High School

Objectives: Students will be able to:
- analyze primary and secondary sources;
- synthesize evidence from primary and secondary sources;
- use and create charts, diagrams, and pictures to determine characteristics of people, places, and events;
- summarize points and evidence to answer a question;
- use evidence to draw conclusions and make generalizations;
- construct arguments using evidence from multiple sources;
- compare and contrast people, places, and events;
- make connections between past and present;
- analyze multiple connections across time and place;
- access a variety of media, including online resources;
- investigate and research to develop products orally and in writing.

2015 Standards

Virginia SOL: GOVT.7b Analyzing the relationships among the three branches in a system of checks and balances and separation of powers;
Checks of the legislative branch
- Over the executive branch: To impeach and convict a president
- Over the judicial branch: To impeach and convict judges/justices
GOVT.4c Fundamental principles of the Constitution: Rule of Law. The Constitution of the United States is supreme, and all individuals are accountable under the law.

National: NSS-C.5-8.3, C.9-12.1 Principles of Democracy

Approx. Time: Two 90 minute blocks or four 45 minute blocks.

Hook: Start the lesson with a brief discussion and brainstorming activity with the students. Begin by telling them no matter who the president is, there often seem to be calls for impeaching the president, usually when people simply disagree with the policies or behavior of the president. So, what do YOU think is an impeachable offense?
- Have the students list reasons why a president should be impeached and write their reasons on the board. Once you have a fair amount of reasons, have them rank them from the most serious to the least serious.
- Once the rankings are completed, project the following to show what the Constitution requires for impeachment of the president.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors

Article II, Section 4, U.S. Constitution
- Ask the students if they know what “Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors” means.
- Have them place their “ranked” reasons for impeachment under all of those three categories that apply.

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The Rule of Law in American Govt: Impeachment

Explain that today they will learn about (i) the process of impeachment, (ii) what these terms mean, and (iii) how they have been applied to certain presidents throughout U.S. history.

Divide students into groups and assign either (i) a step in the impeachment process, (ii) the articles of impeachment, or (iii) historical examples of impeachment, including Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton.

GROUPS:
1. Role of the House of Representatives in the Impeachment Process
2. Role of the Senate in the Impeachment Process
3. Constitutional Reasons (Articles) for Impeachment
4. Alexander Hamilton *Federalist 65* Impeachment
5. Impeachment of Andrew Johnson
6. Impeachment of Richard Nixon
7. Impeachment of Bill Clinton

Each group will research a topic and create either a poster or a digital presentation (Google Slides, Prezi, infographic, etc.) and then present each one to the class. Students will discuss each topic and take notes from each presentation.

Suggested sites for creating an infographic:
https://www.creativeblog.com/infographic/tools-2131971

Presentations should include a basic, but thorough, explanation of each topic and include AT LEAST one picture.

Follow the order of the listed groups for presentations so students start with an understanding of the process and then move to historical examples.
Struggling Learners: Have students in groups highlight information they think is most relevant to their topic to summarize it. This will make it easier for them to focus on what needs to be on their infographic.

Advanced Learners: Have them use the web links instead of the excerpts to allow them to find their evidence more broadly.

Assessment: First, students will participate in a mock impeachment simulation looking at specific evidence concerning President Trump. Use the website link below to print out the news article on arguments in Congress for general background knowledge on the issue. Distribute it to the students and read it together as a class, making a list on the board of arguments for and against impeachment. Once you have discussed the article, have students divide themselves into three groups: those that support impeachment, those that oppose it, and those not sure.

“The Case For and Against Impeachment” news article: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/04/22/case-against-impeachment/?utm_term=.5024f009957a

The two opposing groups will use suggested websites, listed at the end of the lesson, to make arguments for or against articles of impeachment and make those arguments to the entire class, specifically trying to convince the group who is undecided to side with them. As this is an ongoing issue, additional resources, and arguments, for and against impeachment may be available. Therefore, you may want to conduct a Google search for updated information.

Once both sides have made their cases, students will take a vote as members of the House of Representatives on whether or not they believe the president should be impeached. If, by chance, the students approve the articles of impeachment, they will take another vote, as members of the Senate, for removal of the president.