

LESSON NARRATIVE 25-26

Lesson Grabber:

The teacher will present students with a slide (FOCUS ACT GRABBER) focused on Alabama's recent cell phone policy changes under the FOCUS Act. Teachers may substitute the FOCUS Act with any local or school cell phone policy. Students will read the slide before engaging in a brief whole-group discussion on this recent legislation. While students will likely want to discuss the pros and cons of this law for an extended period, the teacher should focus the discussion on these questions:

Why is it important to have written law?

Was the state of Alabama justified in passing this law?

Is the new law fair and just?

What does justice mean?

What does fairness mean?

The teacher may wish to display existing definitions of the terms "fairness" and "justice" as the class works to operationally define these and other relevant terms for the lesson ahead.

Lesson:

After completing the lesson grabber, the teacher will direct students to the concept of historical written legal codes, in particular the Twelve Tables of the Roman Republic and the Napoleonic Code. When completing this lesson as part of a French Revolution/Napoleon unit, the teacher may wish to briefly review background information on early Rome and the formation of the Twelve Tables. When completing this lesson as part of a Rome unit, the teacher will briefly inform students that they are looking ahead in history for the purpose of engaging in an analogous case study. The teacher may need to briefly provide background information on Napoleon and the Napoleonic Era.

The teacher will inform students that they will be examining and comparing/contrasting the Roman Twelve Tables and the Napoleonic Code. This process will begin with a gallery walk activity designed to explore each legal code and develop student background knowledge. While this activity was designed as a gallery walk, this portion of the lesson may be completed as a jigsaw activity if the teacher wishes to make this modification.

Students will work in small groups to cycle through the gallery walk. Each station features background information on the Twelve Tables (12 Tables Gallery Walk Final) and Napoleonic

Code (Napoleonic Code Gallery Walk Final) as well as a few questions (GALLERY WALK QUESTIONS) for students to answer on a scaffold (GALLERY WALK STUDENT SCAFFOLD). Students will be given roughly five minutes at each station. The teacher may add additional time if needed. There are eight (8) thematic stations. If the teacher wishes to reduce the number of stations due to time or class size, it is suggested that the stations for “Civil Liberties” and “Punishments” be removed. Thematic stations include:

1. Marriage
2. Gender Roles/Issues
3. Property
4. Trials
5. Debt
6. Inheritance
7. Civil Liberties
8. Punishments

After students complete the gallery walk, they will engage in a discussion designed to help them think more deeply about the similarities and differences between the two legal codes. In addition to comparing and contrasting these codes, this discussion should lead students to engage with deeper questions regarding fairness, justice, and the importance of legal codes. The discussion will be supported by a discussion scaffold (DISCUSSION SCAFFOLD) and report card activity (REPORT CARD) as students discuss each question in small groups before engaging in the whole-group discussion. The whole-group discussion is focused by the following questions:

1. What does it mean to be fair and just? What standards must a law meet to be considered fair and just?
2. How were different groups (women, enslaved people, social classes) treated under these codes? Were laws and punishments applied equally across all groups?
3. Compare the laws and punishments for crimes outlined in each code. Which code had the harshest punishments? The most lenient?
4. Do you think either of these legal codes influenced modern U.S. law? If so, how?
5. Which legal code included better protection for civil liberties? Provide evidence for your choice. Which of these legal codes would you prefer to live under?
6. Which legal code best promotes fairness and justice? Provide evidence for your choice.

As part of the small-group/whole-group discussion, students will complete a report card (REPORT CARD) scoring each legal code on a variety of criteria. This report card activity is used to guide the discussion and may be used alone or with the discussion scaffold. Following this, students will complete the lesson post-test (the pre-test is the same and was completed prior

to this lesson). The post-test is a memo (ESSAY PROMPT) that requires students to advise a new community that is in the process of developing a legal code. Students will do so by assessing the Twelve Tables and Napoleonic Code and suggesting which would serve as stronger inspiration for a fair and just legal code.

Students can utilize their scaffolds completed during the gallery walk and follow-up discussion as well as their report cards as they complete this culminating written assignment for the lesson.