

Lobbyist: Analyzing the Second Amendment

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like a lobbyist and lobby for or against stricter gun control.

Activity

Step 1: Background Information on Second Amendment and Lobbyists (5-10 minutes)

- Show [Video: Lobbyists and Second Amendment](#).
- As a class, discuss how lobbying is the act of persuading a government official's decisions. A lobbyist might persuade a government official to vote for a specific law. For example, a group of lobbyists may persuade a government official to vote for a law that makes college more affordable. As a class, brainstorm why groups or individuals want to lobby politicians. What would happen if it was illegal to lobby in our country?
- Next, discuss what the act of lobbying entails on a day to day basis. Show [Handout: Understanding Lobbying](#).
- Next, show [Handout: Example of Gun Lobbying Groups](#). Discuss how there are many lobbyists working in Washington, D.C. on both sides of the gun control issue. Some lobbyists say that the mass shootings that have happened in recent years mean that certain types of guns should be illegal to sell, buy, or own. Other lobbyists say that in America, the Constitution says we have the right to own guns and they can't be made illegal. Companies on both sides of the issue are spending lots of money paying lobbyists to convince Congresspeople to vote along with the company's opinion.
- Show [Handout: Text From Second Amendment](#). As a class, read the text from the Second Amendment. Then, have students brainstorm ideas about what this amendment means. Write students' ideas on the board. Discuss how students might interpret the amendment differently.
- Next, discuss how gun lobbying groups interpret the second amendment differently. For example, since the U.S. no longer has a militia, some lobbyists believe that this amendment no longer applies to us. However, other lobbyists say that the amendment mentions "the people," which implies that all American citizens have the right to have firearms.

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5-10 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will be divided into groups of four. Each group will pretend to be a group of lobbyists. Some groups will be lobbying a politician for stricter gun laws. Other groups will be lobbying a politician for more lenient gun laws. Groups will be in charge of creating an argument that can be presented to a group of politicians. Students that are not presenting will act as the politicians and determine which side has a better argument.
- Show [Handout: Steps To Lobbying a Politician](#). Read through the steps as a class.
- Provide students with [Handout: Sources on Gun Use](#). Explain to the students that they will use these sources to create their argument.
- Divide the students into their groups of four. Tell each group whether they will be lobbying for stricter gun laws or for more lenient gun laws.

Step 3: Creating an Argument (25 minutes)

- Have groups complete steps 1 and 2 on their handout. While students are working, ask them the following questions:
 - How do the facts support the claim you are trying to make?
 - What can you say to convince the Congress members to vote your way?
 - What arguments do you think the other side will make? What can you say to discredit their argument?

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

Lobbyist: Analyzing the Second Amendment

Step 4: Talking with Politicians (25+ minutes)

- Explain to students that Congresspeople have the job of voting to approve laws and policies. If passed, these laws and policies govern how our country works.
- Have two groups of students (one group that wants stricter gun control, one that wants more lenient gun control) get ready to present their arguments.
- Select a third group of students (we suggest 8 students or two groups, one group hoping for stricter gun control, one group hoping for more lenient gun control) to be the lobbyists that need to be convinced.
 - Note: it is important to tell students that even though they have an assigned viewpoint for when they are presenting, this viewpoint does not matter when they are acting as a Congressperson. Each student should vote for whichever argument they think is best, regardless of the viewpoint they are in charge of presenting.
- Use a timer to give each group of lobbyists 3 minutes to present their argument to the Congresspeople. After each group has had 3 minutes, you can give each group an additional 1 minute to refute any claims made by the opposing side.
- Once groups have presented, ask the Congress members to vote.
- Declare the winner.
- Repeat the process, switching out the lobbyists and the Congresspeople until everyone has had a chance to present their arguments.

Step 5: Class Discussion (5 minutes)

- Explain how “Interpretation of a Law” can create different opinions on lobbying or any issue.
- Ask the students if they think the Amendments should be interpreted based on the time period they were written in or based on today’s modern culture.
- Ask the students if they believe politicians accepting donations from lobbyists is a good system? Could it lead to politicians doing what’s best for a lobby group instead of what is best for the country? Under this system, could a politician be focused more on their campaign contributions than other priorities?

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Lobbyists and Second Amendment
- Handout: Understanding Lobbying
- Handout: Example of Gun Lobbying Groups
- Handout: Text From Second Amendment
- Handout: Steps To Lobbying a Politician
- Handout: Sources on Gun Use

Not Provided Online:

- Timer

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.