

A Year in the Rule of Law

April Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Are ideas worth protecting?

Subject/Course: Government/Economics/ Civics

Topic: U.S. Patent Laws

Grades: 10-11-12

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Length of lesson: Three class periods with essay due at a later date

Essential Question: Are ideas worth protecting?

Day 1:

To introduce the lesson, ask the students, what is property? Get some answers (like real estate, land, housing, stuff, etc.) Then, ask them what the most valuable things you have are? - 5 min.

Have them make a list of about five. (coin, car, iPod) –And, then have them get into a group of 2-3 and compare/discuss their lists. – 10 min.

Whole Group Discussion- put items on board – once someone brings up the intangible (family, health, ideas, etc.) then go that direction and if they don't get there then "prod them along." – 10 min.

Then pose the following question: does your physical body have value/worth?

Answers should include the physical labor (economic concept) you provide (mowing, shoveling, prostitution, etc.). Then, the value of your ideas should come out - your mental capacity, your intelligence, your perspective, your creativity, etc. Spend some time discussing the value of ideas and then discuss how you measure the worth of an idea. – 15 min.

*** You can even use some of the MasterCard "priceless" commercials

Teacher Preparation for Day 2: Think of some ideas/inventions, perhaps a bit quirky or seemingly insignificant that might be less well-known but add comfort (like the safety pin, margarine, microwave, doorknobs, drinking straws, etc.) Go to <http://www.google.com/patents> and print out the copy of the patent and drawing for each of your students. *If you are not pressed for time, then you can have the students look them up their own examples at home or at the computer lab.

Day 2:

Distribute the patents in class and have students read them. Then they should go into small groups and talk about something they found interesting. -10 min.

Teacher Mini-lecture on patents and copyrights – 15 min.

Article 1 Section 8 – wording, framers’ intent, time frame, requirements, etc. Patent and Copyright rationale. Use: www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/doc/general/index.html for information.

Now you need to discuss what ideas have yet to be thought of or discovered.

Have students individually come up with a list of ideas and then discuss them as a large group. – 15 min.

If time permits, have students reflect on their own motives for discovery. Would they want to attain wealth, fame or service to others?

Homework: assign items for the students to bring in the next day. They need to volunteer to bring a book, CD, art print, game, movie, etc. that they value.

Day 3:

Have the students read a pro/con article about software/music piracy. Have them begin their list of pros/cons as they read. – 15 min. (articles may need to be updated)

“If pirating grows, it may not be the end of the music world” USA Today
www.usatoday.com/tech/columnist/kevinmaney/2005-05-03-music-piracy-china_x.htm

Illegal downloading: An artist’s Perspective –The Pendulum
www.elon.edu/pendulum/story.aspx?id=830

Pro piracy argument site: <http://piracyfaq.com>

Present the pro/con on the board – 10 min.

Now, have students present the item they brought in and volunteer students can briefly (one comment) share their opinion on whether their piece of work should be government protected with a copyright/patent. – 15 min.

***Final Assessment:** - give 2 nights for completion -- Write more than a one page (double-spaced) essay answering the essential question: - Are ideas worth protecting? Argue that Article 1 Section 8 in the Constitution is necessary. Or argue that Article 1 Section 8 should be amended and is not necessary. Use specific examples (past and/or future) in your arguments and be persuasive in your writing.

Teacher feedback: I use this lesson as a transition between Government and Economics since it contains both.

Student feedback: Students did not realize that ideas were way more valuable than things. A person's ideas could easily earn them a living and maybe much more. They copy music, movies and games regularly and don't want to stop. "Everyone does it!"

DESIGNING A LESSON GUIDE

Essential Question: Are ideas worth protecting?

Connection to Students' Lives: The students are asked to examine their own valuable items, their physical and mental assets, connect with an artistic piece that has value, to forecast necessary ideas, and ultimately, to evaluate if ideas warrant governmental protection.

Higher Order Thinking: Students will be evaluating, analyzing, forecasting, and considering multiple sides of an issue.

Evidence of Student Understanding: Students will engage in small and large group discussion. The final paper will serve as the best assessment to their understanding.

Mastery – CS – short lecture, reading articles, patent copies

Self-Discovery – CR – brainstorming, choice in essay thesis, discussion

Understanding – AS – open-ended questioning, pro/con piracy debate, patent copies/pics

Interpersonal – AR – group work, bring in artist selection, real-world piracy issue, creativity – patents

Materials Needed For Lesson: computer, board, lecture, copies of articles