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| **Caucus 101: Caucus History & Iowa’s “First in the Nation” Status** | |
| **Length of class: 60 minutes**  **In short, skip 1-3 from the 90 minute lesson.** |
| **Objectives:** Students will be able to explain how Iowa became first in the nation for the caucuses/primaries. Students will debate/defend why/why not Iowa should maintain its “first in the nation” status.  **Additional objectives:**  Students will be able to define a caucus.  Students will utilize speaking and debate skills.  Students will analyze news articles as evidence.  Students will evaluate their own reasons why/why not Iowa should maintain its “first in the nation” status.  **Standards:**  Iowa Core Inquiry Anchor Standards:  *Gathering and Evaluating Sources*  SS.9-12.5. Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantially from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.  SS.9-12.6. Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.  *Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions*  SS.9-12.7. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.  SS.9-12.8. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose.  SS.9-12.9. Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies and digital technologies.  *Taking Informed Action*  SS.9-12.12. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school activities.  Iowa Core 9-12 Civics and Government Content Standards:  *Analyze Civic and Political Institutions*  SS.Gov.9-12.13. Evaluate the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national and international civic and political institutions, how they interact and the role of government in maintaining order. (21st century skills)  SS.Gov.9-12.14. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to the definition of who is a citizen, expansion of the that definition over time, and changes in participation over time. (21st century skills)  SS.Gov.9-12.18. Critique the influence of intermediary institutions on government and policy such as, interest groups, political parties, the mass media, campaigns, caucuses, elections, PACs, and local, state, tribal, and international organizations. (21st century skills)  *Apply Civic Dispositions and Democratic Principles*  SS.Gov.9-12.19. Evaluate the effectiveness of political action in changing government and policy, such as voting, debate, contacting officials, campaign contributions, protest, civil disobedience, and any alternative methods to participation. (21st century skills)  *Iowa History*  SS.Gov.9-12.27. Compare and contrast the institutions the institutions and systems of Iowa government and politics that are unique to the state including but not limited to Iowa’s unique role in presidential selection and the in the special status of Meskwaki lands as not-reservation lands.  Iowa Core 6-12 Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12:  *Key Ideas and Details*  RH.11-12.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.  *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*  RH.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.  RH.11-12.9. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.  Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12  *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*  WHST.11-12.9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. | |
| **Assessment:** In-class debate. Written response to the following: Should Iowa maintain its “first in the nation” status for caucuses-why or why not? Support your opinion with evidence. | |
| **Materials Needed:**  **1.**  Presidential nomination process reading and flowchart-copies for each student.  **2.** One notecard for each student.  **3.** 4 news articles-divided between students (see procedures)\*: *Iowans: It’s Best for America if our Caucuses Go First*: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/2015/02/28/iowa-caucuses-first-nation-iowa-poll/24125077/> , *Let’s Strengthen-Not Endanger-Iowa’s First-in-the-Nation Caucuses in 2016:* <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jean-hessburg/lets-strengthen-not-iowa-caucus_b_5585559.html>, *Enough with Letting Iowa Go First. The First Primary State Should be California*: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2015/02/04/enough-with-letting-iowa-go-first-the-first-primary-state-should-be-california/>, and *Sorry, Iowa, You Should Have to Earn the Top Primary Spot from Now On*: <http://thefederalist.com/2015/03/18/sorry-iowa-you-should-have-to-earn-the-top-primary-spot-from-now-on/>.  \*Note: Each of the articles identified can be downloaded and printed from the materials links already converted to documents. Feel free to substitute more recent articles as needed. Some possible additions include: *Roundtable, Should Iowa Be First in Line?* <https://www.galesburg.com/opinion/20200124/roundtable-should-iowa-be-first-in-line>. *The state of Iowa could lose millions of dollars without its first-in-the-nation caucuses, according to FEC campaign spending data*: [https://dailyiowan.com/2021/03/09/the-state-of-iowa-could-lose-millions-of-dollars-without-its-first-in-the-nation-caucuses-according-to-fec-campaign-spending-data/.](https://dailyiowan.com/2021/03/09/the-state-of-iowa-could-lose-millions-of-dollars-without-its-first-in-the-nation-caucuses-according-to-fec-campaign-spending-data/)  **4.** Written analysis form  **5**. Evidence form for debate. | |
| **LEARNING PLAN:**   1. **Focus: Presidential Nomination Process:** Pass out “Presidential Nomination Process reading and flow chart.” Give time for students to read, take notes/highlight significant ideas. After, invite a class discussion on definitions of primaries vs. caucuses and what occurs at the national conventions. Discuss the timeline to the national convention. Emphasize the importance of local precincts and local control on the path to the national convention. 2. **Focus: Prep for Debate.** Think-Pair-Share. Give each student a regular sized notecard. Ask students to respond on ONE side of the notecard to the following question: Do you believe Iowa should maintain its “first in the nation” status for caucuses? Why or why not? Give 5 minutes for students to write answers. Once finished, have students pair up with a partner and share their responses. If time allows, invite individual students to share answers and discuss as a whole class-try to find students who disagreed with each other and why to generate further discussion. 3. **Focus: Analysis of Evidence.** The next few steps were generated applying ideas from Choices by Brown University and Structured Academic Controversy by Carleton College. 4. There are four different articles for students to analyze; *randomly* pass out ONE article to each student. Students will *individually* read and analyze article given. Use either NARA’s written analysis form or the one provided with this lesson. Do NOT tell the student which article/side they are given ahead of time. Let them figure this out on own. 5. Pro/support Iowa’s first in the nation status: *Iowans: It’s Best for America if our Caucuses Go First*: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/2015/02/28/iowa-caucuses-first-nation-iowa-poll/24125077/> 6. Pro/support Iowa’s first in the nation status: *Let’s Strengthen-Not Endanger-Iowa’s First-in-the-Nation Caucuses in 2016:* <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jean-hessburg/lets-strengthen-not-iowa-caucus_b_5585559.html> 7. Con/doesn’t support Iowa’s first in the nation status: *Enough with Letting Iowa Go First. The First Primary State Should be California*: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2015/02/04/enough-with-letting-iowa-go-first-the-first-primary-state-should-be-california/> 8. Con/doesn’t support Iowa’s first in the nation status: *Sorry, Iowa, You Should Have to Earn the Top Primary Spot from Now On*: <http://thefederalist.com/2015/03/18/sorry-iowa-you-should-have-to-earn-the-top-primary-spot-from-now-on/> 9. Once students have *individually* completed the document analysis form, have students find other students who had the same article and create groups; they should bring their analysis paper with them. You should have four groups. Students will discuss the evidence/reasons why the author supported or did not support Iowa’s first in the nation status. In each of the four groups, students will select a recorder. The recorder will record on a separate sheet of paper reasons why the author did or did not support Iowa’s first in the nation caucus status. Each group should have a list of 5-6 reasons. They can add other additional reasons they created too, but they must have evidence from the articles included. 10. **Focus: Gathering evidence for debate.** Once students have completed part b, they will now get into two larger groups. The groups who had the two different “pro” articles will gather, while the groups who had the “con” articles will gather. Another recorder will be selected and the new recorder will write down both groups’ evidence and reasons on one sheet of paper. 11. These two larger groups will also select a different person to record an opening statement for the debate. You can now explain to students they will be debating the merits of Iowa’s first in the nation caucus status. The large groups will need to prioritize their evidence and reasons and assign each person a speaking part. 12. Once the groups have opening statements and have assigned speaking parts and prioritized their evidence, have the students sit across from one another. Pass to each student an “evidence form” to complete while the other side is speaking. This might also be a good time to discuss rules/expectations of debate such as being respectful of each other, disagreeing with the other position’s position/ideas and NOT being critical of the person, listening to everyone’s ideas etc. 13. **Debate.** Allow each group to present the opening statements. You can choose for one side to present all of its evidence at once or go back and forth between the two groups. It is up to you. I find it easier for students to follow along if one side gives all of its evidence first. Remember, the key for the students is to argue the side *they have been assigned.* The students might not agree with their assigned side, but it is essential they argue that side. Once the evidence has been presented, give 7-10 minutes for each side to gather and discuss the opposing side’s evidence so they can refute it. 14. Gather back together in 2 groups and do a coin toss to see which side goes first. The teacher should play a minimal role in this debate-only as an observer. Allow the debate to continue as you see necessary. Students may also choose to give closing statements as well. 15. **Application.** Once the debate has run its course, have students go back to their individual seats and look at their note cards again. Ask students to flip over the notecard and on the back side, write a new, critical answer to the question from the beginning: Do you believe Iowa should maintain its “first in the nation” status for caucuses? Why or why not? Remind student it is OKAY for them to change their minds. Remind them to apply the NEW evidence and information they learned from the articles and they class debate to determine a more thorough, comprehensive answer. Now they should back their response with concrete evidence. This may take longer than the original 5 minutes given; it could be assigned as homework or as a fuller, one-page paper response. To show to other students across the state, take a photo of their new reasoning from the notecard an upload it to QR Reader: (You can also give a prize or extra points in awarding the best debate group or individual).   **Homework: For next time…**  Each student must:  Find their own news article about Iowa’s first in the nation status for caucuses. Print it off/send it via email/add the link to our facebook page. Have students briefly present their articles to the class the next day. | |
| **Additional Resources:**  <http://www.iowagop.org/>  <http://iowademocrats.org/>  <https://lpia.org/>  See Secretary of State Paul Pate describe the Iowa Caucus from an interview on ABC News in 2016 at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/iowa-caucus-explained-36580146> (approximately first 10 minutes).  For a more detailed Iowa Caucus history, see “The History of the Iowa Caucuses” from PBS Learning Media: <https://iptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/iptv_caucusiowa_gallery/iptv_caucusiowa_gallery/>. | |