

## LESSON PLAN – HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK

**Subject:** Civics and Government

**Grade Level:** 9 – 12

### Standards:

#### **Indiana DOE**

##### *Academic Standards (6):*

Grades 9–12 IS.1.7

Analyze how the Civil War affected men, women, and children on the home-front. Explain how those on the home-front helped the war effort.

USH.5.8

Explain the role of World War II as a catalyst for social change.

USH.7.9

Analyze the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Grades 9–12 LH.6

Produce coherent and legible documents by planning, drafting, revising, editing, and collaborating with others.

Grades 11–12 SL.2.5

Conduct, debate, and discuss to allow all views to be presented; allow for a dissenting view, in addition to group compromise; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Grades 11–12 SL.2.2 Stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned debate and exchange of ideas by referring to specific evidence from materials under study and additional research and resources.

#### **National**

##### *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Standards*

##### *National Standards for Civics and Government (3)*

Grades: 9-12 II.C.2.2

To achieve this standard, students should be able to explain some of the reasons why political conflict in the United States, with notable exceptions such as the Civil War, nineteenth century labor unrest, the 1950s and 1960s civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam, has generally been less divisive than in many other nations.

Grades: 9-12 IV.B.2.3

To achieve this standard, students should be able to explain the tension between constitutional provisions and the requirements of foreign policy, e.g., the power of Congress to declare war

## LESSON PLAN – HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK

and the need for the president to make expeditious decisions in times of international emergency, the power of the president to make treaties and the need for the Senate to approve them.

Grades: 9-12 II.B.2

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of voluntarism in American society.

### Materials Needed:

Students will need access to:

- Video, How Does the Draft Work? (Length 4 Minutes)
- Index cards

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand how a draft lottery was used to increase America's armed forces in times of national emergency.
- Understand how the draft lottery worked during the Vietnam War.
- Consider the pro's and con's of recruiting volunteers for service in the armed forces.
- Evaluate a conscientious objector's rationale for not serving in combat and identify various noncombat roles for this person.

### Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

How does the draft assure that every citizen shares responsibility for defending our country?

The United States does not maintain an armed force large enough to answer a major attack by an adversary. Instead, the nation uses a draft lottery to select able-bodied citizens at random to serve in a national emergency. Since 1973, enough volunteers have been recruited to fill the nation's military needs. However, all men must register for the draft at age 18 in case we again face a sudden need to increase the size of our armed forces.

## LESSON PLAN – HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK

A Pentagon panel has recommended that women also be required to register for the draft, which would add about 11 million names to the conscription pool.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, all young citizens could be required to devote a period of time (say, two years) to some form of national service. However, Congress has not been willing to enact either change as of December 2021.<sup>2</sup>

## Body of Lesson:

### 1. The need for a draft.

Divide your students into four small groups to research America's military needs at the outbreak of the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. Then have these groups give a brief report to the total group. They should answer these questions:

- A. Why did America have a sudden shortage of military personnel?
- B. How did some citizens avoid military service during this conflict?
- C. What was America's number of casualties (wounded and killed) during this conflict?

### 2. How the draft operates.

Recreate the method that Dr. Jett describes on the video. Write the numbers 1 through 10 on index cards. Put these cards in one bowl. Tell each student to write his/her birthday on another index card and put these in a second bowl. (If you have less than 10 students, discard some numbered cards to match your number of students.)

Now draw a numbered card from the first bowl and a birthdate card from the second bowl. When you match all of the cards, you know the order in which registrants will be called for active military duty. For example, if Card #1 is matched to birthdate March 5, student(s) with that birthdate will be called to serve first.

### 3. Dodging the draft.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Service Panel Weighs Requiring Women to Register for Military Draft," *Washington Times*, January 24, 2019, [https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/jan/24/service-panel-weighs-requiring-women-to-register-f/?utm\\_source=GOOGLE&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_id=chacka&utm\\_campaign=TWT+-+DSA&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuNC7hvXb9AIVDIpaBR1XUguBEAAYASAAEgL6GfD\\_BwE](https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/jan/24/service-panel-weighs-requiring-women-to-register-f/?utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=cpc&utm_id=chacka&utm_campaign=TWT+-+DSA&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuNC7hvXb9AIVDIpaBR1XUguBEAAYASAAEgL6GfD_BwE), accessed December 11, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "Congress gives up on attempt to make women register for the draft after outcry," *Iola Register*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.iolaregister.com/news/national-news/congress-gives-up-on-attempt-to-make-women-register-for-the-draft-after-outcry>, accessed December 11, 2021.

## LESSON PLAN – HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK

Dr. Jett explains that during the Civil War, some men paid others to serve in their place if they were drafted. That option was not available during later wars, so some men fled to Canada or other countries to evade the draft. They were commonly called draft dodgers. If they later returned to the United States, they could be imprisoned or ordered to report for immediate military duty even if their draft number had not been called.

On his first day in office, President Carter issued an executive order pardoning about half a million citizens who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War era. Have your students read the article, “When President Carter Pardoned Draft Dodgers, Only Half Came Back,”<sup>3</sup> then discuss the pro’s and con’s of granting such a pardon.

#### 4. Recruiting volunteers.

Since the end of the Vietnam War, the United States has stopped using the draft to fill the ranks of its military but stepped up efforts to recruit volunteers. (NOTE: Men are still required to register for the draft at age 18 in case the draft needs to be used again to increase the size of America’s military for a national emergency.) Divide your students into three groups to debate the pro’s and con’s of the following statement: *Asking for volunteers is the fairest way to staff America’s military forces.* One group will argue in favor of the statement, a second group will argue against it, and the third group will judge which argument is most convincing.

## Summary/Closure

For the first seven decades of its existence, the United States depended on volunteers to defend itself from military threats. Modern warfare called for millions of troops, so the draft was instituted to find and train them quickly. Although the draft has not been used for nearly fifty years, young men must still register for it, and the next national emergency may require its use again.

## Extension Activities

Some people refuse to go to combat because they believe war is wrong. They may apply for classification as conscientious objectors. If their application is approved, they may be ordered to serve in the military as noncombatants or excused from serving in the armed forces at all. Have your students read the “[Conscientious Objection Fact Sheet](#),” then discuss these questions:

- What would be some noncombatant forms of military service?

---

<sup>3</sup>“When President Carter Pardoned Draft Dodgers, Only Half Came Back,” *History Stories*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/carter-draft-dodger-pardon-half-returned>, accessed December 13, 2021.

## LESSON PLAN – HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK

- Why might a conscientious objector refuse to serve as a noncombatant?
- Should a conscientious objector still be eligible to run for national office?

### Assessment

Your students may have strong emotions invested in any discussion of the draft. This is especially true of men who are approaching the age when they must register for the draft. This study demonstrates they are not the first to be chosen to stand “in harm’s way” to defend their country. Encourage them to speak candidly about how they feel and find ways to serve as responsible citizens when danger threatens our nation’s survival.

### Coming to Terms

Casualties – persons wounded or killed as the result of a military operation.

Conscientious Objectors – persons who refuse to fight in a military unit because they object to war on moral, ethical, philosophical, or religious grounds.

Conscription – choosing someone to fight in a military unit, with or without that person’s consent.

Draft Evasion – avoiding the call to active military service when conscripted by the draft.

Noncombatants – persons who serve in a military unit but do not violently confront the enemy.

### PBS Learning Media

New to PBS Learning Media? Click here to learn more and sign up today:

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/signup/>