



K-12 Curriculum Project Teacher Resource Guide

Wyoming Government – Culture and Participation

Jason McConnell

School of Politics, Public Affairs, & International Studies
University of Wyoming

Presentation Summary:

This presentation examines the culture and political participation in Wyoming. Wyoming is similar to the nation when it comes to political culture and participation, with competing political ideologies and dominant political culture. The presentation outlines the factors affecting the culture and participation in Wyoming, including rurality, and then examines how Wyoming has a higher rate of political participation than the national average and nearby states. To wrap up the presentation, trends in political parties and elections in Wyoming are examined and discussed in comparison with the national trends.

Targeted Grades: Middle School (6-8)/High School (9-12)

Wyoming Social Studies Standards Lesson Aligns With:

- **SS8.1.1** Explain the rights, duties, and responsibilities of a United States citizen.
- **SS8.1.2** Explain how to participate in the political process. (i.e., tribal, local, state, and national elections).
- **SS8.1.6** Understand the basic structures of various political systems (e.g., tribal, local, national, and world).
- **SS12.1.1** Analyze unique freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of living in a democratic society and explain their interrelationships.
- **SS12.1.2** Explain and/or demonstrate how to participate in the political process and form personal opinions. (i.e., tribal, local, state, and national elections).

Suggested Discussion Questions/Activities:

1. Why is Wyoming's political culture primarily conservative?
 - a. Ask students to consider someone in Wyoming they know who is politically active. Ask students if the person's career, lifestyle, hobbies, religion, or other may play a role in their political ideology. Now ask students to consider another Wyomingite who may have a different political ideology. What may be the reasons these two Wyomingites hold different views? If a student does not know anyone in Wyoming with political views, ask them to consider the question with individuals they know in a different state.

2. What are possible reasons for Wyomingites having a higher rate of political participation than other states and the national average?
3. Have students, if comfortable, raise their hands if they have a relative who works for the state of Wyoming. Discuss how this might affect their relationships with Wyoming government and politics.
4. Use padlet.com or your classroom whiteboard to create a word web of words students associate with Wyoming culture and political participation, and have students consider why they associate certain words while other students link different words to culture and political participation in Wyoming.
5. Teachers can also go to [Resources – Wyoming Judicial Learning Center](#) to find more games and lesson plan ideas, including “Judicial Pictionary” and “Are you smarter than a Justice?”

Sources for Additional Information on the Topic:

Suggested Reading

- King, James D., Andrew Garner, Jason B. McConnell, and Robert A. Schuhmann. 2020. *The Equality State: Government and Politics in Wyoming*. 9th. Hayden-McNeil.

Web Resources

- About the Courts. Accessed February 15, 2021. About the Courts – Wyoming Judicial Branch (state.wy.us).
- Opinions. Accessed February 15, 2021. Opinions – Wyoming Judicial Branch (state.wy.us).

Video Resources

- Wyoming's Executive Branch by Jason McConnell (find in the Wallop K-12 Curriculum Project Content)
- Wyoming's Judiciary by Jason McConnell (find in the Wallop K-12 Curriculum Project Content)
- Wyoming's Political Culture and Participation by Jason McConnell (find in the Wallop K-12 Curriculum Project Content)

Contacting the Wallop Team:

For information on how to schedule a chat-back "Ask Me Anything" session with Jason McConnell or for more information on this or other modules contact the Wallop Program Team at wallop@uwyo.edu.