

Welcome!

Teaching About Current Events



Please use the chat to share:

- **Your name**
- **School and state**



Constitutional Rights Foundation

Using Role Play/Simulation to Teach About Current Events (and other topics)

Rationale

Teaching about current events often means dealing with multiple viewpoints or controversial topics.

Forced Perspective: Get out of your head!

Multiple perspectives

Motivating: Change the pace!

Challenging: text, evidence, point of view, bias

Rich discussion among students

Precision

Keep your eye on the prize! Looking for academic discussion!

- Not a “play” with a script
- Not about acting or costumes

Know your students and community!

- Emotionally charged issues.
- Avoid having student role play religious rituals and act like other race/ethnic groups.
- Maybe don't have students share their own opinions in the end.

Different types of role play

- Moot court vs. mock trial
- Congressional committee, legislative hearing, City Council -- any public meeting
- Other types of government or legal bodies (past or present; in U.S. or another country)
- We have a library of free lessons for you. (We'll share later today.)

Meet your TLs!



E'bow



Ben



Regina



Guns and School Safety

**What Is the Best
Way Forward?**

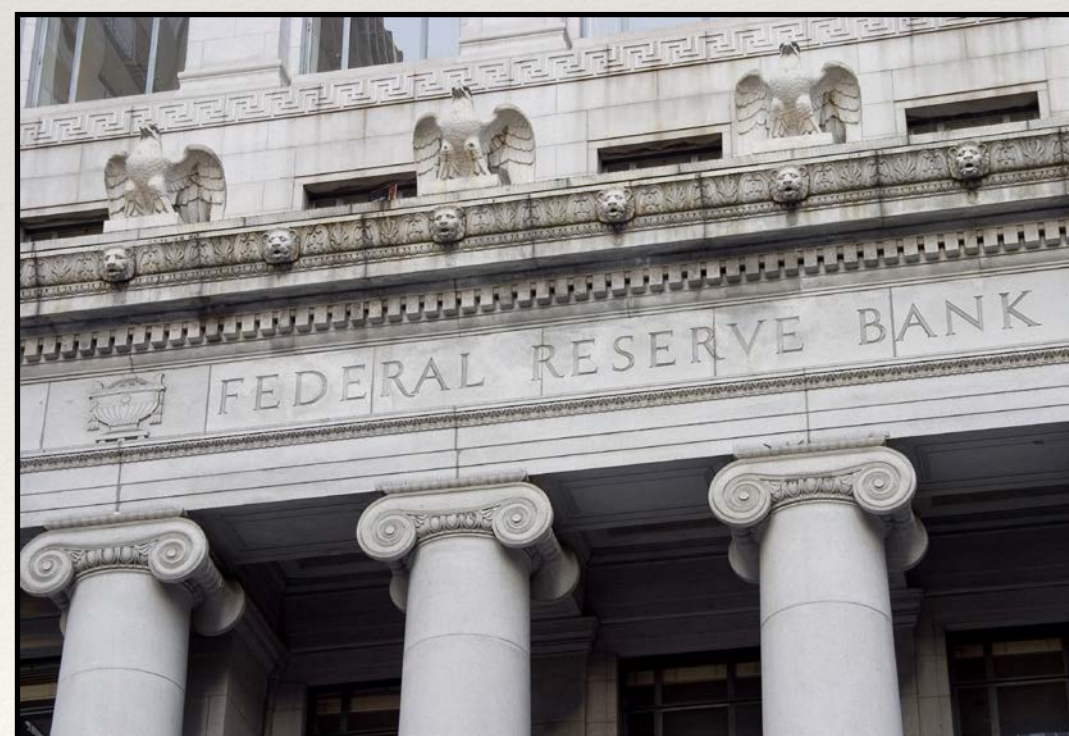
A Civic Simulation

The Importance of Context

Fill in the Blank

After the 2008 Housing / Financial Crisis the Federal Reserve printed trillions of dollars to _____ the economy.

- ❖ Help
- ❖ Fix
- ❖ Strengthen
- ❖ Boost



Importance of Context

Fill in the Blank

During WWII the Nazis printed billions of British Pounds to _____ the English economy.

- ❖ Hurt
- ❖ Undermine
- ❖ Damage
- ❖ Destroy



Key Ingredients

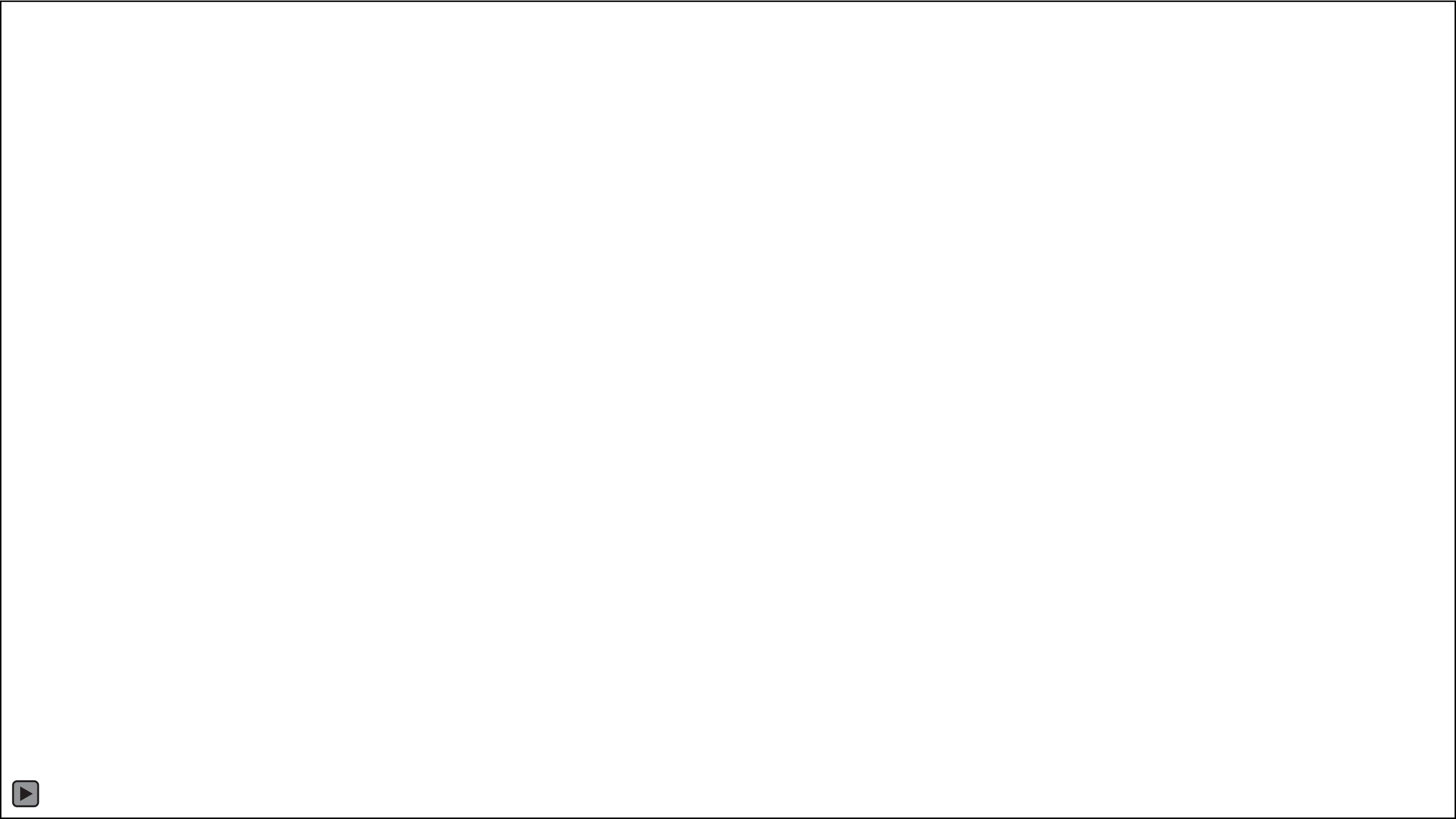
- Structured Academic Controversy (text carefully read and both sides of topic presented)
- Students take on particular roles
- Discussion is completed in small groups
- Entire class debriefs



EXPERI ENCE THE LESSON



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*“Guns and School Safety:
What is the Best Way
Forward?”*



Article Read



**Committees
Discuss**

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One person from each group presents

Lesson Flow

1. I introduced and provided context
2. Class read the article
 - I chose to read the beginning of the article
 - Students took turns volunteering to read the rest
 - They had 1 minute to answer each of the guiding questions

Writing & Discussion

1. In your opinion, which set of laws, federal or state, seem to address the problems of gun violence more effectively? Use evidence from the article in your answer.
2. Of the proposed policies to address gun violence at schools, which seem most effective? Why?
3. What is your opinion of gun control? Adam Lankford, a professor of criminology at the University of Alabama, has found that countries with higher rates of gun ownership experience more mass shootings. In the United States, there are 88.8 guns per 100 people in the country. Does this statistic affect your opinion of gun control? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY: A New Bill on Gun Violence

You are an elected member of your state's legislature. You are on a committee that has the task of proposing a new bill intended to lessen gun violence at schools in your state.

1. Form groups of five lawmakers. Each group is a special legislative committee focused on increasing school safety. Re-read the section "Proposed Policies" in the article. Take notes on which policies you think are most effective and which are least effective.
2. Choose a chairperson for your committee. The chairperson keeps the committee on task and will be the spokesperson for the committee.
3. In your committee, discuss the policies and decide which policy or combination of policies your committee will propose to be part of the new bill:
 - a. Expanded funding for school resource officers
 - b. State-funded training for teachers and school staff in active shooter drills
 - c. New gun regulations, or "gun control" measures
 - d. Allowing teachers to carry concealed firearms in schools
 - e. Another policy not listed
4. Be ready to present your committee's proposal to the rest of the legislature assembled. Your presentation must include three reasons why your committee reached its conclusion and must reference facts from the article.

Proposed Policies

School Resource Officers

Supporters of this proposal argue:

- Decrease in violence at schools since mid-1990s coincides with an increased presence of SROs.
- Often SROs act as informal counselors and educators at the schools where they work.

Critics of this proposal argue:

- SROs are not responsible for the decline of crime in schools.
- Crime in general has declined since the mid-1990s.
- Cases in which SROs have treated misbehaving juveniles the same as adult offenders.
- Many disciplinary problems handled by SROs are better handled by the principal's office.
- SROs were present on campus in Parkland and Columbine.

Active Shooter Drills

Supporters:

- Intended to prepare students and faculty, just like a fire drill.
- Lockdowns can be effective way to keep people safe and avoid chaos.
- Success depends on training, calmness, and sensitivity of school staff.

Critics:

- Better to have a way out or to defend against shooter.
- Drills are traumatizing to students.

Gun Control

Disagreement among supports and critics about policies and interpretation of 2nd Amendment.

Proposed policies include:

- Banning automatic weapons.
- Waiting periods to buy guns.
- Raise ownership age to 21.
- Safety locks on guns.
- Mental health checks.

Some level of agreement about improving mental health services.

Arming Teachers and School Staff

Supporters:

- “The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.” (NRA Pres)
- Guns are either concealed or safely locked away so students cannot access.
- Teachers can be properly trained by law enforcement.
- Deters potential shooters.

Critics:

- Teachers already have enough on their plates.
- Never be able to guarantee wrong person could get hands on gun.
- Bad lesson for students and society. Dystopia

Q & A



Thank you!

Still have questions? Feel free to contact:

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