“Press” Here for Information

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| **Class:** American Government |
| **Unit:** Political Participation Unit |
| **Lesson Title or Topic/Essential Questions:** Essential Questions:* What challenges do citizens face when seeking information about the judicial process and decisions?
* What challenges do journalists face when tasked with covering the courts?
* How can these challenges be overcome, to better inform our participation in the political process?
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| **Estimated Classroom Time Required for the Lesson:** Eight days (55 minutes, each class) |
| **Content Standard Alignment:** Idaho State Standards (9-12):G.4.3.3 – Identify the ways in which citizens can participate in the political process at the local, state, and national  level.RH.9-10.6 – Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including  which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.WHST.9-10.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate  to taste, purpose, and audience. |
| **Lesson Objectives/Instructional Outcomes:**Objective 1: Identify ways in which citizens can better inform their participation in the political process.Objective 2: Compare/contrast the points of view of two or more authors whose writing address the same topic.Objective 3: Identify ways to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to a specific audience. |
| **Lesson’s Relationship to Unit Structure:**This unit will be taught after previous units on the three branches of government. It builds on the knowledge from these units by having students analyze ways that citizens can more effectively inform themselves about political processes, specifically at the level of state courts. This lesson has students analyze the video of an Idaho Supreme Court appeal, and contrast two or three reporters’ accounts of the proceeding. Students will then analyze the challenges citizens face when seeking information about court proceedings and decisions and write an essay answering the essential question(s). |
| **Instructional Materials/Resources**Materials/Resources:* Youtube video about state courts structure - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq3n8hf8EoU (watch first 2 minutes)
* Betsy Russell’s *Balance of powers, sales tax on food at stake in Idaho court case*. Tue., May 30, 2017, 10:12 am – The Spokesman Review
* Case Analysis Template
* Hearing of *Nate v. Denney*: <http://164.165.67.41/SC/2017/ISC_45001.mp4>
* Padlet - <https://padlet.com>
* Rubric for news article - <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=ShowRubric&rubric_id=561964&>
* Three news accounts of hearing –

Idaho's High Court Considers Otter's Grocery Tax Veto <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/idaho/articles/2017-06-15/idahos-high-court-considers-otters-grocery-tax-veto>In packed courtroom, Idaho justices hear arguments in grocery tax case <http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/2017/jun/15/packed-courtroom-idaho-justices-hear-arguments-grocery-tax-case/> Idaho Supreme Court hears arguments in grocery tax veto fight <http://www.ktvb.com/news/local/idaho/idaho-supreme-court-hears-arguments-in-grocery-tax-veto-fight/449406051>* Article Analysis Template
* Idaho Supreme Court decision *Nate v. Denney*
* Informative Essay Rubric - <http://www.orcsd.org/images/PerformanceTaskWritingRubric_InformativeExplanatory.pdf>
* News articles on the *Nate v. Denney* decision.
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| **Methods and Instructional Strategies** |
| **Concept Prerequisites**Vocabulary/Key Concepts:Federal/State Court Structure (review)Judicial ReviewJudicial DecisionJudicial OpinionRule of LawAppealPetitionVetoWrit of MandamusPrecedentImpartial, Independent Judiciary |
| **Anticipated Student Misconceptions**Students may believe that the press can always be relied on to inform the public of what officials are doing and about official policies and goals. Students may also have misconceptions about judges and the judicial system from the way they are portrayed by media. The case used in this activity involves the sales tax on groceries. This is an issue that generates strong reactions from some people. As a result, some students might focus their attention on the social outcome of the case while minimizing or dismissing important points of law.  |
| **Introduction/Anticipatory Set**Day 1Present the class with the question: Should students be able to turn in homework assignments up to the last day of a semester? Why/Why not?* Watch first few minutes of a Youtube video about state courts structure - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq3n8hf8EoU>
* Distribute to students copies of Betsy Russell’s *Balance of powers, sales tax on food at stake in Idaho court case*. Tue., May 30, 2017, 10:12 am – *The Spokesman Review*
* Students will work with a partner to read and annotate Ms. Russell’s article. Students’ analyses will be shared in class discussion on the issues of the case.

Questions for discussion: * Who are the central figures in this case?
* What is the petitioner(s) asking the court to do?
* What are the central arguments for both sides in this case?
* What are the issues at stake here?
* Is this case important to the citizens of Idaho? Why? Why not?
* What are the potential outcomes of this case?
* How will the outcome affect you?
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| **Instructional Activities**Days Two and ThreeAs a class, students will view Idaho Supreme Court Video Archive - Hearing of *Nate v. Denney*: <http://164.165.67.41/SC/2017/ISC_45001.mp4> , and take notes using the Case Analysis Template (CAT). As they view the video, pretending they are reporters for the local newspaper, they should take notes on what they see and hear:* Why is this case important to the citizens of Idaho?
* What do citizens need to know about today’s hearing?
* What are the central arguments in the case?
* What questions and issues should be further discussed in class?

Conduct a class discussion about the hearing to answer any questions and clear up confusion and misconceptions. Students will add notes on new information to their CAT. Day 4Discuss the writing assignment, with a focus on the rubric that will be used for peer review. Students will then use their notes to write an article about the hearing (for the local newspaper) and publish their story on <https://padlet.com>. Day 5 Once stories have been published, assign students to small, cooperative learning groups that will review two or three of their peers’ submissions using the rubric at: (<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=ShowRubric&rubric_id=561964&>). Students will discuss the challenges reporters face when tasked with covering the courts. Students’ having to write about something about which they might not be entirely familiar, illustrates one of the challenges a reporter, new to the court scene, might face. Discussion will bring out other challenges like time constraints, word counts, formats, access, etc.Days 6 and 7 Distribute copies of three reporters’ accounts of the hearing. Students will read and then compare and contrast the three articles, recording information on the Article Analysis Template. Students will share thoughts with their cooperative learning groups, and then with the full class. In each article:* What limitations did students notice?
* Did the authors’ coverage highlight the rule of law?
* Was coverage balanced and thorough?
* Was the focus on central issues, or the people involved in the case?

Using their notes from organizers and discussion, students will draft an essay to answer the Essential Question: What challenges do citizens face when seeking information about the judicial process and decisions?  |
| **Differentiation According to Student Needs**Scaffolding is important for all learners prior to watching the video of hearing. Video could be stopped periodically and discussed so students understand what is taking place. Focus could be narrowed to one argument. Comparing and contrasting only two articles (perhaps edited in advance by the teacher) simplifies that activity. |
| **Wrap Up- Synthesis/Closure**Day 8Students will examine the decision handed down by the Court and will engage in a classroom discussion about how the decision connects to the law. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing the law and not on critiquing the judge/judges or the social effect of the decision. Should the law relevant to the ruling be changed? Does the law uphold justice in this situation? |
| **Assessment (Formative and Summative)**Using their notes from organizers and discussions, students will write an essay in response to the Essential Question: What challenges do citizens face when seeking information about the judicial process and decisions?  A helpful rubric from ISAT that applies to informative essays can be found at: (<http://www.orcsd.org/images/PerformanceTaskWritingRubric_InformativeExplanatory.pdf>). |
| **Extension and Evaluation of the Lesson** |
| Students will search for two or three articles about the decision and compare and contrast the coverage with the actual written decision of the Court (or on the reporting of decisions in other cases). Students will be asked to evaluate coverage and representation of the facts in the articles. |

Name of case: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Petitioner: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Court: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| 1. Background: What is the issue?
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| 1. What are the questions before the court?
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| Petitioner | Respondent |
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| Explain your personal feelings and beliefs about what should happen. What “take-aways” do you have from this issue?  |
| Extension: Explain what the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ political party’s view would be on this issue: |

Name of reporter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of article: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of publisher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of article:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| 1. Background: What is the issue?
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| 1. What are the questions before the court?
 |
| Petitioner | Respondent |
| How was information presented by reporter? Did you notice anything about their treatment of the issue? |
| What connection did the reporter make to the rule of law?  |