



LOC TPS APGov Congress - processes and accomplishments
9-12 Grades

This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Through working with political cartoons, students learn about the methods and accomplishments of Congress in the last fifty years.

Activity Goals: Students will interpret political cartoons to learn more about the legislative process and also important characteristics and milestones of Congress during the mid-1960s and mid-1990s.

Focus Question: How does Congress work or against the president? The media?

Context: This activity would fit in well after students have a fairly solid basic understanding of Congress and the law-making process.

Objectives: AP Gov Skills 1, 2, 4, and 5; Practice 1.b, 2.b, 4.b, and 5.a; EU 1.A: EU 1.C; EK 1.C.3.a; EK 1.C.3.a; EU 3.B; EK 3.B.1.a

and Virginia SOLS GOVT. 1, 3, 7, and 9

Assessment: There are analysis questions to go along with each source as well as a formative assessment task at the end of the activity. The teacher should discuss the documents and analysis questions with students before they complete the assessment task.

Primary Sources: see below

Procedure: Students examine primary sources and answer supporting analysis questions. After a class discussion, students will complete a formative assessment task.

What you will need before implementing: This lesson is dependent on computer and internet access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should be shared digitally with all students (in Google Docs or another format).



Instructions: Go to the link provided to pull up the complete image. Be sure to consider the title, date, and publication. Review the bibliographic details for further information.



[Off to the Revolution, January 6, 1995](#). Ink and white out over pencil on paper.

Pat Oliphant

1995

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97521144/>

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oliphant/part5.html#obj58>

What is the message being conveyed about the political parties of the time?

Why did the cartoonist use the imagery of the Revolutionary War?

Considering the portrayal of key Republican leaders and the complaining donkey of the Democratic party, what opinions might the artist hold about each? Explain why you think so.

How did the promises made and the accomplishments of the 104th Congress relate to the attitudes of the time?



[\[Jesse Helms attacks cultural funding\]](#).

Pat Oliphant

March 6, 1992.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/oliphant/part6.html#obj26>

Examine the image and decode its meaning.

What was happening? Who was involved? How was Jesse Helms portrayed?

Can you explain the political thinking behind this image?

Is there a valid counterargument to be considered? To what extent should government fund/support art and culture?



[“You’re Really Rolling Up Quite a Record,”](#) 1965.

Herb Block

Published in the Washington Post, April 11, 1965.

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblock-gallery/herblock-looks-at-1965.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblock-gallery/herblock-looks-at-1965.html#obj001>

Decode the message of this cartoon.

What can it tell you about the work in Congress from 1965?

How is the relationship between Congress and the president portrayed here?

How do these pieces of legislation relate to the attitudes of the time?



[“Don’t Be Getting Any Ideas That You Have a Right to Vote,”](#) 1965.

Herb Block

Published in the Washington Post, March 11, 1965.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblock-gallery/herblock-looks-at-1965.html#obj009>

How does this cartoon relate to the one above?

What information can you glean from it about the passage of civil rights legislation at that time?

What unique aspects of the Senate are included here?

How can party leaders impact the law-making process?



Another bombardment - the newspaper fleet firing on the Bedouins in Washington

Bernhard Gillam

August 2, 1882

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647232/>

Describe the artist's message relating to the relationship between Congress and the media.

To what extent has the reputation of Congress changed in approximately one hundred and forty years?

Formative assessment:

Write an essay explaining the influence that key congressional leaders can have on the making of policy. How does the relationship between Congress and the president and Congress and the media impact the work of Congress?