



Draw the Lines

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: Who is Listening?

I HAVE: Two Days

LESSON TITLE: Connect the Dots

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Reflective writing
- ✓ Group work
- ✓ Out of their seat
- ✓ Smartboard or projector and laptop for video

MATERIALS:

- 2 Placards for BLUE STATE LEGISLATOR
- 2 placards for RED STATE LEGISLATOR
- 1 placard for STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE
- enough BLUE and RED dots for each student in the class
- roll of string
- masking tape
- Worksheets for: Three rounds of Maps, Groupings Exercise, Crash Course Questions

STEP-BY-STEP:

DAY ONE:

Select four students to be state legislators and give them the STATE LEGISLATOR placards, assign two students to be member of the BLUE party, and the other two students members of the RED party.

Select one student to be a member of the Supreme Court, and they will also be a scribe for the chart on the board. This student will also be creating a map of districts that they think is the most fair.

Explain to the class that the state legislators and judge will be dividing the class into districts, and the citizens in the same district will be voting in elections together.

Distribute large BLUE and RED dot placards to entire class, make sure there is a density of blue dots in one area, and more blue dots overall slightly.

Write the following charts on the board (Judge will transcribe results of map #1 & 2 and teacher will be scribe for map #3)

MAP #1 (Blue Leg in charge)	Number of Blue Dots:	Number of Red Dots:
District #1:		
District #2:		

District #3:		
District #4:		

MAP #2 (Red Leg in charge)	Number of Blue Dots:	Number of Red Dots:
District #1:		
District #2:		
District #3:		
District #4:		

MAP #3 (Judge in Charge)	Number of Blue Dots:	Number of Red Dots:
District #1:		
District #2:		
District #3:		
District #4:		

Give the BLUE legislators two large pieces of string and a roll of scotch tape, and allow them to walk around the room and decide how they want to divide up the class into four districts. The districts must be the same number of students and contiguous. Once they decide, assist them in taping the string to the ground or desk corners acting as boundary lines. Once completed introduce everyone in the same district to each other, and count up the number of BLUE and RED dots in each of the three districts.

Make sure the legislators know they will be assigning each of the FOUR legislators a district they must win the most votes in during the next election in order to stay in office.

At the end of Round 1 ask the Blue Legislators to assign themselves a district and the two RED legislators districts that they have to win during the next election.

Complete the same round with the RED legislators.

Give the string to the judge and ask the class to give the judge input on what would be the fairest way to come up with the districts. This may take a few minutes, as you want to get input from as many students as you can.

Look over the results from all three rounds and ask students

- What effect did giving the legislators control over map-making have?
- (Select a BLUE legislators district from Round 1) What will happen when one of our BLUE legislators runs for election in district _____?
- (Select a RED legislators district from Round 2) What has happened to the “voting power” of BLUE voters in district _____?
- Do you agree with the Judge’s map or would you have gone about it differently? Explain fully.

Homework: Complete worksheet on Groupings

DAY TWO--

Journal: Based on yesterday's activity, what do you think happens when politicians in Pennsylvania's legislature are allowed to draw the districts of their voters? What role did the member of the Judicial Branch play? Based on their role, do you think judges they should be elected by voters or appointed by state representatives?

Discuss journal and review any aspects of the activity yesterday that are pertinent to journal answers.

Distribute video questions and either play through and have students answer, or stop at intervals and ask for answers aloud:

Crash Course Government and Politics: Gerrymandering

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnhFm5QVVT0>

1.27-

Q. Why do we have a census?

A. *To find out how many people live in a state and then know how many representatives that state should get in the House of Representatives. (see*

https://www.census.gov/schools/pdf/materials/cis_lesson_58US.pdf for Census lessons)

Q. Which state has the most people?

A. *California*

Q. What's the lowest number of reps a state can get based on population?

A. *1*

Q. What's one state with a super low population?

A. *Wyoming, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, Vermont, Montana*

2.40-

Q. How many Senators does each state get?

A. *Two*

Q. Why is that better for people in Delaware than California?

A. *answers will vary, but students should understand that the voting power of a citizen in Delaware is greater than a citizen in California. If you covered the Great Compromise you could remind students of the arguments between large population and small population states around representation in Congress.*

Q. What's the difference between at-large elections and single member district elections?

A. *In at-large elections every person in a state votes and the candidate who won the most votes wins the race. In single-member district elections the state is divided into districts and the candidate who wins the election within a district wins the race.*

Q. What idea was the result of the Supreme Court decision in Baker vs. Carr?

A. *One person, One Vote (for more on Baker vs Carr:*

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-government-and-politics/interactions-among-branches-of-government/congressional-behavior/v/baker-v-carr)

4.57-

Q. Who do you think are "minority groups" in your state?

A. Answers will vary, students should understand that the term minority is used to categorize demographic groups of people but often the term isn't exactly precise for a given group. For example, African Americans are a minority group in Pennsylvania but a majority group in Philadelphia, but continue to be referred to as minorities within the city limits.

Q. What does 'contiguous' mean?

A. All portions of the district must be physically adjacent (for more on criteria of a district: <http://redistricting.ils.edu/where-state.php>)

5:41

Q. Who draws the districts?

A. State legislatures

Q. Why do you think this will lead to problems?

A. Because whatever party is in charge of the state legislature during this process will try to give themselves an advantage for upcoming elections.

KEEP IN MIND:

- The rounds might take some time so be prepared to be engaging the class constructively while the legislators decide.
- During the last round, the class may decide it would be better if the judge didn't even know if people were members of the BLUE and RED party and want to turn their placards over.
- The Crash Course host talks SUPER fast so it's recommended teachers slow down the video or stop it at intervals to ask comprehension questions and start video at .58 (he uses too many big words prior to this that will makes kids feel dumb and stop listening.
- You may want to review vocabulary

IT WENT WELL! EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Try *Sharing My Info* lesson in *Do I Count?*

More video options can be found at:

Playlist-- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB7FI_GiGMAZVW-OqPKTGRnCvW-hHpYJC

Gerrymandering in PA: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_1TChFSQjU

How Gerrymandering Works: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mky11UJb9AY>

Data mining use in gerrymandering:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=54&v=kBlz6SB_JLc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcUDBgYodIE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGLRJ12uqmk>

This clip clearly takes a position on gerrymandering but uses pop culture kids will know:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF4jvJNvCqY>