

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 Framer 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 5: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Join a Linkage Institution

In this role-playing exercise, you will join linkage institutions. Linkage institutions connect the government to the people. If we are to be a government of the people, for the people and by the people, linkage institutions have an important role to play. Complete presentation slides that include the following findings:

- Join a POLITICAL PARTY. Develop a plan to recruit winning candidates. Create a brief platform statement. Establish a plan to educate voters. Generate a strategy to raise money for party activity.
- Join an INTEREST GROUP. Create a strategy that fulfills your desired policy outcomes. Generate a strategy to raise money for interest group activity. Establish a plan to recruit membership into your group. Hire a lobbyist. Create an action-plan for your lobbyist.
- Join a CAMPAIGN. Choose a national, state or local election. Develop a plan to win the election. Generate a strategy to raise money for campaign activity. Establish a plan to recruit campaign workers. Create a media strategy. Build a get-out-the-vote strategy.
- Join the MEDIA. Choose to join a print, TV or alternative media group. Create a strategy that builds civic understanding. Write copy for a media campaign that educates citizens on the importance of voting. Write an opinion piece on an important issue. Create memes for a desired political outcome.
- When all of the presentation slides have been completed and posted, you will be invited to assess other linkage institution activity and report back as to what you have learned.