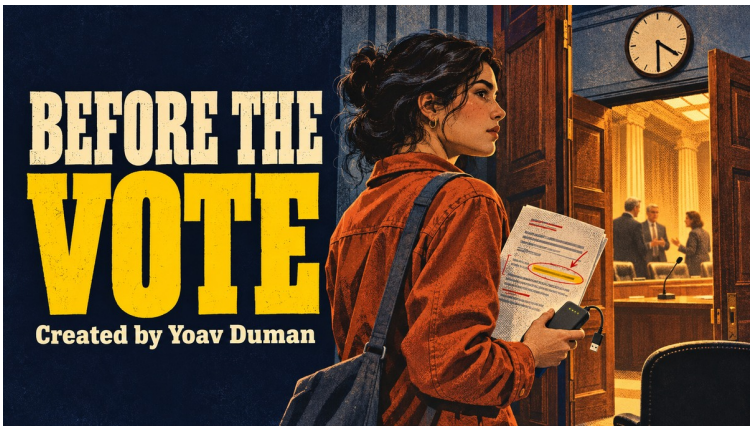
Instructor Manual

Interest groups, lobbying and committee agendas



Set up the assignment

Use this in an introductory U.S. government unit on interest groups or Congress. Share the direct For Class link. The activity page has editable Canvas instructions, the student manual, and the offline HTML. Plan about 45 minutes including submission.

Students record four responses at minimums of 55, 60, 60 and 75 words. The game brings the necessary evidence into the activity. At the end, students enter a name and course or section and submit their Class PDF in Canvas. For Fun makes writing optional.

What students practice

Trace money, time and connections to specific outcomes. Distinguish who gets a meeting, who files wording, who publicly requests discussion, what the chair schedules, and what later legislative steps would be needed.

Teach from the replay

The two charger runs keep the people, moves, responses and draft procedure fixed. Students predict first. Only the chair's scheduling rule changes. The rule and the charger case are fictional.

Charger moves	Original rule	Letter-only rule
Letter + office	Scheduled. Coalition wording.	Scheduled. Coalition wording.
Letter + reception	Scheduled. Supplier wording.	Scheduled. Supplier wording.
Office + reception	Scheduled. Coalition wording.	Off the agenda. The request and amendment stay on file.

With letter plus reception, the letter qualifies the bill on its own. An unchanged slot under both rules leaves the value of Rivera's request in other situations open.

Debrief and Grading

Compare how different routes produce different records.

Use the school-bill decision

Moves	What the record supports
Nurses + file wording	Letter and plan meet the rule. Staff circulate the coalition draft with the limited reporting grace period.
Facilities letter + lab plan	Letter and plan meet the rule. Staff circulate the supplier draft, which would allow installation before omitted checks for one semester.
File strict wording + facilities letter	The strict text stays on file. The missing plan keeps the bill off the agenda.

Under the proposed nurses' deal, rural schools with unused filters already on site still do the checks before installation. During the first 30 days they can write the results down by day 30. From day 31, checks and records both precede installation.

Grade four responses out of 12

Award up to three points per response. Check the evidence, the reasoning, and the scope or consequence of the claim. For the evidence response, use the source-specific anchors. Forecasts and supplier checks are commitments for discussion. Grade explanations from the report.

Checkpoint	Credit a response that does this
Moves · 55 words	Links each action to a recorded effect, explains an opportunity cost, and identifies a later committee step.
Replay · 60 words	Compares the student run and the example under both rules, explains the first changed outcome, and tracks what stays on file.
Evidence · 60 words	Makes a warranted claim, offers plausible accounts and distinguishing evidence, and traces a result to the scheduling rule. Use the examples on page 3.
School bill · 75 words	Explains the agenda and wording under the actual moves, gives a benefit or cost, applies the rural timing provision, and poses a specific question for a custodian.

Use ten minutes to debrief

Compare what two students gained and gave up. Ask how paid time, a former aide, and local ties helped at different steps. Close by asking who supplied useful information and whose work was absent. Give full credit to a well-reasoned path that misses the agenda.

Grading the Evidence

Use the anchor for the card the student chose.

For the 60-word response, award one point for a warranted claim grounded in a detail, one for plausible accounts plus evidence that could distinguish them, and one for an accurate replay explanation. Credit any defensible argument supported by the record.

Card	Examples of reasoning that earns credit
E1 · Donor status	Randomized disclosure of donor status among actual donors changed access to senior officials in the study (18.8% vs. 5.5%). Staff might reward donors or interpret the label as a sign of engagement. Separate those cues, and use later votes to test a claim about votes.
E2 · Social settings	The assigned invitation affected public support. It could change whether meetings happen or what happens during them. Compare attendance by assigned group. A design varying venue after an initial commitment to meet could probe the second mechanism.
E3 · Reese's Law	The introduced Senate bill shows an earlier toy exception. The markup gives Kelly's stated route into the House draft. Earlier drafts or correspondence could help distinguish advice from industry from staff reliance on an existing standard.
E4 · Revolving door	Lobbyists' revenue changed after a former employer left the Senate. Look at client demand and contact records for comparable lobbyists to help distinguish the value of access from a change in clients' needs.
E5 · Help for allies	The legislative subsidy theory predicts that support with drafting can help an already sympathetic lawmaker act. A briefing study using public support may miss effects on drafting. Compare filing rates or staff time with and without ready-to-use wording.
F1 · Supplier records	Two labs reported a six-week appointment wait. A blank heat result could reflect a skipped test or an omitted result. Ask for the original lab log with matching test IDs. Broader capacity claims require more labs and turnaround data.

Check the scope of the claim

A filed amendment stays on the record when the bill misses the agenda. Meeting rates measure access. A blank lab entry leaves the test's completion open. A justified plan to collect more evidence can earn full credit.

Source links

Kalla and Broockman (2016) · Grose, Lopez, Sadhwani and Yoshinaka (2022) · Introduced Senate bill, Sec. 4 · House Report 117-440

Blanes i Vidal, Draca and Fons-Rosen (2012) · Hall and Deardorff (2006) · Camp, Schwam-Baird and Zelizer (2024)