OREGON YMCA
YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

Legislative Curriculum

Amended August 2025

Table of Contents:

Program Introduction:

In Youth and Government Legislative programs, teens from across the state meet in their local school or YMCA Delegations throughout the year to discuss and debate issues that affect their state and to propose possible legislation to make a positive impact. The program culminates with the teens serving as delegates at their state conference, debating measures on the floor of the mock legislature.

As a result of the program, students learn about the democratic system and are trained in parliamentary procedure, legislative committee process, debate, press relations, and lobbying techniques. Delegates have the opportunity to try their hand at leadership in an open and receptive learning environment.

PROGRAM GOAL:
To develop young leaders who are informed and active participants in shaping the future of their communities and our democracy.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:
- Encourage active participation in political, civic, and public affairs.
- Provide training, active participation, and experience in the legislative process.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical abilities.
- Develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Provide awareness and possible solutions to societal issues.
- Provide opportunities to respectfully listen to and discuss varying viewpoints.

PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS:
- Leadership training.
- Public speaking.
- Critical thinking and writing.
- Community activism, civic engagement, and advocacy.
- Academic enhancement through the development of research, reading, and writing skills.

Curriculum Introduction:

The Curriculum:
This program curriculum is intended as a helpful tool for Youth and Government delegations. It is intended as a step-by-step guide for Delegation Advisors (or the equivalent) to ensure legislative delegates are prepared for a fun and meaningful program year.

Youth and Government is fundamentally student-led. As such, advisors should feel encouraged to empower Delegation student leaders to actively lead most meetings.

Youth and Government is primarily a civics education program. But importantly, the goal is to learn civics in a fun and engaging way. The desire is that students arrive at the annual State Conference having learned the contents of this curriculum. With that goal in mind, advisors and delegation leaders are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to best fit their delegation's needs.

This curriculum includes ready-to-use scripts— expressed with italicized sections within quotation marks— and bullet-pointed instructional prompts to support all Advisors or Delegation Leaders, regardless of planning time or experience.

This curriculum is intended to be hands-on and engaging for the entire group, so as long as the learning objectives are met and the content is covered, you're welcome to change the language or specific activities as needed.

The Timeline:
The Youth & Government Legislative program runs from fall through spring of the academic year. This curriculum is organized into 22 weeks of "in-classroom" lessons beginning in September and accounting for common school breaks such as Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring. The lessons are organized so that the delegation gets into full swing in October and culminates around early April with the annual State Conference. Extension events like Youth Advocates, Changemakers, and the Conference on National Affairs (CONA) occur in the spring and summer, and will be briefly covered in the curriculum. Throughout the year, delegations are encouraged to reach out to the Program Committee, which is ready and excited to support.

The first half of the curriculum focuses on preparing students to develop an impactful legislative concept and turn it into a well-crafted piece of legislation. Assignments during this part of the year are designed to help them understand key concepts and guide them toward producing strong and effective measures.

The second half of the curriculum—after winter break—focuses on civil discourse and public speaking, and how they are best used in a legislative context. Key assignments will remain

focused on measures, with an emphasis on quality teamwork, public speaking and debate. These activities are designed to prepare all students for a meaningful experience at the annual State Conference.

Lesson Organization:

Each planned lesson will follow this simple structure:

- **Title:** Including the week number and very brief context
- **Progress Check:** A visual cue of where this lesson fits amongst key dates of programming.
- **Learning Objective:** The core outcomes, understandings, or takeaways the students should obtain through the lesson.
- **Needed Materials:** Any materials that will need to be prepped and ready to facilitate the lesson, often found in the workbook or in the resource section of Wild Apricot.
- **Introduction:** Brief context to help students prepare for the coming lesson. Suggested introductory statements are provided in italics.
- **Lesson:** The lesson for the week.
- **Assignment:** The work students will be expected to do before the next lesson.

Notes on Recruitment:

Even a Delegation of two students can have a successful and effective year in Youth and Government. That said, this program often thrives with broader participation. As the school year launches, so should recruitment—if it wasn't already taking place during summer! Students are encouraged to host interest meetings, post flyers, engage with peers on social media, and seek support from the program committee to maximize recruitment. While recruitment should take place throughout the year, a considerable push during September may be the most effective.

Notes on Team Building and Group Activities:

Team-building activities are provided to start this curriculum, but advisors and Delegation leadership are encouraged to try other activities that may be favorites of students, and to hold space to continue team building throughout the year. Team building activities should always end with a reflection time from the group to help apply the lessons learned to the program.

Special note: There is a common impulse to bypass team-building activities to make room for more measure support. While understandable, this is strongly discouraged. We have found that as students develop their legislative concepts and refine them into quality measures, they will count on each other for supportive— and critical— feedback. Skipping team-building activities almost always negatively impacts this vital process as students don't trust each other enough for honest and helpful feedback.

Additional Meeting Ideas:

- Invite Guest Speakers.
- Schedule time for bill partners to meet with local legislators and stakeholders.
- Service Projects.
- Press Conferences/Press Releases.

Informational Meetings:

Informational Meetings are best positioned to take place within the first few weeks of school. The recommended format of the meeting is to:

- Welcome students.
- Click through Informational Slides
- Discuss registration details.
- Questions.
- Recruitment.

Below are the general talking points and information to be shared about each of the key opportunities throughout the year.

Program Overview:
"Welcome to the Oregon YMCA Youth and Government Program. Youth and Government programs have existed across the nation for over 80 years and are conducted in 40 states. Youth and Government is an opportunity for Oregon high-schoolers to find and use their voice to change their community. During the program year, you will learn leadership and teamwork skills, address issues in your community, learn how to write and pass change-making legislation, or learn to cover this change-making process as a free and fair press."

Annual Kick-Off Event:
"As schools, YMCAs, and existing Delegations are finalizing their recruitment—typically in early October—all current and prospective delegates will have the opportunity to join together for a fun, social, and informative kick-off event in Salem."

Legislative Delegates:
"The legislative process is the backbone of a thriving democracy, where diverse voices come together to debate ideas, craft laws, and address the needs of the people. In this track, legislative delegates will explore the critical role of legislative bodies in shaping society, gain firsthand experience in drafting and debating measures, and develop the skills necessary for effective collaboration and civic leadership. By engaging in this process, writing legislation to address their community, and presenting it with quality rhetoric, participants will deepen their understanding of how thoughtful policymaking sustains democratic values and serves the common good." Legislative Delegates will have the opportunity to run for peer-elected and executive-appointed positions such as Committee Chair, Youth Governor, and more."

Media & Press Delegates:
"In this track, students will step into the roles of both journalists and communications professionals, learning to gather facts, craft compelling stories, and strategically convey messages to diverse audiences. Through hands-on activities, they will explore how ethical journalism and effective communication amplify diverse perspectives, promote transparency

and empower citizens, ensuring a vibrant and resilient democracy. Students will have the opportunity to run for peer-elected leadership positions such as Editor-In-Chief."

Pre-Legislative Assembly:
"Typically in mid-February, all delegates will attend the Pre-Legislative Conference, known as 'Pre-Leg' (pronounced "pre-ledge"). This fun event will offer opportunities for legislative delegates to advance their legislation and public speaking skills through a variety of workshops, experience mock sessions to prepare for the annual State Conference, run for a variety of elected positions, and socialize with delegates from across the state. Students will have the opportunity to run for peer-elected leadership positions such as Youth Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Clerk of the House and Senate, Sergeants at Arms, Committee Chairs. Delegates in the Press Corps will have the opportunity to receive special training and begin their coverage."

Annual State Conference:
"The annual Oregon Youth and Government State Conference will be held in Salem in early April. The conference cost includes program materials, swag, celebrations, two morning and evening meals, and a two-night hotel stay. Financial Assistance applications are available for students with a demonstrated financial need.

The conference is open to all Youth and Government students (Legislative and Press Corps Delegates) and will include delegations from across the state of Oregon. During the conference, legislative delegates will bring the measures they have written with their measure-writing partner (Co-sponsor) in their Youth and Government Delegation and present them to peer committees, which will seek to improve the legislation through an amendment process. If their measure, amended or otherwise, is adopted by vote in their assigned committee, they might present those measures to their "originating chamber" (Senate or House of Representatives). Delegates will then debate each measure and vote to determine its success. Successful measures from one house might then be debated in the other, with the Governor signing or vetoing bills for an act that successfully passes both houses.

At the conference, the final elections of the two top-voted Youth Governor candidates occur. The current Youth Governor will appoint a few special leadership positions, including Roundtable Chairs and the Chief of Staff of the Office of Youth Governor. "

The Conference On National Affairs (CONA):
"As you're identifying a problem or opportunity affecting your local community or state and writing a piece of legislation to address it, you should also consider what national or global issues you find most important, and your creative solutions. Each year, a select group of delegates with important proposals on these key issues will get the opportunity to travel to North Carolina at the end of June for the Conference on National Affairs, known as 'CONA'. Here, hundreds of students from Youth and Government programs nationwide will assemble for a similar but intense process of presenting and debating their proposals of national or international import. To make this selective delegation, students will need to display the Y Core values, demonstrate a commitment to a close-knit delegation and its considerable requirements, and propose a creative, unique, or thoughtful solution to a problem of sincere, national or global import."

Youth Advocates:
"The Youth Advocate Program brings high school students to Washington, D.C. to advocate for YMCA priorities alongside their local Y leaders during National Advocacy Days. This four-month advocacy training program gives students the opportunity to elevate their voice on issues important to the Y and provides students with practical, real-world experience advocating with Members of Congress and their offices in Washington, D.C."

Changemakers:
"YMCA Changemakers is a special, three-day event during the YMCA Governors Conference in June, where pairs of students are chosen by their local YMCA to present a proposal to bring about local change. The proposal could have national or global impact as well, but must be connected to a local need or opportunity."

Governors Conference:
"The YMCA Youth Governors Conference, known as Gov Con, occurs each year in mid-June, bringing together every youth Governor from across the nation for workshops, trainings, advocacy, relationship-building and collective learning."

Questions:
You've covered a considerable amount.

- Be sure to hold space for questions, referring any you cannot answer to the Program Committee for support.

Recruitment:
Do not let an audience go without taking another stab at recruitment.

- Ask the students who they plan to bring to the Delegation, what groups or communities they plan to appeal to, or how you can all, together, ensure more students have access to these fun events.

Team-Building & Recruitment:

Team-building activities like icebreakers, trust-building, and getting-to-know-you games should be conducted throughout the program year. Most delegations will find it best to intentionally concentrate many of these activities during the three to four weeks between the start of the school year and the start of the Youth and Government curriculum and program year, while they maintain a concerted focus on recruitment. Below you'll find tried-and-true activities that are often popular with Youth and Government delegates, though every delegation is encouraged to make them their own or try their own favorites.

Snowball:

- Ask each student to take out a piece of paper and tear it into three equal pieces, each with their name and one object, person, place, or activity that they care about. Once complete, crumble the pieces into snowballs.
- Now tell the students to have a one-minute snowball fight with that paper.
- At the end of one minute, ask each student to pick up three "snowballs" and find the three people these snowballs belong to. They should ask them about the object, person, place, or activity they wrote on the paper and how that relates to law, democracy, or a strong community.
- Ask the students to report back on what they learned from one of the three students they talked to.

Scavenger Hunt:

- Have each student write down their name and an obscure fact about themselves that few people would know. These are then typed up on a sheet of paper or written on the board, but with the names left blank.
- Students should match the obscured facs with the correct student name.
    - This could be done in two ways:
        - Have everyone just guess and see how many they get right. Afterward, they could discuss first impressions and stereotyping.
        - Have everyone work on the sheet through the meeting, week, or until the next meeting, and offer a prize to the person with the most correct answers.

Two Truths and a Lie:

Each person shares three statements about themselves, and the group guesses which one is the lie.

Would You Rather…?

Quick-fire questions ("Would you rather be able to fly or be invisible?") to spark laughter and conversation.

Speed Friending

Like speed dating: students rotate in pairs and have 2 minutes to answer a fun prompt (favorite movie, weirdest food tried, etc.) before moving on.

Human Knot
Everyone stands in a circle, grabs two different people's hands, and works together to untangle without letting go.

Trust Walk
In pairs, one student is blindfolded and guided carefully by their partner through a simple obstacle course.

Marshmallow Tower Challenge
In small groups, students build the tallest tower possible with spaghetti, tape, string, and one marshmallow on top.

Group Storytelling
Students sit in a circle and take turns adding one sentence to create a silly, collective story.

Scavenger Hunt (with a twist)
Teams must find or complete fun tasks (like taking a group selfie with a red object, or finding someone in the group who can whistle).

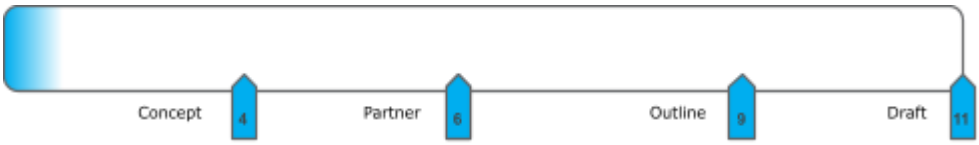
Voting with Your Feet
Pose a question or statement ("Cats are better than dogs," "TikTok should be banned in schools"). Students move to a corner of the room marked *Agree*, *Disagree*, or *Neutral*. After moving, they explain their reasoning — like a mini floor debate.

Bill in a Box
Teams are given a random box of objects (markers, rubber bands, paper clips, etc.) and 5 minutes to invent a "bill" that solves a problem using those items. They then "present" their bill to the group.

Floor Debate Relay
Split the room in half as "pro" and "con." Pose a question or statement ("Babies should be required to have social media accounts," "School should start no earlier than 10 am"). Each side lines up, and students take turns stepping up to make one point (20 seconds max), alternating between pro and con and rotating out for the next teammate in line.

Week 1: Introductions and What is a Measure

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can define what a measure is within Youth and Government programming, and describe its purpose in proposing community change.

Needed Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"From the annual State Conference to the Conference On National Affairs (CONA), and from Changemakers to Youth Advocates, Youth And Government (YAG) programming empowers youth to recognize and value their voices, and to translate that voice into community change. The legislative track serves as a foundation for most pathways, providing experience in proposing statewide measures at the State Conference. Students can then explore additional opportunities, such as proposing a national or global initiative at the Conference On National Affairs, or developing local projects through Changemakers, or advocating directly to their legislators in the Youth Advocate program."

Lesson:
- Start by posing a simple question to the delegation: "*What is a Measure?*" and allow for some sharing of answers.

"A measure is an umbrella term for proposed legislation. In the simplest of terms, measures should offer a meaningful solution to a problem affecting a community. In YAG, these change-making measures can take the form of a Bill for an Act, a Joint Resolution, a Joint Memorial, or a Concurrent Resolution. Each of those measure types have different and specific functions, but all are written by a pair of legislative delegates.

At the annual State Conference, measures are first discussed in peer committees, where they may be refined through an amendment process. If peers agree that the measure would make a good law– if it offers a good solution to a real problem, is well-researched and accounting for existing legislation, and is presented well– it might advance to both chambers of the legislature. With the signature of the Governor, if applicable, it could become a law.

The research, writing, presentation and civil debate of measures act as a core tenant of Youth and Government programming. Vital change-making ideas, expressed as well-written measures, are the catalysts for collaborative Committee sessions, thoughtful Chamber debate, and decisive actions by the Youth Governor.

The better a measure is prepared, the better the entire experience is for you, the delegate. Consequently, it is important that you understand measures thoroughly, how to write one, and the process by which they become law. Writing a measure is quite simple – if you know a few secrets. Between now and winter break we'll be learning them together."

Activity:

- Ask students to list issues or concerns they see in their community, and synthesize them on the board. These can be issues in their school, home, neighborhood, state, etc, and do not have to be paired with a solution (yet). This is a time for discussion and brainstorming, not debating.
    - Guiding Questions:
        - *"What is something in your community that you don't like, or would change? In your family? Your school?"*
        - *"Is there something <u>negatively</u> affecting a particular community that you wish didn't?"*
        - *"Is there something <u>positively</u> affecting a particular community that you wish others could benefit from?"*
- Select a few concerns listed on the board, and dive deeper.
    - Ask students:
        - *"Who's affected by this problem, and how deeply?"*
        - *"Are there some who may not see this as a problem? Explain."*
        - *"Who do you think is responsible for solving this problem?"*
- Next, begin to discuss broad solutions.
    - Ask students:
        - "How are these problems solved elsewhere?"
        - "How would YOU solve this problem?"
    - Discuss whether each solution could address the problem in the form of a state law. If so, what would that measure look like?

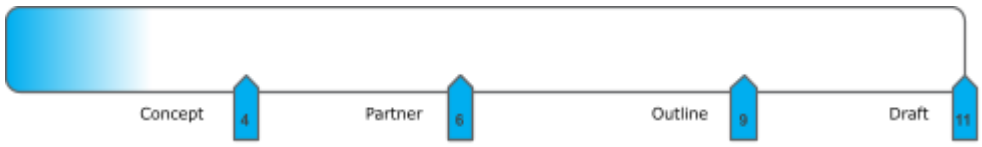
Assignment:

"Next week is Delegation elections! So before next week, everyone needs to:

- Review the Delegation President and Delegation Secretary job descriptions found in the Workbook, pages 5-7 and consider who (including themselves) they might nominate.
- Consider if there are other positions our delegation should elect.
- Review the Workbook Introduction, Workbook Pages 3-4

Week 2: Leadership

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can define the concept of core values, identify the YMCA's core values, and explain the importance of core values in leadership.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)
- Delegation President and Delegation Secretary job descriptions, Workbook, pages 5-7

Introduction:
"Youth and Government values student leadership. In this program, student leaders will guide their peers through traditional lessons and hands-on experiences, while also leading a vast array of 'behind the scenes' projects and duties. It will be this group's duty to select those leaders later in this meeting."

Lesson:
Pose this series of questions to the delegation. Give time for the group to discuss responses in between, and record key or consensus answers:
- *"What is a core value?"*
- *"What about an example of the core values of this country?"*
- *"Do any of you have an example of a core value for you, personally?"*
- *"Should the leaders of our Democracy hold certain core values?"*
- *"If we want to live in a thriving Democracy, what is the relationship between our national values, the values of our leadership, and the daily lives of its citizenry?"*

"In 'The Republic', Plato describes core values, or as he calls them, 'Virtues'. These virtues were so fundamental that he uses the word 'Cardinal', from the Latin 'Cardo' *meaning 'to hinge', to illustrate how everything else—life, leadership and more—hinges upon those traits.*

Plato believed Courage, Wisdom, Temperance, and Justice to be the most cardinal virtues. He was an originating architect of the political order most democracies now maintain. As a program of the YMCA, Youth and Government identifies its own core values — Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility— that it believes trusted leadership and good governance hinge upon."

Pose the following questions to the delegation:
- *"What does being caring mean to you?"*
- *"What does honesty look like for you?"*

- *"How do you show respect? When do you feel respected by others?"*
- *"What are some ways you show responsibility in school, at home, or in the community?"*
- *"How do you think the success of this delegation is hinged upon the Y Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility?"*

"With those values in mind, we'll now elect our delegation leadership."

Activity:
Delegations have considerable freedom to run their elections as they see fit, and may elect as many additional officers as they feel necessary as long as a Delegation President and Secretary are determined. Below is a suggested Elections process you can reference as you complete your own:

- Step 1: Review Required Officer Roles
  - Briefly review the responsibilities of the required officer positions (Workbook, pages 5-7). Allow time for students to ask clarifying questions.
- Step 2: Nominations
  - Open the floor for officer nominations. A student may nominate a peer (with their right to accept/deny) or nominate themselves.
- Step 3: Candidate Statements
  - Each accepted nominee is invited to give a short (1 minute) statement that generally answers why they want the role, what strengths or experience they will bring to the role, and what core values they will lead with.
- Step 4: Voting
  - Using a voting method appropriate for your group (like the recommended Secret Ballot method in which students hand in their vote on slips of paper, or a simple show of hands, or with the use of a digital polling tool) vote for each required position.
- Step 5: (Optional) Additional Roles
  - As a delegation, brainstorm any desired and additional roles, and determine if they should be similarly voted for or appointed by the elected leaders. Examples of additional roles might be Delegation Press Editor, Social Chair or Delegation Recruitment Chair
- Step 6: Announcements and Celebrations
  - Announce the winners respectfully, applauding for all nominees for volunteering for the responsibility.

Assignment:
"Next week we will start to form 'Legislative Concepts'. To be ready:

- *Complete the 'What's meaningful to you?' and 'What's the problem' activities in your workbook, Workbook Pages 8-9*

Week 3: Legislative Concepts 101–Roots

Progress Check:

Learning Objective:
Students can define a Legislative Concept and explain its role as the foundation of a strong and impactful measure. Students can identify multiple community challenges, reflect on how their values and the perspectives of others inform their thinking, and use this understanding to identify a strong legislative concept for a future measure.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"Youth And Government programming centers on empowering youth to recognize and value their voice, and to translate that voice into community change. The legislative process exemplifies these values, so the research, writing, presentation and civil debate of measures act as a core tenant of Youth and Government programming. Vital change-making ideas, expressed as well-written measures, are the catalysts for collaborative Committee Sessions, thoughtful Chamber debate, and decisive actions by the Youth Governor."

Lesson:
"This first step in a measure-writing process is developing a 'Legislative Concept' or 'LC'. Many impactful measures begin with a passion for a community, a hope-filled vision to improve the lives of others, or a commitment to addressing an injustice. While a legislator can write a pragmatic measure without personal passion it can become much more difficult to defend in debate and move through a robust legislative process. This is especially true in YAG, where a condensed legislative timeline means many measures will not make it out of committee. Whether your interests are in the environment, education, social services or otherwise, your LC should be about something in which you believe strongly.

Your first assignment from last week was to complete the 'What's meaningful' activity in the workbook."

- Ask students to share some of the topics they listed in the 'What's meaningful to you' activity. Be sure to give many different students the opportunity to share.
- Encourage students to think about those passions, the common groups they identified, and consider if they have a personal core value or cardinal virtue that might be inspiring those passions.

"Most LC's will begin rather simply, by first answering 'What's the problem?'. Your second assignment for this week was to complete the 'what's the problem' activity in the workbook."

- Ask students to share a few specific problems they identified in the 'What's the problem' activity. As they need help, direct them to the brainstorming questions in Week 1.

"An LC often drills down to the root causes of the problem it identifies. Sometimes to help drill down, it's best to ask "why" over and over again. For example, if the problem is "Oregon classrooms are overcrowded", ask "Why is this happening?". It might be answered by "lack of funding", "not enough physical classrooms", "understaffed schools", "zoning restrictions", and so on. To each of those answers, again ask why. "Why are schools understaffed?" might be answered in many ways, including, "Not enough educators are available". Keep asking "why?" until you feel the answers get truly foundational or difficult to address.

This is a critical time for the legislative teams writing an LC to bring in key demographics, affected communities, and important stakeholders. In addition to providing important perspectives and context, these communities are often best equipped to answer, 'Why is this happening?' "

Activity:

"To help us all drill down to the roots of our problems, we're going to sketch out "Why Trees".

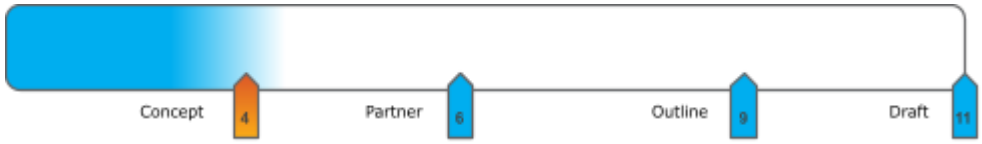
- *Consider the five problems you identified in the "What's the problem?" workbook activity.*
- *Write one of them down, as if a leaf on a tree. Then begin asking "Why (is this happening)?".*
- *Record the answers as if they were branches growing towards the trunk of the tree. It's okay if they intersect or end up looking more like intertwined vines, which is often the case with meaningful problems.*
- *Keep asking "Why?" for each answer— no less than three branches deep— until it feels like you've hit the really complex roots of the tree.*
- *Repeat this process for all five problems, essentially creating a "why forest".* `

Assignment:

- Ask the students to select the three "why trees" from their "why forests" that they feel most passionate about, or have the most clear and compelling root issues.
  - Ask them to ask their parents, friends, and teachers if there were branches or roots that should be added.
  - Ask them to consider:
    - "Has this always been a problem? If so, why?"
    - "What institutions or policies influence this issue?"
    - "Who is most affected? Who is not?"
    - "Who benefits or loses if nothing changes?"
  - Students should then decide on one tree to present to a small group next week.

Week 4: Legislative Concepts 201–Remedies

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can connect the root cause of a meaningful issue to an appropriate legislative solution/remedy, analyze whether existing legislative tools already address it, and evaluate if those tools are sufficient or need to be strengthened or expanded.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)
- "Electronic Resources" list, Workbook pages 51-53

Introduction:
"Last week, you worked to go beyond the surface of an issue you care about—digging into its root causes and exploring why it exists in the first place. You started to see that problems like food insecurity, mental health gaps, or school discipline disparities don't often happen in isolation—they're usually the result of deeper forces like access, funding, policy, and history.

- Ask a few students to quickly share one of their "why trees" that stood out to them, especially after they considered the assigned questions from last week.

*Today, we're shifting from asking **why** a problem happens to asking **what** lawmakers can actually do about it. If you're going to design a helpful and change-making law, you need to know the tools available— whether it's creating funding, setting rules, or requiring action. We're going to explore those tools now, so you can begin connecting the roots of your issue to the realistic remedies that lawmakers use to create change."*

Lesson:
"You're a legislator who's just been presented with a meaningful problem from one of your constituents—students, parents, workers, community members—about a serious issue they care about deeply. These constituents are effectively your bosses, so it's your job to respond. But, without a magic tool to instantly fix their problem, you are bound by a common set of legislative tools. Let's look at what those are.

Here are five common types of legislative "remedies", solutions, or tools. Most laws use one or more of these strategies to make change."

- Ask your Delegation leadership to share the following remedies:

Regulation or Restriction
- These are typically laws that limit or prohibit certain actions.
- "You can't do this anymore."
- *Example:* Banning flavored tobacco sales or regulating tobacco advertisements to protect youth health.

Funding / Appropriations
- These are typically laws that provide money for programs or services.
- "We're going to spend public money to fix this."
- *Example:* Grant programs to improve school mental health services.

Taxation or Incentives
- These are typically laws that encourage/discourage behavior with taxes or rewards.
- "You'll pay more—or less—depending on your choices."
- *Example:* Tax credits for installing solar panels or increased taxes for using fossil fuels.

Mandates or Requirements
- These are typically laws that require someone to do something.
- "You have to do this."
- *Example:* Requiring schools to provide free period products.

Access / Equity Guarantees
- These are typically laws that expand access or protect rights for certain groups.
- "Everyone should be included or protected."
- *Example:* Ensuring students with disabilities receive accommodations.

Activity: Roots to Remedies
- First, ask if anyone found resources they might use to identify remedies related to their issue. As they need help, suggest they consider organizations, non-profits, advocacy groups or think tanks that might relate to the subject.

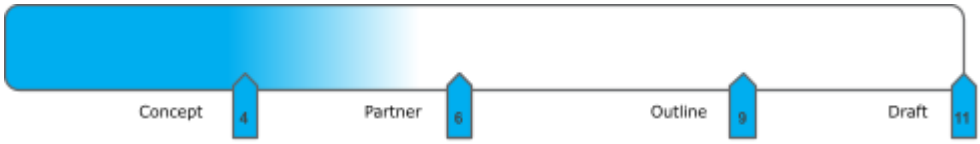
"The next step in developing your Legislative Concept is to pair the meaningful problem you've found that affects a topic you're passionate about, with a compelling remedy. We've just covered five key types of remedies, but you'll find additional options in the Legislative Remedies Resource of your workbook.

- Instruct students to get into small groups of 3-4. Each student should quickly share one of their "Why Trees", and while focusing on the root issues, work with the group to match which kind of legislative tool could reduce or remove this root cause.
- They should additionally consider:
  - Which of these tools already exist for their issue?
  - Could combining two or more of these types make a remedy and LC stronger?

Assignment:
- Ask the students to review Legislative Remedies Resource in their workbooks, and consider those discussed in their groups today. They should highlight the top 1–2 remedy types they believe best address their issue's root causes.

Week 5: Legislative Concepts 301–Stakeholders

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can identify a wide range of stakeholders who may be impacted by a given legislative concept, and explain the role of stakeholders in the legislative process.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"Last week we learned that Oregon lawmakers can pass laws that regulate, fund, require, educate and more. Your assignment was to complete the legislative remedy worksheet in your workbook to help you identify which legislative tools might best fit your problem."
- Ask a few students to share which remedies felt the strongest for their problem, or if anyone thought a combination of remedies might be more impactful.
- Ask for a few students to share their thoughts on the real Oregon Legislation that related to those remedies.

"This week, we will see that legislation doesn't exist in a vacuum. Every measure affects real Oregon Communities, and real Oregon neighbors—sometimes in ways a lawmaker intends, and sometimes in ways a lawmaker doesn't. While representative Democracy should help to facilitate the inclusion of more perspectives, the best lawmakers start by asking, "Who is this for?", "Who might be harmed or left out?", and, "Whose voices need to be included in the process?

"In Oregon's real legislative process, legislative concepts are sent to committees that invite stakeholders (people directly impacted by the issue) to testify. This input often leads to meaningful changes in a measure. In Youth and Government, we don't yet hold formal testimony sessions, so it's especially important that you include and center those perspectives while you're still shaping your idea."

Lesson:
"A stakeholder is anyone (or anything) who is affected by a problem, will be impacted by a solution, has experience, authority, or insight into the issue, or has a vested interest whether it be in favor or in opposition.

"Stakeholders aren't just the people your measure is designed to help— though those voices should be at the center of your measure. They can include community members living the issue, workers and professionals in that field, state agencies and local governments, opponents or skeptics, parents, students, advocates, or business owners, or more."

- Get the students engaged by asking these questions, allowing the group to brainstorm answers:
    - What happens when a law is passed without asking key stakeholders first?
    - What kinds of people are often left out of these conversations?
    - Have you ever felt affected by a decision, whether in school or government, where no one asked your opinion?

"As a group, imagine we had a legislative concept that addressed concerns about children consuming vape products. In our discussion, we sketched out why trees and identified that vape producers were financially motivated to market towards children by creating flavored product lines. From this, our legislative concept could seek to protect these children by using the legislative remedy of restriction, and banning the sale of flavored vape products."

- Ask the students these series of questions, encouraging them to think creatively and offering the prompts as needed. In this scenario...
    - **Who are the obvious stakeholders?**
        - Possible answers: Teens, Public health experts, Vape product manufacturers, State Agencies like Oregon Health Authority.
    - **Who might be less-obvious stakeholders?**
        - Possible answers: At-risk teens or teens with anxiety or ADHD who may use nicotine to self-medicate, tribal governments with cultural uses of tobacco, public defenders who may have concerns with criminalizing youth behavior.
    - **Who might be harmed or negatively affected? Why?**
        - Possible answers: Vape product sellers like smoke shops, convenience stores, adults who use these products to quit smoking, State revenue if their sales generate taxable income, law enforcement that may be tasked with enforcement.
    - **Who might support this legislation? Why?**
        - Possible answers: Parents of teens that vape, health groups like the American Lung Association, school officials that see issues firsthand, student groups, black market vendors who might stand to profit from a change.
    - **Who might oppose this legislation? Why?**
        - Possible answers: Vape & retailer industries that might find this anti-business or harmful to profit, libertarian groups who might see this as a loss of liberty, cultural groups that might have a connection to tobacco use.

Activity:

- Separate the students into small groups. Groups will have 10 minutes to create a stakeholder map for the legislative concept example you'll provide. They should be prepared for a quick report afterwards.
    - **Questions to answer in the Map:**
        - Who are the obvious stakeholders?
        - Who are less-obvious stakeholders?
        - Who might be harmed or negatively affected by this legislative concept? Why?
        - Who might support this legislative concept? Why?
        - Who might oppose this legislative concept? Why?

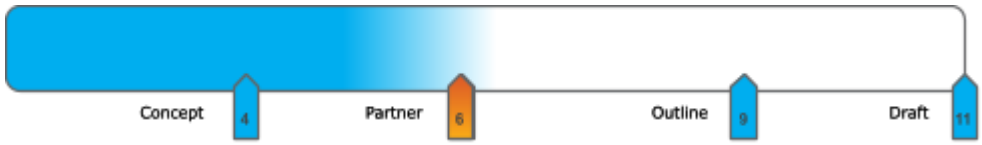
- **Example Concepts (one for each group):**
  - Requiring all schools to start after 9am.
  - Amending the Oregon Constitution to lower the voting age to 16
  - Phasing out the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers by 2028
  - Creating a licensing framework for the breeding or selling of dogs
  - Requiring legal representation for youth in legal proceedings

Assignment:

- Students should consider their stakeholder maps, roots, and remedies, and complete the Legislative Concept Worksheet in their workbook
- Announce that students will group into year-long measure-writing pairs at the next meeting.

Week 6: Legislative Concepts 401–Limit

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can differentiate between actions that fall within legislative authority and those that belong to executive or judicial branches, or that are restricted by local/federal law.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"Now let's talk about what Oregon Legislators can't do. Understanding these limits is just as important as knowing the tools in the toolbox—because proposing a solution outside the legislature's power means your measure may not advance, might be held up in courts, or cause damage to a system of checks and balances. Here are a few key limits you need to know:"

- Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns sharing the following:

- ***"Jurisdictional Limits***
  - *The Oregon Legislature cannot pass laws for the federal government or other states (though they can <u>suggest</u> them with a type of measure called a Joint Memorial).*
    - *<u>Example</u>: The Oregon Legislature cannot change the federal minimum wage or the minimum wage of the state of Washington. (But they can pass a joint memorial that <u>urges</u> those changes.)*
  - *The Oregon Legislature cannot pass laws directing how most private organizations operate outside of the State. (though they can offer their opinion with a Concurrent Resolution)*
    - *<u>Example</u>: The Oregon Legislature could hold the NCAA to a standard of athlete protections while conducting business within Oregon, but cannot compel the NCAA to meet those standards nationally.*
  - *The Oregon Legislature cannot compel private organizations to act on its behalf or carry out state functions—like conducting research, managing programs, or fulfilling state contracts— without their consent.*
    - *<u>Example</u>: The Oregon Legislature could create statewide policy regarding food delivery, but cannot compel a specific company like DoorDash to conduct research or deliver state foods to emergency shelters.*
  - *The Oregon Legislature cannot supersede municipal authority or ignore "home rule". While the legislature has broad authority to create sweeping or broad policy decisions that affect most or all of the state, it generally defers most local and day-to-day decisions to local governments.*

        - *Example: The Oregon Legislature can create a statewide framework or set of standards for the use of traffic control devices, but, the legislature cannot single out a city to install a specific traffic light.*

- ***Limits from Separation of Powers***
    - *The Oregon Legislature cannot encroach on the powers of the Oregon Executive Branch, as outlined in the Constitution. This includes the authority of the Executive to carry out or enforce laws passed by the Legislature, appoint or remove (most) governmental officials, veto legislation, issue (most) executive orders, manage the day-to-day of the Oregon National Guard and state agencies, and more.*
        - *Example: Very generally speaking, while the Oregon Legislature can create or fund a new school meal program and task the Oregon Department of Education to administer it under provided and general guidelines, they cannot actually run the program themselves, hand-pick an individual to oversee the program, or direct the individual or day-to-day decisions of the program.*
        - *Example: The Legislature generally does not have the authority to fire most governmental officials. While there is a process to expel fellow legislators, most positions serve at the pleasure of the executive, or the voters.*
    - *The Oregon Legislature cannot interfere with or take over the powers of the Judicial Branch, as protected by the Oregon Constitution. This means lawmakers cannot decide the outcome of court cases, overturn a judge's ruling, retry a case, or punish a judge for their decision. Only the Judicial Branch can interpret laws, decide if a law is constitutional, and resolve disputes brought to the courts.*
        - *Example: The Oregon Legislature can set sentencing guidelines or certain procedures for courts to follow, but cannot direct specific case outcomes, or punish judges for arriving at those outcomes.*

- ***Other Constitutional Limits***
    - *The Oregon Legislature cannot violate rights guaranteed by the Oregon or U.S Constitution.*
        - *Example: The legislature cannot pass a law that bans people from criticizing the Government (free speech), is applied differently based on race or religion (equal protection), or allows the police to search homes without a warrant (due process and privacy).*
    - *The Oregon Legislature must respect Federal Law (the Supremacy Clause)—While the State cannot go against federal law, they can set state policies that go further than federal law, as long as they do not conflict.*
        - *Example: The Oregon legislature cannot legalize the use of a pesticide restricted by Federal Law, but it can strengthen local restrictions further.*
    - *The Oregon Legislature must follow its own rules and procedures. Among many other rules and procedures, chambers must have a quorum to conduct official business, measures must only relate to only one main subject, amendments must be germane (if it is relevant, appropriate, and logically related to the main subject of the measure), measure-types need to be correct, and more.*
        - *Example: A bill for an act cannot seek to amend the constitution, cannot be related to both school lunches and logging regulations, cannot include amendments that are entirely unrelated, or be voted on if a majority of members are not present.*

- *The Oregon Legislature cannot amend the Constitution on its own. Instead, the legislature has to propose an amendment and refer it to the voters for approval.*
  - *Example: The Oregon Legislature cannot vote to change the voting age. Instead, they must pass a Joint Resolution that proposes the change, and seeks voter approval.*
- *The Oregon Legislature must approve a balanced budget. The state is not allowed to spend more money than it expects to receive.*
  - *Example: The Legislature cannot pass legislation that funds new programs without identifying how the state will pay for them. They can propose raising revenue or cutting costs, but the final budget must be in balance."*

Activity:

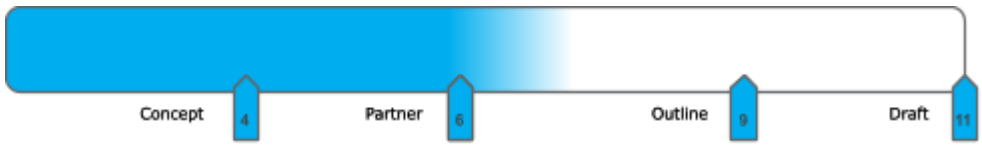
- Ask the students to take the why tree and topic they feel most drawn to, and summarize the problem it addresses in one brief sentence. It might sound somewhat like, "[Main Root Cause Issue] is causing [important problem 1] and [important problem 2] to [identified communities]."
- Then, if possible, summarize the preferred remedy in one brief sentence. This could sound like, "This LC addresses these problems by [explain remedy]."
- Quickly share around the room, sharing only those two sentences aloud.
- Have the students split into measure-writing pairs.
  - **These groups will meet together for the rest of the school year and act as co-sponsors of a measure they create from one of their Legislative Concepts.**
  - There may be special exceptions to make groups of 3 or act independently, but this should be very strongly discouraged as it will considerably limit student participation or have adverse ramifications at the annual State Conference.
- In their pairs, each student will present their legislative concept. Again, try to start with one brief sentence summarizing the problem, a brief sentence summarizing the solution, and additionally, one brief sentence describing why it matters or why the audience should care.
  - Each student should receive kind but constructive feedback on making the LC stronger, paying extra attention to the best legislative remedies available.
- At this point, each pairs' LCs can be combined, or new ideas can be drafted, but each group of students must have one — and only one— legislative concept by the end of the activity.

Assignment:

- Next week the legislative concepts will begin to form into complete measures, so any pair that has not yet selected a legislative concept must meet independently to do so, using the 'Selecting a good legislative concept' tips found in the Workbook, Page 14.

Week 7: Legislative Research

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can identify credible sources of data and use that data to investigate the current legal and policy landscape in Oregon related to their legislative concept.

Materials:
- Laptops, or devices able to support in internet-based research

Introduction:
"Over the last few lessons, we've explored what kinds of tools Oregon lawmakers can use, and what limits they must work within—like jurisdictions and constitutional boundaries. You've also begun to shape your own ideas for legislation, grounded in real problems and real solutions, and with the support of a measure-writing partner.

Now, it's time to ask: What already exists? What's been tried? What's working—or not working?

Before a legislator writes a measure, they have to understand the landscape around their issue. That means reviewing laws, policies, programs, and facts that already exist. This next phase—legislative research—helps you avoid redundancy, build stronger proposals, and find language and examples that will make your measure realistic, effective, and persuasive."

Lesson:
"Thoughtful research will help you establish a strong legislative framework for your measure, if you ask and answer key questions. Let's dive into a few:"

- Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns sharing the following:
  - **To better understand the current law or status quo:**
    - *"What laws or policies already apply to our issue in Oregon?"*
    - *"Is there a program or solution in place? Who runs it? Is it working?"*
  - **To see what other places have tried:**
    - *"How have other states or cities tackled this issue?"*
    - *"How have other states or cities failed to tackle this issue?"*
    - *"What did their law do? Could it work here?"*
  - **To find data or evidence to support your idea:**
    - *"Who might be interested in tracking related data?"*
    - *"Who might have reason to issue a report about this topic or its affected-communities?"*

        - *"Who might already be in position to tell a similar story or otherwise cover this topic?"*
    - **To kickstart your measure-writing and speech-prep process:**
        - *"Could the definitions, key phrases, or legislative remedies that you found in related laws support your measure writing?"*
        - *"Does the supporting material you found include documented testimony, recorded debate, or submitted findings?"*
    - **Remind students of the Electronic Resources List available in their workbook, pages 51-53.**

Activity:

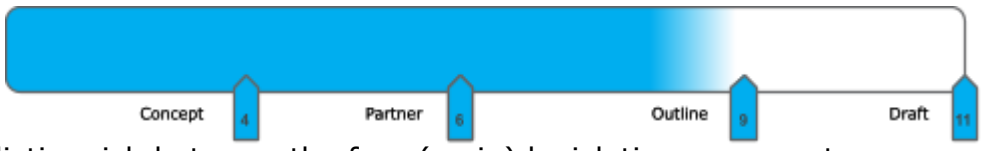
- Instruct students to find their measure-writing partner, and together, work with another measure-writing pair on guided research.
    - In these small research groups, pairs should quickly state the core of their legislative concept by succinctly describing their chosen problem and remedy. (This should take no longer than 30 seconds per measure-writing pair)
    - Afterwards, the research groups should, together, ask and answer the questions that would help them better understand current law or the status quo, spending considerable time digging into the ORS and OLIS.
    - Delegation leadership should float in the room, helping to guide and support research groups as needed.

Assignment:

- In their pairs, students should perform a Legislative Review of their selected topic, completing the Legislative Research Worksheet in their Workbook.
- Students should consult the YAG Officer Position Descriptions in their workbook, and consider if running for office feels right or meaningful to them. Delegation primaries are nearly around the corner!

Week 8: Measure Types

Progress Check:



Learning Objective:
Students can identify and distinguish between the four (main) legislative measure types. They should be able to explain the purpose, scope, and procedural requirements of each, and be confident to select the appropriate measure-type for their legislative concepts.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)
- Laptops, or devices able to access ORS and OLIS
- A Desk or lectern to use as if on Family Feud

Introduction:
"Now that you've performed a legislative review, started to research your issue, and chosen a legislative remedy that fits the root cause, you're ready for the final step in shaping your legislative concept: choosing the measure type that matches your idea. Each measure type has a unique purpose, authority, and process. Using the correct measure type is both required and essential for your proposal's success. Today, we'll work together to build confidence in selecting the right measure type.

Lesson:
"We're going to dive deeper into the four major measure-types in Oregon's Youth and Government program."
- Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns sharing the key measure types below. After each measure type is introduced, seek an example or two from the group.
- Instruct the Delegation leadership to have students use their practiced abilities in ORS and OLIS, and give an example of legislation for each measure type. (They might shout out the ORS# and the measure's 'relating to clause'.)

***"Bills for an Act** are measures commonly known as bills during Youth & Government, and are often the most common measure type. This piece of legislation is used to create, amend, or repeal laws in the Oregon Revised Statutes. This piece of legislation can be enacted in an emergency or take several years to implement, and can affect a vast array of policy issues. Most bills for an act require a simple majority of both chambers and the signature of the Youth Governor to become law.*

***A Joint Resolution** is a measure that can propose an amendment to the Oregon Constitution and then refer it to the people for a vote. It may also create an interim legislative committee under ORS 171.61,establish a legislative task force, or authorize*

a temporary action, or direct to a state agency or officer to take an action. Generally speaking, Joint Resolutions that propose a constitutional amendment require a 3/5 vote in both chambers. Otherwise, most joint resolutions require a simple majority in both chambers. None require a Governor's signature to be enacted.

***A Concurrent Resolution** is a measure used for internal operations and procedures of the Legislature, such as calling Joint Sessions or making special appointments. It is more commonly used to honor individuals, recognize historical events, or establish State days of recognition and other state emblems. They can also be used to announce the Legislature's formal opinion on important issues. However, Concurrent Resolutions are not binding and do not create an enforceable law. They generally require a simple majority in both chambers, and do not require a Governor's Signature.*

***A Joint Memorial** is a formal letter or statement from the Oregon Legislature to U.S. Congress, the President, or another government entity, typically on matters affecting the state or our nation. This type of legislation provides a means of telling those bodies what the state legislature thinks about an issue, or would like to see happen, but cannot compel those bodies to effect change. Importantly, this piece of legislation is persuasive or symbolic and is not binding as it does not create an enforceable law. Generally speaking, Joint Resolutions require a simple majority in both chambers but not a Governor's signature to be enacted."*

Activity:

- Divide students into two groups. Each group forms a single-file line. The first person in each line approaches the table to 'buzz in' with the correct measure type for the scenarios presented. The first to respond correctly earns points and can explain their choice for a bonus point. If incorrect, the other team has a chance to answer. Continue with the next person in line for each scenario. Facilitators should engage students enthusiastically, using fun, inclusive energy, while ensuring all students can participate comfortably
- Question 1. Two Points:
    - A group of legislators wants to propose that the Oregon Constitution guarantee the right to clean air and water.
    - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Resolution
- Question 2. One Point:
    - A lawmaker wants to make it illegal for people under 18 to buy energy drinks.
    - *Correct Measure Type:* Bill for an Act
- Question 3. Three Points:
    - The Legislature wants to declare that climate change is a statewide emergency and should be treated as such across all government agencies.
    - *Best Answer:* Concurrent Resolution
- Question 4. Two Points:
    - Lawmakers want to create a 12-month task force to study youth incarceration and recommend reforms.
    - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Resolution

- Question 5. One Point:
  - The Legislature wants to formally recognize March 22 as "Water Conservation Awareness Day" in Oregon.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Concurrent Resolution
- Question 6. Three Points:
  - Legislators want to repeal an old law that requires schools to teach cursive handwriting.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Bill for an Act
- Question 7. One Point:
  - Oregon lawmakers want to urge Congress to pass a national ban on assault weapons.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Memorial
- Question 8. Three Points:
  - A proposal would create a program to subsidize grocery stores in food deserts—but doesn't mandate participation or create legal enforcement.
  - *Correct Answer:* Bill for an Act
  - Resolutions or memorials wouldn't create a funded program.
- Question 9. Two Points:
  - The Legislature wants to send a formal request to Congress to create a path to citizenship for Dreamers (DACA recipients).
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Memorial
- Question 10. Three Points:
  - A legislator wants to both direct the Oregon Department of Education to study teacher shortages and create a task force to address it.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Resolution
- Question 11. One Point:
  - The Legislature wants to officially honor firefighters who battled record-setting wildfires across Oregon.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Concurrent Resolution
- Question 12. Two Points:
  - A student coalition wants to require all Oregon high schools to offer financial literacy classes before graduation.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Bill for an Act
- Question 13. Two Points:
  - A group of students proposes the Legislature direct the Oregon Department of Education to pilot a civic education TikTok account managed by the agency.
  - *Correct Measure Type:* Joint Resolution
- Question 14. Three Points:
  - A legislator wants to express concern about rising hate speech online and suggest schools adopt stronger media literacy efforts—but doesn't require any action.
  - *Best Answer:* Concurrent Resolution
  - Could *also* be a Bill for an Act *if action is mandated.*

- Next, instruct the students to assemble in their small research groups (made up of two pairs of measure partners). As if they've made it to 'Fast Money', they need to match their why tree/topic with the correct measure type, being sure to consider what measure type fits both the problem and the remedy.

Assignment:

- Students should complete the Measure Outline Worksheet that relates to their identified measure-type, found in the Workbook.
- If students are interested in running for office, they should attend the Officer Open Hours scheduled for this week. (Details available in the Annual Calendar)
- Standing assignment: Students should continue researching their topic in measure pairs.

Week 9: Parts of a Measure & Organizing

Progress Check:

Learning Objective:
Students can differentiate between the four measure types based on their legal force, purpose, and jurisdictional reach.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"Policy change isn't one-size-fits-all. No matter what kind of change you want to make, or the fiscal impact of that change, each measure type acts as a different tool in your lawmaking toolbox. You might have a hammer, a wrench, a magnet, and a flashlight and use each in different ways, just like the different measure-types can create a law, change the constitution, make a symbolic gesture, or send a formal letter. Each might address the same topic, but with drastically different results—depending on which tool you pick.

Sometimes the same concern can take many forms, depending on your audience, timeline, and political climate. Today, you'll learn to experiment with format by turning one idea into four different types of measures, each taking a different tone and tactical approach. By the end, you should find that your goal—not just your topic—strongly influences your measure type. You may also find that the legislative process is often much more fluid and flexible than you might imagine."

Lesson:
"You can often think of Bills for an Act as the hammer of a toolbox. As one might hammer a nail, Bills for an Act can be forceful and binding law. They can also amend or change laws, even removing them altogether. Hammers and Bills for an Act are often best used when something needs to be fixed, fastened, or broken apart in law.

A Joint Resolution is often like a wrench, they are used to tighten, loosen, or adjust the core mechanisms of government. They can propose constitutional amendments, form committees, or direct agencies. While not as blunt as a hammer, Joint Resolutions are vital for deeper structural work. Wrenches and Joint Resolutions are often best used when the foundation of law or process needs adjusting.

Concurrent Resolutions are like a flashlight. They don't build or change anything, but help everyone see what matters. They can honor, declare, recognize, or celebrate—shining light on values, events, or people with symbolic importance. Flashlights and Concurrent Resolutions are often best used when making a statement, not a statute.

Joint Memorials are like a magnet. They reach into a space you can't access directly and try to pull something closer. They aren't tools of force, but of influence and retrieval, used to draw attention or request action. Magnets and Joint Memorials are often best used for pulling attention or help from outside your jurisdiction.

Now let's see this toolbox in action. The topic we will address is school meals.

- Ask the students these questions, giving plenty of time for sharing ideas. Offer the corresponding prompts as needed.
    - What's an example of how we might address school meals through a Bill for an Act?
        - Prompt: A Bill for an Act could require all public schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to every student.
    - What's an example of how we might address school meals through a Joint Resolution?
        - Prompt: A Joint Resolution might amend the Oregon Constitution to guarantee school meals as a protected student right.
    - What's an example of how we might address school meals through a Joint Memorial?
        - Prompt: A Joint Memorial might urge Congress to expand federal meal reimbursement.
    - What's an example of how we might address school meals through a Concurrent Resolution?
        - Prompt: A Concurrent Resolution might designate October as "Student Hunger Awareness Month"

Activity:

- Ask the students for one serious topic (like student hunger or affordable housing) and one fun or silly topic (like flaming hot cheetos or Taylor Swift).
- With the selected topics, have the students organize into small groups of two measure-writing pairs or so. Like the toolbox questions they've just answered, each small group should consider how both topics might be addressed using each of the four measure types.
    - Students should try to stretch themselves, showing flexibility and creativity—hoping to not have the same idea as another group.
    - They should record their ideas as simple, short sentences, and share them with the group when complete.
    - Afterward, as time is available, you might ask "Did the measure type change your tone or language?", "Did you goal shift depending on the measure type?",

Assignment:

- Students should turn their completed measure outlines into first drafts by using the Outline to Draft Resources that correspond to their selected measure types in the Workbook.
- Students should if they want to declare candidacy before Delegation Primaries

Week 10: Oregon's Budget

Progress Check:

Learning Objective:
Students can identify components of Oregon's budget process, including the roles of the Governor, Legislature, and the requirement for a balanced budget. Students can explain how the state budget reflects Oregon's priorities by analyzing funding allocations.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)
- Copies of (printable) Budget Identity cards, below.

Intro:
"You've learned how to craft policy ideas, choose the right measure type, and shape a legislative concept. But there's one more critical responsibility every lawmaker holds: managing the state's money. In Oregon, only the Legislature can write and pass the state budget—and it must be balanced by law. That makes every legislator a steward of taxpayer dollars, responsible for using public funds wisely.

Regardless of the measure type, all proposals must consider fiscal impact—because every new idea competes with existing obligations and priorities. In this lesson, we'll explore how Oregon's budget works, how lawmakers prioritize spending, and what fiscal impact means for the success—or failure—of your bill."

Lesson:
"Oregon's budget— the balance of state revenue against its obligations, programs, and expenditures— starts when the Governor proposes a draft budget. More than just numbers on a spreadsheet, it reflects the state's values and priorities. From there, the Legislature—led by the majority party but requiring bipartisan support—negotiates, amends, and approves the final version. Lawmakers decide what gets funded, how much, and why. And unlike the federal government, Oregon's Constitution requires the Legislature to balance the budget, meaning they can't spend more than the state expects to collect.

"Some years end in surplus, allowing for special projects, rainy day savings, or tax returns. Other years bring a deficit, requiring cuts, new revenue, or tough trade-offs. Finally, once passed by both chambers, the budget returns to the Governor for signature or veto.

"So what does that all look like, in practice? The current 2023–2025 biennial budget might be bigger than you'd think: it totals over $121 billion. About a quarter of revenue comes from

"the general fund"— mostly personal and corporate taxes—, about a third comes from the Federal Government, and the rest comes from other funds— often collections for agency programming. Of the General and Lottery fund— which tends to make the most news— about 50% is spent on education, 27% on human services, 10% on public safety, and 12% on the rest— including administration.

"Some state spending is required, like K–12 schools, the state's Medicaid match, State employee salaries and pension, debt services, and other voter and court-mandated programs while the rest—called discretionary spending—must be debated and prioritized. The fiscal responsibility of the state is massive, but it's not alone: the Federal Government has considerable fiscal responsibility for things like National defense, Social Security, Medicare, immigration, foreign policy and interstate commerce. Local governments— like cities and counties— have their own fiscal responsibility for things like police, fire, libraries, local roads, housing, zoning, elections, trash, and parks."

Activity:
"To see how the budgeting process works in real life, we're going to step into the shoes of Oregon lawmakers and try to balance the state budget. In this scenario, The Oregon Legislature has $10 billion available to spend for the upcoming two-year period (biennium).

- *$6.5 billion is already committed to required spending—this covers essential services like education, Medicaid, and debt payments.*
- *That leaves only $3.5 billion for lawmakers to work with.*

However, not all of that $3.5 billion is truly "new" money:

- *$2 billion of it is currently allocated to <u>continuing</u> existing programs. While not legally required, this funding maintains programs many Oregonians rely on, such as:*
    - *Wildfire Prevention & Climate Resilience – $400 million*
    - *Affordable Housing Construction – $300 million*
    - *Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Programs – $250 million*
    - *Public Transportation Improvements – $200 million*
    - *Earthquake Preparedness & Seismic Upgrades – $200 million*
    - *Rural Infrastructure Grants – $150 million*
    - *Small Business Development Support – $150 million*
    - *Youth & After-School Programs – $100 million*
    - *School Safety & Behavioral Health Pilots – $100 million*
    - *Emergency Management & Disaster Response Continuation – $150 million*

That means <u>only</u> $1.5 billion is <u>truly flexible</u>—lawmakers can choose to fund new proposals, expand current programs, cut taxes / state revenue, or even save it for future use.

- *A (non-exhaustive) list of new proposals law-makers might consider are:*
    - *Universal Preschool Access – $500 million*
    - *State Rainy-Day Fund Deposit – $500 million*
    - *Tuition-Free Community College – $400 million*
    - *Cut State Income Taxes – $400 million*
    - *Expanding Broadband to Rural Communities – $300 million*
    - *Tax Credit for Low-Income Working Families – $250 million*
    - *Electric Vehicle Rebate Program – $200 million*
    - *Statewide Youth Employment Program – $150 million*

"To pass a budget, lawmakers (that's you!) must compromise and come to an agreement by at least a simple majority vote. Each of you will receive a secret delegate card containing your legislative priorities. These reflect the values, goals, or concerns of your constituents.

Your goal is to:

1. *Collaborate with others*
2. *Advocate for your priorities*
3. *Find compromise*
4. *Finally agree on how to reach a balanced, $10 billion dollar budget*

Please look at your secret delegate card which must guide your decision making process. You'll now have the rest of the session to negotiate, make deals, and pass your version of the Oregon budget. Good luck!"

Assignment:

- The group should be prepared to present the budget they approved in the Budget Activity next week.
- Students writing Bills for an Act should revisit the budgetary questions asked in the Measure Outline worksheets of their workbook, refining the fiscal impact of their measure. Students writing other measure types will not need to outline fiscal impact in the text of their measure, but should feel confident answering questions related to the fiscal impact of their measure.

The Budget Hawk

"Fiscal discipline above all"

- Oppose any programs that will increase the state's debt. Prefer cutting programs over raising revenue.
- Prefer cuts to existing programs over raising revenue.
- Will only support new spending if it's offset by cuts elsewhere.
- You are willing to make cuts to the $2 billion in non-committed funding.

Education Champion

"Invest in our students"

- Your top priority is fully funding K–12 schools
- You favor expanding access to higher education.
- You're willing to compromise on other priorities if it means major wins for education funding.

Safety Net Protector

"No Oregonian left behind"

- Your focus is protecting and expanding human services such as Medicaid, mental health, and affordable housing.
- You will oppose cuts to social programs, even in a deficit year, and see these services as a worthy reason for the state to incur debts.

Infrastructure Builder

"Build it strong, build it now."

- You believe Oregon's economy depends on modern infrastructure: transportation, broadband, and seismic safety.
- Push for capital investments even if it means short-term borrowing.

Tax Cutter

"Let the people keep it."

- You believe Oregonians are overtaxed.
- You support tax cuts or credits whenever possible, even if it requires reducing state services or programs.
- You oppose any new programs or services that impose a tax.

Rainy-Day Saver

"Save today, survive tomorrow."

- You prioritize building the state's financial reserves for future emergencies.
- You resist large new spending proposals in favor of saving funds.

Fix-It First Pragmatist

"Mend the roof before the storm."

- You believe in maintaining and improving existing programs before funding new ones.
- You'll only support new initiatives if old ones are already effective and sustainable.

Week 11: Measure Writing Tips

Progress Check:

Learning Objectives:
Students can apply the CLEAR principles to strengthen their legislative writing, and edit and revise their own legislative drafts to ensure clarity, grammatical consistency, neutrality of tone, and precision in meaning.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent)

Introduction:
"Before we kick off this week, let's think back to last week's budget activity.
- *Ask for the group to report on which programs they funded, which they cut or reduced, which new proposals they supported (if any), whether they added savings or cut revenue, and how close they came to the ten billion dollar total.*
- *Guide the group through a series of a few reflection questions, which may include:*
  - *What priorities were easy to agree on? Why?*
  - *What caused disagreement or tension within the group?*
  - *Which programs or proposals did you want to fund but couldn't?*
  - *Did anyone compromise their personal priorities to reach an agreement?*
  - *What surprised you about how others viewed your priorities?*
  - *How do you think real lawmakers navigate similar budget challenges?*
  - *If your budget became law, who would be most affected—positively or negatively?*
  - *What do you think is harder: coming up with ideas or paying for them? Why?*

"Now that you've developed your legislative concept, chosen the right measure type, and considered its fiscal impact, it's time to turn your outline into a Measure. Writing a measure isn't about making a passionate argument, that's for your opening and closing statements. Rather, it's about clearly and confidently stating what your proposal will do, how it will do it, and who it will affect.

"Today's lesson will help you draft a measure that is simple, professional, and powerful. You'll learn a few 'Clear' tips of legislative writing, see how small changes in language can make a big difference, and start turning your outline into a clean first draft. Just like a real legislator, your goal is to make your proposal easy to read, impossible to misinterpret, and ready to move through the legislative process."

Lesson:

- Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns sharing the 'CLEAR' tips, below.

"Measure writing can be fairly easy, as long as you remember to be 'CLEAR':"

- **C** – Be **Clear** and Direct
  - Say what you mean in as few words as possible. Replace long, winding sentences with short, strong ones.
  - Example: Turn,"Due to the alarming rise in distracted driving and the associated increase in accidents, it has become increasingly necessary to take legislative action to address the problem", into, "Using a phone while driving is prohibited."
- **L** – **Lose** the Jargon
  - Use common, plain language unless a technical term is required. Avoid fancy words or legalese unless it serves clarity. A thesaurus is not your friend here.
  - Example: Turn, "This measure seeks to ameliorate urban ecological deterioration," into, "This measure protects city parks from pollution."
- **E** – **Express** in Present Tense
  - Write your measure as if it's already in effect. Don't say what will happen by some unnamed, future legislative body—say what your measure makes happen.
  - Example: turn, "Oregon residents of at least 16 years of age will have the right to vote in local elections", into, "All Oregon residents 16 years of age and older have the right to vote in local elections."
- **A** – **Avoid Argument** or Emotion
  - Your measure is not your speech or opinion piece. Save persuasive language for your speeches or presentations, unless in a Whereas Statement of a Joint Memorial, Joint Resolution, or Concurrent Resolution— and even therein some arguments should be saved for speeches.
  - Example: turn, "I believe restrictions on drivers under 18 will save lives" into, "Drivers under 18 may not drive between midnight and 5 a.m."
- **R** – **Revise** for Precision
  - After writing, go back and trim. Ask: Can I say this with fewer words? Can it be misunderstood? Could it be clearer? Could some of this be saved for my speeches?

Activity:

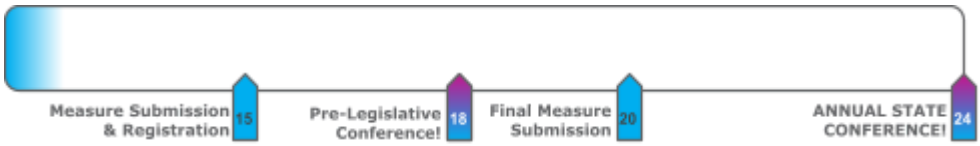
- Instruct the students to assemble back into their Research groups (two pairs of Measure Partners).
- Together, these small groups should quickly review each Rough Draft *twice*, as if reviewing their measures through each of the first two "Clear" lenses: Be Clear and Direct and Lose the Jargon.
  - Try to encourage multiple edit passes: each of the rules merits its own attention with fresh eyes, and students need to gain comfort reviewing each other's measures multiple times.

Assignment:

- Measure writing pairs should additionally review their measures another three times: applying the lenses of E, A and R:Express in Present Tense, Avoid Argument, and Revise.

Week 12: Process 101 – Intro to Rules

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students will gain confidence using the Standing Rules by practicing common actions in a low-stakes mock session, while emphasizing respectful discourse, fairness, and student leadership.

Materials:
- Copies of the Standing Rules: Common Actions Table
- Gavel or other stand-in object for the Delegation President (acting as Chair)
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper and a hat (or vessel to pull names from)
- Timer, stopwatch, or phone to keep time

Introduction:
"Youth and Government isn't just about laws—it's about leadership, fairness, and learning how to make your voice heard while respecting others. That's why we use Standing Rules to guide our debates. These rules—adapted from parliamentary procedure—help us create a space where everyone has a fair chance to speak, disagree respectfully, and keep the process moving. In this program, your voice matters, but so does how you use it.

"Today, we're going to learn the most common phrases and actions used during legislative sessions, and we'll practice them in a lighthearted way so that when it's time to debate real measures, you'll feel confident and prepared."

Lesson:
"Our program's standing rules are adaptations of parliamentary procedure, but Oregon Youth and Government has its own unique structure. While it can sound wordy and confusing, don't be intimidated! The basics of how to speak in session will be covered in this lesson, and we will have plenty of time to practice the rules together. This lesson does not cover the entire process, we'll get to that next week. Instead, we will cover the basics of how to speak, to ensure that the most important parts of respectful debate do not get missed."

Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns sharing these speaking instructions, giving tips or personal examples when possible.

- First, you must indicate to the chamber and chair that you're interested in speaking. This can be done by raising your hand or placard, or however the Chair/Presiding Officer asks you to do so.

- When the Chair/Presiding Officer recognizes you, you must stand. Recognition is often given by head nod, point, or verbal cue. You don't speak *until* you've been recognized (and have stood). The exception to this is when your action is considered interruptible, which is outlined in the standing rules.
- Very few Oregonians are given the privilege to speak in the hallowed halls of our State Capitol. So, when the chair/presiding officer recognizes you the very first words spoken should be in appreciation to the chair/presiding officer for recognizing you. Begin with your thanks, every time.
    - For example, "Thank you, Madam/Sir/Chair", or "Thank you Chair, and my esteemed colleagues"
- Oregon legislators are elected representatives acting as the careful stewards of their given districts, and the trusted voice of their constituents. As such, they, and we, make a point to introduce ourselves after recognition. For YAG's rules, after respecting the chamber and its chair with appreciation, speakers *must* provide an introduction— who they are, who they represent, and why they are speaking. If delegates do not provide an introduction, it makes their recognition no longer valid, and it's possible they'll be asked to sit down.
    - For example, "Thank you Madame Chair and esteemed colleagues. I am Senator Swift from the Tayler Delegation. I rise to…"
- Even though you may be speaking to the entire chamber, or referencing something another speaker provided, **always** address your comments through the Chair, never directly to another delegate. This is to keep debate respectful — it attempts to make the debate about the policy rather than the person.
    - Example: "You're wrong!" becomes, "Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this measure, as I believe one of my honorable colleagues may have misspoken because…"

Activity:

- Ask the Delegation President to lead this activity.
- Instruct the students to write their name on a piece of paper, fold it up, and hand it in.
    - While they are doing that, quickly seek and record a list of 5-10 random, silly and non-political topics from the room. "Hot Cheetos", "Mullet hairstyles", etc. Write those down, individually, and fold them up.
        - Be sure to save these silly topics and student names: you'll use them in a coming activity!
- *"We're now going to apply today's intro lesson for speaking under standing rules with an Improvisation Activity. I am going to randomly select one of the topics you've submitted and add a legislative remedy or action. I'll then pull names out of a hat to determine who will speak in opposition, and who will speak in favor."*

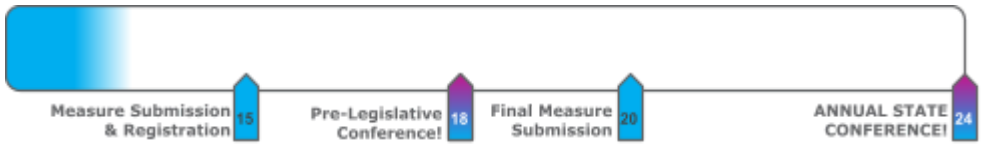
- The Rules:
  - I will be Presiding as the Chair and will gently enforce the Standing Rules Basics we just learned.
  - Each speaker will only have 30 seconds to speak, and no seconds to prepare!
  - Keep the process respectful, but let's have fun. This is less about making perfect arguments or giving dazzling orations, and more about being comfortable with the process."
- With all names submitted, begin the game. Pull the first topic from the hat, and give it a quick, improvised introduction that prompts a legislative remedy or action.
  - For example, *"Our next order of business is to hear House Measure 123, relating to tax incentives for Hot Cheetos". The chair recognizes _____ (draw a name from the hat) to give a thirty second statement in opposition".* Go back and forth between opposition and support a few times before switching to a new topic.
    - Don't worry about following a script or speaking perfectly— this is really an improvised practice for the chair, too!

Assignment:

- Students should watch one of the sample debates from the Oregon House of Representatives, found in the Week 12 resource of their Workbook, and be prepared to discuss next week.

Week 13: Process 201 — Measure Presentation

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students can describe and participate in the structured process of a legislative committee.

Materials:
- Copies of the Standing Rules: Common Actions Table (available as an Advisor Resource)
- Gavel or stand-in object for the Delegation President (acting as Chair)
- Timer, stopwatch, or phone to keep time

Introduction:
"Last week we dipped our toes into Youth and Government's Standing Rules by getting comfortable introducing silly arguments with the respect the standing rules facilitate. Each of you has the full set of standing rules at your disposal, which includes the complete list of 'Actions' you can take, and additional information about each of them. The best legislators should familiarize themselves with that document, but for now, we'll all dive deeper to see how the most-common actions within YAG's standing rules are used throughout the full Presentation of Measures."

Lesson:
"When it's time to present a measure in a Legislative Committee, the process follows a clear structure."

Ask your Delegation leadership and/or experienced debaters to take turns guiding the delegation through the presentation process, keeping time during each step of the process, and giving tips or personal examples when possible.

- Introduction:
  - Following the docket order (also legislative schedule, this is the order in which measures are heard), the chair or their clerk will introduce the next measure to be considered. They do that by reading the Measure Number, its (optional) Measure Short Title, and its relating to clause.
    - Chair: "We will now consider measure XYZ. Will the clerk please read the title?"
    - Clerk: READS EXAMPLE MEASURE TITLE
  - You *may* only have up to a minute to look over the measure before the proceedings begin, so it is imperative that you pre-read the measures in your committee, and actively pay attention to and participate in the presentation of the measure.

- Opening Statement (2 minutes):
  - The chair will ask the Measure sponsor to give a 2 minute introductory speech, and grant them speaking privileges. Either the Primary or Secondary sponsor, but only one, can give an introductory speech if they are both in the same committee/chamber.
    - Chair: "The measure sponsor is now recognized for a two measure opening statement. Is a measure sponsor present?"
    - Sponsor: Indicates that they want to speak, Thanks the chair, Introduces themself. Ex: "Thank you chair. Swift, Nashville Delegation. OPENING STATEMENT."
- Questions (3 minutes):
  - After the Opening Statement, the chair will move the chamber into a questions and answers period. They will give instruction as to how to seek recognition (some have hopeful-questioners raise their hands, some have them form a line, etc)
  - Once the chair recognizes you to speak your turn, and you've risen to introduce yourself, it's important to remember that because standing rules prohibit speakers from directing statements or questions to fellow delegates, the entire process that follows is actually directed *through the chair*. It's weird, at first, but it actually can *remove* a lot of pressure.
    - After introducing yourself, instead of launching directly into your question, you first ask the chair if the sponsor will yield to a question. The chair will put that inquiry to the sponsor, and if they yield, the chair will return your speaking privileges so you can ask your question. (Think of this part as passing a metaphorical talking stick. From the delegate to the chair to the sponsor to the chair to the delegate. The chair MUST touch the talking stick between every step.)
      - Chair: RECOGNIZES THE NEXT DELEGATE TO SPEAK
      - Delegate: "Thank you chair. Swift, Nashville Delegation. Does the speaker yield to a question?"
      - Chair: "Does the speaker yield?"
      - Speaker (measure sponsor): "Yes."
      - Chair: "Yes."
      - Delegate: CAN THEN PROCEED TO ASK QUESTION
    - Even after the sponsor yields, it's still not a direct conversation because you then ask your question *to the chair.* For example, "Madame chair, is the measure sponsor prepared to present data supporting the mullet hairstyles' damage to K-12 education, such as the percentage of student hairstyles 'tending to business in the front whilst partying in the back'?
    - After the question is asked, speaking privileges are automatically transferred to the measure sponsor to respond. Once the sponsor responds, the chair has the floor back to recognize the next delegate that wishes to answer a question.
  - During the question and answer period, both the Primary and Secondary sponsor can answer questions, but only one sponsor can speak per question.
- Debate Period (10 Minutes)
  - After the Questions and Answers period has concluded, the chair will move the chamber into a debate period. They will give instruction as to how to seek recognition (some have hopeful-debators raise their hands, some have them form a line, etc). The chair will always seek a speaker in the opposition, first.

    - Once it's your turn and the chair recognizes you to speak, you rise and introduce yourself, adding why you've risen.
        - Example: "Thank you Madame Chair and esteemed colleagues. I am Senator Swift from the Tayler Delegation. I rise in opposition to the Tortured Poets Ban because…"
    - The Measure Sponsors may not participate during the debate period.
- Closing Statement (2 minutes):
    - Either the Primary or Secondary Sponsor, but only one, can give closing remarks. They typically respond to some of the previous debate, and try to make a final plea for support.
- Vote.
    - If quorum—the first, ⅔ threshold necessary for any action— is met, the members present at the time of the vote call will participate in a yay-nay vote.
        - If a voice vote, members must speak in normal tones - no shouting.
        - If a "vote of division," members will vote by standing or raising their hands.

Activity:

Ask the Delegation President to come and lead this activity.

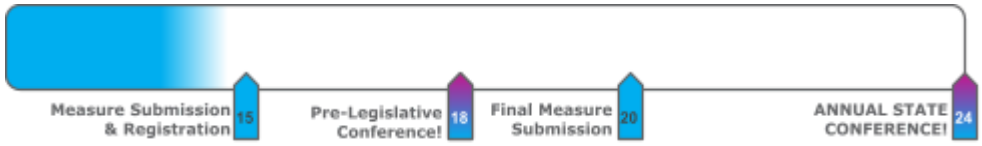
- *"To get us comfortable with both the standing rules, and how they are implemented in the presentation of measures, we will now move into a mock joint session of the legislature. In it, each and every measure partner group will present their measure in a sped-up version of the presentation process.*
    - *The Rules:*
        - *I will be Presiding as the Chair, and more-strictly enforcing the Standing Rules Basics. That means I'll be correcting you as we go, so keep the rules at your fingertips.*
        - *Participation is mandatory, as are tough questions, critical feedback, kindness and encouragement.*
        - *Measures must have at least two questions, one speaker in support (pro), and two speakers in opposition (con) from the Delegation.*
        - *To keep this moving quickly, each speaker will only have 30 seconds to speak.*
        - *Keep the process respectful, but let's have fun. This is less about making perfect arguments, or giving dazzling oration, and more about being comfortable with the process."*
- Begin the Joint Session speed round by calling the session to order, and selecting the first measure to be presented.

Assignment:

- Each measure writing pair should refine their drafts, incorporating constructive feedback from today's joint session.

Week 14: Speech 101 — The Rhetorical Triangle

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students can define and explain the three rhetorical appeals (Ethos, Pathos and Logos) and how each rhetorical appeal can influence different types of audiences in a legislative setting.

Materials:
- Gavel or stand-in object for the Delegation President (acting as Chair)
- Timer, stopwatch, or phone to keep time
- Copies of the silly debate topics and names from Week 12, and a hat to pull them from

Introduction:
"Last week we combined the basics of standing rules with the Legislative process for the presentation of measures. You all got to dip your toes in speech and debate, but only had brief 30 second experiences. This week, we will dive deeply into the power of persuasion by looking at 'The Rhetorical Triangle'.

"Persuading someone— let alone an entire audience— to, 1) agree that the problem or idea you measure addresses is a meaningful one, 2) that the solution you propose is just and good, and 3) that you, specifically, should be heard to address it in the first place, can feel like an impossible mission. Luckily, an ancient Greek philosopher made persuasion easy with a simple triangle."

Lesson:
Ask your Delegation leadership to take turns guiding the delegation through this lesson on the Rhetorical Triangle.

"In 350BC, the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, wrote a treatise 'On Rhetoric' that has helped orators ever since. While Aristotle taught a great deal in the treatise, the work is perhaps most-known for describing how three methods of persuasion— Logos, Ethos, and Pathos— can work independently or in ultimate concert (A Rhetorical Triangle) to persuade a given audience."

- **Logos**
  - *"Logos is often translated as logic, but actually refers to a great deal more. Aristotle teaches that many audiences need to hear a logical argument full of well-connected facts, reasons or statistics. That may require historical or literal analogies to help draw logical conclusions. Logos means being well-researched and well-prepared, but also understandable or relatable. (something can't be logical if it can't first be understood.)"*

- **Ethos**
  - *"Aristotle described Ethos as 'persuasion through character.' It's more personal because it is about the speaker themself. He suggests that many audiences need the presenter to feel trustworthy and knowledgeable. They might do this by demonstrating their mastery of the subject, providing their educational or professional experience with it, or maybe introducing a related lived experience. More so, those credentials, and the arguments they support, need to be communicated in a clear and understandable way. Being well-spoken, which most easily comes across through confidence and respect for both the audience and the chair, helps to build this trust. Word choice and etiquette (such as body language and knowledge of parliamentary procedure) also contribute to convincing the audience that a speaker is confident and trustworthy."*
- **Pathos**
  - *"Using Pathos in rhetoric is bringing out an emotional response from the audience, forcing them to care or be convinced because of the specific values, beliefs, or emotions you draw upon. Illustrations, examples, stories and testimony can elicit a range of emotions from heartbreak to hatred that can make an audience more receptive to your words. To do this, the speaker needs to know and respect their audience well, and carefully draw from the emotions that would elicit support."*
- **Triangles**
  - *"Triangles — including rhetorical ones— come in many shapes. They don't have to be perfectly balanced. A good persuasive speaker should consider their topic, goal, and audience in order to create the right mix and match or balances of Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. This allows a specific audience to meet a specific goal. Most successful persuasive orators will have trusted partners hear their words and help encourage which sections need a little more logos ('give me a few more stats, here'), which sections need an adjusted Ethos ('maybe slow down in this section and make eye contact'), and which sections need a touch more Pathos ('this opening needs a good hook, maybe a nice story'). In a delegation, we become trusted partners for each other."*

Activity:

Ask the Delegation President to lead this activity.

- *"We're now going to get hands-on with Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle and begin to see how one might take shape for our measures. To do so, we're going to bring back our improvisational argument game from a few weeks ago, but with a twist. Each of you will be randomly selected to argue either for or against one of our topics. You'll have thirty seconds to try to be persuasive. But this time the twist is that I'll be randomly selecting one of Aristotle's methods— Logos, Ethos, or Pathos— for you to lean on. I will also be randomly selecting who will speak in opposition, and who will speak in favor.*

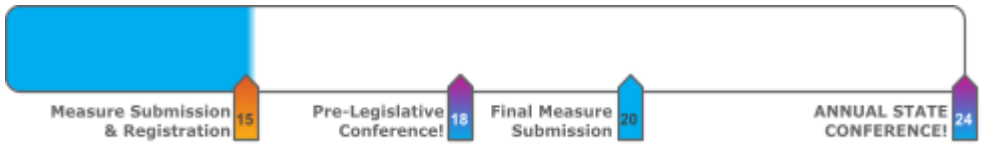
- *"The Rules:*
  - *I will be Presiding as the Chair and will gently enforce the Standing Rules Basics— so make sure you introduce yourselves appropriately and always address me— the chair.*
  - *Each speaker will only have 30 seconds to speak, but with the twist, you'll get a few minutes to prepare.*
  - *Keep the process respectful, but let's have fun. This is really not about making perfect arguments or giving dazzling orations and more about getting practice with each of these persuasive methods."*
- Pull the first topic from the hat, and give it a quick, improvised introduction that prompts a legislative remedy or action.
  - For example, *"Our next order of business is to hear House Measure 234, relating to the requirement of pets to wear cute human clothes in public spaces."*
    - Draw three names from the hat to determine who will be presenting. Assign one of them to speak with a focus on Logos, one with a focus on Ethos, and one with a focus on Pathos.
    - Give the group about a minute to prepare— helping them as needed.
    - After a minute or so, ask each speaker to present.
      - Remember, they should first rise, thank the chair, introduce themselves with name and delegation, and introduce why they are speaking (they can choose whether they are rising in support or opposition).
      - After their arguments, be sure to be celebratory— giving kind remarks or leading applause.
  - Continue this process with new topics and speakers until everyone has provided remarks.
- Once everyone has spoken, bring the group back together to ask a few reflective questions about what they've learned.
  - *"Did anyone notice that certain persuasive methods tended to work better with certain topics than others?"*
  - *"Did anyone notice a topic that might have benefitted from pulling from two or more of the persuasive methods?"*
  - *"How might the experience be different if the audience was different— maybe less familiar with the topics, maybe affected communities, or otherwise?"*

Assignment:

- Measure writing pairs should get together to finalize their drafts. They don't have to be fully polished and perfect, but they do need to be ready to submit for the Pre-Legislative Conference (Pre Leg).
- Measure writing pairs should consider their specific skills, abilities and experiences, their unique measures, and the likely audiences they'll have at Conference, and begin to plan how to balance a Rhetoric Triangle that's specifically tailored for their measure presentations.

Week 15: Speech 201 — Opening & Closing Statements

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students will understand the purpose and structure of quality opening and closing statements in the legislative process, feel more confident presenting them formally, and appreciate how real legislators successfully use Aristotle's persuasive methods.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent) for notes.

Introduction:
"Last week we got hands-on experience with Aristotle's Rhetoric Triangle, so each of you should be familiar with Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. In addition to finalizing the drafts of our measures, our assignment last week was to begin mapping out the specific shape of your rhetoric triangle. Considering your specific skills, backgrounds, and experiences, and thinking of your specific measures and how they might be presented to differing audiences, you should have created a rhetorical triangle specific to you and your measure.

"When you present your measure in session, your Opening and Closing Remarks are your best chance to persuade other delegates. These speeches aren't just formalities—they're your chance to show why your idea matters, why your solution is smart and just, and why your peers should care enough to vote yes.

"But you don't have to be perfect or a natural public speaker to do this well. Standing Rules help the debate proceed fairly, and good preparation helps you deliver clear, strong, and respectful remarks—even if you're nervous.

"Today, we'll look at what's the point of these speeches in the first place, and some guiding principles you should use to persuade well. You'll get a chance to try drafting and practicing your own ideas in a supportive, low-pressure way."

Lesson:
"So, what's the point of an opening statement? In short, it introduces the problem and solution clearly, it frames the measure in your terms, and it makes people want to support you.

"The point of a closing statement is similarly simple. It is your absolute last chance to persuade on your terms, it gives you an opportunity to respond to what you heard in debate, it summarizes why a 'yes' vote is the right call, and it actually asks for it.

The best opening and closing statements follow a format that you'll explore in your workbook. But before that, they adhere to these guiding principles that we'll cover today."

Ask the Delegation leadership to lead covering the following points:

Be respectful.
"This may seem obvious, but it's critically important. Show respect — and earn Ethos— by quickly thanking the chair and the chamber for taking the time to address your important topic. Respect your support, and show yours is a movement legislators should join, by appreciating well-crafted arguments or highlighting important testimony. Respect your opposition, too, by addressing their concerns as valid (even if not correct) and illustrating why a yes vote is still the right choice. Thank your opposition for seriously considering and engaging with this topic, even if they have reservations. Respect everyone's time by using it. Use your allotted time, even if you think the vote is in the bag, or that you don't stand a chance. Leaving time on the table tells your audience that you weren't prepared or passionate enough— that your position lacks Logos and doesn't deserve their Ethos."

Actually appeal.
"Firstly, this principle means to be thoughtful of your rhetorical triangle and your special appeals to Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. Carefully listen to other debates in the chamber and to the questions and debate presented during your presentation, and determine if you should dial up the Ethos, focus on the Logos, or can dial back the Pathos. This principle also means you shouldn't assume your audience has read the full text of your measure or that an argument you make or position you take is obvious: you actually have to present a clear appeal. Finally, this principle means you have to actually ask for the outcome you want. If a door-to-door salesperson presented the perfect argument as to why their patented vacuum is better than all others, but never actually asked you how many you'd like or, 'what do I have to do to make this your vacuum, today?', you are much less likely to buy that vacuum. The legislative process is similar: you actually have to ask the chamber to vote yes to pass this important legislation."

Be on your terms.
"Being on your terms initially means to be really clear. Distill your measure to its simplest form, and take your time with it so that your audience knows what you're asking for; don't leave it up to their best guess. Being on your terms can also mean saving some arguments, stories, or key facts from your opening remarks. This can be important when your opposition raises important concerns that might seem to be popular with the audience. If you've saved some arguments, you'll be able to help supporters respond immediately in debate, or can offer final rebuttals in your closing statement. Similarly, being on your terms can mean not responding to some arguments. Sometimes sponsors feel it necessary to respond to each and every argument— even those that really didn't inspire any opposition from the audience. In that case, it can sometimes be best to avoid adding air to those arguments, and instead, save that time or space for your more compelling points. Relatedly, being on your terms means that your closing statement should not only respond to the arguments of your opposition. Doing so places the final word of your measure in your opposition's terms, right before the vote is called. Instead, a closing statement in your terms should sandwich any rebuttals between your planned remarks."

Activity:

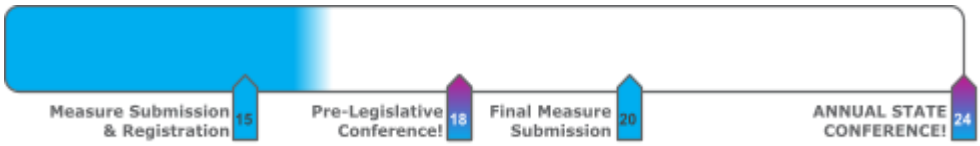
- Instruct measure-writing pairs to spend the next 5-10 minutes looking through the key stats, personal stories, one-liners and winning arguments they've prepared during their research and preparation. Almost as if taking an inventory of their arguments, they should generally rank from strongest or most-important to weakest or most-optional, and additionally consider which feel most in support of Ethos, Pathos, or Logos.
- Next, measure-writing pairs should partner with another set of pairs. Each pair should spend no more than 5 minutes presenting their strongest arguments to the other group. In response, the other pair shouldn't debate the points, but instead, offer feedback regarding which they felt was the strongest, best-supported Logos, Ethos, or Pathos, or if certain appeals might be best-suited in an opening statement, closing statement, or left available for rebuttals as needed.
- The pairs should then alternate so each pair offers arguments and receives feedback.
- Repeat this with new pairs as time allows.

Assignment:

- Measure-writing pairs should consider the guiding principles of today's lesson and the feedback from their peers, and complete the Opening Statement and Closing Statement worksheets, Workbook pages 31-41.

Week 16: Process 301 — Quality Questions

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students will learn how to ask strategic, respectful, and constructive questions during a legislative process, and use peer questions to strengthen their measure and remarks.

Materials:
- Students' completed measures (printed or otherwise displayed on large paper)
- Tape, Index cards or sticky notes
- Copies of the "Styles of Questions" mini-guide (can be printed or posted)

Introduction:
"Great debate and impactful change cannot occur without a deep understanding of the proposed measure. The Q&A period can often be overlooked as delegates read the text of the measures or consider their debate points. But this is a critical mistake. Q&A should be filled with exploratory questions, helping you to understand the problem and the proposed solution. But additionally, the Q&A period is where you see how deeply someone has thought about their idea, how well they understand its impact, and how seriously they've considered different perspectives.

"Whether you're for or against a measure, asking the right question can spark real dialogue. Questions can challenge weak spots, highlight strengths, or bring out deeper meaning. In Oregon's real Legislature, it's often the questions—not the speeches—that make or break a measure.

"Today, you'll learn the different ways we use questions in Youth & Government, and then you'll get to help your peers by asking thoughtful ones."

Lesson:
"Questions in Youth and Government can take many forms. For now, we're going to explore five key question formats that you might choose from to really understand—and be able to later debate— proposed measures."

Ask the Delegation leadership to lead cover these question-types, giving additional examples or personal experiences as they are able:

Clarifying Questions
Purpose: Help <u>you or the audience</u> better understand a part of the measure, the realities of the problem, or intent of the sponsors.
Use When: Something is vague, complex, or undefined.

Examples: *"What does the measure mean by 'sustainable sourcing'?"; "Could the sponsor explain how the funding process would work?"; "Am I understanding the problem correctly— there's a mullet to Nascar pipeline?"*
Guiding Tip: Be curious, not critical.

Critical/Challenging Questions
Purpose: Help the audience highlight potential weaknesses or unintended consequences.
Use When: You want to respectfully point out flaws or gaps, prepare for lively debate,
Examples: *"If I am reading this correctly, wouldn't low-income students be disproportionately affected by terms of the penalty section?"; "Was there a reason 'Hot Cheetos' are defined so broadly— potentially affecting other spicy snacks?"*
Guiding Tip: Use facts, not feelings. Avoid a "gotcha" tone, even if you are in fact setting up for pending debate.

Supportive or Tee-Up Questions
Purpose: Help the speaker clarify something strong, display additional facts, knowledge or preparedness, or share an emotional hook.
Use When: You agree, and want to help the measure or speaker shine.
Examples: *"Would the sponsor explain again how many people this would benefit?"; "Can the sponsor share more about the personal story you mentioned?"*
Guiding Tip: Don't be afraid to help a peer build their case.

Value-Based or Philosophical Questions
Purpose: Help the discussion center around fairness, justice, or trade-offs.
Use When: You want to push the room toward deeper reflection, even if you're still unsure if you're for or against a measure.
Examples: *"In a budget shortfall, should the state prioritize this over something like healthcare?"; "Is it fair to expect counties to follow this rule without funding?"*
Guiding Tip: Ask questions that don't have easy answers.

Follow-Up Questions
Purpose: Dig deeper into a speaker's earlier response or add nuance to the debate.
Use When: You want to clarify, expand on, or respectfully challenge a prior answer.
Examples: *"The sponsor has given a wonderful answer to a previous question. As an important follow up, where can I find that in the text of the measure?"; "The sponsor has said this measure would reduce costs. Would they provide data or evidence to support that?"*
Guiding Tip: Good follow-up shows you're listening closely and thinking critically. Try to build on ideas, not just repeat them.

Activity:
"No one likes being surprised by tough questions at conference. To help, we're all going to spend time asking questions of each other. Be kind and respectful, but don't think of tough questions as a bad thing: you're doing your peers a favor by asking them now, and giving them time to prepare."

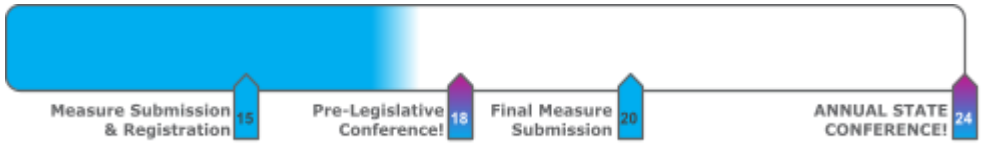
- Have students post their measure drafts on large paper (11x17 or greater) around the room or on desks/tables, and give each student a stack of sticky notes or index cards.
- Students walk around the room and read each measure.
- On a sticky note or card, they write one thoughtful, original question for each measure.
    - Encourage a mix of question types from today's lesson!

Assignment:
Each student should review the Q&A Tips for Pros in the workbook, pages 42-43. Then, they should take their list of peer-submitted questions and sort them into three categories:

1. Incorporate into the text**:** Fix unclear parts, define terms, revise penalties or funding sections, etc.
2. Include in opening or closing remarks: add clarifications, stats, or stories to preemptively answer likely questions.
3. Prepare as on-the-fly responses: draft a quick, respectful response in case that question comes up at conference.

Week 17: Legislative Committees

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students will understand the critical role of legislative committees, including their responsibilities in debating, amending, refining, and advancing (or failing) legislative measures. They will practice engaging in committee-style deliberation and learn how to make and respond to amendments.

Materials:
- Pens/paper for note-taking
- Stopwatches, timers, or cell phones for time-keeping

Introduction:
"Last week, we focused on the Q&A process — that vital step in the presentation of a measure where you open your measure up to critique, questions, and insights. Today, we take that a step further.

"In most democratic systems, it would be impossible for every lawmaker to consider every bill in detail. That's why committees exist. They are the first filter—and often, the most important part—of the legislative process.

"Committees are small, assigned groups of legislators who review proposed measures in detail. They help decide what gets improved, what moves forward, and what doesn't. In the Oregon Legislature, about 3,000 measures are introduced each session—but only a fraction become law. Committees are how we manage time, improve quality, and make sure only the strongest ideas get a full hearing.

"In Youth and Government, every measure starts in a committee. If it fails there— which many do— it goes no further. But if it passes, that version of the measure is what heads to the floor — without further changes . This means committees are <u>the only place</u> where measures can be amended. And importantly, not every measure can or should move forward. That's not a failure—it's a key part of the difficult job of a legislator. This all makes committees both powerful and vital: they may not have the grandeur of the House or Senate floor, but they are where the real work gets done."

Lesson:
Ask the Delegation Leadership to take turns covering these key-aspects of committees, offering examples or personal experience as time allows.

The Tone and Function of Committees
"Committee sessions feel very different from floor sessions. They are:
- *Less formal, more collaborative*
- *Focused on problem-solving*
- *Often involve breaks, brainstorming, and compromise*

"Once a measure is introduced, it belongs to the Legislature. That means other members can suggest edits or even vote to fail it. This doesn't mean the sponsor failed—it means the process is working. Sometimes, even strong ideas need more time.

Your job as a committee member is not to pass everything. Your job is to make every measure better—and then decide whether it deserves to move forward."

The Amendment Process (How to Improve a Measure)
"In YAG, committees are the only body that can make amendments to measures. Very few measures pass committee without amendment(s), and many will fail committee <u>even after</u> several amendments. As you hear constructive opposition, ask yourself:
- *Can this problem be fixed with an amendment?*
- *If it were fixed, would I support the measure?*

"To propose a change:

- *Have your proposal ready in writing, and make a Motion to Amend.*
- *Be specific: 'I move to strike lines 22–23, change the tax rate in line 36 to 0.5%, and set the enactment date in line 73 to July 1, 2030.'*
- *If seconded, the committee votes whether to consider the amendment.*
- *If yes, follow the process: opening statement, questions, debate, closing, then vote.*

"The chair can usher in minor changes (grammar, punctuation, spelling) by passing motions to amend with the 'unanimous consent' of the chamber.

Pro Tip: Most measures that succeed have been amended at least once."

Critical Evaluation - What Questions Should You Ask?
"Throughout the presentation of a measure, keep asking yourself:
- *Do I recognize or agree with the problem this measure addresses?*
- *Do I believe the proposed solution is effective and responsible?*
- *If I disagree, can I suggest a better solution or fix it with an amendment?*
- *Even after amendments, does this measure reflect my values and judgment?*

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, it may be time to vote against the bill—and that's okay. Not every good idea is ready, and not every ready idea is the right one."

Voting and Responsibility
"Voting is a serious responsibility—and more complex than it may seem. In the Oregon Legislature, committee votes often come '<u>with recommendation</u>', meaning members believe a

measure deserves to pass both committee and the full chamber. While YAG doesn't use formal recommendations, committee votes carry similar weight.

Even if a measure sponsor or the entire committee worked hard to write, present or improve a measure, you may still vote against it if:

- *The core idea still doesn't sit right with you*
- *The policy feels incomplete*
- *It clashes with your personal or political values*

This is part of a healthy legislative process. You're not disrespecting your colleagues by voting no—you're doing your job."

Committees Shape Floor Debate
"Once a measure reaches the floor, it cannot be amended. That means committees must do the heavy lifting of:

- *Fixing weak points*
- *Asking tough questions*
- *Preparing sponsors and floor leaders*

As a committee member, your insight will help shape how others vote. You might be the one who explains why a measure is worth supporting—or why it isn't."

Activity:

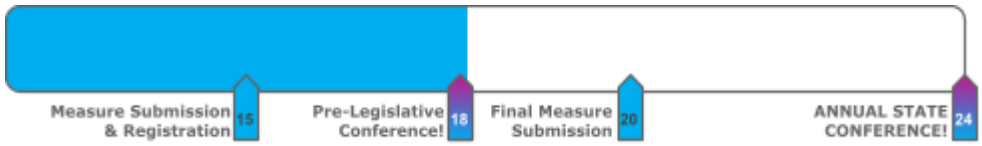
- The Delegation President should split students into small groups of about six, keeping measure-writing pairs together. These groups will act as non-binding committees, generally adhering to Standing Rules while presenting each measure in a sped-up process that focuses on the Q&A and Debate sections of measure presentation.
- Students should ask good and sometimes critical questions, leaning into honest and at times constructive debate, and consider potential resolutions to key problems with the amendment process.
- Each pair should have about 1 minute of opening and closing remarks, 2 minutes of Q&A, and 8-10 minutes of debate. Remember, amendments are only allowed during the debate period.
- After each measure has been addressed, if time allows, bring the group together for reflection questions which might include:
    - What were some of the most helpful critiques or questions your group raised?
    - Did your measure improve through amendments? If not, why did you choose not to change it?
    - What made a measure "passable" in your view?
    - Was it hard to vote to fail a measure? Why or why not?
    - How does this exercise change how you plan to revise your measure going forward?

Assignment:

- Amendments made during today's section were "non-binding" or optional, but measure sponsors should review the questions, comments, and offered amendments from their mock committee session and revise their measure, presentation and preparation materials accordingly.
- Reminder: Next week is the Pre-Legislative Conference, in which measures will be introduced statewide for the first time. Sponsor pairs should ensure they are prepped, polished and ready.

Week 18: The Art of the Con

Progress Check:



Learning Objectives:
Students will understand the importance of respectful, well-reasoned opposition debate and will practice delivering critiques that enrich discussion, test ideas, and elevate the democratic process — even when those critiques challenge the majority.

Materials:
- White board or similar
- Stopwatches, timers, or cell phones for time-keeping

Introduction:
"Have you ever held back from debating against a measure (or otherwise) because you didn't want to seem rude or confrontational?"

"It's natural — but opposition debate is actually a sign of a healthy democracy. Good opposition doesn't mean tearing someone down; it means caring enough about the issue to help stress-test it. Measures that pass with no critique often miss key voices, have unintended consequences, or leave important ideas on the table. Many key measures only became law because a thoughtful "con" helped reshape it. Similarly, some of the most harmful policies passed, in part, because no one was brave enough to speak up.
Today, we are going to celebrate 'The Art of the Con'."

Lesson:
"Why does opposition debate matter?"

- *"It ensures all voices are heard—even when they're unpopular,"*
- *"It reveals blind spots—unintended consequences or gaps in logic,"*
- *"It sharpens the final policy—sometimes turning a bad measure into a great one,"*
- *"It models courage and respect—even in disagreement,"*
- *"It supports the minority—a cornerstone of democratic balance."*

"There are many ways to provide critical opposition debate. Let's look at a few:"

Ask the Delegation Leadership to take turns covering these con-characteristics, sharing examples or personal experiences as they are able.

The Machiavellian Strategist
"It is better to anticipate betrayal than suffer from it." – *Machiavelli*
Example: *"I rise in opposition because this net neutrality bill looks great politically, but centralizing power in the FCC could later be abused by a less friendly administration. I worry we are empowering future overreach."*
Use When: You want to expose long-term political risks, unintended power shifts, or hidden motives behind a proposal.

The Sun Tzu Flanker
"Appear at the point which the enemy must hasten to defend." – *Sun Tzu*
Example: *"I rise in opposition to this measure. Supporters talk about throttling, but what about its quiet loopholes—like prioritizing certain government traffic or political campaigns? We cannot approve this measure until those flaws are fixed."*
Use When: You want to change the battlefield by focusing attention on a blind spot, overlooked consequence, or vulnerable clause.

The Aristotelian Logician
"The law is reason, free from passion." – *Aristotle*
Example: *"I rise in opposition because this measure claims to encourage competition, yet prohibits pricing strategies. That blatant contradiction weakens the entire logic of the measure."*
Use When: You want to deconstruct flawed reasoning, internal contradictions, or lack of evidence behind claims.

The Stoic Blocker
"If it is not right, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it." – *Marcus Aurelius*
Example: *"I rise in opposition, not because of what this measure includes, but because of what it doesn't. We haven't seen the fiscal impact. We haven't heard from small ISPs. Why are we rushing when this demands such careful thought?"*
Use When: You want to slow down legislation, ensure procedural rigor, or raise concerns about the timing of a vote.

The Inquisitor
"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers." – *Voltaire*
Example: *"I rise in opposition because I simply have more questions than this measure has answers. How will this affect rural broadband access? What's the actual cost to small ISPs? Where's the data?"*
Use When: You want to expose gaps in research, force the sponsor to clarify assumptions, or prepare the ground for further critique.

The Political Realist
"Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable, the art of the next best" – *Otto von Bismarck*
Example: *"I oppose this measure because this will die in the courts. Why waste time and political capital on something doomed, especially when our docket is filled with better, more workable solutions?"*
Use When: You want to point out real-world barriers to implementation or considerable tradeoff conversations: legal, electoral, or budgetary.

The Rhetorical Swordsman

"Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men." – *Plato*

Example: *"I rise in emphatic opposition because supporters are claiming this measure protects the people—but it protects Comcast's lawyers, first. I won't mistake good language for good justice, and won't vote in support of it, either."*

Use When: You want to dismantle a persuasive or emotionally charged argument with wit, precision, or rhetorical judo.

Activity:

"Opposition is absolutely critical, but it can feel really deflating to hear it for the first time at conference— when you're in the spotlight and have little time to make changes. For today's activity, we will be doing one of the kindest things we can do for one another: opposing the heck out of everyone's measures!"

- Delegation Leadership should lead the group through a con-party in which the group rotates through its measures, offering respectful but critical opposition feedback in a safe environment.
    - For each measure, the group will be given 1-2 minutes (max) to read through the text. Then, each pair of measure sponsors should stand before the group and give a very quick, 30-second overview of their measure.
    - Next, the sponsors will seek opposition arguments that are helpful, respectful and critical. Students should be encouraged to try to find arguments that fit within a Con-Characteristic from today's lesson, and bravely present them.
    - This is not a debate, so there will be no opportunity for rebuttal.
    - Rotate through measures after each has received no less than 3 opposition arguments.

Assignment:

- Measure sponsors should review the critical opposition provided to them today, and consider revising their measure, presentation and preparation materials accordingly.

Week 19: Legislative Lobbying

Progress Check:

Learning Objectives:
Students will have an introductory understanding of the role and responsibilities of lobbyists in a democratic society and practice strategies to respectfully lobby effectively for (or against) legislation.

Materials:
- Stopwatches, timers, or cell phones for time-keeping

Introduction:
"Lobbying is one of the most misunderstood parts of the democratic process. To some, it conjures images of wealthy power brokers whispering in the ears of politicians. But in truth, lobbying is simply the act of trying to persuade a lawmaker to support or oppose a piece of legislation. It can be done by high-powered professionals and power brokers, by trusted advocacy organizations, or by everyday citizens just like us.

"In fact, every time you share your opinions, make a case, or advocate for your measure, you are lobbying. The key is learning how to do it effectively, ethically, and with respect for the process and the people involved. Your work in lobbying your fellow delegates might be the difference between a measure that dies quickly in committee, and one that becomes 'law'."

Lesson:
Ask the Delegation Leadership to take turns covering these Lobbying points, sharing examples or personal experiences as they are able.

The Role of a Lobbyist:
"The key role of a successful lobbyist is to represent the interests of a group, organization, community, or even themselves. They should try to influence how lawmakers vote on specific measures on behalf of those key constituencies, and provide information, analysis, and thought-partnership to lawmakers towards those ends.

"To do this all, successful lobbyists don't see their work as momentary or transactional, but rather, as requiring long-term relationships and trust. They generally aren't trying to convince everyone, but to simply move the needle with key stakeholders. Often, lobbyists don't focus on being loud, or even necessarily heard. Instead, focusing on being credible and trusted can ensure they are heard when it really matters."

Tips for Lobbying *For* a Measure:

- *Know the measure's key talking points—summarize the problem and solution quickly*
- *Personalize your message—share a quick story or local impact*
- *Know your audience—tailor your pitch to what they care about*
- *Build coalitions—mention other measures or causes they support*
- *Always end with a call to action: 'Will you support this measure in committee?'*

Tips for Lobbying *Against* a Measure:

- *Focus on a specific concern: cost, unintended consequences, legal issues, etc.*
- *Stay respectful—never attack the sponsor*
- *Offer alternatives if you can (or suggest amendments)*
- *Ask questions that make them think: "What happens if…?"*
- *Aim to slow momentum or plant doubts, not to "win" outright.*
- Ask the group for other tips for successfully lobbying.

Activity:

"Lobbying in YAG often comes down to working a room. Committee and chamber sessions are non-stop, so effective lobbying often happens in busy halls during brief breaks, during larger meals together, or during short periods of free time. Today, we're all going to work the room as lobbyists for measures you'll be randomly assigned. Remember that strong arguments help make measures better, so speak with kindness, but really go for it."

Instructions:

- Randomly assign each student a classmate's measure. Try to ensure they don't receive their own. Pair up students and start the clock:
  - 1 Minute: The first student lobbies for their assigned measure.
  - Announce the switch.
  - 1 Minute: The second student lobbies for their assigned measure.
- Rotate pairs and repeat a few times.
- Announce a switch: "Now, lobby *against* your assigned measures."
  - Repeat the process a few times.
- End with a Sponsor Debrief in which each student meets briefly with the author of the measure they were assigned and shares:
  - At least one strong argument *for* the measure
  - At least one concern or successful argument *against* it
  - Any surprising reactions from others

Assignment:

"Next week all measures must be polished and submitted. After that, measures can only be changed by their assigned committees at Conference. That means that this week is the final week to make any adjustments before the conference. Measure Sponsors should meet to produce the Final Version of their measure, and are encouraged to incorporate notes from today's lobbying session."

Week 20: Legislating with a Free Press

Progress Check:

Learning Objectives:
Students will begin to understand the vital role of a free and fair press in democratic systems, recognize how legislators interact with the media, and explore how storytelling and transparency shape public trust and political outcomes.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent) for notes

Introduction:
"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? If a legislator passes a life-changing measure—but no one reports it—did they really make an impact?"

"In a thriving democracy, elected officials are accountable to the people. But voters don't sit in on committee meetings, attend floor sessions, or read every bill. That's where the press comes in. The press is the bridge—the eyes and ears of the public. A free and fair press tells community stories, addresses necessary changes or changes in progress, amplifies voices being heard (or ignored), and reports on outcomes being delivered. But the press doesn't just repeat stories. It also questions, investigates, and challenges power. That can be uncomfortable—but it's essential. A free and fair press keeps us all honest, and helps the public decide who they trust with their vote.

"Today we'll learn more about the role of a free and fair press, the relationship between lawmakers and the press, and how we'll see it in our YAG context."

Lesson:
"There's no denying it: many Americans have a different relationship with the press than they might have had for decades. Whether it's the decline of print journalism, the growth of analysis and commentary, claims of "fake news", and more, the media landscape is quickly evolving. But in democratic systems, a free press is often called the "Fourth Estate"—a check on power just like the three branches of government. Journalists provide transparency, giving the public access to debates, votes, and actions they'd otherwise never see. Sometimes they are presenting helpful facts, but they also often provide narrative, emotion and important context that helps the public care about what tends to be complex and indigestible policy.

"Legislators rely on the press to inform constituents of their work, share the stories that inspire legislative change and the impact of passed legislationship. Often, legislators will engage with the press to try to build public support or counter misinformation.

"But, importantly, legislators must also be prepared to answer hard questions, and accept that some press coverage will be critical.

"The best democracies celebrate balance, and honor both courage and critique. Legislators and journalists who are doing their jobs well will sometimes challenge one another—and that's a sign of a strong democracy in action.

"In Youth and Government, thoughtful legislative delegates should be intentional and proactive in their relationship with press/media delegates. Pitching story ideas to members of the press can help fellow legislators understand the 'why' of a measure even before it's presented in chambers, or help the Governor understand the scope of need before they consider signing it into law. Availing yourself to special interviews can help establish your credibility. Responding with care and timeliness to fact checks and requests for statements can keep coverage prompt, factual and helpful. Remembering the press is always on duty, and minding what you say and how you say it, can keep leadership ambitions alive."

Activity:
Final versions of measures are due this week (Check the current conference schedule for the exact due date). With the available time remaining, Measure Sponsors should polish the text of their measures.

Assignment:
Measure Sponsors need to submit the final version of their measures. Delegation leadership needs to quickly review each, not to check if a measure is perfect, but to ensure each is ready enough to be introduced in committee at the Legislative Conference.

Week 21: Legislating at Conference

Progress Check:

Learning Objectives:
Students will identify common challenges and pitfalls faced during legislative sessions and develop strategies to navigate them with confidence, care, and professionalism—ensuring they participate fully, debate respectfully, and contribute meaningfully to a successful Youth and Government experience.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent) for notes

Introduction:
"At Youth and Government, the goal isn't perfection—it's participation. But while mistakes are totally normal (and expected!), there are a few common pitfalls that can make the experience harder than it needs to be. This week, we're going to look at some of those challenges, how to avoid them, and what it looks like to have a successful (and fun) time in chambers. From awkward missteps to missed opportunities, the goal here isn't to scare you—it's to prepare you.

"Remember: some of the most impressive delegates in the room have also had microphones turned off mid-sentence, called the Chair by the wrong name, or forgot to vote. The difference is that they bounced back with grace. So will you."

Lesson:
- Ask the Delegation Leadership to take turns covering these common pitfalls, sharing examples or personal experiences as they are able.

Lacking Care
What it looks like:
- Jumping into debate without seeking recognition, forgetting to introduce yourself, speaking *to* other delegates instead of *through* the Chair, or making comments that feel too personal.

Why it matters:
- Debate should be lively, but it should always feel safe. Complete introductions not only give important context to the conversation, they also act as intentional moments to ensure care.
- Taking time to properly address the chamber, speak through the Chair, and acknowledge your role helps keep the tone respectful and grounded in purpose—not personality.

Pro Tips:

- Write your intro into your speech: "Good morning, Representative from the Elm Street Delegation…" helps ground you and your audience.
- Add a memorable detail to your delegation name: "...representing the fiery folks of Forest Hills."
- Talk to your Chair like a teammate—not a referee. They're here to help.
- Don't react (visibly or audibly) during someone else's remarks. Save it for debate or rebuttal.

Not being in the game:

What it looks like:

- Sitting on a good idea until it's too late or leaving the best speeches unspoken.
- Skipping votes because you're on the fence or think your vote won't matter.
- Not asking questions because you think they're "too basic."
- Perhaps most importantly: only paying attention when your measure is up.

Why it matters:

- The conference flies by. If you wait too long for the "perfect" moment, you might miss your shot entirely.
- Debate is better when more people participate—and you'll gain confidence with every step you take.
- Bravely speaking up—even if you lack confidence or haven't prepared every word— not only shows a trust in yourself and your ideas, but in your colleagues to hear them with grace.
- You should want your measure to pass—you've worked hard. But, yours is only one part of an entire docket full of hard work and change-making potential. Trust in your partner and in your preparation, and take the conference one measure at a time.

Pro Tips:

- Warm up with a small move: ask a genuine, basic question early in a session.
- As soon as you feel ready to speak, jot down 3 to 4 words to keep you grounded—and immediately seek recognition. You can always write more while waiting.
- Don't leave the room as important votes are near. If you know you'll need to step out, wait until just after a vote has finished and request personal privilege.
- Be a full participant—even when your measure isn't being discussed. You'll learn more, gain respect, and contribute to a stronger conference.
- Your first attempt might not feel perfect. Say it anyway.

Missing the moment:

What it looks like:

- Allowing a problem to advance without a fix in committee.
- Debating too long on a problematic measure no one wants to fix.
- Repeating points instead of advancing the conversation.
- Getting caught up in "winning" instead of collaborating

Why it matters:

- Committees are the only bodies that can "fix" things through an amendment process. Moving too quickly, or failing to address issues while in committee, can clog up chamber dockets and result in quality measures going unheard.
- Sometimes it's just not the right time. There almost always comes a time in many measures with considerable opposition in which the room has to ask itself if the problems are fixable, or if it's just time to vote the measure down and consider other ideas.
- Sometimes you need to seize a moment just for yourself and your bravery— even if it means repeating a point. But to ensure discussions progress instead of stagnate, and to ensure there's time to hear more ideas, debate should feel additive, not repetitive.

Pro Tips:

- While in Committee, as you hear—or provide—substantive opposition, ask yourself if the problem can be addressed with an amendment. Then, ask yourself if you'd still be opposed even if the measure had no problems.
- Sometimes it has to be said
- If you're unsure whether to speak again, listen for something *new* that you can respond to—don't just hit repeat.
- Use a "Yes, and..." structure to build on previous comments instead of circling back.

Overidentifying with your measure:

What it looks like:

- Taking criticism of your measure personally.
- Shutting down after an amendment you didn't want gets adopted
- Tuning out debate on others' measures.

Why it matters:

- Every delegate feels deeply connected to the measure they sponsor—but no one measure defines you.
- All legislation belongs to the legislative body once it's introduced. That doesn't mean you shouldn't still feel proud or reasonable responsibility, but it does mean that strong policy can only emerge through collaboration and feedback—even if it stings a little at first.

Pro Tips:

- Practice saying: "Thank you. You make a great point and I look forward to working with you to address it." Or, "Thank you for sharing my passion for this important issue."
- Ask someone from outside of your delegation to review your measure before the committee.
- If your measure changes significantly, you still get to advocate for it—or pivot your stance respectfully.

Activity:

Having already submitted the final versions of their measure, with the available time remaining, Measure Sponsors should work together to begin the Strategy & Reference Guide Worksheet in their Workbook.

Assignment:

Measure Sponsors should work together to advance their Strategy and Reference Guide.

Week 22: Public Speaking Tips for Conference

Progress Check:

Learning Objectives:
Students will learn key public speaking strategies to confidently and effectively present their legislative ideas, connect with their audience, and contribute persuasively to democratic dialogue.

Materials:
- Pens/Pencils/Markers and paper (or an electronic equivalent) for notes

Introduction:
"Public speaking is one of the most valuable tools in a delegate's toolbox—and one of the most feared. But here's the truth: great public speakers aren't born, they're built. And in a setting like Youth and Government, your voice matters not because it's perfect, but because it carries ideas that deserve to be heard.

Whether you're presenting your own measure, speaking in support of someone else's, or debating in opposition, the way you communicate can shape votes, change minds, and build trust. Today we will review a few practical, proven tips to help you organize your message, project confidence, and speak with purpose."

Lesson:
- Ask the Delegation Leadership to take turns covering these common pitfalls, sharing examples or personal experiences as they are able.

Consider Your Voice (A part of Ethos)
- Volume
  - Can every part of your speech be heard without shouting?
  - Consider varying your volume: while it all must be heard, consider a few special points in your speech to actually quiet your volume to draw listeners in, and a few points to increase your volume to invoke passion.
- Tone
  - The tone of your voice may represent trust and confidence, boredom or disinterest, or fear and intimidation. It can display enthusiasm, anger, sorrow or other emotions.
  - Be sure you are using a tone that is appropriate to your presentation or to its specific parts.

- Pitch
  - Pitch can display or betray emotion, and delay understanding. Is your pitch too high for a serious subject, or too low for exciting parts?
  - Can you manipulate it for clearer understanding and fewer distractions?
- Pace
  - A well-written speech is somewhat useless if you have to rush so much to read it all that no one can actually follow you. Speak slowly so your audience can understand your message.

Pro Tips:

- Practice speaking in large rooms with other noises to simulate the normal hum of chambers. You'll find you probably need to speak more loudly than you might think. Practice speaking a little more loudly than you are comfortable with, so it's comfortable when it matters.
- When used well, stories or shared testimony can humanize the problem. And your tone—starting with empathy and rising into conviction—shows your audience exactly when to care, and why to act.
- As you practice, if you find you rarely can finish a planned speech in your given time, remember that it is very rarely that you need to speed up. The answer is almost always to trim, condense, or save a few points to use in Q&A.

Use Your Posture and Presence (Ethos)

- Stance:
  - Before you speak, pause, breathe, and ground yourself. Taking that moment can not only improve your speaking, but can help draw your audience in.
- Eye Contact:
  - Look at your audience—especially when delivering key arguments. It builds connection and trust.
- Facial Expression:
  - Match your expression to your tone. Smile when appropriate. Stay composed while listening, even if you disagree.
- Gestures:
  - Use your hands naturally, but don't overdo it. Don't lock them at your sides and look like a robot, but make sure your movement isn't distracting.

Pro Tips:

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and knees relaxed. Think of yourself commanding that space: try not to sway, pace, or move around too much, which can often display a lack of confidence.
- Memorize at least a few lines. Big moments of Logos and Pathos should not be read, but delivered directly to your audience.
- Rest your printed remarks at chest level to make eye contact easier without losing your place.
- Practice your speech in front of a friend and give them the job of calling "foul" (like in baseball) if your hands leave the strike zone—roughly shoulder to midsection, and no more than 6 inches out to each side. This zone keeps your gestures natural, expressive, and focused—without becoming distracting flails or dramatic windmills.

Don’t just practice to repeat, practice with intention:

- Practice your presentation at least three times.
  - Round 1: Focus on eye contact and natural phrasing.
  - Round 2: Focus on your expressions and emotional engagement
  - Round 3: Focus on your gestures and pacing
- Time yourself every time, cutting and trimming as you go until the speech is dialed in.
- Practice in front of a mirror, a peer, or record video for self-review.

Pro Tips:

- While you may read most of your prepared speech, remember that you probably don’t need to practice how well you can read. Instead, it's how well your audience joins in what you’ve written because of how well you’ve presented it.
- Practice boiling your entire measure into one sentence. If you can’t summarize it simply, your audience won’t follow it.
- Present it to a parent, friend, or classmate. Ask them what they heard or understood. Their takeaway should match your intent.
- Review a recorded version and *don’t* watch it. Instead, *listen* for awkward phrasing, unclear transitions, or distracting filler words.

Show the Five C’s

- Competitive:
  - Treat your time and ideas seriously. Skip inside jokes or casual tones that undercut your credibility.
- Confident:
  - Step up ready to speak. Confidence doesn’t mean perfection—it means conviction.
- Courteous:
  - Respect and genuinely appreciate your audience, the chair, and your fellow delegates—even when you disagree.
- Credible:
  - Be honest about what you know and prepare thoroughly so you are seen as the expert in the room.
  - Just as importantly: do not diminish what you *do* know by being dishonest about what you *do not*.
- Commanding:
  - Stand tall. Speak clearly. Dress with intention.
  - Own your space and your message as if to say, “I take this seriously, so you should take me seriously, too.”

Pro Tips:

- Be ready to speak on time and as if you feel good about what you are saying (don't give your audience the chance to question).
- Speak slowly and clearly, choosing to make fewer arguments very well, rather than rushing to try to make every argument.
- Use a “support doc” or notecard system to track your strongest arguments and likely rebuttals.
- Tighten your wording. Simpler is often stronger.
- Trust that your audience can read the measure you’ve provided. Your oral statements should add new content to the discussion, not merely reading what’s already in your measure’s text.

- Remember you're still on display even when you aren't speaking: Watch your expressions while listening to questions, and especially to delegates debating in opposition. Stay respectful, even if you disagree. Appear calm and steady, especially if you hear a good counter-argument for the first time.

Activity:
The Annual State Conference is just around the corner. With any time remaining, Measure Sponsors should work together to polish their presentations and update their Strategy and Reference Guide.

Assignment:
Most schools will be off next week for Spring Break. Students should have fun, but because the Annual State Conference is the following week, Measure Sponsors should work together to polish their Strategy and Reference Guides, and go over any last preparations for their measure and its presentation.

Week 23: Spring Break

Progress Check:

Week 24: Annual State Conference!

Progress Check: