You and Your Government

Grade Level: 4-12
Time: Day 1: 5-10 minutes. Day 2: 1 hour

Objectives:

- Identify the government’s impact/influence on their everyday lives.
- Differentiate the influence of national, state, and local government.
- Understand that they have the power to influence and shape government.

Curricular Connections: Civics, Technology

Materials: Access to research material. You can also utilize the community charts and spheres of influence sheets available in the forms sections as an introduction.

Procedure: This activity works best prior to any formal discussion on the importance of or purpose of government.

1) On day #1 give students 5-10 minutes to list as many activities as they can think of in which government plays no role. Encourage the students to be creative.
2) Direct the students to take their lists home and ask them to consult with their parents for further ideas. The list will be handed in the next day.
3) On day #2 give students five minutes to share ideas and add to personal lists.
4) Collect all lists and begin to share items without identifying the author. With each item, the students are encouraged to analyze whether or not government has an impact/influence on that item. Continue until the class realizes that government literally has an impact/influence on every aspect of their existence.
5) Although the class should not attempt to achieve closure yet, students should be allowed to state their opinions concerning the amount of power government possesses.
6) Students conduct research to discover which level(s) of government are responsible for each item that they now realize is impacted by government.
7) Once research is complete discuss research findings and ways that students can influence government.

Reflection:

- Discussion of governmental impact and influencing government.

Assessment:

1. A brief paragraph on the topic, "Governmental Power--- Too Little or Too Much?"
2. Results of research

Source: Adapted from Craig N. Kittelson; Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan #:AELP-GOV0017