



Local Connecticut Resource List for Teaching Civics and Government

“Democracy needs to be re-born in each generation and education is its mid-wife.”
-John Dewey, Education Reformer

A great deal of information is available to help teachers improve their content understanding of civics and government; locate lesson plans, materials and activities for classroom use; and provide information about groups and organizations involved in citizenship and law related education efforts. This guide has been developed to help classroom teachers access this information.

The new *Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks* identifies civics as one of the four key social studies disciplines (along with history, geography and economics) to be included in instruction at every grade level. For each of these disciplines, themes are identified that carry through the Frameworks for each grade level K-8 and for each high school course. The civics themes that are addressed are Civic and Political Institutions; Participation and Deliberation; and Processes, Rules and Laws.

Each of these themes is addressed throughout the school experience to be grade level and content topic appropriate. Increasingly sophisticated student expectations and compelling questions are included to guide the teacher development of inquiry activities.

It is hoped that this resource guide will be helpful to elementary and secondary teachers in planning effective inquiry lessons to help their students gain a better understanding of and a genuine interest in citizenship and government.

RESOURCES

Civics First

Civics First is a private, non-profit association that promotes and conducts law-related education programs and projects in Connecticut's public and private schools, courtrooms and communities. Its goal is the incorporation of citizenship education into the curriculum of all schools, from kindergarten through high school. Civics First organizes statewide competitions for middle and high school students including mock trial, debate and We the People programs.

These competitions provide excellent opportunities for students to engage in inquiry based research

[Connecticut Civic Participation Resource Guide](#) (United Way of Connecticut's 2-1-1 site)

This resource guide provides information on volunteering, donating, learning about public issues, voting, and a host of other civic engagement opportunities in Connecticut.

[Connecticut Bar Association \(CBA\)](#) - Civics Programs

The CBA's Civics Education programs offer students throughout Connecticut a better insight into the United States legal system.

The following Civics Education Programs can help supplement your curriculum and bring the world of civics to life for students:

- [Adult Civic Education](#) covers a wide range of areas, from wiretapping to eminent domain, so that students can better understand the intricacies of civics and American government;
- The [Connecticut Court Visitation Program](#), where students witness real-life criminal court proceedings;
- [Bill of Rights in Action](#), in which students gain a more solid understanding of how the U.S. Constitution affects their lives;
- [Mock Trial Competitions](#), co-sponsored by Civics First Inc., where middle and high school students compete against other Connecticut schools in a battle of courtroom wits, right in the classroom;
- [Constitution Day](#), a yearly celebration remembering the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787;
- 2014 Law Day Ceremonies - The Connecticut Bar Association hosts annual Law Day ceremonies in May of each year at the Connecticut Appellate Court in Hartford.

You can also inquire about inviting speakers to your school: civicsed@ctbar.org.

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities worked with the University of Connecticut's Institute of Public Service to revise and expand *Local Government in Connecticut*, a book written for high school students and published in 1992. The second edition was published in 2001.

Written by Frank B. Connelly, a former Connecticut town manager with over 20 years experience, the book's 18 chapters review Connecticut's basic forms of local government and their many variants; examines the purpose and inner workings of local government, including management, finance and budgeting, operations, planning and zoning; discusses the role of elected officials and political parties; and provides information on careers in local government.

Each chapter includes practical examples and recommendations for class projects and individual assignments. [An appendix](#) provides website addresses and a bibliography to encourage further study.

Connecticut's Old State House

Connecticut's Old State House has as its mission to reawaken citizen engagement and awareness by offering authentic, educational and inspiring visitor experiences. The Old State House offers a wide variety of history and law related field trip programs for teachers and students including:

- History is All Around Us – a multi-sensory, multi-media exhibit that follows 300 years of Hartford's history – a program that can be adapted for students from grades K - 12.
- I Spy the Old State House- Students exercise their powers of creativity, curiosity and observation when they create “spy glasses” to help them explore the art and architecture of Connecticut's Old State House – a program for students in grades K-3.
- The Legend of the Charter Oak - Students will learn about this important story in Connecticut history by reenacting the legendary event that took place in Hartford in 1687. – a program for students in grades 2-6.
- Discover the Old State House - Students explore Connecticut's Old State House through questioning and interactive activities. – modified programs for students in grades 3-12.
- How Government Works: Connecticut's 3 Branches and Why They Matter - Students engage in a fun and interactive role-play election and mock court trial to learn about the three branches of state government in this program for students in grades 3-6.
- Prudence Crandall and the Black Law: In the room where the historic Black Law of 1833 was passed, students will roleplay Prudence Crandall and Andrew Judson (the lawyer and legislator that tried to stop her from teaching African-American girls in her school), and various historical characters that either supported or opposed Crandall & Judson's points of view. - Modified for students in grades 5-12.

In addition, the Old State House organizes Connecticut's History Day competition and provides a variety of supporting materials and workshops for teachers and students about History Day.

Connecticut State Department of Education

The Connecticut State Department of Education provides an online version of the Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks. The Frameworks, based on the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework, identifies four main disciplines in the social studies: History, Civics, Geography and Economics. Throughout the suggested K-12 content, the document suggests that all four disciplines be taught in every grade and provides suggestions for including civics throughout the K-12 school experience.

Secretary of the State of Connecticut

The office of the Secretary of the State provides a wealth of information for all social studies teachers. In addition to voter, election and candidate information, the website includes the Connecticut Civic Health Index.

The website includes resources such as “It’s Your Right – Why Voting Matters”, a voting rights unit for high school civics and a number of interesting Civic Engagement Initiatives including a video competition, poster contest, essay contest and citizenship awards.

Additionally, The Secretary of the State’s Connecticut [Election Project 2012](#) provides online materials and resources to teachers on the electoral process and voting with integrated language arts, math, and social studies cross-content.

NOTE: Everyday Democracy and its consultant do not take any position on, nor shall be held responsible for, the lack of accuracy, partiality, intent or agenda, or credibility of the content and the organizations, institutions, websites, etc. included in this resource list. Teachers should use their own judgment when accessing and using materials and resources from these organizations/institutions and their sites.

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