| **Understanding Policy Making: The Net Neutrality Debate** |
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| **Unit Overview** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| Mignon Clyburn has spent her life in government service. A native of South Carolina and graduate of USC, she spent eleven years serving on the SC Public Service Commission before moving to Washington, D.C. and eventually being appointed to commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission by President Barack Obama in 2009. She is known for her defense of net neutrality and dedication to decreasing the digital divide for rural and low-income Americans. In this unit, students will evaluate a variety of informational sources in order to explain how policy is created in America. Students will examine their own beliefs and develop a well-supported opinion.  |  |
| **Skill Emphasis at a Glance** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| * Students will learn to use inquiry to find informational sources of various media formats which will be synthesized into an opinion. They will evaluate the sources in order to develop a research-based opinion.
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| **Standards at a Glance** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| * USG.3.ER – Describe the policy making process in the American constitutional government.
* USG.3.IN – Interpret how American political beliefs are shaped by the founding principles, core values, and changing demographics of America, and how those beliefs led to the creation of ideological trends which affect public policy over time.
* USG.3.CC – Investigate the role of linkage institutions (i.e. media, interest groups, political parties) and explain how they shape public policy and opinion.
 | * Teachers should consider how they will formatively assess students understanding of the standards throughout the unit in order to inform their instruction.
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| **Resources and Materials** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| * [Government Regulation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDqGzMdhL1M&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=47)
* [Net Neutrality Explained](https://youtu.be/p90McT24Z6w)
* [Am I the Only Techie Against Net Neutrality?](https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshsteimle/2014/05/14/am-i-the-only-techie-against-net-neutrality/#797bd8e870d5)
* [How Mignon Clyburn, the FCC’s lone Democrat, is Fighting to Save Net Neutrality](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mg4wv3/how-mignon-clyburn-the-fccs-lone-democrat-is-fighting-to-save-net-neutrality)
* [FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn Rips Net Neutrality Ruling](https://youtu.be/9_DkHw7q2DE)
* [Hank vs. Hank: The Net Neutrality Debate in 3 Minutes](https://youtu.be/mc2aso6W7jQ)
* Writing utensil
* Paper
* Computer w/ internet access
* FlipGrid
* [SC African American History Calendar 2020](https://scafricanamerican.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/scde_10722_01_2020_African_American_History_Calendar_For_web_09.pdf)
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| **“I Can…” Statements** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| * I can evaluate a variety of informational sources and opinion editorials in order to develop and apply an opinion.
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| **Lesson Sequence** | **Instructional Guidance** |
| * Students will discover and learn initial information about policy and regulation in terms of government. Teachers should place students in small groups to explore the topic and the types of policy: domestic, economic, and foreign. Graphic organizers are one method teachers could use to do this. Students should be asked to summarize the information in some way; Show-You-Know would be an ideal format for this. The CrashCourse video “Government Regulation” is also an informational video teachers could use to introduce the topic.
* While participating in the classroom/lesson reading activities students will be given multiple opportunities to read a variety of texts. Online articles, print articles, and videos will be made available for students to ingest individually, with small groups, or as a class. Students will be given an opportunity to find topics that they relate to and care about for the purpose of applying their learning to them personally.
* While evaluating the concepts of domestic policy and the policy making process, students will be asked to research the history of the seat belt in cars. The teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the circumstances that led to the creation of the seat belt and how it eventually became mandatory for not only all cars to have seat belts but it is now required for passengers to wear them. This conversation could start as a whole group and shift to small group conversations. A graphic organizer might assist students in their thinking. It is important that the teacher give students the opportunity to write about the connections between public opinion and linkage institutions with the creation of the seat belt laws.
* Students will respond to specific discussion questions following each day’s lesson; teachers will determine daily lesson focus for students to apply their understanding, connect prior knowledge, and explain personal relativity. A question to consider at this point in the unit would be “Should the government regulate the internet?” Allowing students to ponder this question as they experience the informational texts will promote inquiry. Students should be introduced to the topic of net neutrality. The teacher will show the students “Net Neutrality Explained,” a Wall Street Journal video on YouTube. This is also an opportunity for students to experience informational texts on their own. Giving students time to explore this topic using a search engine and choosing articles to read on their own will promote inquiry.
* Students will be exposed to arguments on either side of the debate and take notes as they read on a Pro/Con t-chart. Students will be given a copy of “How Mignon Clyburn, the FCC’s lone Democrat, is Fighting to Save Net Neutrality” from Motherboard: Tech by Vice (March 22, 2017). Students should carefully read the article and quotes given by Mignon Clyburn and use the information to fill out the Pro portion of their t-chart. Students will also be given a copy of “Am I the Only Techie Against Net Neutrality?” from Forbes (May 14, 2014).
* Students will take a position on the initial focus question and will engage in a writing workshop to produce an argument essay. Students will determine the stance they would like to take concerning the question “Should the government regulate the internet?” after reading a variety of informational texts and watching informational videos. Students will engage in research to find reliable sources that will support their argument. Teachers will teach the structure of writing an argument and the importance of reliable data when discussing policy that will impact American citizens. Teachers will assist students with paraphrasing and quoting. Following information acquisition, students will create a skeleton outline of their essay to determine logical sequencing. Students should refer to the rubric when creating their outline to ensure all required elements will be present. Students will use their rubrics to write their first drafts. Students should have an opportunity to share their first drafts with a peer for feedback. Students will go back and revise their writing for clarity, coherence, and logic. Teachers will allow time for conferences with students independently to make final revisions prior to creating their final draft.
* While developing their argument, students will research a variety of informational sources. Students will take a stance on government regulation when it comes to the internet. Teachers will provide mini-lessons on source bias and plagiarism throughout the writing process.
* Once the final paper is submitted, teachers will give students an opportunity to reflect on their writing and its implications through creating a short video. Teachers should pose the question “What did writing this essay teach you about policy?” and allow students to freely share what this writing process taught them about government regulation and policy formation.
 | * Students should have a grasp of the basic beliefs of the two major political parties before starting this unit. Reteaching might be required to ensure that students are implementing the core beliefs of the parties into their research about policy.
* This research into the seat belt could be chosen and given to the students to save time. The seat belt example is an opportunity for students to see a simple example of the concept before diving into a deeper and more complex topic.
* The teacher should ask questions like “What do you think people who believe in individual freedoms thought about the creation of seat belt laws?”, “Why do you think mandating cars have seat belts was not enough? What factors led state governments to decide to make it mandatory to wear them?”, “Based on what you know, can you explain why the federal government does not have a mandatory seat belt wearing law?”
* These articles can be given to students either as hard copies or electronically.
* Recognizing that there are time constraints to every unit, teachers should adjust the writing process to fit the time frame appropriate for their class. The rubric should make clear the expectations for the students writing (i.e. how many words, what elements should they include). The teacher should feel comfortable guiding them through the writing process, therefore a lengthy research paper with a formal format might not be appropriate. The ultimate goal is to allow the students to write about their reading and express their opinion.
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References

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Gustin, Sam. “How Mignon Clyburn, the FCC's Lone Democrat, Is Fighting to Save Net Neutrality.” *Vice*, 22 Mar. 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mg4wv3/how-mignon-clyburn-the-fccs-lone-democrat-is-fighting-to-save-net-neutrality>.

Steimle, Josh. “Am I The Only Techie Against Net Neutrality?” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 2 Feb. 2016, https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshsteimle/2014/05/14/am-i-the-only-techie-against-net-neutrality/#59cac4770d51.