

Title: Engaging with Parliament and Government

Audience:

Social Studies 10, Explorations 11, Comparative Culture 12, Political Studies 12, and Social Justice 12

Overview: Students will evaluate and analyze visual images of political spaces and documents about engaging in our parliamentary democracy.

Objectives

All courses:

- *Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas and data; and communicate findings and decisions.*

Social Studies 10:

- *Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups at times and places (continuity and change)*

Human Geography 12:

- *Assess the significance of places by identifying the physical and/or human features that characterize them (sense of place).*
- *Identify and assess how human and environmental factors and events influence each other (interactions and associations)*

Activities and Method

ACTIVITY 1: Image Analysis - I see, I think, I wonder

Instructions

1. Investigation: Pick one of the two images on the next page and answer the questions below. You can choose either picture.

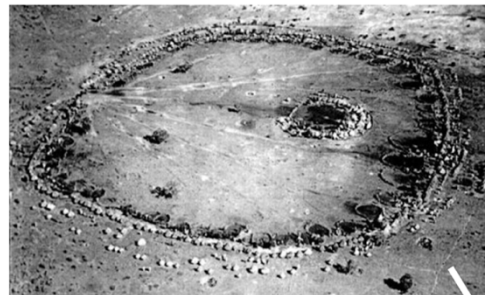
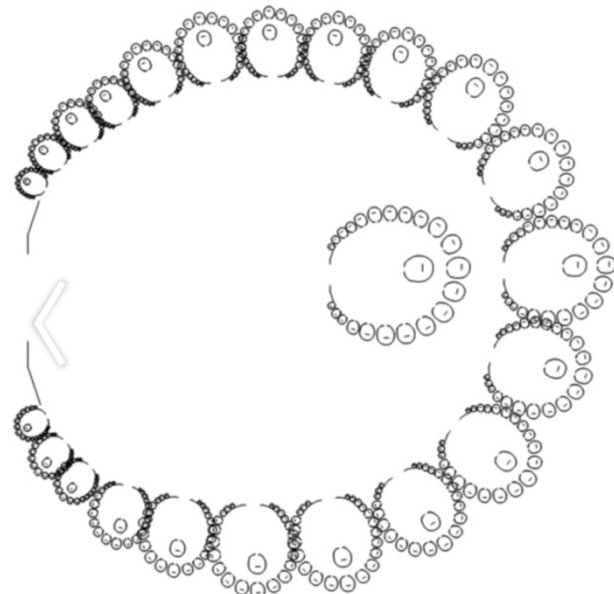
1. What do I see in this image?
2. What is one word I could use to explain how I feel as I see this image?

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
<p>3. What do I think I am looking at? (extension or alternative for TOK: what do you believe you know as you look at this image, and what do you use as proof or evidence that your belief is justified?)</p> <p>4. What am I wondering about this image - what is one question I would like to ask of an expert?</p> <p>2. Creative expression: create a 60-second spoken-word poem about how you feel when you look at the image. Get a peer to listen to your poem, then identify 3-5 key words that express your poem's big ideas.</p> <p>Extension activity: Do this task for both images, then compare the images. What do they have in common, and how are they different? Summarize your observations in the chart below.</p>	

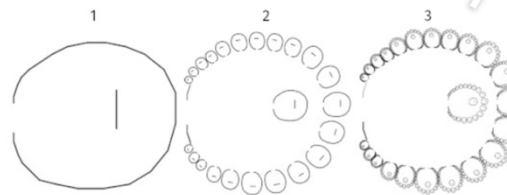
Nuragic Complex of Barumini, Sardinia.



Grade 11-12 extension to do after the “I see, I think, I wonder” activity: students read the article from which this photograph. During this discussion, students share their “wonderings” and reflect on the extent to which the text addressed their wonderings: <https://www.italia.it/en/sardinia/things-to-do/barumini-the-nuraghi>).



Aerial photo of Ba-ila village



1b: Fractal generation of Ba-ila simulation. First iteration is similar to single house, second is similar to family ring, third to village as whole

Photograph of Ba-Ila settlement of Southern Zambia

Grade 11-12 extension to do after the “I see, I think, I wonder” activity: students read the article from which this photograph is taken. During this discussion, students share their “wonderings” and reflect on the extent to which the text addressed their wonderings:

<https://www.archdaily.com/1001808/the-fractals-at-the-heart-of-indigenous-african-architecture>

ACTIVITY 2 : Reflective Journal

1. Synthesizing ideas: Read the quotes below, then summarize their big ideas in:

- a. Three words
- b. 1 sentence.
- c. 1 short paragraph of 50-80 words.

“We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.”

— British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, House of Commons (meeting in the House of Lords), October 28, 1943.

“We live within the circle, the circle of life and the circle of death, we move within the memory of the past while moving toward the future (...). Everything that the world does is done in a circle.”

— Chumash elder and story teller Julie Tumamait

2. Producing an argumentative text:

Choose one quote: to what extent do you agree with it? Provide your answer in a recorded audio file, a video file, or a written text.

- a. One sentence.
- b. Two sentences that refer to a personal experience you have had.
- c. One short paragraph that incorporates personal experience **and** an example drawn from your prior knowledge.

3. Producing a creative text: a collage poem

Create a collage poem out of these quotes by splicing and rearranging bits of text. Share your text aloud in a reading circle with other students who have chosen this option. Prepare to share.

- a. Why you kept certain parts of the text.
- b. Why you removed certain parts.
- c. Why you organized the sections of your collage poem the way you did (for instance, bringing certain parts of the two quotes together).

ACTIVITY 3: Space, Self, and Community

Guiding Question:

Consider the following quote, “*We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.*”(Winston Churchill, October 28, 1943.) To what extent does this quote apply to your perspective about school spaces?

PART 1: Hook

Evaluating the Classroom

- Students are asked to look around their classroom/learning space, think about, and discuss the following:
 1. Why do you think your teacher has organized the classroom in this way?
 2. How else have you seen classrooms organized? Why do you think there are differences from teacher to teacher or room to room?
 3. Other than the seating, what else do you notice in this classroom? (i.e., decor, information displayed, organization, etc.)

Imagining the Classroom

- In small groups, ask students to produce a list of what they would prioritize if they were to create their own classroom from scratch. Some considerations may include:
 1. Layout of the space
 2. Accessibility
 3. Learning styles
- Groups should be prepared to share their ideas with the class.

PART 2: MAIN ACTIVITY

Political Spaces

Stations

1. Print out images of different political legislatures /spaces and place each one in a different station around the room.
 - a) Examples may include:
 - i. Canadian House of Commons
 - ii. US Congress
 - German Reichstag
 - North Korean Supreme Peoples’ Assembly
 - Nauru Parliament
 - Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Colombian Congress
Zimbabwean Parliament
Chinese Great Hall of the People
United Nations

b) You could also personalize this activity by choosing images that reflect the backgrounds of your students.

2. Divide students into groups and assign each one a different image.

3. Ask students:

- a. *What do you notice about this space? Where do you believe this might be?*
- b. *What inferences can you make?*
- c. *What questions do you have?*

4. Students share out to the larger group. After each group shares, the teacher shares where that image is from and what legislative body it represents.

5. Ask students to choose one of the legislative bodies that they feel is the most: Collaborative? Decisive? Adversarial? Inclusive? Hierarchical? And justify their choice.

Guiding Question:

Consider the following quote: *"We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."*(Winston Churchill, October 28, 1943.) Based on yesterday's activity, to what extent does this quote now apply to your understanding about legislative bodies and political decision-making?

PART 1: Hook

Compare and Contrast

- Provide a handout to students with an image of the St. Stephen's Chapel on the left and an image of the chamber of the BC Legislative Assembly on the right. Ask students to identify similarities and differences between the images. They can mark up the sheet while they discuss in pairs.

PART 2: Main Activity

History of the BC Legislature

1. Give a short presentation on this history of parliamentary democracy and the B.C. Legislature. Focus on connecting historical developments to explain why things are the way they are today.
2. Explain that there is a more recent focus on advancing reconciliation by making the B.C. Legislature more reflective of the many Indigenous peoples across the province.
 - a. Ask students: how could the government do this? Give examples.

Virtual Tour

3. In pairs, students will be taking a self-guided [virtual tour of the B.C. Legislature building](#), and investigating why things look the way they do where our laws are created.

4. Students are asked to look for, research, and report on:
 - a. What symbols and connections to history can you find?
 - b. What evidence of reconciliation do you notice?
 - c. What questions do you still have?

5. Once students have completed the tour, they create a proposal for one change to the B.C. Legislature. Students must defend and justify their proposal. The proposals could include:
 - a. A new arrangement
 - b. Getting rid of something (symbols, paintings, etc.)
 - c. Adding something (symbols, paintings, etc.)

PART 3: Extension

St. Stephen's Chapel

- For students who are keen to explore further, provide the following link to a virtual tour of the St. Stephen's Chapel in the UK.

<https://www.virtualststephens.org.uk/sites/virtualststephens.org.uk/files/panoramas/1707/tour.html>.

Students are free to compare and contrast what they see in this tour versus that of the previous virtual tour of the chamber of the BC Legislative Assembly.



SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES

1. **Collaborative research and evaluation** : look at the short video called “How do we know: research and evidence”

<https://www.virtualststephens.org.uk/explore/visualization>

Once students have watched the film and read the website, organize them into six small groups. Assign each group one of the “big six” social studies historical concepts: Historical significance, continuity and change, cause and consequence,

historical perspectives, ethical dimension of historical interpretations. Each group must do a spoken presentation to explain why their concept is important for the unit.

ACTIVITY 4: Participating in Government

Preamble: Through this activity, students will be able to connect with govTogetherBC to select a relevant engagement topic to offer input into potential government legislation.

Outcome: Students will be able to understand the topic by reading the *Engagement Summary, Journey So Far* and *How to Participate* for their chosen topic.

Note: For this lesson plan, we will focus on The Future of the Royal BC Museum; however, teachers may wish to adapt the plan to focus on current engagement opportunities offered the provincial government.

I. **Introduction:** The teacher will ask students:

What impact can you have on the legislative process?

Examples may include: attending a protest, writing a letter to the editor, voting, attending a candidates' meeting, contacting the media.

Introduce students to the [govTogetherBC website](http://govTogetherBC) and show potential engagement topics and opportunities to engage. These forms of engagement could include surveys, virtual or in-person information sessions to collect public feedback.

II. **Activity**

Ask students to read the *Engagement Summary, Journey So Far, AND How to Participate*.

Input for public engagement		
	Reading notes	Your opinion
<i>Who</i> – who does this legislation impact?		
<i>What (must/may/must note)</i> – what is the goal of this legislation		

<i>When</i> – What is the deadline for engagement? When will this policy take effect?			
<i>Where</i> – What area(s) of B.C. is impacted?			
<i>Why</i> – Why is this important to B.C.?			
<i>How</i> – How will this policy bring positive change?			
<i>If (conditions)</i> – What will this policy impact if implemented? (positive or negative)			
<i>If not (consequences)</i> – What will this policy impact if not implemented? (positive or negative)			
<i>But (exceptions)</i> – What may be some potential challenges?			

III. Using the completed graphic organizer, students will write letters to their MLA and associated minister for this engagement opportunity.

Considerations for students:

- Appropriate salutation
- Formal language
- Content structure (Introduction, Issue, Solution Options, Closure)
- Invitation to visit classroom to discuss topic
- Complimentary Close and Signature

Students will send this letter twice – one to their MLA (which they may locate through the [MLA Finder](#), and the other to the relevant minister through the [BC Ministry Service Plans website](#).

IV. Extension Options

- Classroom visit by MLA and/or Minister.
- Student involvement in other related community engagement options (i.e., virtual, or in-person sessions, surveys, etc.)
- Virtual visit to the legislature (with a focus on the legislature chamber), arranged through the Parliamentary Education Office.
- [Register to Vote program](#) through Elections BC, for student vote.

Wrap-up proof of learning: Reflective text

Provide students with a set of three curricular “big ideas”, using your judgment to determine which are appropriate for their age and course. Then, assign a written-word, spoken-word or graphic text that allows them to explain how they understand ONE big idea considering everything they have learned during the unit.

Examples of texts are a podcast or mock interview between two students, a spoken-word poem, an image or art piece with an explanation, an essay, a comic strip or a journal entry, a collage poem or a “lesson plan” in which the student shows how they would teach this big idea through the unit.

Here is an example of curricular big ideas:

Understanding how political decision are made is critical to being an informed and engaged citizen (Explorations 11, Political Science 12)

Value systems and belief systems shape the structures of power and authority within a culture. (Comparative Cultures 12)

Political institutions and ideology shape both the exercise of power and the nature of political outcomes.(Political Studies 12)

The development of political institutions is influenced by economic, social, ideological, and geographic factors. (SS10)

Preparation (by teacher and by students)

Teacher will need access to a laptop and a projector for the various visuals.

Teacher will need to access and print the images of the difference political spaces.

Teacher will create a PowerPoint of the visuals.

Teacher will print out the graphic organizers for students.

Students will need laptops to access the websites.

Duration of activity

If completing all the activities, duration can vary between 5-7 classes based on the classroom needs.

Learning Outcomes

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Materials & Resources

Site links:

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<https://www.archdaily.com/1001808/the-fractals-at-the-heart-of-indigenous-african-architecture>

<https://www.virtualststephens.org.uk/sites/virtualststephens.org.uk/files/panoramas/1707/tour.html>

[virtual tour of the B.C. Legislature building](#)

[govTogetherBC](#)

[MLA Finder](#)

[BC Ministry Service Plans website](#)

[Register to Vote program](#)

Evaluation of activity

Numerous formative and summative assessments of the learning opportunities are embedded into the lessons/activities. These assessments include:

1. Class discussion
2. Presentations
3. Exit Slips
4. Graphic organizers
5. Written letter to the MLA/Minister

Summative Assessment:

Wrap-up proof of learning: Reflective text

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Examples of texts are a podcast or mock interview between two students, a spoken-word poem, an image or art piece with an explanation, an essay, a comic strip or a

journal entry, a collage poem or a “lesson plan” in which the student shows how they would teach this big idea through the unit.

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NOTE: *The ideas and opinions expressed in this classroom activity belong to their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Parliamentary Education Office only edits for clarity.*