# Presidential Mandate: Lesson Plan

## Topic
A presidential mandate refers to the authority of a president to govern as a representative of the people, an authority granted by their successful election to office. The assertion of a presidential mandate is typically based on the claim that a majority (or plurality) of voters support the president’s policy agenda, and they should therefore be allowed to enact it once in office.

## Possible subjects/classes
- History
- Government
- Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible subjects/classes</th>
<th>Time needed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● History</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Government</td>
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<td>● Social Studies</td>
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## Video link:
https://academy4sc.org/topic/presidential-mandate-the-right-to-govern/

## Objective: What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?
Students will be able to...
- Define what a presidential mandate is.
- Describe how the idea of a mandate is used to grant political power to a newly elected president.
- Articulate the competing ideas about who should receive a presidential mandate.

## Key Concepts & Vocabulary
- Presidents, elections, executive branch, legislative branch

## Materials Needed
- Worksheet, Internet access

## Before you watch
**Brainstorm:** As a class, brainstorm all the possible meanings of the word “mandate,” including related words like “mandated” and “mandatory.” What are
possible synonyms of these terms? Have students call out their answers and write them on the board.

While you watch

1. What is a presidential mandate?
2. Who gives the president their mandate?
3. Does the presidential mandate exist in the Constitution?

After you watch/discussion questions

1. How far do you think the presidential mandate should extend? In other words, how much power should the president receive from their election?
2. Do congressional members have a mandate? What happens when a legislator's mandate clashes with the presidential mandate?
3. Should a president be considered to have a mandate when they win by a small margin? What if they win the electoral college but lose the popular vote?

Activity Ideas

- **Debate:** Divide the class into two groups. Announce that the members of one group represent the newly elected president, who won by 5% of the vote. Have this group argue that their candidate has a presidential mandate and why, including ideas about how representative democracy and the electoral system works. Have the other group argue that there is no such thing as a presidential mandate, including ideas about the balance of powers and what should happen if a majority of Congress disagrees with the new president's agenda. Have a structured debate with two students from each group making opening and closing arguments, and the rest of the students making and responding to arguments in turns.

- **Worksheet Reflection:** Have students individually answer the *Reflection* section of the Worksheet and then consider the scenarios given in the *Consider This* section in pairs or small groups. Then, discuss their answers and interpretations as a class.

Sources/places to learn more

3. “Mandate: The President and the People.” YouTube, uploaded by AnnenbergClassroom.org, 13 Sept 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5mfZli0cpM.