

## **Unit 7: Government and Citizenship**

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## Legal Status and Citizenship

Vocabulary: Citizen apply vote sponsor  
Right form legal status

There are different types of legal status. Some people are refugees. Other people are immigrants. Some people are permanent residents. Some people are U.S. citizens.

You have a green card. You are a permanent resident. You can apply to be a U.S. citizen. You use the N-400 form to apply. You fill out the N-400 form.

Circle the word. Write the word:

1. There are many types of legal \_\_\_\_\_ (status/jobs).
2. Some people are \_\_\_\_\_ (refugees/mothers).
3. Other people are \_\_\_\_\_ (migrants/immigrants).
4. Some people are permanent \_\_\_\_\_ (residents/presidents).
5. Some people are U.S. \_\_\_\_\_ (born/citizens).
6. You have a green \_\_\_\_\_ (lawn/card).
7. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ (permanent/new) resident.
8. You can \_\_\_\_\_ (register/apply) to be a U.S. citizen.
9. You use the \_\_\_\_\_ (N-400/N-100) form.
10. You \_\_\_\_\_ (fill out/read) the form.

Circle the word that does not fit:

1. immigrant refugee citizen doctor
2. apply fill out right write
3. form paper letter car

Discussion Questions: Are you a citizen? Do you want to be a U.S. citizen? Why or why not?

## Citizen Rights and Responsibilities

Vocabulary:    marry    travel    deported    vote  
Politician    government    benefit    jury

You are not a citizen. You can do many things in the U.S. You can work. You can go to school. You can marry. You can drive a car. You can buy a house. You can pay taxes. You can be deported. You can travel outside of the U.S.

You are a citizen. You can vote. You can be a politician. You can get government benefits. You can sponsor your family to come to the U.S. You can work for the government. You can be on a jury. The right to vote is the most important right of a U.S. citizen.

### You are NOT a citizen. Can you do this?

- |                            |     |    |
|----------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. work                    | Yes | No |
| 2. drive a car             |     |    |
| 3. get government benefits |     |    |
| 4. learn English           |     |    |
| 5. be on a jury            |     |    |
| 6. vote                    |     |    |

### You are a citizen. Can you do this?

1. be deported
2. vote
3. sponsor your family
4. pay taxes
5. be a politician
6. work for the government

Discussion Questions: What can citizens do in your home country? Is it the same or different in the U.S.?

Circle the correct answer.

1. What form do you use to apply for Citizenship?  
a. N-100                      b. N-400                      c. Passport

2. What is a benefit for U.S. citizens?  
a. The right to vote.                      b. The right to work.

Yes or no?

- |                                    |     |    |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Immigrants work.                | Yes | No |
| 2. Citizens pay taxes.             | Yes | No |
| 3. Refugees go to school.          | Yes | No |
| 4. Citizens are deported.          | Yes | No |
| 5. Immigrants vote.                | Yes | No |
| 1. Refugees work.                  | Yes | No |
| 2. Immigrants pay taxes.           | Yes | No |
| 3. Immigrants marry.               | Yes | No |
| 4. Citizens apply for citizenship. | Yes | No |
| 5. Permanent residents vote.       | Yes | No |

Write the verb in present continuous.

Example: He/work.                      He is working.

- |                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. I/vote                      | _____ |
| 2. They/apply/for citizenship. | _____ |
| 3. We/pass/class.              | _____ |
| 4. He/study/test.              | _____ |
| 6. She/fill out/N-400 form     | _____ |

## **The Citizenship Process**

Vocabulary: loyal fingerprints letter  
Interview History ceremony

You apply for U.S. citizenship. You are 18 years old. You live in the U.S. for 5 years. You are loyal to the U.S. You are a good person. You read and write English.

You have to do many things. You fill out the N-400 form. You mail the form. You get a letter from the government. The government takes your fingerprints. The government gives you a date for the Interview. You study English, U.S. history and government. You go to the Citizenship Interview. You answer the questions. You write sentences.

You pass the test. You go to the Citizenship Ceremony. You get a citizenship certificate.

You do not pass the test. You can try again in three months.

***How much does it cost?*** \$325.

***Where can you get help if you want to apply?***

6. Lawyer
7. School
8. Social services
9. Friends or relatives

***How long does it take to become a U.S. Citizen?***

It can take several months.

Sometimes it can be more than two years.

***Does everyone take the citizenship test?***

No. If you are born in the U.S. you never take a citizenship test.

## Der takes the Test

Der Xiong wants to become a United States citizen. She needs to fill out an application, study for the test, and go to the interview. She has to study for the test. She has to learn the 100 Citizenship questions. She studies for a few months before her interview. It's hard to remember everything. She is nervous about the interview. She is not happy. She wants to pass the test.

Der goes to the office for the interview. The woman at the office is not friendly. She doesn't smile. She asks Der thirteen questions. Der doesn't understand one of the questions. She says, "I don't understand. Can you ask a different question?" The woman asks her a different question.

Der has to write a sentence. She has to write about a brown dog. Her hand shakes. Der finishes the sentence. She doesn't know if the test is done. She asks the woman, "Did I pass the test?" The woman says, "Yes, you did! You did very well!" Then Der is very. She gets a letter in the mail. She goes to the Citizenship Ceremony. Now she is a U.S. citizen!

## Comprehension Questions

- |                                       |     |    |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Der was always a U.S. citizen.     | Yes | No |
| 2. She has to apply for citizenship.  | Yes | No |
| 3. It is easy to study for the test.  | Yes | No |
| 4. There are 100 Interview Questions. | Yes | No |
| 5. Der is happy before the interview. | Yes | No |
| 6. She writes a sentence.             | Yes | No |
| 7. Der passes the citizenship test.   | Yes | No |
| 8. Der is a U.S. citizen.             | Yes | No |

## Grammar: Past vs. Present Tense. Write the verb in the past tense.

- To pass
1. She \_\_\_\_\_ the driver test.
  2. He \_\_\_\_\_ the citizenship test.
  3. I \_\_\_\_\_ the class.
  4. The car \_\_\_\_\_ us on the road.

- To fill
1. We \_\_\_\_\_ out this paper.
  2. You \_\_\_\_\_ out the N-400 form.
  3. I \_\_\_\_\_ my prescription.
  4. She \_\_\_\_\_ my glass with water.

- To apply
1. I \_\_\_\_\_ for a job at Rainbow Foods.
  2. She \_\_\_\_\_ to be a U.S. citizen.
  3. He \_\_\_\_\_ to go to college.
  4. We \_\_\_\_\_ for a loan.

Discussion Questions: What did Der do to become a citizen? Do you know someone who took the test? What was it like?

How many syllables?      1      2      3      4

1. citizen	___	___	___	___
2. green card	___	___	___	___
3. vote	___	___	___	___
4. apply	___	___	___	___
5. resident	___	___	___	___
6. N-400	___	___	___	___
7. form	___	___	___	___
8. immigrant	___	___	___	___
9. legal	___	___	___	___

Match the word with the definition.

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Green card ___         | a. The right of a U.S. Citizen    |
| 2. Permanent resident ___ | b. A person who votes.            |
| 3. Citizen ___            | c. The Citizenship form           |
| 4. N-400 form ___         | d. Permanent resident ID.         |
| 5. to vote ___            | e. Can apply for U.S. citizenship |
| 6. Legal status ___       | f. Your official legal identity.  |

Answer the questions. Then ask a partner.

1. *Are you a U.S. citizen?*
2. *Do you vote?*
3. *Do you want to be a U.S. citizen?*
4. *Are you an immigrant?*
5. *Do you have an N-400 form?*
6. *Do you study the 100 questions?*

## Voting

No one votes. What happens?

1. No one votes.
2. Politicians don't know what people want
3. Politicians cannot solve problems
4. We don't solve problems

Everyone votes. What happens?

1. Everyone votes
2. Politicians know what people want
3. Politicians pass laws to help people solve problems
4. We solve problems

Discussion Questions: Do you think it is important to vote? Why or why not?

## Voting and Elections

<u>Vocabulary:</u>	candidate	politician	office
represent	solve	problems	laws

Citizens vote in elections. We vote on Election day. Citizens vote for candidates. The candidates are people who want to be politicians. They run for office. The voters elect a candidate to office. They choose the person they want to represent them.

Politicians represent the citizens. They work for citizens. They listen to the people. They work to solve problems. They pass laws to solve problems.

### Yes or No?

- |                                     |     |    |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Voters elect candidates.         | Yes | No |
| 2. Candidates vote for politicians. | Yes | No |
| 3. Candidates run for office.       | Yes | No |
| 4. Politicians represent citizens.  | Yes | No |
| 5. Citizens pass laws.              | Yes | No |

### Match the word and the definition:

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. citizen ___   | a. runs for office           |
| 2. represent ___ | b. votes for candidates      |
| 3. elect ___     | c. to fix a problem          |
| 4. candidate ___ | d. an elected government job |
| 5. office ___    | e. to vote for someone       |
| 6. solve ___     | f. to work for people        |

### Write the missing vowels:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. c _ t _ z _ n.     | 4. v _ t _ .    |
| 2. c _ nd _ d _ t _ . | 5. _ l _ ct.    |
| 3. r _ pr _ s _ nt.   | 6. _ ff _ c _ . |

## Voter Registration

Vocabulary:    register                  Election Day    absentee  
                  General                  Primary

You want to vote. You register to vote. You need a picture ID and proof of your address. You fill out a voter registration card. You mail it or you bring it on Election day.

You are not going to be at home on Election day. You are an absentee voter. You can vote before Election day.

Election Day is in November. It is the General Election. The General election is the Tuesday of the second week of November.

The Primary election is in September. There are many candidates in September. There are two or three candidates in November. We vote for the President every four years.

Write the correct word. Circle the word.

1. You want to vote. You \_\_\_\_\_ (lawyer/register) to vote.
2. You fill out a registration \_\_\_\_\_ (form/card).
3. You can vote \_\_\_\_\_ (absentee/missing).
4. We vote on \_\_\_\_\_ (President's/Election) Day.
5. The Primaries are in \_\_\_\_\_ (November/September).
6. The General Election is in \_\_\_\_\_ (December/November).
7. There are \_\_\_\_\_ (many/no) candidates in the Primaries.
8. There are \_\_\_\_\_ (two or three) candidates in the General Election.
9. We vote for president every \_\_\_\_\_ (two/four) years.

Circle the second Tuesday of November:

## **Political Parties**

In the United States there are two major political parties. These are groups of people who share many of the same ideas about political issues. The two major political parties are the Democrats and the Republicans. Each party endorses a candidate for political office.

## **Voter Education**

How do we pick a candidate? Voter education is the most important part of voting. It is important to find out what issues each candidate stands for. This is their platform. Where do we learn about candidates and issues?

1. Newspapers
2. TV ads
3. Friends and family
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates raise money to pay for ads. These ads are called propaganda because they try to get people to endorse, or support, a candidate or a bill.

## **Candidates**

Read about your candidate. Answer the questions.

1. What is the name of the candidate?

---

2. What job do they want?

---

3. Who endorses them?

---

---

4. Write two issues.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

5. Do you like the Candidate?

---

---

6. Do you want to vote for them? Why or why not?

---

---

What else do you want to know about them?

---

How can you find out more about the candidates?

**Where do we vote?**

We vote close to where we live at our polling place. We vote at the Polling Place from 7 am to 8 pm. You can leave work to vote. You can get a ride to the Polling Place.

Call this number:

Election Division: 1 (651) 296-2803

League of Women Voters: 1 (651) 224-5445.

Use the Internet:

1. Go to this website: [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us).
2. On the left side, click on “Elections and Voting.”
3. On the bottom of the page, click on “Find your Polling Place.”
4. Type your ZIP CODE or your COUNTY.
5. Type in the number of your address. Choose your street.
6. Click on GO!
7. Your Polling Place address is on the left side of the page.

Answer the questions:

1. Where is your polling place?

---

2. How do you get to polling place?

---

3. What is the name of the Polling place?

---

4. Is it a school? A church?

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### At the Polling Place

1. go to the polling place.
2. sign your name.
3. take a ballot.
4. go to a booth.
5. fill out the ballot.
6. put the ballot in the machine.
7. leave the polling place.

### Match the word and the verb:

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. go to ____    | a. the ballot in the machine |
| 2. sign ____     | b. the booth                 |
| 3. take ____     | c. the polling place         |
| 4. go to ____    | d. your name                 |
| 5. fill out ____ | e. the ballot                |
| 6. put ____      |                              |
| 7. leave ____    |                              |

### Write the verb in present continuous.

Example: go to/Polling Place. I am going to the Polling Place.

1. sign/name. \_\_\_\_\_
2. take/ballot. \_\_\_\_\_
3. go to/booth. \_\_\_\_\_
4. fill out/ballot \_\_\_\_\_
5. put/ballot/machine. \_\_\_\_\_
6. leave/Polling place. \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** You can use a translator to vote. You can bring a translator with you to the Polling place.

What are the two political parties in the United States?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Match the word with its definition.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. __ Candidate     | a. The U.S. voting system                  |
| 2. __ Polling Place | b. A person who runs for political office. |
| 3. __ Register      | c. The paper you use to vote.              |
| 4. __ Ballot        | d. To support a candidate                  |
| 5. __ Election      | e. To sign up to vote.                     |
| 6. __ Endorse       | f. The place where you vote.               |

***Class activity:*** Take a mock class vote. Fill out a ballot. Give it to the teacher to count.

## City Government

Vocabulary: Mayor leader residents election  
City Council member

The **Mayor** is the leader of the city. The residents vote for the Mayor. Some cities have elections for Mayor every six years.

The **City Council** is the city legislature. The people who work in the legislature are members. The residents vote for City Council members. Some cities have elections for City Council every two years.

Circle the correct word. Write the word.

1. The city leader is the \_\_\_\_\_ (doctor/mayor).
2. The city legislature is the City \_\_\_\_\_  
(council/counting).
3. The people in the City Council are \_\_\_\_\_  
(members/remember).
4. Residents \_\_\_\_\_ (shout/vote) for the Mayor and the  
City Council members.

Who works for you?

**Your City mayor:**

---

**Your City Council member:**

---

You are a city resident. You want to talk to your City Council member. What do you do? Use a phone book or the Internet to answer the questions.

City office Phone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Council member Phone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

### State Taxes

Vocabulary: spend    tax    budget    cut    program    law

**spend** money                    add up the **budget**            **cut taxes** for citizens

**pay** your taxes                    follow the **law**

Discussion Questions: Why do people pay taxes? What do the taxes pay for? What kinds of things come from taxes?

### MINNESOTA STATE GOVERNMENT

The Legislative Branch is called the LEGISLATURE. It has two parts. It has a House of Representatives and a Senate.

134

Representatives

67

Senators

Legislators make **laws**. They **collect** taxes and **spend** taxes.

## STATE LEGISLATURE

Vocabulary:    district                    elect            represent

There are **201** people in the State Legislature.

The state is divided into many districts. Every district has one Senator and two Representatives. The people in a district elect one Senator and one Representative.

### Did you understand?

1. How many people work in the State Legislature?  
a. 16            b. 67            c. 201
2. How many Senators are there in the state? \_\_\_\_\_  
a. 67            b. 134            c. 201
3. How many Representatives are there in the state? \_\_\_\_\_  
a. 106            b. 1            c. 134

### Write the correct word.

1. The state is divided into many \_\_\_\_\_ (districts/house).
2. Every district has \_\_\_ (4/1) Senator and \_\_\_ (2/1) Representatives.
2. The people who live in a district can \_\_\_\_\_ ( live/elect) people to the state legislature.
3. They elect people who can \_\_\_\_\_(meet/represent) them in the legislature.

Legislators

- a. make laws    b. teach            c. drive taxis

How many syllables:

1. senator
2. legislator
3. Legislature
4. laws
- 5.

Legislators **make laws** and **spend** money for the state.

The **taxes** help pay for these things:

**ESL CLASSES**

**HOUSES**

**ROADS**

**JOB**

**SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN**

### State Legislature

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. You            | Work in the Senate _____                      |
| 2. Senator        | Pays taxes and talks to the legislators _____ |
| 3. Representative | Works in the House of Representatives _____   |

### Yes or No?

- |                                     |     |    |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. People do not pay taxes.         | Yes | No |
| 2. People talk to their legislators | Yes | No |
| 3. Legislators work for people      | Yes | No |
| 4. Taxes pay for schools            | Yes | No |

### Finish the sentences:

1. People need to talk to their \_\_\_\_\_ (legislators/cats).
2. Legislators can make \_\_\_\_\_ (laws/houses) for the state.
3. People pay \_\_\_\_\_ (cash/taxes) to help pay for programs.

4. Legislators work at the Capitol in (St. Paul/Minneapolis).

MINNESOTA STATE TAX

*Where do taxes come from?*

*How much:*

1. individual income tax	N/Y	\$0.43	_0_.____
2. sales tax	N/Y	\$0.28	_0_.____
3. business tax	N/Y	\$0.04	_0_.____
4. car tax	N/Y	\$0.03	_0_.____
5. tobacco and alcohol tax	N/Y	\$0.02	_0_.____
6. other tax	N/Y	<u>\$0.20</u>	_0_.____
		<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>_1_.____</b>

What do you think? Circle Yes or No if you think the tax is good or not. Write how much money you collect for tax.

MINNESOTA STATE TAX

<i>Where do they go?</i>		<i>How much?</i>	
1. schools for children	N/Y	\$0.37	_0_.____
2. health and social services	N/Y	\$0.27	_0_.____
3. property taxes credit	N/Y	\$0.12	_0_.____
4. college	N/Y	\$0.10	_0_.____
5. buses and public safety	N/Y	\$0.04	_0_.____
6. other	N/Y	<u>\$0.10</u>	_0_.____
		<b>\$1.00</b>	_1_.____

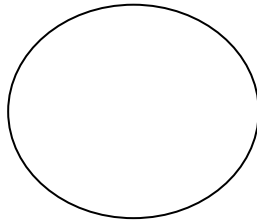
What do you think? Circle Yes or No if you think the program is good or not. Write how much money you spend from tax.

## STATE TAXES

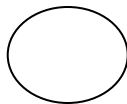
People pay taxes. In Minnesota, you pay many kinds of taxes. They go to the state budget. They pay for services in the state.

Taxes  $\Rightarrow$  Budget  $\Rightarrow$  Services

Legislators can raise taxes. There is more money to spend on services. The state budget is bigger.



Legislators can cut taxes. There is less money to spend on services. The state budget is smaller.



Did you understand? Find the correct word.

1. People in Minnesota have to pay \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The tax goes up. You \_\_\_\_\_ taxes.

3. The tax goes down. You \_\_\_\_\_ taxes.
4. Money in the state \_\_\_\_\_ comes from taxes.
5. Taxes pay for \_\_\_\_\_ in the state.

budget    services    raise    taxes    cut

**Legislature Vocabulary**

<b>Think</b> of ideas	<b>Talk</b> on the Telephone	<b>Vote</b> for the president	A <b>bill</b> in the legislature
-----------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------------

**Pass** on the left    **Sign** a check    **Veto** the idea

Write a sentence using the two words:

1. pass/ball \_\_\_\_\_
2. send/mail \_\_\_\_\_
3. sign/check \_\_\_\_\_
4. veto/idea \_\_\_\_\_
5. bill/legislature \_\_\_\_\_
6. follow/law \_\_\_\_\_
7. vote/president \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary Matching**

Circle the word that does NOT mean the same thing.

Example: law

a. rule      b. legislators make it      c. a table

1. **talk**

a. discuss      b. speak      c. read

2. **pass**

a. to move      b. to send on      c. to stop

3. **bill**

a. an idea for a law      b. what legislators write      c. a tax

4. **veto**

a. to like      b. vote against      c. to stop

5. **send**

a. pass on      b. give to someone      c. to keep

6. **sign**

a. to write      b. to approve      d. to smile

7. **vote**

a. to choose      b. to listen      c. to pick

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What kinds of laws do we have to follow in the U.S.?
2. Where did these laws come from?
3. Can you think of a law that you want to change?

**How do Legislators make laws?**

**Vocabulary**      bill      vote      pass      veto      sign      send

**1. Think** of an idea for a new law. This is a bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**2. Talk** about the bill and make changes to it.

**3. Vote** on the bill.

**Pass OR Veto**

**4. Send** the bill to the Senate

SENATE

**5. Talk** about the bill or change the bill.

**6. Vote** on the bill.

**Pass OR Veto** the bill

**7. Send** the bill to the Governor.

GOVERNOR

**8. The Governor signs OR vetoes** the bill

**9. Now** the bill is a state **law**

Role-Play: Would you vote for these bills?

1. Should St. Paul build a new sports stadium with tax payer money?
2. Should the state use money from gambling to pay for programs in the state?

3. Should the state have a higher tax for corporations?
4. Should we pay more taxes for health care and welfare programs?
5. Should we have a higher penalty for drunk drivers?
6. Should Minnesota have a light rail system?

### How a bill becomes a law

Vocabulary: **member, bill, law, lobbyist, influence, committee, petition, interest, pass**

A **bill** is an idea for a new law. A bill goes to the House of Representatives. The members decide if they think it is a good idea or not. If they like it they send it to a **committee**. Then they send it back to the House of Representatives for a vote.

Then the bill goes to the Senate. The bill can **pass** in the Senate or not pass. If the bill passes in the Senate, then it goes to the Governor. He has to sign the bill before it becomes a law.

**Lobbyists** are people who work with legislators. They try to get legislators to vote for the bills that they want. **Citizens** can work with lobbyists to **petition** for a bill to become a law. Citizens can be lobbyists too.

Circle the correct word. Write it down.

1. A bill is an idea for a new \_\_\_\_\_. Law/state
2. A bill starts in the House of \_\_\_\_\_. Representatives/White
3. The Representatives will take a \_\_\_\_\_ (vote/sign) on the bill.
4. If they like the bill, it will \_\_\_\_\_ (fail/pass) the House.
5. The Representatives send the bill to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Governor/Senate).
6. The Senators vote on the bill. They can pass or \_\_\_\_\_ (check/veto) the bill.
7. If the Senators like the bill, they \_\_\_\_\_ (send/show) it to the Governor.
8. The Governor can veto or \_\_\_\_\_ (sign/think) the bill.
9. If the Governor signs the bill, it is now a new \_\_\_\_\_ (law/house).

Matching

1. Representative \_\_\_\_ a. branch of government

2. Law \_\_\_\_

b. we pay money

3. Legislature \_\_\_\_

c. person who makes laws

4. Tax

d. a rule

### **Find your State Legislators**

Use the State Government website. Go to:

[www.house.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us).

1. On the left side of the screen, click on

### **Who Represents You?**

2. Move down to the center of the screen. Click on

**“Find your elected officials in Minnesota.”**

3. At the bottom of the screen, enter

Your **address** and **zip code**

It will say: State House of Representatives  
State Senate

Click on the **NAME** of your representative, and **Print**.

Phone numbers: House information: 1-651-296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550. Senate: 1-651-296-0504 or 1-651-296-2887

### **Write to your Legislator**

#### **Before you write:**

1. Choose one issue.
2. Find your legislator's name.

#### **When you write:**

1. Write your name and address on the envelope
2. Write their name and address on the letter.
3. Tell the legislator that you are a constituent.  
(They represent you).
4. Tell them something about yourself.
5. Tell them about your issue.
6. Tell them why the issue is important to you.

#### **After you write:**

1. Put the letter in the mail.
2. Talk to your class.
3. Wait for your representative to write back.

**A Sample Letter**

Date: Month, Day, Year

The Legislator's Name  
Their Address: Number, Street  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am your  
constituent. I am a \_\_\_\_\_. I go to  
school at \_\_\_\_\_.

In my community, \_\_\_\_\_.  
It is a problem because \_\_\_\_\_.

Please help fix this problem.

Sincerely,

---

Your Name

**Write your own bill**

Think about one issue or problem in the U.S.

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What do you think can help fix the problem? Write it down.

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Pretend you are a member of the House of Representatives.  
Write down an idea for a new law.

1. Read your bill to the class.

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2. Talk about the bill.

What do you like about the bill?

What do you not like about the bill?

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What do you want to change about the bill?

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**Class activity:** What is a question you want to ask the legislator?  
Talk to your class. Write it down.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the question to the class.

### **The Legislator Visit**

**What do we do with the Legislators?**

- 1. Eat** food
- 2. Sit** in a circle
- 3. Meet** the legislator
- 4. Ask** a question
- 5. Listen** to the answer
- 6. Talk** to the legislators
- 7. Say** thank you and goodbye

**Write the correct word:**

Eat sit meet ask listen talk say

1. \_\_\_\_\_ in a circle.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the legislator
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to the legislator.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ to the answer.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ food.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a question.

**You don't understand. What do you say?**

*"I don't understand."*

*"Can you say it again?"*

*“What did you say?”*

*“Can you repeat it?”*

### How do you say goodbye to the legislator?

*“Thank you.”*

*“Nice to meet you.”*

*“Good bye.”*

*“Thank you for coming.”*

Lesson 1: The state government Structure and Representation by District

**Materials:** Large poster visual, Handouts, Access to a computer

Time required: 2 hours

**Introduction:** Show the class a picture of the House in session. Ask the class to tell you what is happening in the picture. Then explain that it is a picture of politicians working.

**The State Legislature:** Pass out Hand out 1. Explain that the Legislature has two parts. As you point to each part of the legislature, add the part to your large poster visual. Use color coding to distinguish between people and names of government bodies.

**Functions of the state legislature:** Explain that a law is any rule about what people in the state can do, and what programs the state has for people. Give examples such as: how many teachers will work in public schools, or how many buses will run every day, or how much money communities will get for police officers, new roads, etc.

**The state legislators can make new laws or change the law, but they have to show how that will happen.** They decide how taxes are collected and spent so that there is money to pay for the new laws to be implemented. Example: the classroom has a list of rules about attendance and behavior. If we make a new rule that everyone needs to bring a pencil to class, then we have to show how people are going to get pencils.

**Districts:** Pass around the visual of the districts. Tell the class that every part of the state can elect legislators to the state government. Ask the class why some are bigger or smaller than others, and then explain that the representation is based on population.

**Find your legislators:** Have the learner write down his or her address and use the district finder website, OR, if the class is computer literate, have your class use the Internet exercise to find his or her legislator.

## Lesson plan Notes:

Review: The State Government. Read through the packet of information about the structure of the state government. Ask if anyone has any questions.

Introduction: Begin by asking the class: Do you have children in school? Do you have children in college? Do you use the freeways? Ask the class if they know where the money comes from to pay for these programs. If they do not know, explain that money for these services and programs come from state taxes that people pay.

The State Budget: The amount you bring in should be the same as the amount you spend, or more. If you spend more than you bring in, you have a deficit. If you spend less than you bring in, then you have money left over for the next year.

Collecting State Taxes. Ask the class to make a list of the different types of taxes they pay. Write them on the board. Explain that the state government uses the taxes to pay for new laws and programs. Pass out the “Minnesota State Tax” page. Read each type of tax, explaining new words and giving examples of the taxes. Look at the pie chart to find how much of the state budget comes from each type of tax. Then ask the class if they would keep this tax or not if they were legislators. Circle yes or no for each type of tax.

Spending State Taxes. Do the same procedure for explaining the different types of spending in the state.

Role-play: Ask the class to pretend that they are legislators. Ask them, in groups or pairs, to decide which taxes they want to keep. How much money (what percent) of the total budget do they think should come from each tax? How much money (what percent) of the total budget do they think should be spend on each program?

Discussion: the Minnesota State government has a \$160 million deficit. What do you think would be the best way to balance the budget? Ask your class to discuss if they would increase tax, cut spending for programs, or keep a deficit.

How a Bill Becomes a Law. After your class understands how taxes are used to pay for programs or new laws, ask them how laws are made. Read the steps of How a Bill Becomes a Law. Explain each new vocabulary word. Cut up the steps of How a Bill Becomes a Law. Ask the class to put them in the correct order.

Role play: Conduct a mock vote with the class. Read a list of bills that are in the Legislature right now. Then read the list again, and after each one ask the class to vote on whether or not they would pass or veto this bill if they were legislators.

Evaluation: Pass out the vocabulary matching/fill in the blank sheet. Ask the class to work in pairs to finish the sheet.