

In My Shoes: Role Playing American Government and Politics

Oprah said it succinctly, “Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives.” This is not new. Women’s Rights advocate, suffragette and poet Mary T. Lathrap wrote in 1895:

*Just walk a mile in his moccasins
Before you abuse, criticize and accuse.
If just for one hour, you could find a way
To see through his eyes, instead of your own muse.*

In each of our five (5) units of study in American Government and Politics you will be invited to connect with relevant players. To better understand government and politics, walk in the shoes of those who have and continue to shape our government and politics. The end result will not only improve our understanding; provide practice of essential skills; but also inspire and empower our own civic engagement. Welcome. Get ready to “take the time to walk a mile in [their] moccasins.”

Unit 1: Yesterday’s Framers Meets Today’s Political Scientist

Unit 2: Meet an Iron Triangle

Unit 3: Join the Fight for Civil Rights

Unit 4: Analyze Public Opinion Data

Unit 5: Join a Linkage Institution

Unit 2: INTERACTION AMONG BRANCHES

Meet an Iron Triangle

In this role-playing exercise, you will be assigned a Congressional committee, an Executive agency, and an interest group. Complete presentation slides that include the following findings:

- Congressional committee – discuss the role played by this committee. Include a brief description of the makeup of the committee today. How many members? Party split? Primary focus?
- Executive agency - discuss the role played by this Executive agency. Include a brief description of the makeup of this agency today. How many employees? Budget? Primary responsibility?
- Interest group - discuss the role played by this interest group. Include a brief description of the organization of this interest group. How many members? Budget? Primary focus?
- Find a public policy issue that these three works on together. Explain the unique role played by each in order for the public policy to be successful. Explain why this relationship might be described as an “iron triangle.”
- When all of the presentation slides have been completed and posted, you will be invited to eavesdrop 3-4 conversations and report back as to what you have learned.

Unit 2: In My Shoes - Role Playing American Government and Politics ROLES

Congressional Committee	Executive Agency	Interest Group
House Judiciary Committee	Department Of Justice	NAACP
Senate Health Committee	Department Of Health	AARP
House Judiciary Committee	Department Of Justice	NRA
Senate Natural Resources Committee	Department Of the Interior	Sierra Club
Senate Judiciary Committee	Department Of Justice	The Federalist Society
Senate Commerce Committee	Department Of Commerce	U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Senate Health Committee	Department Of Health	Planned Parenthood
House Education Committee	Department Of Education	National Educational Association
House Ways and Means Committee	Department Of the Treasury	Americans For Tax Reform
House Agriculture Committee	Department Of Agriculture	American Dairy Association

