**Federalism and Lawmaking: Claim Your Powers**

**State v. Federal Government**

**Abstract:**

This lesson focuses on the basic concepts of federalism and lawmaking. It explores powers reserved to the states and those given to the federal government through discussion and a “Claim your Powers” activity. It also reviews the federal and Minnesota constitutional amendment process and the legislative lawmaking processes. Students are introduced to federalism and lawmaking through a instructional video.

**Objectives:**

* Students will gain a deeper knowledge of federalism and the powers granted to state and federal governments
* Students will understand the constitutional amendment and lawmaking processes.

**Grade level:** 9-12

**Time to complete:** One 60-minute class period.

**Materials needed:**

* Federalism and Lawmaking PowerPoint
* “Claim” and “Do not Claim” signs
* Instructor handout and scoring sheet

**Procedure:**

1. Use the Federalism and Lawmaking PowerPoint to introduce students to federalism and the lawmaking process.
   1. Note that there is a video embedded in the PowerPoint that will only work with an internet connection. If an internet connection is not available, the slide can be removed and explained through the remaining slides in the PowerPoint.
2. Claim Your Powers Activity
   1. Divide the class into two groups. One group represents the federal government and the other represents the Minnesota government. (If the class is large, additional groups may represent other states or the federal government.)
   2. Provide each group with two signs: “CLAIM” and “DO NOT CLAIM”
   3. Establish the purpose of the activity by explaining that the exercise is intended to review and reinforce the student’s knowledge of federalism. Tell the class that in this activity they will be acting as either the state or federal government and that it is their responsibility to maintain the powers granted to them in the Constitution.
   4. Tell the class that you will read a series of situations, each involving a power of state, federal, or both governments. After each situation is read, each group will have a short period of time to discuss the situation and decide if the power described belongs to it. At the end of one minute, the leader will say the word “vote” and each group must hold up a card, either “CLAIM” or “DO NOT CLAIM”. Every group must vote on each situation.
   5. Explain that scoring will be as follows:
      1. Two points will be given for correctly claiming the claim of a power
      2. One point will be given for correctly voting not to claim a power.
      3. A zero will be given to a group incorrectly claiming or not claiming a power.

**Method of evaluation and results:**

The instructor can determine whether the students correctly grasped the concept of federalism through the “Claim your Powers” activity.

**Instructor Handout**

**Situations[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. Juveniles are truant if they miss school too often.
2. Taxes are collected for the building of roads.
3. A school is set up to educate the children in a neighborhood.
4. A law states the hours the polls will be open on election day.
5. Money is borrowed from China to fund our defense.
6. Postal offices will only be open on Monday-Friday.
7. A new county position is created.
8. Ralph Z. is being tried for a crime.
9. A patent is granted to Joe Einstein for a new invention.
10. A law is passed only allowing citizens to be married.
11. The army is deployed to Uzbekistan.
12. An income tax cut is being proposed.
13. A treaty with a foreign country to import oil is being negotiated.

**Score Sheet**

**(Possible Points)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Situation** |
|  | **Federal** | |  | **State** | |
|  | Claim | No Claim |  | Claim | No Claim |
| 1. |  | 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 2. | 2 |  |  | 2 |  |
| 3. |  | 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 4. |  | 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 5. | 2 |  |  |  | 1 |
| 6. | 2 |  |  |  | 1 |
| 7. |  | 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 8. | 2 |  |  | 2 |  |
| 9. | 2 |  |  |  | 1 |
| 10. |  | 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 11. | 2 |  |  |  | 1 |
| 12. | 2 |  |  | 2 |  |
| 13. | 2 |  |  |  | 1 |
| **TOTAL** | **16** | **5** |  | **16** | **5** |

1. These may be read aloud or written on index cards and distributed to each group. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)