

Overview of the Day and Teacher's Assignments

We look forward to facilitating your class through the Legislative Role Play. **Give yourself a couple of weeks to introduce the materials to the students.** This program has **2 distinct parts corresponding to the roles** you will assign your students: **committee work and chamber debate.** Please refer to your **schedule** and the following classroom assignments to help clarify the details of your tour.

Assign the roles

For **committee work**, divide your students into legislators and witnesses.
-There should be **5-10 student legislators on the committee**: one student should be assigned the **role of chair**; one should be assigned the **role of reporter of the bill** for the chamber debate. The reporter will need to keep track of what happened during committee.
-The rest of your students are **witnesses** who will testify before the committee. If you have a large group, we have included the option of another role- **media reporter**.

For debate, all students take on the role of legislator except for the **Speaker** (chairs the House debate), the **LT Gov** (chairs the Senate debate), and the **Governor** (signs or vetoes the bill...the Governor can make a statement). **If your group is scheduled in only one of the Chambers, assign the appropriate role for that Chamber chair.**

Teach the roles

A good way to describe legislators is to explain that they are groups of elected officials who get together to figure out if a bill addresses a need, who it affects, how much it costs, if it infringes on anyone's rights, if it works with the Constitution. Legislator's decisions affect the State's future.

Note: Review the Critical Thinking attachment.

Explain to the students that the committee is a group of people trying to solve a problem. There will be different opinions and the tension that creates is part of the democratic process. The compromises made are part of that process as well.

Note: the role play works better if the tour guide takes the role of sponsor of the bill to get the committee process started. This can be an option; teachers know their class; teacher can decide.

Teach the Bill

Make sure the students understand the intent of the bill and the language. 'Strike-throughs' are the changes being made to the existing law. Underlines are the addition of new language.

Teach Analytical Skills

Make sure your **witnesses** state their stand is on the bill when they testify and that they are able support their stand with facts, surveys, etc.

Help them to **research** appropriate websites for statistics to support their arguments.

Make sure your **legislators** reflect on the **Critical Thinking** attachment as they learn facts and figures from the witnesses and can make an argument to support their vote.

Note: kids often get caught up in the statistics and language of the research. To humanize this process, have the students interview the school guidance counselor, convenience store owners, any other appropriate 'roles' that are accessible to them.

FYI:

- the committee is the place for public input...once the bill goes to the Chambers, only legislators debate
- there are 3 readings of the bill in Chambers
 1. the first reading is title only and committee assignment
 2. the second reading is an opportunity for amendments and debate and a vote for the third reading
 3. the third reading, generally, is simply the final vote
- each bill, when passed 'crosses over' to the other Chamber for committee work and debate before it ends up on the Governor's desk

What students need to bring with them:

Make sure they come with **copies of the bill, their scripts, etc.** and that they refer to them throughout the day. Name tags are helpful but not necessary. Appropriate dress code applies. **Be clear with the students that they may not touch anything on the desks they use...they are visiting in someone's office space.**

You and your tour guide will work together to facilitate students as they go through the process. The students should be prepared to take the initiative.

MISSY SHEA, Sec of State Office, will send you hard copy of the Adventures of Bill.

If you have any questions about the role play tour or any suggestions, please contact:

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