



# MANDATORY DRESS CODE LESSON PLAN

**Subject:** How a Bill Becomes a Law

**Grade Level:** Elementary and Middle School

**Length of Lesson:** Amount of time available (allow at least one hour, if possible)

**Summary of Lesson:** LSO has a number of “props” that can be used by the students to create a mandatory dress code “bill.” The “bill” in question will be an individual (either the legislator presenting the lesson, the classroom teacher, a principal, or a student from the class) dressed up in the props available, such as hats, ties, scarves, etc. The students will amend the “bill/individual” by adding, removing, or including different props to demonstrate how a bill can change over time.

**Materials available:** LSO will provide you with a box of props, which may include belts, hats, scarves, jewelry, slippers, sunglasses, ties, gloves, etc. No paper is needed for this activity. You may also wish to show up with an “outfit” on to start the ball rolling. For example, some legislators may want to come dressed as their non-legislative profession (e.g. nurse, rancher, etc.)

## Objectives of Lesson:

- Students will learn the legislative process by simulating the lifecycle of a bill, specifically debating the merits of a “mandatory dress code” using fun props in an interactive exercise.
- To suggest to students that in a diverse society such as ours, people have different and conflicting values, interests and priorities.
- To develop familiarity with how legislatures try to settle conflicts over values, interests and priorities by means of deliberation, debate, negotiation, compromise, and majority votes.
- To get across the idea that the work of the legislature in trying to resolve differences of opinion in society is a difficult, but important task.

## Important Notes:

- In order to illustrate how the legislative process works, at each step in the process, assume the “bill” passes to the next stage to demonstrate all of the stages, even if the students vote the measure down along the way.
- You will serve as Committee of the Whole Chairman, Committee Chair, and Presiding Officer, but the students will be debating. Please make sure they observe some basic parliamentary procedures to ensure the debate remains civil and productive, but don’t get too technical.
- It’s important to watch the time and keep the process moving forward. You must ensure the bill passes the House and Senate in the amount of time allocated for the lesson. This is also a good opportunity to explain the importance of deadlines throughout the legislative process.

**Lesson plan:**

- 1) Describe the objectives above.
- 2) Divide the students into two groups, which will represent the House and Senate. Explain to the students that there are 30 members in the Wyoming Senate that serve four-year terms and that anyone wishing to serve in the Senate must be at least 25 years of age, a United States and Wyoming citizen and must have resided within the district they wish to represent for at least 12 months preceding the election. Also, explain there are 60 members in the Wyoming House and that members serve two year terms. All candidates must be 21 years old to serve and be a citizen of the United States and Wyoming and must have resided within the district they wish to present for at least 12 months preceding the election.
- 3) Once you have divided the students into two groups, ask for volunteers from each group to serve as a House Committee and Senate Committee. In this case, select a group of 3 students to represent a Senate standing committee and a group of 5 students to represent a House standing committee. Explain to the students that in the Wyoming Legislature there are 10 standing committees that have 5 members from the Senate and 9 members from the House.
- 4) Pick out several of the props and put them on yourself (or whomever is representing the “bill,” which may be the teacher, principal or a student), to represent the “introduced” version of the bill.
- 5) **Introduction and Referral:** Refer the bill to the House Committee and ask the students named to the committee to come forward.
- 6) **Committee Hearing:** Show the students what other materials are available for the dress code bill. Ask the students selected to serve as House Committee members to debate whether the props the “bill” is wearing should remain the same, whether items should be eliminated, or, whether materials should be added from the props provided. Once the students on the committee are finished debating what items should be added or removed, have them recommend a “Do Pass” or “Do Not Pass.” This will demonstrate committee action.
- 7) **General File:** Assume the “House Standing Committee” recommended a “Do Pass” to move the bill forward. Explain that the bill is now in Committee of the Whole and all students selected to serve as House members can debate the bill. Encourage students to debate whether they agree or disagree on what the standing committee group decided. Inform the students that once again, props can be added or removed (this will demonstrate additional amendments to the bill.) Allow the students to debate until you feel it has gone on long enough and then have someone call for the question. A voice vote can be taken at this time by simply asking those students in favor of the materials you are wearing to say “Aye” and those not in favor of the materials you are wearing to say “Nay.” (*Assume the bill passes, however explain to the students that the bill could die here in the actual legislative process.*)
- 8) **Third Reading** (*in the interest of time, skip second reading*): If the majority of the students in the House are in favor of the bill on CoW, inform the students that their “bill” has moved on to what is called third and final reading and that this is the last time for the students to make their case on whether the materials the “bill” is currently wearing should or should not stay the same. Once debate is finished, ask the teacher if he/she will call out the names of each student. This will demonstrate a roll call vote.

- 9) At this point the dress code bill has either died or is moving onto the other house (*assume passage, but explain that the bill could die here in the actual legislative process*). If the majority of the students vote in favor of the bill on third reading, explain to them that the process above is repeated in the second house. Repeat steps 5-8 and inform the students that the same process will be repeated.
- 10) **Joint Conference Committee:** If time allows, explain to the students that in some cases a Joint Conference Committee may be needed to reconcile the differences in the House and Senate versions of the bill. Also explain that it's possible for a bill to die in a Joint Conference Committee.
- 11) **Governor's Action:** Explain to the students that if their dress code bill is able to pass both the House and the Senate, it will then move onto the Governor for his/her signature. You may want to have one of the students volunteer to act as the Governor. Inform the students that the Governor may do one of three things: sign their dress code bill into law; veto the bill and return it to the Legislature, where then the members of the House and Senate can override his/her rejection; or allow the bill to pass without the governor's signature.

### Conclusion

Summarize how this exercise relates to your job as a legislator, specifically related to the lesson objectives:

- The role of government to help regulate the safety of citizens and the varying views of society about the level to which government should or should not regulate the activities of its citizens.
- In a diverse society such as ours, people have different and conflicting values, interests and priorities.
- Familiarity with how legislatures try to settle conflicts over values, interests, and priorities by means of deliberation, debate, negotiation, compromise, and majority votes.
- The work of the legislature in trying to resolve differences of opinion in society is a difficult, but important task.