

Make the rule do the work.

Intended goals: explain executive origin and routine survival; apply country-specific conditions; defend conditional tradeoffs; propose a comparative research design. Origin means selection into office, not the historical origin of a constitution.

Evidence boundary: this is a teaching and assessment design, not a classroom-validated intervention. Supported predictions, repairs, first explanations and independent checks are different evidence. No supplied trial establishes learning gains, duration, engagement or retention.

Assign the full route

New student setup offers only the full nine-country, eighteen-move route. Core remains solely for legacy records or an instructor-desk override; reduced coverage does not establish nine-country understanding. Preserve all changed targets, denominators and deadlines. Record assigned coverage and missing work; compare points only on identical mission sets.

Instructor desk code: 6717. The gate is a classroom convenience, not account security. Set explanation expectations and use reports for hand-in. Local storage and validated backups do not provide identity-verified or tamper-proof examination records.

A provisional teaching sequence

Meeting / phase	Work and evidence
Before play	Optional six entry checks (form A). Individual first responses; no corrective baseline feedback. Preserve a missing or partial baseline honestly.
Session 1	Cast and scaffold; three matched circuits; role rotation; one lab run and a planned one-input replay. Close with an individual explanation of what was held constant.
Session 2	All nine paired country dossiers in family groups; short office-rule-condition-result teach-backs. Pause between country pairs.
Session 3	Cross-country synthesis, conditional tradeoffs and research design. Submit final research, then complete the six required exit checks (B).
Later	Optional return form C after a chosen delay. Keep return cards unseen until that administration.

Three resumable sessions are a planning sequence, not a tested duration. Allow extra reading, discussion and check time. Measure burden in a pilot without lowering case coverage or rigor. Rotate operator, analyst and skeptical reporter; collect each student's checks individually.

Separate a rule from an assumption.

Cast: name the offices and voters. **Office:** identify the selected or challenged post. **Rule:** name the procedure and its target. **Condition:** apply the threshold, clock or other requirement. **Result:** state who leaves, who stays, what happens to the bill, and whether an election follows.

Model boundaries to say aloud

The matched circuits fix a 48-52 ordinary defeat and a 58-42 formal challenge regardless of the earlier bargain. They demonstrate a legal implication with political support held constant. The lab makes choices change support, then holds that resulting support constant across survival rules. Neither is an estimate of real-country effects.

Fictional majority investiture is 51 of 100; real parliamentary and semi-presidential systems can permit minority cabinets or no initial investiture. A supporting agreement is not the same as cabinet membership. Outside supporters can promise confidence while opposing an ordinary bill.

The lab assumes invented preferences, vote blocs, token costs, six commitment slots and a deterministic least-satisfied-party dispute. **Every seat outside continuing confidence support votes for the challenge.** Abstention, toleration, uncertain discipline and institution-induced bargaining changes are excluded. The comparison assumes an executive is already in office; it does not waive formation requirements.

Worked lab example: housing, no concessions

Civic + Workers has 73 confidence seats. Initial bill support is 73. Workers is the least satisfied partner and faces the delivery dispute. Each response below uses the same initial agreement and priority.

Response	Bill / confidence / challenge	Consequence under the model
Hold the line (0 tokens)	55 / 42 / 58	Bill passes. Parliamentary and semi-presidential cabinets lose the valid confidence motion; a separately elected President remains. Presidential ordinary censure leaves the executive in office.
Recruit Greens (1 token)	61 / 59 / 41	Bill passes; the challenge fails. All three executives remain under the stated rules. The original Workers withdrawal still occurs.
Settle the dispute (2 tokens)	73 / 73 / 27	Original agreement and bill support are restored; the challenge fails. One token remains.

These are model outputs, not evidence that one bargain or institutional family is morally better. Ask students to predict a one-input replay before launching it, identify which total should change, and explain one assumption that a real country case challenges.

Build a mechanism, then test its limits.

Country teach-backs and synthesis

After both moves, ask for the office, procedure, controlling condition, direct result and what remains. A correct option with an empty or copied explanation supports a narrower claim than a reasoned application. Keep source-rule help available in practice; record help exposure when interpreting first answers.

Three contrasts: UK outside confidence support versus Germany's successor requirement; France's linked bill procedure versus Taiwan's appointment and two clocks; US House accusation versus Chilean ministerial conviction/removal. Add South Africa's different targets, Brazil's legislative bargaining and Portugal's constrained dismissal and denominator. All nine still require both moves.

Tradeoffs: preference is not the mark

Ask who gains, who bears a cost, what mechanism connects the move to an outcome, and which condition is necessary. Perturb one condition: remove the alternative majority, weaken cohesion, change a veto actor, or constrain dismissal power. Score the argument and its revision, not the favored policy or institutional family.

A conditional research example

Hypothesis: where an alternative majority is unavailable, a constructive no-confidence rule may lower successful cabinet replacement without reducing budget delay. **Mechanism:** opponents must agree on a successor. This predicts two distinct outcomes, not one generic measure of stability.

Design: observe government-periods at risk of challenge, including failed and absent motions, across comparable periods or a rule change. Measure successor support before the challenge, replacement events, caretaker days and budget passage time separately. Select cases independently of successful removal. A UK-Germany illustration alone does not isolate the rule.

Rival: fragmentation, discipline, majority status or crisis severity can produce both successor disagreement and delay. Specify a feasible comparison or within-country design response and its remaining limit; reform adoption may itself respond to instability. **Challenge:** after measuring comparable support conditions, constructive rules show no predicted difference in replacement, or the proposed successor-agreement mechanism is absent. State uncertainty rather than treating one contrary observation as automatic refutation.

Research design card: X and distinct Y; mechanism; unit and period; observable measures; comparison and selection rule; rival process plus design response; challenging observation and remaining limitation. A list of confounder names is not an identification strategy.

A randomized information vignette can test an effect of information on respondents' blame attribution. It does not identify an effect of presidentialism on a country's democratic survival. The selected constitutional dossiers illustrate mechanisms; they are not a controlled causal sample.

Preserve the first explanation.

Administration

Entry A: optional before teaching or practice, without notebook help or corrective feedback. It seals automatically when any teaching or practice begins; entry cannot be completed retroactively. A missing or partial baseline is not zero. **Exit B:** opens only after submitted final research; six responses are required for new-record completion. **Return C:** optional later application. Keep cards unseen until administration; 7-14 days is a suggested delay. Immediate use tests immediate transfer.

Each card supplies legal premises. Collect the explanation, decisive clause, confidence 0-3 and help (none/reference/discussion/mixed). Confidence and help are not grades. Use the same accommodations and no speed score. Lock all six initials before answer guidance. Firsts remain visible; each item permits up to three revisions, each with why it changed or was retained.

The app's standard route labels A as entry and B as exit; the forms are parallel in intent, not psychometrically equated. A research pilot may counterbalance A/B using separately administered versions while preserving phase and form labels. Do not relabel a normal exit response as a baseline.

Six constructs; human criteria

Check	What a defensible explanation must do
1. Bill / office	Separate the ordinary bill result from executive survival and assembly continuation; apply a special confidence link when the stated rule introduces one.
2. Origin / title	Use selection and survival relationships. President or Prime Minister titles alone do not classify the system.
3. Target / entry	Apply the motion's actual target. Appointment or investiture does not cancel later confidence responsibility.
4. Successor / denominator	Distinguish an anti-incumbent majority from successor votes and calculate the stated all-member or votes-cast threshold.
5. Clock / conditions	Use the correct triggering event, distinguish required resignation from optional dissolution, and apply consultation as well as timing.
6. Inference / stakes	Separate office turnover, policy delay and democratic survival; challenge a causal leap with measures, a comparison, a rival and disconfirming evidence.

The application presents item-specific human criteria after the required initial-response sequence. They guide review; they are not automatic marks. Inspect an explanation before granting criterion credit. Keep checks 1-5 and research inference in check 6 visible as separate profiles rather than one general learning-gain number.

Score reasoning.

Pilot the claim.

Use each check's four stated criteria as a transparent item profile: 0 or 1 per criterion, with a note for ambiguous evidence. Do not award a point for jargon or infer reasoning from a correct choice. Score initial and revised work separately; confidence is descriptive.

Analytic self-explanation rubric

Dimension	0	1	2
Rule / mechanism	Missing or materially wrong; title-based assertion.	General rule correct; target or procedure incomplete.	Correct relationship, target and relevant procedure or mechanism.
Scenario evidence	No relevant fact; wrong denominator or clock.	Relevant fact named but weakly applied.	Decisive fact, clause, threshold, clock or political condition correctly applied.
Consequence	Conflates bill, office, assembly or democracy.	Main result right but another outcome omitted.	Distinct outcomes and sequence; for tradeoffs both benefit and cost with affected actors.
Boundary	Universal claim or irrelevant caveat.	Plausible condition with little explanation.	Specific counterfactual or missing condition with an explained change or limit.

Use the 0-8 explanation profile on selected teach-backs, tradeoffs and novel applications. Keep it separate from the check's 0-4 item criteria; do not add both as if they were independent evidence. A polished explanation that removes the wrong office loses rule and consequence credit.

Research design: six dimensions, 0-2 each

Assess (1) X and a distinct Y; (2) mechanism; (3) units, periods and observable measures; (4) case/period selection and comparison; (5) rival process plus a design response; (6) concrete challenging evidence and a remaining limit. **0:** absent or materially wrong. **1:** present but underspecified. **2:** specific and coherent. Maximum 12; word minima are completion checks, not marks.

Test the learning claim.

Record and reporting

Archive the first-response export before feedback. Retain item/form version, rule card, phase, first answer and clause, confidence, help, timestamps and revisions with reasons. A local record does not prove identity or secure exam conditions. Report supported predictions, first explanations, repairs and missing coverage separately.

A defensible pilot

Predefine unfamiliar first-explanation quality as a primary outcome, not passport points. Record form, route, prior familiarity, help, missing data and the interval to return checks. Compare entry and exit criterion profiles; inspect high-confidence errors and justified revisions. The unseen return form tests transfer to short rule cards, not necessarily to full constitutions or real news.

Calibrate two scorers with low/middle/high anchor answers; double-score a prespecified sample, blind to phase where feasible, and report disagreements by dimension. Pilot clarity and burden before setting proficiency thresholds. The rubrics and forms are proposed instruments, not validated scales.

Pre/post change alone does not show the game caused learning: repeated testing, supplied rules, instructor explanation, prior knowledge and form difficulty may contribute. To estimate an instructional effect, use a feasible comparison with the same content and time, comparable facilitation and individual assessment; random assignment strengthens that comparison. Report uncertainty and missing participants. No such study is claimed here.

Keep classification separate from outcomes

The game uses Elgie's minimal semi-presidential definition: a popularly elected fixed-term President plus a PM/cabinet collectively responsible to the legislature. Dismissal and dissolution powers vary within that family. These families do not measure democracy, federalism, party count or electoral proportionality.

Constitutional source check: 2026-10-29. Incidents are hypothetical. The following key validates the stated applications; it does not predict political behavior or demonstrate student learning. The notebook and Sources file link the operative texts.

Parliamentary variations

United Kingdom | Largest party is not an automatic entitlement to govern

Move 1: The largest party cannot find a partner

Invite the leader who can command confidence to form a government. Coral's leader can command confidence with Green's support. The largest single party has no automatic claim when it cannot sustain a government.

Move 2: Support without joining the Cabinet

A minority cabinet can remain in office with outside confidence support even though this bill failed. Confidence support and support for each policy are different. Partners do not have to enter the Cabinet for an outside confidence agreement to matter.

Debrief: Confidence support can come from outside Cabinet. An ordinary policy defeat need not settle the confidence question.

Primary rule sources: [UK Parliament: What is a hung Parliament?](#); [House of Commons Library: Commanding confidence \(29 June 2026\)](#)

Germany | Constructive no confidence

Move 1: Agree on who comes next

Secure at least 51 votes for a successor. Constructive no confidence joins removal to election of a replacement. A majority of all 100 members means at least 51 votes for that successor.

Move 2: A different route: Article 68

The Federal President may dissolve within 21 days on the Chancellor's proposal; dissolution is not automatic. Article 68 creates a conditional dissolution route after a failed confidence request. The power lapses if the Bundestag elects another Chancellor by a majority of all members before dissolution. Its 21-day period is different from Article 67's constructive replacement.

Debrief: Do not import Article 67's successor requirement into Article 68. The latter is conditional dissolution, not automatic dismissal.

Primary rule sources: [Germany: Basic Law, Articles 63, 67, 68](#)

South Africa | A President in a parliamentary relationship

Move 1: Read the motion, not the title

The President, the Cabinet and the deputy ministers. Section 102(2) requires their resignation. The title President does not create an independent fixed-term survival rule.

Move 2: Change the target of the motion

The President must reconstitute the Cabinet; this motion does not itself require the President's resignation. A Cabinet motion under section 102(1) requires Cabinet reconstitution. Section 102(2), targeting the President, has a different resignation consequence.

Debrief: The title President is compatible with parliamentary origin and survival. Apply the precise section 102 target.

Primary rule sources: [South Africa: Constitution, Chapter 5, sections 83, 86, 87, 89, 102](#)

Presidential variations

United States | Separate survival despite divided government

Move 1: A hostile House

The President stays in office; the bill has been blocked. Policy defeat affects legislation, not the President's separate term. The executive may need to bargain for a different bill.

Move 2: Accusation is not yet conviction

The President remains in office; House impeachment alone does not remove the President. Impeachment is an accusation. Removal under this route requires Senate conviction, with two-thirds of senators present concurring.

Debrief: House impeachment is not Senate conviction. Exceptional removal is distinct from ordinary political confidence.

Primary rule sources: [US National Archives: Legal provisions relevant to the Electoral College process](#); [Congressional Research Service: Impeachment and the Constitution](#); [US National Archives: Constitution, Articles I and II](#)

Brazil | Coalition building can happen under presidentialism

Move 1: Your coalition partner walks

Keep the presidency and negotiate a new legislative majority. The executive's separate mandate survives the coalition rupture. Passing legislation may still require a new agreement.

Move 2: A ministerial change, a legislative cost

Ministerial dismissal can be within presidential power while the President must renegotiate support to pass the bill. Article 84(I) gives the President ministerial appointment and dismissal power. That power does not provide the votes needed to enact a bill.

Debrief: A President can dismiss a minister without commanding that minister's party's legislative votes.

Primary rule sources: [Brazilian Senate: Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Articles 76, 77, 82, 84, 85, 86](#)

Chile | Ministerial coordination does not create a confidence-dependent prime minister

Move 1: A cabinet coordinator is unpopular

The President, who appoints and removes ministers. A coordinating role does not create a semi-presidential prime minister. The President retains the ordinary ministerial appointment/removal power.

Move 2: Exceptional removal reaches a minister

The minister is removed through this exceptional accountability process; that does not create routine parliamentary cabinet confidence. The Senate's guilty finding in the constitutional accusation process removes the accused. A minister can face this procedure in a presidential system without turning ordinary policy criticism into no confidence.

Debrief: Ordinary ministerial appointment authority does not exclude exceptional constitutional accusation and removal.

Primary rule sources: [Chile, National Congress Library: Current Constitution, Articles 24-26](#); [Chile, National Congress Library: Constitution, Article 32\(7\)](#); [Chamber of Deputies, Chile: Constitutional accusation analysis](#); [Chile National Congress Library: Constitution, Articles 52-53](#)

Semi-presidential variations

France | Cohabitation and separate fates of President and government

Move 1: Two mandates, one executive

An Amber President and a Coral-supported Prime Minister coexist. This is cohabitation. The President keeps the separate presidential mandate while the government needs Assembly confidence.

Move 2: When a bill and confidence are linked

The censure resolution fails and the finance bill is considered passed; this vote does not force government resignation. Forty-eight is below the all-member majority of 51. Article 49(3) links bill passage to whether censure succeeds, unlike an ordinary bill vote.

Debrief: Article 49(3) changes the bill-confidence link. Apply its valid-use premise; do not generalize it to any bill at any time.

Primary rule sources: [France, Élysée: Constitution of 4 October 1958, Articles 6, 8, 20, 49, 50](#)

Portugal | Presidential power has constitutional conditions

Move 1: The President dislikes your plan

No. The Constitution limits the presidential dismissal power. Article 195(2) ties dismissal to safeguarding normal democratic institutional operation and requires prior Council of State consultation. Mere policy disagreement is not the stated test.

Move 2: The denominator changes the result

No. Forty-eight is below the required 51 votes from all 100 members. Article 195(1)(f) uses all members in full exercise of office, not only those voting yes or no. Forty-eight is below the required 51, so this motion does not entail Government resignation.

Debrief: Threshold: Article 195(1)(f), with procedure in Article 194. Presidential dismissal is separately constrained by Article 195(2).

Primary rule sources: [Portuguese Parliament: Constitution, Articles 121, 187, 190, 194, 195](#)

Taiwan | No investiture consent does not mean no legislative responsibility

Move 1: Appointment is not immunity

The premier must tender resignation within ten days; the President stays. Appointment without investiture coexists with legislative no confidence. Dissolution may follow under specific rules, but is not automatic.

Move 2: Which event starts the clock?

No. The ten-day period runs from passage of no confidence, not from the premier's later resignation. The Additional Articles tie the presidential dissolution window to passage of the no-confidence motion. Resignation does not restart that clock.

Debrief: Use Additional Articles 2-3, not superseded main provisions. The dissolution clock begins at motion passage.

Primary rule sources: [Taiwan, Office of the President: Additional Articles of the Constitution, Articles 2-3](#); [France, Élysée: Constitution of 4 October 1958, Articles 6, 8, 20, 49, 50](#)