

The Many Uses of Government Documents

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Did you know that government documents are an excellent resource to use in the classroom? You can build a new relationship right in your community with the local school district. Try working with a school librarian or a teacher to create some new lesson plans. Here are some suggestions to use:

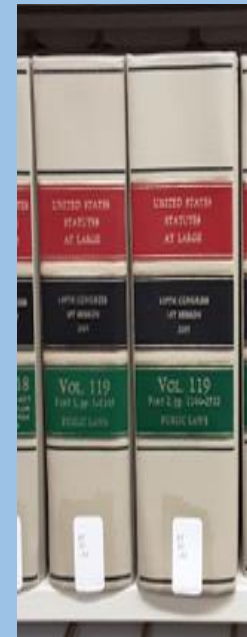


Grades 6-8

- **Design your own government building:** After teaching the students about architecture, show them the various building and room brochures. Then have the students design a room on their own that they would like to see a part of the government use. (VA 6-8 #1, VA 6-8 #11)
- **Create your own Bill:** Using Ben's Guide to teach the students about bills and use the Statutes at Large to show what bills look like. Have the students break into small groups and then pick whether they want to be Democrat or Republican. Using the statutes as a guide, the students will write their own statutes. To make it interesting, they can debate them as a group. When finished, you can bind their laws into a book for the classroom. (SS.CG.6-8.2, SS.CG.6-8.7)

Tips for the lessons...

- **Make them engaging:** let the students be able to interact with resources and each other.
- **Make them original:** allow students to make the final product their own. Allow for adaption and freedom.
- **Be enthusiastic:** If you are excited about the lessons, then so will the students. Don't overdo the enthusiasm though!
- **Make them relevant:** be sure to let the students know why they are doing this lesson and how it will affect them in real life.



Grades K-5

- Using Ben's Guide and a projector/smartboard, teachers teach a lesson and have the students underline or highlight specific words/phrases to show their answers. (SS.CG.K.1 and SS.H.2.2)
- Place the State Game: Using Ben's Guide, have the students move the state into the correct spot on the map and then have the students draw the outline of the state. (SS.G.5.1)
- Virtual Tour of the Government: Using the building pamphlets, show the students the various rooms and buildings around the government. Follow up with YouTube videos for the full tour. (SS.CG.3.3)

Grades 9-12

- **Comparing Presidents:** Using the Presidential Papers, have the students choose two presidents from different time periods. Have the students write the similarities/differences in language, topic, recipient, etc. (WHST.9-10.7, SS.H.9-12.3)
- **Being a Supreme Court Justice:** Using the Supreme Court Reports, have the students break up into 4 groups (justices, observers, and two opposing councils). Have the students either pick a current, relevant issue, or pick one for the students. The students will research their side of the issue and then debate as at an oral argument. The justices will pick the side that presented their case best and observers will comment. (SS.CG.9-12-12, SS.CG.9-12.2)

Disclaimer: These are only suggestions, please feel free to change them or adapt them. Also, any standards listed are Montana based and may change based on location. (SS= Social Studies, CG= Civics and Government, H= History, VA= Visual Arts)