

## Sample Lesson: What is a “policy?”

**Teaching Artist:** Ally Tufenkjian

**Grade:** 10th-12th

**Theme of Lesson:** Breaking down policy making, its impact, and its evaluation

### **Restating of Inquiry Questions:**

- How is “policy” defined on a political level?
- Why and how is policy created and what should it accomplish?
- How does policy affect individuals?

### **Objectives:**

- Students will learn the definition of “policy.”
- Through discussion and an experiential activity, students will learn that policy originates in response to a societal issue or need, and that policy is designed to address that issue.
- They will understand the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating a policy.
- By collaborating during the main activity, students will realize that multiple players are involved in the policy-making process.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Large post-it
  - Index cards (for *Sequencing Bingo* and *Context Clues* activities)
  - The Six Steps of Policy* handout
  - Two worksheets (*Drafting a Policy* and *Evaluating Policy Outcomes*)
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## **1) Introductory Brainstorming: Defining “policy” (3-5 min)**

### Part One)

- Students will brainstorm the meaning of “policy;” facilitator will write their answers on the whiteboard.
- Facilitator will then hang the definition of policy on the wall.
- Definition: A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual, which guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes; a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.*

\*\*Optional Part Two) Context clues activity if students have trouble generating the definition in Part One:

- Students will be split into small groups and receive index cards with sentences using the word “policy” in various contexts, i.e.: “The School Board implemented a new grading policy to ensure that all students were evaluated in a consistent way.”
- They will define policy based on the context clues in the sentences they are given.
- Groups will share out their definitions, which will form a common definition for the whole class to use.

## **2) Intro activity: Sequencing Bingo (5 min)**

- Students will work in small groups. Each group will receive index cards with the 6 main steps of the policy making process and will work together to sequence them in the correct order as quickly as possible. Once a group thinks they have the correct order, they will hold up their “Bingo!” card. Groups will keep working until a group achieves the right sequence.
- Following the activity, students will receive a handout detailing the 6 steps and what/who they involve.

## **3) Main activity: Making and Evaluating a Policy (15-20 min)**

### **Overview:**

- Students will split into small groups and work together to form, implement, and evaluate the outcomes of a policy based on the provided prompt.

### **Breakdown:**

- Each group will collaborate to complete the first worksheet, presenting them with the following problem:
  - “Childhood obesity rates have tripled over the past 30 years, and New York City has an even higher proportion of obese and overweight children than other parts of the country.”
- Once completed, the whole class will regroup to debrief on their worksheets.
- Then they will be given a second worksheet, evaluating the proposed solutions and outcomes of their policy outline, to complete in their smaller groups.

## **4) Class reflection/Final Processing (5-7 min)**

- Reflect on the evaluation process: Did your group achieve its goal? Why/why not? Were some outcomes successful, but not others?
- What was it like making these policy decisions as a group?
- Did anything surprise you about this process?
- Do you think the collaborative method we used today mirrors real-world policy making?

**Key Vocabulary/Concepts:** Policy, implementation, evaluation, outcomes, collaborative decision making, government officials

**Intelligences Addressed:** Logical-mathematical, Spatial, Linguistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Existential

**Indicators:**

**-Logical-mathematical:** Students use logic to sequence steps of the policy making process; students identify creative solutions to the presented problem; students fill out a chart as they brainstorm ideas.

**-Spatial:** In the Sequencing Bingo activity, students create a physical sequence of index cards.

**-Linguistic:** Students break down the meaning of the word “policy” and the steps involved in policy making.

**-Interpersonal:** Students reflect on their individual role in policy making.

**-Intrapersonal:** Students form conclusions working as a group.

**-Existential:** Students consider the effects of policy on individuals and society.