

# Real Life Application of Bill Writing

*Lesson Plan for Grade 12, Government  
Prepared by Mr. Larson*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this lesson, students will get into groups of 2-3 and analyze the school handbook. They will then find a portion of the handbook which they think should be changed and come up with a stump speech as to why they believe this. If they convince the teacher they will move to step two of the project. If the teacher is not convinced, they students should find another portion of the handbook to address or come up with a new stump speech. Step two of this project involves students rewriting their chosen portion of the handbook. For step three, the students will present their newly written portion to the school advisory council with the intent of getting it placed in the handbook for the following school year.

This lesson will give students the chance to see how legislators draft bills. The students will understand how legislators negotiate with other parties to ensure their bill is passed and ultimately becomes law. Additionally, this give the students the chance to publicly speak in front of both their peers and adults on the school advisory council.

## EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. Montana Content Standard 1—Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.
2. Montana Content Standard 2—Students analyze how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance to understand the operation of government and to demonstrate civic responsibility.
3. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10 - Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## OBJECTIVES

1. TLW be able to analyze written work for clarity and unambiguous writing.
2. TLW be be able to write their ideas in a clear and concise manner.
3. TLW be able to see compromise in action and analyze how the desire to compromise influenced their decisions.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Copy of the Student handbook (one per student)  
<http://www.buttecentral.org/highschool/documents.php>
2. Computers or smartphone to type (minimum of one per group)

## VERIFICATION

### *Steps to check for student understanding*

1. Students will give a stump speech to the teacher. This will allow the teacher to see if the students  
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  - a. Understand the section of the handbook they are rewriting.
  - b. Have enough information to move forward with their plan.
2. Students will be required to turn in what they have accomplished at the end of the class period. This will allow the teachers to look over student work and give positive and constructive feedback to the students, ensuring they will meet the learning objectives.
3. The teacher will conference with individual student groups through the class period, asking them questions about their project and ensuring they are progressing towards the learning objectives. If they are not, the teacher will prompt the students with questions to get their minds and projects going in the right direction.

## ACTIVITY

### Background content:

The day before the lesson is introduced to students they will take notes on how legislators pass bills. This lesson will also include information on what makes a “good” bill. A good bill is clearly written and leaves little to nothing up to interpretation.

On the day of the lesson students will be grouped by their readiness levels. I will strategically pair an advanced student with an intermediate student and a struggling student. In their groups, the students will begin to go through the student handbook and highlight portions that they wish to change.

They will then come to the teacher and inform them of the section they are addressing. There may be no groups addressing the same portion of the student handbook so these will be picked on a first come first serve basis.

After the teacher is aware of what section the students are addressing, the students will go back to their groups and begin writing their stump speech. Their stump speech should be a short 1-2 minute speech in which all members of the group address the portion of the handbook they wish to change, why they wish to change it, and what their proposal is. The teacher will be writing down feedback of their proposal and stump speech as they gave it and will discuss this with the students when they finish their stump speech. If the teacher is satisfied, the students will begin to rewrite the portion of the handbook they wish to amend/change.

In their groups, the students will rewrite their section of the handbook. As they work, the teacher should monitor the classroom and play the role of devil's advocate. It's important that students understand that

they are trying to convince administration to change the handbook and that compromise is necessary. When the students feel like their rewritten portion of the handbook is complete, they should conference with the teacher. The teacher will go over the student work and offer commentary about what the students did well and what should be improved. This serves as a formative assessment and also allows the students to enact positive change in their school.

The students should then take the teacher feedback and complete a final version of their rewritten portion of the handbook. This will be submitted to the teacher in an electronic copy.

After the electronic copy is turned in, the students will work together to come up with a sales pitch on why the advisory council should adopt their proposal. Their pitch should be between 4-5 minutes. How they decide to present it totally up to the students. They could do a business presentation, a video, or any other proposal pre approved by the teacher. The students will present this to the class to receive feedback from both the teacher and their peers. Additionally, this will give them the chance to practice their presentation before presenting to the advisory council.

Once they give the presentation to the class, the students will schedule a time to present their proposal to the advisory council.

After their presentation, the students will complete a feedback proposal to the teacher. This will serve as the summative assessment of the assignment. They will tell the teacher how their project came together. They should explain why they picked the portion of the handbook they did, how they came up with their reasons for changing things, how their presentation came together, and how their presentation to the advisory council went. Additionally, they should give feedback on their fellow group members. Students may complete this in a one page written paper, an audio file, or any other way they wish.