

Where Are They Safe?

Understanding Presidential Succession

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Grade Level	8
Duration	3 class periods

National Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface

Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places

5. That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.

Element 6: The Uses of Geography

18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

AZ Standards

ELA

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

8.W.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

The use of geographic representations and tools helps individuals understand their world.

8.G1.1 Use geographic tools and representations to analyze historical and modern political and economic issues and events.

Global Interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographic reasoning.

8.G4.1 Take an active stance on a geographic issue reflecting its scale (local, regional, state, national, or global)

CIVICS

An understanding of civic and political institutions in society and the principles these institutions are intended to reflect including knowledge about law, politics, and government is essential to effective citizenship.

8.C3.2 Examine the origins and purpose of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.

Process, rules, and laws direct how individuals are governed and how society addresses problems

8.C4.2 Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems.

Overview

Many organizations in our world have a distinctive chain of command. This chain of command is needed to keep things running in planned and unplanned situations. One of things that students should understand is that there is a formal plan in place to safeguard and to replace, if necessary, the President.

In this lesson students will learn about two very different concepts. First, they will learn about the chain of leadership for Presidential Succession. They will also be investigating different regions across the U.S. By learning about these different regions and their geographic features, students will be able to understand why certain members of our government are never in the same location at once.

Purpose

Materials

Where Are They Safe? Understanding Presidential Succession

- Projection device
- Who do you think should be in line for Presidential Succession? Worksheet
- Current Order Answer Key
- Regional National Disasters Cards
- Region Cards and Answer Key
- US Regions map (unlabeled regions)
https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US_Regions_blank.pdf
- US Regions Teacher map (labeled and in color)
https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US_Regions_Teacher_Key.pdf
- Physical Regions of the United States
https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US_PHYSICAL_REGIONS.pdf
- 5 different colors of highlighters or colored pencils
- Large U.S. map
<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-tilemap.pdf>
- Tape/pushpins
- Presidential Succession Assessment

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Identify the chain of leadership in Presidential Succession.
2. Apply the Presidential Succession plan.
3. Identify the 5 geographic regions across the U.S.
4. Explain geographic features of these 5 different regions.

Procedures

Prior to this session: research the current holders of the various offices mentioned in the lesson.

SESSION ONE

1. Begin the lesson by asking the students if they know who is next in line if something were to happen to the current president. Lead them in a discussion.
 - Why they think it is important to have a back-up?
 - How this related to the chain of command in your school, in a company, or even in their family?
2. Distribute the Who do you think should be in line for Presidential Succession? worksheet to each student. Give them about 10-15 minutes to fill out the first page.
3. When students are done, have them compare their list with their neighbors, but don't allow them to make changes.

4. Project Current Order Answer Key. Name the current people in office and provide descriptions to help the students better understand the offices. Or have students research the holders of these offices on their handheld devices.
5. Collect their worksheets as the assessment for the day.

SESSION TWO

6. Begin this session by asking students if they know what region we live in. This should lead to a discussion about regions.
 - What is a region?
 - What are the 5 regions of the U.S?
 - How are the regions different from each other in terms of climate, land, and resources?
7. Distribute the unlabeled U.S. Regions Map to each student. Project the U.S. Regions (labeled and colored) map. Have students color the regions and complete the legend.
8. Next have them mark on the map with a small "x" all the states they have lived in or visited.
9. Discuss what national disasters/elements have the students experienced (or know about) in these different locations. Assign symbols to these disasters and have them mark their map to indicate strong occurrences of these natural phenomena. (i.e., blizzard = ❄, heat = H, lots of mountains = MMMM, etc.)
10. Remind students to create a legend on their map with different symbols for the natural disasters that they identified.
11. While students are working on their maps, walk around the room asking each student (group) to explain one or two differences between the 5 main regions. Or you can collect their maps for full grading.

SESSION THREE

Prior to this session: Print in color and assemble the giant U.S. map found at <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-tilemap.pdf> or use a classroom wall map for this session.

12. Begin class by taking 5 minutes to discuss U.S. regions and succession and review what the students have learned the last two days. Pass back the Who do you think should be in line for Presidential Succession? worksheet. Have them also refer to their U.S. Regions maps.
13. Project the Regional National Disaster Cards. Have the class use their maps where they have identified natural disasters in certain regions to help you fill in the cards. (See Card 1) Have them also create some more original types of

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disasters (i.e. flash floods, nuclear plant explosions, zombies, etc.) for the regions.

14. Divide the students into pairs. Distribute the 5 Region Cards (precut if possible) or allow time for cutting.
15. Instruct students to take their presidential succession list and divide the members in the list throughout the USA. Explain that their task is to make sure that their government can still run even if certain members are not available. They should also identify what could happen in the different regions (hurricane, etc.).
16. Once the students have finished the earlier steps, have them tape/tack their Region Cards on the large classroom USA map in the correct locations. Tell them their decisions are final, and cards cannot be moved once they have placed them. **OR** Instead of having the students place the cards on a large classroom map; students can write out their choices in the different regions on smaller individual maps like a bingo card.
17. Discuss with the students the practices already in place to make sure that certain members are not in the same location at once. (President and Vice President never fly on the same plane, etc.)
18. As a class, have one volunteer draw a Regional National Disaster Card from a jar or hat. This indicates what happens at a given time. If the event is severe enough remove the cards from that region. Or have the students cross off regions on their small map as the disaster cards are called.
19. Ask students who lost their president who is in charge next. Was there a group that put the president and vice president in the same place? Who is in charge of their country now?
20. Choose another card, and repeat the steps 18-19, are their governments still working? Who is running their country?
21. Continue this class process until you feel the students have experienced/figured out the importance of the presidential succession, and the involvement of regions in the USA.
22. Assess students with the Presidential Succession Assessment and as homework, students will write an argument defending one region over the others as the safest region of the U.S. in terms of natural disasters. This is where the President should be sent in a time of crisis. Remind students to include what scale is this issue (local, state, or national).

Assessment

Social Science

The Presidential Succession Assessment can be graded for the correct 5 leaders in the chain of succession. Mastery will be considered a score of 80% or higher.

The Region Cards and map can be graded for accuracy. Mastery will be considered a score of 80% or higher.

The argument for one region of the country should contain the scale of this issue (national). Mastery will be considered 100%.

ELA

The argument for one region of the country being safer than the others can be graded using the 6 Traits Writing Rubric in the areas of Ideas and Organization. Mastery will be considered a score of 4 or higher.

Extensions

For a flippant look at the Line of Succession view YouTube video (2.31 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn8e-WzKK9Y>

Have the students one of the following:

- Develop succession lists for other organizations.
- Create regions maps for their school or neighborhood.
- Give them a second chance at keeping their whole list safe.

Sources

Wikipedia list with links to each office and current officers

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_line_of_succession

Site to help explain governmental topics to kids.

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/government/national/succession.html>