

# ***From Disorder to Order: The Need for Government***

by

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## **Lesson Description**

In this lesson students will discover the reasons why government is essential for a society to function in an orderly way. The students will first participate in a small group activity where they will read about a community that has no government, and therefore is in a state of chaos. Each group will identify the problems in the community and how they think the problems could be solved. Next, students will use the previous scenario to identify how a government might help the situation, and what functions the government would provide. As a culminating activity, students will create a society with a functioning government. Students illustrate, write, and present their findings to the class.

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

## **End of Cluster Expectation (Benchmark) Addressed: Civics 1 [Government]**

Students will understand that governments exist in the United States for many purposes.

**Focus Question:** Why does government exist?

**Assessments:** See pages 8-9.

## **Objectives**

Students will:

- Identify the general purposes of government through the process of deductive reasoning.
- Explain the various purposes of government in the United States and Delaware.

## **Prior Knowledge or Skills Needed**

Civics 1 for grades K-3 suggest that students will understand the concept of authority and that positions of authority, whether elected, appointed, or familial, carry responsibilities and should be respected. Students should also have a basic understanding that rules are necessary for groups of people to get along and reach a common goal. By fourth grade, students have been exposed to a variety of structured groups. For example, they have played on sports teams, been in classrooms, and have also been a part of other community activities.

## **Time to Complete**

3 days (approximately 40 minutes per day)

### **Materials Needed**

- If Everybody Did By: Jo Ann Stover
- Frenzy Island Activity Sheet (Handout 1)
- Highlighters
- Chart Paper
- Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils, Art Supplies
- Poster Paper
- Frenzy Island Listening Sheet (Handout 2)

### **Procedures**

- Began class with the following (setting is students in your classroom).  
“I have decided to turn the classroom over to you today. You can do whatever you’d like. I have a lot of phone calls that I have to make and I need to go to the faculty lounge make some copies for math. Does anyone have a concern about this?”
- After the students share their concerns, or enthusiasm, begin reading the book If Everybody Did.

### **Day 1**

1. Introduce the lesson by reading the book If Everybody Did. Project transparency copies of select pages on the overhead to insure that all students see some illustrations in the book. After reading the book, have the students discuss (turn and talk to a partner) what life would actually be like if everybody did what they wanted.
2. Divide the class into small groups and distribute copies of Handout 1. Ask students to read “Frenzy Island,” the fictional story about an island on which chaos is king. Then, have them work in their small groups to answer the short response questions at the bottom of the page.
3. Lead a whole group discussion focusing on the questions at the bottom of Handout 1.
4. Students will be given a short writing prompt - Why is it important when people are living in groups to have someone in a position of authority? (i.e.: coach, teacher, parent)

### **Day 2**

1. Review previous day’s activity. Ask the students to describe the problem on Frenzy Island. How did the class suggest the problem might be solved?
2. Write the word “government” on the board. Ask students to write the first thing that comes to their mind when they hear the word “government.”
3. Create a web of student responses on the board.
4. Ask the students to use the web and their own prior knowledge to construct a definition of government.

5. Revisit the story of Frenzy Island. Discuss the fact that Frenzy Island does not have a system of government. There is an absence of authority. Nobody is in charge. There are no laws and people are doing whatever they want without worrying about the impact it has on other citizens.
6. Have students return to their small groups. Ask them to create a T-chart. In the left hand column they are to identify the problems that are occurring on Frenzy Island. Give the students a few minutes then ask them to share their responses
7. Now, have the students list ways in which the government might intervene to help solve the problems identified in the right hand columns of their T-charts. For example, students might identify the fact that people are stealing and hurting others. They should recognize the need for laws and people to enforce the laws.
8. The students will then reconvene to share their opinions on how government would improve Frenzy Island.
9. The teacher will create a chart titled “Purposes of Government.”
10. As students share, the teacher will rephrase their contributions to fit the purposes of government listed below. Each of the purposes will be added to the chart. The teacher will add additional purposes that the students may not have recognized.
  - Maintaining social order
  - Providing public services
  - Providing national security
  - Managing conflict
  - Establishing and administering justice
  - Managing resources
11. In closing, the teacher will review the purposes for government and why it is necessary.

### **Day Three**

1. The teacher will begin by reviewing yesterday’s lessons. The students will be asked the following questions. Why is government necessary? What purposes does government serve in a community? Teacher will lead a discussion to make sure the students have an understanding of these concepts.
2. Students will be asked to look at the picture that accompanies the Frenzy Island story. Ask the students:
  - Would you want to live on Frenzy Island? Explain why (or why not).  
One expects that students would not like to live on Frenzy Island because there is no government.
3. Have students to return to their small groups. Tell them that “Government has now arrived on Frenzy Island!” Ask the groups to pretend that they are now the newly elected government of Frenzy Island. Each group is to create laws that will solve each of the problems on Frenzy Island.
4. After students have decided how their government will solve the problems, they will be asked to create a drawing of the “new” Frenzy Island i.e. the one with a government. After the drawing is complete, students should write a paragraph describing their poster, and what life is like on Frenzy Island now.

5. When groups have finished, the class will come together as a whole. Each group will have a chance to share their completed project.
6. As each group presents their project, the rest of the class will complete a listening sheet (See Handout 2). Handout 2 is designed to serve as a vehicle for students to demonstrate their understanding of the purposes of government by identifying examples of the various purposes of government that are provided by other groups. When they hear an example of the function, they are to place a check mark next to that particular function. Then they should write an example that was mentioned in the presentation. For example, the group might say that no citizen's property is being stolen anymore because the government is now MAINTAINING ORDER due to the creation of a police force.
7. Refer back to the purposes of government chart and put a check next to all of the purposes that were shown in the presentations. If a purpose is not illustrated, ask students to give an example of how that purpose might be applied to Frenzy Island.
8. Debrief: return to the Key Question for this lesson. Why does government exist?

**Tips for the Teacher:** A group of educators who analyzed student work that was collected during piloting suggested that it might be helpful to focus on 2-3 purposes of government if this is an initial lesson on the subject of government purposes. This might help make the learning more memorable or manageable. Subsequent lessons might build on the initial list of 2-3 purposes.

### **Extensions**

- Create bulletin board. The bulletin board would be titled: "Islands of Purpose: Why we have government." On a blue background, kids would make little islands. Each island would contain one of the six purposes for government. Beneath each island the students would give an explanation and examples identifying what their particular function means to them.
- Teacher could create a current events corner. In this area of the classroom, students would be provided with newspapers or current magazines. Students would also be encouraged to bring articles from home. Students would be looking for examples of our government in action.

### **Citations**

Stover, Jo Ann. If Everybody Did. Bob Jones University Press, Greenville, South Carolina. 1989.

Lesson 1- Why Do We Need Government? Adapted from:  
[www.michigan.gov/scope.html](http://www.michigan.gov/scope.html) 3/26/2004

Handout 1

# Frenzy Island

People living on Frenzy Island are having problems. The people do whatever they want. If one family likes the lawn furniture of another family, they just take it. The strong people push the weaker people around. People drive as fast as they want and are always running into each other. Many of the roads have large potholes which cause many accidents. Some people are homeless and do not have enough food to feed their family. Sometimes, a group of the weaker people join together to get even with one of the stronger people. Nobody feels safe on the island, especially since “outsiders” have been rowing close to the island. The “outsiders” have been identified as citizens of neighboring Meany Island. The many problems on Frenzy Island are beginning to frustrate the citizens.

## *Questions*

1. Why do you think that there are so many problems on the island of Frenzy?
2. How might the problems be solved?

Handout 2

## Frenzy Island Listening Sheet

As your classmates share their presentations listen for each of the functions of government listed below. As you hear one mentioned, place a check mark beside it, and then describe the example that was given.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Maintaining Social Order**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Providing Public Services**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Providing National Security**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Managing Conflict**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Establishing and Administering Justice**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

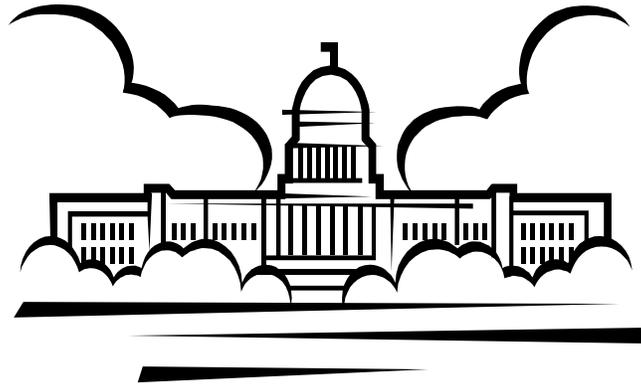
\_\_\_\_\_ **Managing Resources**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessment 1: Selected Response

**Benchmark Statement:** Students will understand that governments exist for many purposes in the United States.

Data



### Selected Response Prompt:

Which of the following is a purpose of government?

- a. providing people with everything they want
- b. maintaining social order
- c. forcing people to do everything they are told
- d. ordering everyone to be polite to one another

*Desired Response =   b*

## Assessment 2: Extended Response

**Benchmark Statement:** *Students will understand that governments exist for many purposes in the United States.*

[Data](#)



### Extended Response Prompt:

How might life in Delaware be different without government? Use this information to explain what might be one purpose of government.

### *Desired Response*

2- Life in Delaware would be different because everyone would do what they wanted and this might lead to the kind of chaos and disorder that threatens people and their property. An advantage to having government is that Delaware is a more orderly place to live. For example, the government provides police officers to enforce traffic laws to reduce car accidents. This means fewer people will get hurt.

1- Life in Delaware would be different because everyone would do what they wanted.

0- Life would be better with no government.

### **Rubric**

- 2 - This response gives a valid reason with an accurate and relevant explanation.**
- 1 - This response gives a valid reason with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no explanation.**
- 0- Inaccurate or no response.**

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