



DELIBERATION & PUBLIC VOICE (9-12)

OBJECTIVE: Students will understand deliberation as a civic responsibility protected by the First Amendment by creating opportunities for public discussion of participatory budgeting proposals.

STANDARDS:

- **HS.SP3.8** Present arguments and explanations that feature ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues using print, oral, and digital technologies.
- **HS.C1.2** Evaluate how society and political systems in different contexts promote civic virtue and democratic principles established by the founding documents.
- **HS.C1.3** Explain and use deliberative processes implemented in various civic and political institutions.
- **HS.C4.6** Assess options for action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.
- **HS.C4.7** Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions in the classroom, school, and out-of-school civic contexts.

CIVICS EXAM QUESTIONS:

- What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment? **A:** Free Speech

TIMELINE: This lesson fits best during the Deliberation phase, between Campaigning and Voting, as a way to promote discussion, raise awareness, & deepen understanding of the proposals before voting takes place.

APPROXIMATE LESSON LENGTH: One 60-minute class period, plus additional time for planning the deliberation process if needed.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- [*First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*](#)
- Completed Project Proposal Details
- Sticky notes and writing materials

VOCABULARY:

- Amendment
- Deliberation
- Free Speech
- Persuade
- Public

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Engage

- **Think-Pair-Share:**
 - Pose the following questions to students to first individually reflect: “Have you ever changed your mind about something after hearing someone else’s perspective? What helped you change your mind?”
 - Then have students partner with a peer to share their individual reflections on those questions.
 - Bring students back together as a whole group. Invite students to share their own reflection or highlights from the paired conversation.
 - Then have the class discuss the following questions:
 - Why is it important to hear different opinions before making a decision?
 - What happens if we only hear one side?
- Explain that free speech lets us hear ideas that challenge or improve our thinking.

2. Explore

- Display the text of the *First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution* for students to see. Provide time for students to read or review, while highlighting specific phrases and language for emphasis or clarification.
- Ask students the following questions and foster a class discussion, encouraging students to draw upon the First Amendment language to help support their thoughts:
 - What role does the Constitution play in protecting free speech and the press?
 - What are some examples of free speech and the press?
 - How does free speech and the press connect with voting?
 - How might free speech and the press help people vote more wisely?
 - What happens to democracy if only one voice gets heard?
- Ask students to think of and share examples of settings or practices where they can use their voices in public, allowing others to hear their ideas, ask questions, and form thoughtful opinions before casting their votes. Brainstorm and record a collective list of deliberation activities that students share.

3. Explain

- Ask students to define the word ‘deliberation.’ Revisit the last question’s phrasing, “using our voices in public, where others can hear ideas, ask questions, and share thoughtful opinions,” to help guide their understanding. Arrive at a collective consensus on what ‘deliberation’ means.

- Explain to students that deliberation is a collaborative process that focuses on different perspectives and seeks to evaluate ideas. Revisit the class's collective brainstorm of deliberation activities. Identify common concepts or characteristics that are present across these activities.
- Link these concepts to the importance of using critical thinking when voting, just like in the School Participatory Budgeting process.
- Have the different project proposals from the School Participatory Budgeting process posted around the room. Provide students with four sticky notes for each project. For each proposal, have students elaborate on the following points for each proposal on an individual sticky note:
 - One strength/benefit of the proposal.
 - One weakness/concern of the proposal.
 - One question about the proposal.
 - One way the proposal may impact students.
 - OPTIONAL: One way the proposal may impact staff.
 - OPTIONAL: One way the proposal may impact the community.
- After students analyze each proposal through the above prompts, demonstrate the deliberation process by allowing students to share their notes with one another in small groups or the whole group while walking around and reflecting on their peer's notes.
- After students analyze each proposal using the prompts above, guide them through a deliberation process by having them share their notes during a gallery walk. As students move around the room, encourage them to read and reflect on their peer's ideas, identifying common themes, unique ideas, or questions they may have.

4. Elaborate

- Remind students of the conversation on free speech and the press, and that the more voices that are included in the deliberation of ideas, the better ideas become. In small groups or as a whole group, ask students to brainstorm different methods to be used for deliberation about the project proposals with peers on campus.
 - Examples may include: school newspaper articles or op-eds, social media posts, announcements with questions, classroom discussions, townhalls, online forums, deliberation corners, interactive bulletin boards, etc.
- Have students select one or a few ideas and develop a plan to promote deliberation opportunities on campus.
 - Specifics for deliberation plans may include a timeline, implementers, needed tools or resources, location, etc.
- Have students share their deliberation plan with the group for further feedback and refinement.

5. Evaluate

- **Think-Pair-Share:** Pose the following reflection questions to the students:
 - How can free speech help make our school community more informed?
 - What's the difference between using speech to inform vs. to persuade?
 - Why is it important to hear many perspectives before we vote?
 - What are the next steps to implementing my idea for deliberation on campus?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Evaluating Student Deliberation

This activity will take place after students implement their deliberation strategy. Students will reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their deliberation strategies. Students will analyze participation, gather feedback, and identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Gather Evidence of Impact:** When implementing their deliberation plan, students should collect the following information
 - Participation Rates: number of students that interacted with them
 - Type of engagement: questions asked, polling, informal interviews
- **Glows & Grows:** Students will evaluate the following information when reflecting on their deliberation plan.
 - Glows: What went well?
 - Grows: What challenges did you face?
 - Reach: Who did this method engage? Who was left out?
 - Next steps: How can we improve or expand this method?
- **Presentation:** Students will create a presentation using flipchart paper with the above information. After all presentations, students will discuss which strategies reached the most students.