

TEACHER GUIDE

MODULE 1 – CITIZEN: FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY



PRESENTED BY  

Civics Matters Arizona

Civic Learning Hub

Grade Band: 6th-12th

Estimated Module Completion Time: 3 hours

May be completed across multiple sessions or
asynchronously

OVERVIEW

Module 1: Citizen — Foundations of Democracy

This module teaches civic participation, rights/responsibilities, community dialogue, and historical continuity starting with a fictionalized Arizona scenario.

Students learn:

- How citizens participate in local decision-making
- How rights and responsibilities interact
- How historical debates on liberty and order continue today
- How civic action affects local policy

ARIZONA CONTENT STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Below are the standards this module addresses within the Arizona History & Social Science Standards.

Civics Standards (Grades 6–8)

Standard	Module Connection
6.C4.2 – Describe and apply civic virtues including deliberative processes that contribute to the common good and democratic principles in school, community, and government.	Students practice respectful dialogue, consideration of others’ rights, open-mindedness, negotiation, compromise, and civic responsibility through the Engage simulation and module reflection activities.
7.C4.2 – Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as a means of addressing public problems.	The Engage simulation centers on evaluating a proposed local rule intended to address noise and safety concerns while considering its effects on speech and assembly.
7.C4.4 – Explain challenges people face and opportunities they create in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places.	Students explore how people—including young people—have addressed civic issues through advocacy, collaboration, public discourse, and participation, then apply deliberative decision-making in the simulation.

ARIZONA CONTENT STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard	Module Connection
8.C4.1 – Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies to promote the common good.	Students compare civic participation across time, from the founding era and Mercy Otis Warren to contemporary student-led advocacy movements.
8.C4.2 – Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems.	In the Engage simulation, students assess a proposed local restriction as a response to community concerns while weighing its consequences for individual rights.

Inquiry Standards (6–8)

- SP1: Developing questions & planning inquiries
- SP3: Gathering and evaluating sources
- SP7: Civics & political awareness through decision-making

ARIZONA CONTENT STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

High School – Government (Grades 9–12)

Standard	Module Connection
HS.C1.3 – Explain and use deliberative processes implemented in various civic and political institutions.	Students practice listening to competing perspectives, weighing arguments, and making a decision through the Engage simulation.
HS.C2.1 – Explain the importance of individual participation in civic and political institutions.	The module demonstrates how individuals can influence public life through advocacy, writing, organizing, student government, and other forms of participation.
HS.C3.1 – Examine how the United States Constitution established a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits and analyze how those powers, responsibilities, and limits have changed over time.	Students examine how constitutional rights and democratic principles shape civic participation and affect individuals and groups, including through the Engage simulation's debate over freedom of speech and assembly.

ARIZONA CONTENT STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard	Module Connection
HS.C4.1 – Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions in all three branches and at the local, state, tribal, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purpose achieved.	The Engage simulation introduces students to local policy decision-making and asks them to consider how different perspectives and approaches can address a community concern.

Inquiry Practices (9–12)

- Evaluate evidence,
- Develop claims,
- Communicate conclusions aligned with democratic engagement.

ARIZONA CONTENT STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

C. Arizona State-Specific Civics Standards

Arizona Constitution & State Government (HS.C2.AZ):

- Students understand how the Arizona Constitution protects rights, including free expression.

Civics Test Items (required):

- First Amendment, roles of government, responsibilities of citizens.
- This module directly prepares students for mastery of the content of Arizona's Civics Test.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of module 1, students will be able to:

Civic Knowledge

- Explain the tension between protecting individual rights and maintaining public order.
- Describe how the First Amendment and the Arizona Constitution protect speech and assembly.
- Identify civic responsibilities (participation, informed decision-making, community engagement)

Civic Skills

- Analyze stakeholder perspectives
- Distinguish between liberty, order, and balance
- Understand how civic decisions impact communities
- Reflect on their civic voice

Civic Dispositions

- Recognize the importance of one's civic voice.
- Develop curiosity and empathy for diverse points of view.
- Value compromise as essential to democracy

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

Use these to anchor classroom discussion:

Founding Era Connections

- Founding-era debates about liberty/order.
- AZ territorial governance and constitutional design.
- Frontier-era public order issues.

Arizona-Specific Connections

- Arizona's 1910–1912 constitutional debates emphasized direct democracy.
- (initiative, referendum, recall).
- The AZ Constitution (Article 2) includes even broader protections for free expression than the U.S. Constitution.
- Historical examples of Arizona communities balancing rights and order (frontier towns, water rights disputes, local governance challenges).

HOW TO USE MODULE 1 IN THE CLASSROOM

Before the module (5–10 minutes)

Pre-Module Discussion Questions:

- What makes a community rule “fair” or “unfair”?
- Why might a community want to limit certain activities in public spaces?
- What is the difference between a right and a responsibility?
- When have you seen a debate between freedom and safety?

During the ‘Engage’ section

- Encourage students to pause at each reflection prompt.
- Let students choose different pathways and compare experiences.
- If using “desks in pairs,” have partners take different routes and discuss outcomes.

HOW TO USE MODULE 1 IN THE CLASSROOM

After the 'Engage' Section (10–20 minutes)

Post-Engage Discussion Questions:

1. Which value guided your choice: liberty, order, or compromise? Why?
2. How did hearing multiple perspectives change your decision?
3. How does the Arizona Constitution protect your ability to gather, protest, or share ideas?
4. What does it mean to be an informed citizen in your community?
5. What happens when no one participates in local decisions?

During the Module (30–60 minutes)

1. Students watch/read/listen to the resource.
2. Students complete the short-answer reflection questions immediately after.
3. Do a fast share-out:
 - One takeaway
 - One question you still have

HOW TO USE MODULE 1 IN THE CLASSROOM

After the Module (15–20 minutes)

Post-Module Discussion Questions:

1. What new idea about civic participation or citizenship stood out to you from the module resources?
2. How do different perspectives or sources help deepen understanding of civic issues?
3. What responsibilities do citizens have beyond voting, based on what you learned in the module?
4. How do historical or constitutional principles continue to shape civic life today?
5. What is one takeaway from the module that feels relevant to your school, community, or everyday life?

Optional Written Reflection

1. Using one resource from the module, explain how it helped you better understand what it means to be an informed and engaged citizen.

HOW TO USE MODULE 1 IN THE CLASSROOM

Module Extension activities

A. Student Council Simulation

- Students form teams to propose three versions of a Riverview Park policy, then vote on them.

B. Primary Source Mini-Study

- Students examine:
- First Amendment (U.S. Constitution)
- Arizona Constitution Article 2 (Declaration of Rights)
- Then answer:
- How are the protections similar or different?