

For Teachers



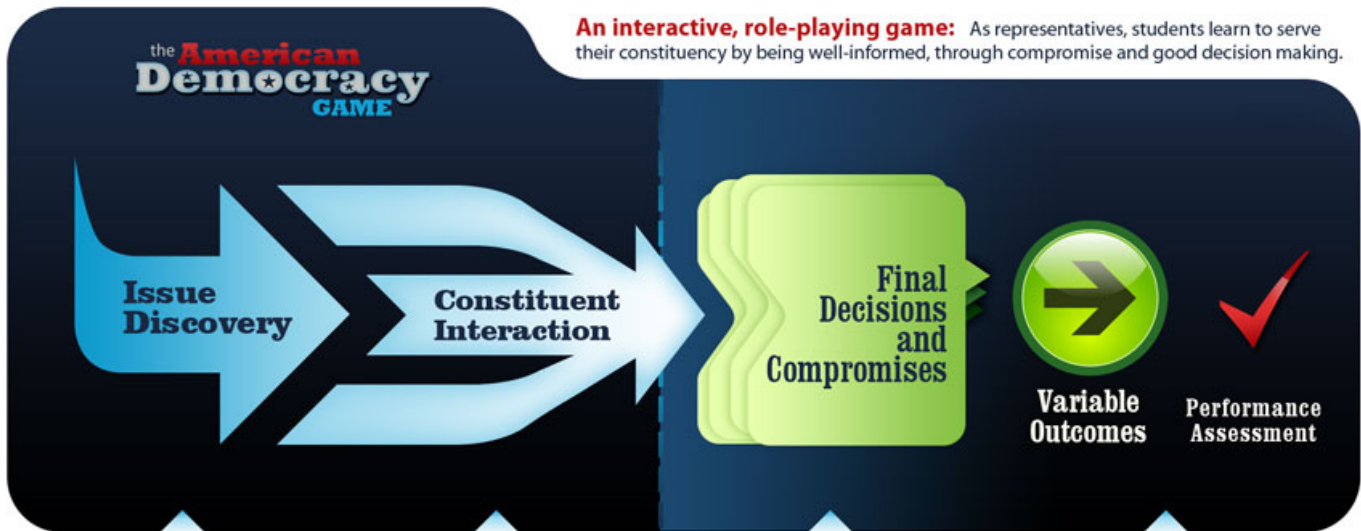
Game Overview:

The American Democracy game was developed by the **National Conference of State Legislatures** to help the public; primarily students in grades 6–8, better understand the workings of representative democracy.

Game Learning Objectives:

- Gain an understanding and appreciation of how our republic or system of representative democracy works.
- Learn how the work of Congress and state legislatures affect people’s lives every day.
- Understand that citizen participation is important and that they have voice in government.
- Learn that legislators care what people (students) think.
- Understand that debate, negotiation and compromise are essential to the lawmaking process and that without compromise, nothing would be accomplished.
- Develop awareness that special interest groups have a legitimate role in the legislative process and represent your interests.
- Understand that legislators are accountable.

About the Game



Users are familiarized with each issue through media presentations, staff, constituent, and colleague interaction. From the start, users can form and record how they are leaning on an issue.

Each level presents multiple chances to hear and respond to constituent concerns and comments through visits, phone calls and even through social media.

Through compromise, debate, and participating in the legislative process, users reach and mark their final vote.

Collected user choices and responses help gauge and determine up to 8 possible outcomes. Users are assessed on their performance which they can share with their teacher and friends.

Level 1 - Community Dog Park



In level one of The American Democracy game, students receive an introduction into the world of representative democracy, including vocabulary such as: "constituent" and "representative". Through game play, learn key concepts, such as: the importance of gathering diverse input, the role of a representative's staff, the importance of communication and professionalism, and the process of compromise.

After being elected to office, the student faces the challenge of dealing with a community issue. The city council of the fictional city of Setterville, is considering a bill to build a local dog park. The student is presented with an overview of the bill and a summary of some potential concerns. The student then gathers as much information as possible to make an informed choice. Three compromise opportunities are presented, and depending on the student's choices, the game unfolds into a multiple scenario experience, where they attend a city council meeting and vote. After the vote, the student finds out whether the bill passes or fails. The student then receives an assessment of their performance as a representative.

Level 1 Classroom Discussion Points:

- How did you feel about receiving two petitions; one from Dougie Barker representing people only in favor of the dog park (otherwise known as the minority) and one from Tanya Teacher and Timmy Learner representing people in favor of a community park, which included a dog park, picnic grounds and playground (otherwise known as the majority)? Did you pick up on the fact that if you chose to support the community park/the majority you actually were supporting all groups (because the people in favor of only the dog park would also get what they wanted)?
- Did anyone play the game on the opposing side of any park? What was that like? If you play the game again, do you think you will try making different choices to see how the outcome can vary?

Level 2 - Mandatory After School Exercise



Level two of the American Democracy game introduces the student to a more challenging issue at the state level of government. In this level a fictional bill has been introduced to increase the school day by one extra hour, so students can participate in mandatory afterschool physical activities. Similar to Level one, the student reviews an overview of the bill and a summary of some potential concerns. The student will then play through experiences, where they will gather information to make an informed choice. The game offers three compromise opportunities, and depending on the student's choices, the game unfolds into a multiple-scenario experience, where players attend a committee meeting and then a vote. After the vote, the student finds out whether the bill passes or fails. The student then receives an assessment of their performance as a representative.

Level 2 Classroom Discussion Points:

- What are the pros and cons of the idea that our state could make a law that would require you to stay at school for an extra hour to do physical activities?
- Did having a celebrity endorsement from Crush Dunkin make you want to support the bill any more or any less?
- Did any of the concerns brought to you by people in the game help to sway your leaning?
- Did anyone play the game on the opposing side of the bill? What was that like? If you play the game again, do you think you will try making different choices to see how the outcome can vary?

Level 2 Classroom Activity

- Find out about a bill that has recently been introduced in your state legislature. Who supports it? Who opposes it? Can you come up with any possible compromises?

The American Democracy Game - In Class Worksheet



You can find the Before and After Worksheet in the files that came with the American Democracy Game Introduction Module, or you can download it from the website at the following link: <http://democracygame.org/worksheet.pdf>.