

LESSON 9

Grade Level & Subject: High School Social Studies (History or Government)

Unit: Discovering the Rich History of the Michigan Supreme Court

Lesson: The Second Amendment and the Right to Bear Arms

State Standards and Benchmarks:

Social Studies. Strand I Historical Perspective. Standard I.2 Comprehending the Past. All students will understand narratives about major eras of American and world history by identifying the people involved, describing the setting, and sequencing the events. Standard I.4 Judging Decisions from the Past. All students will evaluate key decisions made at critical turning points in history by assessing their implications and long-term consequences. Strand III. Civic Perspective. Standard III.2 Ideals of American Democracy. All students will explain the meaning and origin of the ideas, including the core democratic values expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other foundational documents of the United States. Strand V. Inquiry. Standard V.2 Conducting Investigations. All students will conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources, analyzing and interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses, reporting results both orally and in writing, and making use of appropriate technology.

Unit Outcome:

When this unit is finished, students will be able to: (1) conduct historical research/investigation using both primary and secondary sources, (2) describe the importance of the Michigan Supreme Court, (3) present, verbally and in written form, informed opinions about Court decisions and procedures, and (4) recognize how the Michigan Supreme Court affects their lives.

Lesson Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Recognize procedures, processes, and justices of the Michigan Supreme Court
- Define “the right to bear arms”
- Justify a Court’s decision based on an understanding of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution
- Compare and contrast two Michigan Supreme Court cases dealing with Second Amendment rights

Rational/Purpose for Lesson:

The Pond case deals with self-defense and the Zerillo case deals with the possession of a firearm by a non-naturalized foreign born resident. Since the

Second Amendment gets so much publicity, students will quite likely be aware of it and its implications. This lesson will provide them with information about two cases that affect the interpretation of said amendment in Michigan. Most students will be somewhat familiar with the Second Amendment. It is discussed in many classrooms, on radio programs, and on the television quite frequently. Issues regarding this amendment often appear in the newspaper as well. (If a teacher finds this issue too sensitive, inappropriate, or uninteresting, they may choose to deliver Lesson 10.

Resources/Materials required:

- Handout: Synopsis of Pond case
- Handout: Zerillo case (if it was not passed out on Day 8)
- References: PondVPeople.doc; PeopleVZerillo.doc

Introduction:

Ask students to explain the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. If they do not know, provide them the basic information about the “right to bear arms.” Ask students to offer and defend their opinions about this amendment and the current practices of some U.S. citizens in exercising this right.

Procedures:

1. Begin by asking students to explain the Zerillo case
2. In a class discussion, encourage students to share their thoughts about the case including their understandings and opinions
3. Encourage questions
4. Correct them when necessary
5. Give a quiz that checks for comprehension
6. Pass out the Pond case handout
7. Tell students to read it
8. Tell students to compare it to the Zerillo case
9. Lead the ensuing discussion

Closure:

Tell students that many Americans interpret the Second Amendment differently than others. Inform them that the ways people exercise this right and fight to protect it are quite controversial to people who interpret the Amendment differently. One side believes that all Americans can – and some believe, should – exercise this right. The other side does not see this right to be as important nor do they see it as a right for all citizens. This side certainly would not agree that all Americans should exercise this right. Whatever students’ opinions, it is important that they are aware of this amendment and how it is interpreted because they may own guns or know people who do. Further, regardless of whether or not most citizens who own guns store them safely, guns are

dangerous and can and have been used as weapons to harm people and guns can harm people accidentally.

Guided study/Homework:

If day ten is assessment day, tell students to prepare for that assessment. If day ten will be another Michigan Supreme Court lesson, consider the following: Have students write a persuasive essay dealing with the right to bear arms. Tell them that they need to try to convince their readers of something. Tell students to refer to the cases discussed in class and to information they know or can find from current events about the Second Amendment. This paper should be no less than one page and no more than three pages long.

Assessment:

1. The Zerillo comprehension quiz will be graded
2. If the homework is assigned, the persuasive essays will be graded for: persuasiveness, spelling, and reference to current events or to the cases studied in class.

Evaluation and Reflection: (To be completed by teacher after lesson has been implemented)

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1. Share your thoughts about the Zerillo case
2. Actively participate in the discussion
3. Read the synopsis of the Pond case
4. Participate in the discussion
5. **Homework:** Study for your Unit Assessment OR Write a 1-3 page persuasive essay about something having to do with the “right to bear arms.” Convince your reader of something. Make references to the cases studied in class and information from current events.

If you missed class, you should also:

1. Get a copy of the lecture notes
2. Get a copy of the handouts
3. For Homework: Write a 3 page persuasive paper about the “right to bear arms.” Take a stance either for the “free exercising” of this right or for the careful restriction of it. Be sure to reference both current events and the cases decided by the Michigan Supreme Court.

