



Lesson 18.23 “Follow That Bill!”

Unit 18: Civics and Government Today

Lesson Objectives

- Students will be able to identify the steps for an idea to become a bill to become a law.
- Students will practice these core steps of the process through a board game.
- Students will reflect about existing laws and how they, as citizens, would change them and propose in writing how they could contact the appropriate legislator with a proposal.

Lesson Competencies

- I can identify, explain, and analyze the core civic practices and foundational principles that guide governments and communities. (Moose SS)
- I can analyze, interpret, evaluate, and use information delivered orally or visually. (ELA 7)
- I can locate and integrate relevant and credible information from multiple reference sources into my text (e.g., factual evidence, varying perspectives, conflicting information). (ELA 5)

Essential Questions

How have New Hampshire’s people shaped its government?

Focus Questions

What are the responsibilities of federal, state, and local government?

How do people act as good citizens in a democracy?

Estimated Time

One 45-minute class session

Materials & Equipment

Video: [“Mason Explains: How a Bill Becomes a Law”](#)
“Follow That Bill” game squares for printing or projecting
Scissors and markers for making game pieces
Six-sided game die



Educator Introduction & Rationale

In New Hampshire, the legislative branch is called the General Court. The N.H. General Court is known as a citizen legislature because the people who serve are not professional politicians. The General Court is divided into two parts: the N.H. House of Representatives and the N.H. Senate. The N.H. House of Representatives has 400 people in it. Each town is allotted a certain number of representatives based on the size of its population. With 400 representatives, the N.H. House is the second largest representative body in the United States; only the U.S. House of Representatives is larger. Representatives are elected every two years. The N.H. Senate has just 24 senators, making it one of the smallest state senates in America. The state is divided into 24 senate districts, and one senator serves for each district. Senators are elected every two years, just like representatives.

This is the twelfth lesson for middle school students in Unit 18: Civics and Government Today. It is recommended that students complete the learning objectives in "Lesson 18.3: Federal and State Governments" in order to have the necessary background information about the three branches of government.

In this lesson, students focus the process by which legislators transform ideas into bills and bills into laws. An activation about what makes a good law opens the learning activity and sets the foundation for the guided practice activity. A board game simulating the process of creating and passing legislation helps small groups of students engage with the complicated twists and turns of the legislators' work. The lesson closes with an extension activity for students who are ready to contact their state legislators about their ideas for New Hampshire laws. Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom. Please note, lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of the document. You may wish to preview these with your students.

Before the Learning Activity

Student reading and comprehension questions

Who makes the laws for New Hampshire? Have students watch [Mason Explains: How a Bill Becomes a Law](#). The information provided in this video will give students essential information on the process of ideas citizen have becoming laws in both the federal and state governments. Students should come to the learning activity with answers to these two questions:

1. What is the order of events for a bill to become a law?
2. What are the places in the process where the bills can fail to become law?

Learning Activity

Actuation

What makes a good law? Have students discuss in small groups or pairs what ideas they have for laws we should have in New Hampshire. Invite them to consider why people might oppose this law and what changes they could make to their idea to make it more appealing. Ask them to take brief notes on their discussion, as they will need these ideas for the Guided Practice activity.

Direct Instruction

How often do ideas become laws? Tell students that:

- Ideas are proposed to legislators all of the time, sometimes people agree and can sponsor the bill, other times they never make it past the “idea” phase.
- Throughout the process, many changes are made as people ask questions and challenge ideas. Often the law that ultimately is signed by the governor is very different than the original idea!
- To demonstrate how often bills are presented to the legislature, you can use the voting record search tool. For example, the voting record for 2025 sessions can be found [here](#).

Guided Practice

Legislation game. The journey an idea takes to become a law is complicated. Most ideas never become laws. Build the board to play “Follow That Bill!” in small groups to develop an understanding of the legislative process and the obstacles legislators need to navigate.

Students begin by cutting out the board game pieces and putting the events in order. Alternatively, the board could be assembled ahead of time, or the answer key/example board can be used to play the game.

Be sure to read the rules together ahead of time and have each student come up with an idea for a new law for their game piece.

Teaching tip: Project the answer key game board on a whiteboard. Attach the game pieces to magnets to move them around the board for a whole group experience.



Extension

What would you change? A lot of work legislators do involves making changes to existing laws.

Ask students to research outdated laws in New Hampshire they think need to be changed. What would they change about it? Or would they want to eliminate it completely? Why? Ask students to write a paragraph detailing the answers to these questions as well as proposing which legislator would be best suited for this topic. Should it be a house representative or a senator? Why?

Help the class decide on one or two outdated existing laws that should be changed to better serve New Hampshire and its citizens. Work together to draft a proposal and send it to the state representative or senator identified to be most affiliated with this area of concern.

Alternatively, legislators have suggested that recommending a day to honor a NH person who has made contributions to the state or nation is a helpful proposal to make.

Supporting Materials

Other

- Laws and Rules at-a-Glance. www.nh.gov/glance/laws-rules.htm

Resources

- Lorenca Consuelo Rosal, *The Liberty Key: The Story of the New Hampshire Constitution* (1986). Inspiration for “Follow That Bill!”

Standards

New Hampshire Social Studies Frameworks:

- ✓ Civics and Governments: Structure and Function of United States and New Hampshire Government (SS:CV:8:2.4)

NCSS Themes:

- ✓ Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- ✓ Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance
- ✓ Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

C3 Frameworks:

- ✓ Civic and Political Institutions (D2.Civ.3.6-8)
- ✓ Processes, Rules, and Laws (D2.Civ.11.6-8)

Common Core ELA:

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details (RH.6-8.3)
- ✓ Craft and Structure (RH.6-8.4, RH.6-8.5)

Lesson Vocabulary

amend	(verb) To revise or change
amendment	(noun) An addition to an existing document; in the U.S. Constitution, the amendments come after the original document
bicameral	(noun) A legislature that has two parts; the U.S. Congress is bicameral because it has the House of Representatives and the Senate
bill	(noun) In government, a draft version of legislation that is under debate and not yet law
branch of government	(noun) A section of government with its own purpose; the U.S. government has three sections of the government with different responsibilities that support each other to create, examine, and enforce laws
citizen legislature	(noun) A group of people chosen or elected to make the laws for a colony or state; different from a common legislature because individuals are paid very little and usually have other jobs
committee	(noun) A group of people who make decisions and plans about a specific topic or issue
deliberative session	(noun) A time to explain, discuss, and debate proposals in government
democracy	(noun) A government ruled by majority vote of the people
General Court	(noun) The official name for the New Hampshire state legislature
government	(noun) A group of people that have the power to make and carry out laws for a community
governor	(noun) The leader of the executive branch of a state government



House of Representatives	(noun) One of two legislative chambers; usually larger than the Senate
law	(noun) A rule that regulates the actions of members of a community
legislative	(adjective) Describing the people or branch of government that makes laws
legislative branch	(noun) The section of government that makes laws
legislator	(noun) A person elected to serve in either the House of Representatives or Senate
legislature	(noun) A group of people chosen or elected to make the laws for a colony or state
Senate	(noun) One of two legislative chambers; usually smaller than the House of Representatives
sponsor	(noun) In government, a member of the House or Senate who officially presents a bill to the legislature
veto	(verb) To reject something; in government, to reject the final version of a bill passed by the legislature