

OUR FLAG
UNITY FOR ALL

Changing Rules, Laws, and the Flag

Grade Level: 9th-12th

Time: 60-75 minutes

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the process of making changes in rules at different levels (school, state government, federal government).
- Students will analyze how President Eisenhower's administration guided the adoption of the 50-star flag.
- Students will evaluate how the U.S. flag would change if a territory became a state.
- Students will practice critical thinking by comparing small-scale changes at school to national-level decisions.
- Students will engage in collaborative activity to apply these ideas.

Key Vocabulary

- Rule vs. Law
- Amendment
- Ratification
- Territory vs. Statehood
- Symbolism

Standards:

- Kansas State History, Government, and Social Studies, 9th-12th grade government: Students will explore the vital role individuals play by being civically engaged in the varying levels of government. Each will analyze their own duty and ability to influence or alter governing bodies, when needed, in accordance with founding principles and documents.
- Kansas State History, Government, and Social Studies, 9th-12th grade government: Students will examine the creation, structure, and processes of the United States federal government and analyze the connections between federal, tribal, state, and local governments.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Lesson Progression

Slide 3: Facilitate a discussion of the question, “Have you ever wanted to change a rule or law?”

1. **Slide 4:** Ask, “How did you try (or how would you try) to change it?”
 - Guide discussion: There are different enforcers of rules or laws. The slide shows examples of family/school, city, and state laws that affect teens.
2. **Slide 5-7:** Ask students if their family has a process for changing rules? (Maybe some do?) Then, show the process required to change and/or creating rules and laws at the school, state, and federal levels.
3. Use **slides 8-9** to discuss the history of changing the U.S. flag during the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration.
4. **Slide 10:** Present the basic three steps laid out for the U.S. flag to be changed. Ask students how we know that to be a true fact? (ask Wikipedia? ask AI? that’s what my dad said? saw it on a movie?)
5. **Slide 11:** Review the *definition and importance of Primary Sources*.
 - Pass out copies of the White House Press Release from Oct. 16, 1958, and copies of the Primary Source Analysis sheet. (Document 0, Modeling Doc, found on page 4 of this lesson plan.
6. Use **slide 12** and the one side of the analysis worksheet to model how to analyze a primary source. This particular primary source was written by James C. Hagerty on behalf of the White House. It was released to the press/public on October 16, 1958. It outlines the process the Eisenhower administration underwent when changes to the flag were imminent.
7. Show students some flag design submissions on **slides 13-14**. These are also primary source documents, and several were created and submitted by citizens, some students. Ask how many designs were submitted, according to the primary source press release? (1900)
8. **Slide 15:** Go over instructions for the primary source analysis activity. These instructions are also included on the worksheet.
 - a. The students will work in pairs or small groups.

- b. Distribute one of the 15 primary source documents to pairs of students. (Due to the variety of document lengths, you may want to go 1 document:1 student for the one-two page documents.
 - c. Each pair or group should work together to read the document and answer the questions on the worksheet.
 - d. Pairs need to share their answers with the class.
 - e. When groups are finished, direct the whole class to work together to put the documents in chronological order to demonstrate a timeline of the flag-changing process.
10. **Slide 16 provides more information** about President Eisenhower's influence on and attitude towards the U.S. flag.
11. Use **slide 17** to extend these ideas to the present day: What would happen to the flag if Puerto Rico or another territory became a state?
12. Give instructions for the Simulation Activity. These instructions are also included on **slide 18**.
- a. Working in pairs, groups, or as individuals, students should design a new U.S. flag that contains 51 stars. As students work, select 12 (or roughly one-third to one half of your class) to be the committee.
 - b. Each design should be presented to the committee for consideration.
 - c. The committee will vote on their chosen submission and give their recommendation to the "president" (you or another adult).
 - d. The "president" will confirm the committee's choice or ask for a resubmission.
13. Slides 19-20: Review the similarities and differences between changing a school rule and changing a governmental law.
- Both require a proposal, review, and approval. Both have structured processes to help maintain order and fairness.
 - Guide discussion of the review questions on slide 20. These could also be assigned as a written review of what was presented/learned in this lesson.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Participation in discussion, quality of reasoning in group activity.
- **Summative (optional):** Short reflection paper on the similarities and differences between changing a school rule, a law, and the national flag.

Extension / Homework

- Research another time the U.S. flag was redesigned and explain the historical context.
- Use persuasive or argumentative writing techniques to answer the following prompt:
"Should the U.S. adopt a flag design that allows for unlimited state additions without redesign? Why or why not?"

President Eisenhower played a significant role in the flag we see today. He was, in fact, the only U.S. President to serve under three different flags! As our country unites to celebrate the 250th signing of the Declaration of Independence, The Eisenhower Foundation and IKEducation is offering educators the opportunity to receive a free U.S. flag along with many resources to enhance student understanding and appreciation for the symbol of our country.

The 15 documents used with this lesson are all from the holdings of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, in Abilene, Kansas.

The text on the documents that looks like this was added for the purposes of this lesson and is NOT original to the document.