

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 1: FOUNDATIONS

Yesterday’s Framers Meets Today’s Political Scientist

In this role-playing exercise, you will be assigned a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787; a contemporary political scientist; and one of the Federalist Papers essays. Complete presentation slides that include the following findings:

- Delegate to the Constitutional Convention: Biographical introduction written in your own words with appropriate visuals; Context information on a relevant debate that took place at the convention involving this delegate; Explanation of whether or not this delegate signed the proposed new constitution.
- Contemporary political scientist: Biographical introduction written in your own words with appropriate visuals; Context information on relevant research conducted by this political scientist; Direct evidence from a publication written by this political scientist.
- Federalist Paper essay: Brief synopsis of the arguments made in this essay.
- Create a hypothetical lunch conversation between your Framers, your political scientist and the topics found in your Federalist Paper essay. This dialogue should represent the relevant debates at the convention and how those debates might be discussed in our current political science culture.
- 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 1: In My Shoes - Role Playing American Government and Politics **ROLES**

Index of the Framers of the Constitution

Connecticut

Oliver Ellsworth
Wm. Samuel Johnson
Roger Sherman

Delaware

Richard Bassett
Gunning Bedford Jr.
Jacob Broom
John Dickinson
George Read

Georgia

Abraham Baldwin
William Few
William Houston
William L. Pierce

Maryland

Daniel Carroll
Daniel Jenifer
Luther Martin
James McHenry
John F. Mercer

Rhode Island

No delegates

Massachusetts

Elbridge Gerry
Nathaniel Gorham
Rufus King
Caleb Strong

New Hampshire

Nicholas Gilman
John Langdon

New Jersey

David Brearly
Jonathan Dayton
William C. Houston
William Livingston
William Paterson

New York

Alexander Hamilton
John Lansing, Jr.
Robert Yates

North Carolina

William Blount
William R. Davie
Alexander Martin
Richard D. Spaight
Hugh Williamson

Pennsylvania

George Clymer
Thomas Fitzsimons
Benjamin Franklin
Jared Ingersoll
Thomas Mifflin
Gouverneur Morris
Robert Morris
James Wilson

South Carolina

Pierce Butler
Charles Pinckney
Charles C. Pinckney
John Rutledge

Virginia

John Blair
James Madison, Jr.
George Mason
James McClurg
Edmund J. Randolph
George Washington
George Wythe

Index of Contemporary Political Scientists (use these or other favorites)

John Aldrich
Robert Axelrod
Regina Bateson
Jill Frank
Rodney E. Hero
Jennifer Hochschild
Matthew Holden, Jr.
Robert Jervis
Peter J. Katzenstein
Robert O. Keohane
Christina Kiel
David Lake
Jeffrey Lazarus
Margaret Levi
Steven Livitsky

Arend Lijphart
Jane Mansbridge
Gwyneth McClendon
Dale Murphy
Pippa Norris
Dianne Pinderhughes
G. Bingham Powell
Robert D. Putman
Kelly Rader
Melvin Rogers
Mark Rupert
Burcu Savun
Theda Skocpol
Susan Stokes
Sidney Verba

Federalist Papers #1 – 85 (pick one of the essays)