalls of each. Make connections to real world governments (i.e. America as a Republic, the UK as a Limited Monarchy, Cuba as a dictatorship, etc.)

**Forming Your Own Government**

6. Divide students into groups of three. Distribute the “Forming a Government” activity sheet. Read the directions as a class. Have groups self-select a manager, recorder, and reporter. Managers are responsible for facilitating group discussion and keeping the group on track. Recorders are responsible for anything that needs to be written down. Reporters are responsible for presenting the
group’s work to the class. In groups, students will have to defend their governments. Stress the importance of compromise while working in groups. Explain that when governments form, at least at the beginning, consent and compromise is required. Groups who finish early can be provided with art supplies and poster board and instructed to create a visual for their work.

7. After students have had ample time to “form” governments, ask group reporters to present. Each question on the “Forming a Government” activity sheet should be answered in the presentation. After each presentation, open the floor for questions. Any member of the group (not just the reporter) can field questions. Examples of questions students or the teacher might ask are:
   - What does your form of government imply about human nature?
   - Is your government fair? Explain.
   - Why does your government not have a right regarding ________________________?
   - What problems might arise due to the form of authority you chose? (i.e. is revolution likely?)
   - Why do you have X law instead of Y?
   - Is civic engagement important under your government?
   - What could you add to your Bill of Rights?

**Culminating Activity**
- Present groups with new sets of facts or influences (i.e. outside aggression, immigration, revolution) and have them explain how their governments would respond.
Different Forms of Government

**Absolute Monarchy**: A government ruled by a king or queen whose power is not limited by any laws or other bodies of government.

**Anarchy**: A government where no authority exists.

**Aristocracy**: A government in which power rests in the hands of the upper class.

**Autocracy**: A government in which power is rested in the hands of a single individual, such as an emperor or king.

**Democracy**: A form of government in which the people rule by voting or voicing their opinions.

**Dictatorship**: A model of government in which the ruling party has no restrictions. Their word is law.

**Limited/Constitutional Monarchy**: Monarchy in which the king or queen must behave according to certain laws and usually shares power with other branches of government.

**Oligarchy**: A government in which power is in the hands of a small group of people. The group makes laws and other decisions.

**Republic**: A form of government in which the people elect representatives to vote on matters for them.

**Theocracy**: Government based on religion.

**Totalitarianism**: The state is considered more important that individuals. Therefore, nearly every aspect of society is controlled by the government.
Scenario: Imagine finding yourself on a lush, deserted island along with the rest of the students in your school. After a few weeks, it becomes clear that there is absolutely no chance of ever being rescued. It is quickly becoming clear that the lack of rules is creating tension among the island’s new inhabitants. You decide that a government is needed in order to secure peoples’ rights.

Directions: Consider your situation and the various forms of government discussed earlier in class. You are responsible for deciding what kind of government is best for the island. In doing so, you will need to consider the questions below. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class and defend your form of government. This means you will need to discuss within your group possible problems that might arise after your government is in place.

Grades will be based on your group’s presentation and defense of government (be sure to answer all “Questions for Consideration” in your presentation) and a written Constitution that you will turn in. The Constitution must include a “Bill of Rights” with 5 fundamental rights your government will protect, as well as 10 laws to keep peoples’ rights from being violated. (For the purposes of this activity, please develop a government that gives citizens some fundamental rights.)

Questions for Consideration:

1. What kind of authority figure(s) will your government have? (i.e. which form of government will yours be modeled after?)
2. How will you decide who has authority? (i.e. voting by all citizens, voting by elites, primogeniture, self-appointed and defended, etc.)
3. What will “authority” be responsible for?
4. What rights will your government be responsible for protecting? Think of at least 5 fundamental rights. (You may refer to the U.S. Bill of Rights to help you decide.)
5. What laws will your government have to protect rights? Think of at least 10 laws. In doing so, consider laws that will uphold your government’s fundamental rights (for example, will there be laws that control citizens, as well as laws that limit authority?) How will violators of laws be tried (if at all) and punished?
6. Will citizens be involved in government? If so, to what extent?
7. What responsibilities will citizens have?
8. What possible problems might arise in your form of government?
THE BILL OF RIGHTS
Amendments 1-10 of the Constitution

The Conventions of a number of the States having, at the time of adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added, and as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government will best insure the beneficent ends of its institution;

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two-thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States; all or any of which articles, when ratified by three-fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the said Constitution, namely:

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.
Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.