



### DVD chapters:

• Why the Legislature Is Important	3:10
• Structure of the Legislature	0:55
• History of the State House	3:00
• How a Bill Becomes Law and the Importance of Committees	5:33
• How to Get Involved	3:42
• Visiting the State House	2:47
• Useful Resources	7:36

### General relevant Grade Expectations:

- H&SS - 14 Students act as citizens
- H&SS - 15 Students show understanding of various forms of government
- H&SS - 17 Students examine how access to various institutions affects justice, reward, and power

These are aligned with 7th and 8th grade GEs. For more detailed information about high school GEs see the Department of Education's social studies web page at [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_curriculum/history.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_curriculum/history.html).

### Teaching Tools

This program can be useful in the classroom by:

- Showing students how the legislative process works
- Preparing them for a visit to the State House
- Teaching students how to follow legislative action, determining who their elected representatives are, and how to contact them

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## Learning Activities

Research your representatives and senators. (To start, go to <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/> then click on "Find My Representative or Senator" in the lower right corner.) What about their backgrounds and beliefs makes them both ordinary citizens and political leaders?

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Defining criteria for selecting leaders at the school, community, state, national and international levels

Legislative committees can be described as the backbone of the legislative process. Choose a committee to research. What is its purpose and makeup? What legislation is it currently considering? Be sure to check the weekly schedule of committee meetings at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/schedule/schedule2.cfm> for the chance to see your committee in action.

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Describing how rules and laws are created
- Identifying the basic functions, structures and purposes of governments within the United States

What current issues are being discussed and debated by the Vermont Legislature? What could this legislation mean for you, your family, or your town? What are the basic arguments on both sides of the issue? What is your opinion of this legislation? To deepen your understanding, watch a committee hearing or contact a lawmaker to schedule a visit to your school. Go to "Connecting Legislators to Schools at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/CivicEd/>.

**[H&SS7-8:14] Students act as citizens by:**

- Giving examples of ways people act as members of a global community
- Identifying problems, proposing solutions, and considering the effects of a course of action in the local community, state, nation, or world
- Explaining and defending their own point of view on issues that affect themselves and society, using information gained from reputable sources

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Describing how government decisions impact and/or relate to their lives

**[H&SS5-6:19] Students show understanding of the inter-connections between government and the economy by:**

- Evaluating the costs and benefits of government economic programs to both individuals and groups

## Learning Activities (continued)

The Vermont Legislature's Website allows users to track the status of current legislation. Track a current bill by going to <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/> then clicking on Legislation Information Database.

Research how a bill becomes a law in Vermont by reading the information at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/FieldTrip/TheLegislativeProcess.htm> or viewing the flow chart at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/FieldTrip/BillToLawFlowChart.htm>. Take an issue that you feel strongly about, create legislation about this issue, and get it sponsored by a member of the Vermont Legislature. Compare the path of your legislation to the information provided on the above Web pages.

Make your own flow chart or graphic representation of how a bill becomes a law. Use your graphic to explain the process to a younger student at your school.

Learn more about what legislative pages do and apply to become one at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/misc/LegPagesApp.htm>.

With your teacher, schedule a tour to the State House. Click on <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/sthouse/sthouse.htm> for more information.

Find out more about the positions of Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House. How is each person connected to the legislature? Who currently holds these positions? Compare and contrast their beliefs, backgrounds, and priorities.

How is the Vermont Legislature similar and different to the United States legislature? To begin your research, click on <http://www.thomas.loc.gov/links/>.

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Describing how rules and laws are created (e.g., participating in a simulation about creating a new law)
- Identifying the basic functions, structures and purposes of governments within the United States

**[H&SS7-8:14] Students act as citizens by:**

- Identifying problems, proposing solutions, and considering the effects of a course of action in the local community, state, nation, or world
- Explaining and defending their own point of view on issues that affect themselves and society, using information gained from reputable sources
- Establishing rules and/or policies for a group, school, or community, and defending them

**[H&SS7-8:16] Students examine how different societies address issues of human interdependence by:**

- After examining issues from more than one perspective, defining and defending the rights and needs of others in the community, nation and world

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Describing how rules and laws are created
- Identifying the basic functions, structures and purposes of governments within the United States

**[H&SS7-8:14] Students act as citizens by:**

- Demonstrating positive interaction with group members

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Describing how rules and laws are created

**[H&SS7-8:8] Students connect the past with the present by:**

- Explaining differences between historic and present day objects in the United States and/or the world, and evaluating how the use of the object and the object itself changed over time
- Investigating and evaluating how events, people, and ideas (democracy, for example) have shaped the United States and the world, and hypothesizing how different influences could have led to different consequences

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Defining criteria for selecting leaders at the school, community, state, national and international levels

**[H&SS7-8:15] Students show understanding of various forms of government by:**

- Identifying the basic functions, structures and purposes of governments within the United States