

The Shared Country Instructor Guide

An organic, in-class simulation of federalism for groups of four to six. Students start with a fictional country and discover the consequences of dividing authority through decisions about a river, clinic funding and teacher licensing. No prior learning or advance student preparation is required. Plan a 50-minute class, with the core sequence ending at 46:30.

What students learn

Students distinguish protected regional authority from revocable delegation, connect self-rule with participation in common government, and identify symmetry and asymmetry in formal powers. They explain how consent rules affect action, separate fiscal equalization from central control, and consider minority rights within a region. Their final response must link an actual institutional decision to a benefit and a cost.

Before class

Open the Slides PowerPoint or its PDF. The two opening questions are already inserted and unnumbered. The displayed slide numbers continue from 1 to 21. Canada and India now appear at slide 17, before Pelar. Use the timed Teaching Script at the lectern and the one-page Answer Sheet for quick checks.

Print one Country Brief page and both Response Form pages for every student. There is no second briefing page in this package. All later case information appears on the slides; Pelar also appears on response page two. Students need pens. The instructor needs a visible-to-instructor clock and a projector. Student devices, accounts and internet access are unnecessary during class.

Groups and participation

Each group contains National, Coast, Plain and Ridge, one student per government. Add a Residents' Advocate for a fifth student and a Constitution Clerk for a sixth. No one shares a role. Only the four governments cast governmental votes. All students write their own responses and speak during the structured turns. Advisers recommend and check reasoning without an extra vote or veto.

Use the same speaking order throughout: National, Coast, Plain, Ridge, Advocate, Clerk. Each 80-second speaking block gives 20 seconds per student at four, 16 at five, or 13 at six including handovers. National cues turns. Place any remaining students into groups of four to six before beginning.

Course fit

Use in introductory comparative politics, political science or American government. For an American politics class, present Aven as a fictional model of federalism and use the closing questions to connect it to the course. The game does not reproduce U.S. constitutional amendment procedures, enumerated powers or case law.

The 50 minute lesson

Times are elapsed from the start. The Teaching Script supplies exact spoken cues and shorter intervals within these blocks. Silent writing fills the gaps between spoken cues. These are planning estimates rather than results from a timed classroom trial.

Clock	Displayed slides	Student work and purpose
00:00–03:20	1–3 + elections question	Choose roles, make an opening judgment, read shared country facts and the assigned role.
03:20–07:00	4–6 + protection question	Establish protected authority and the change rule. Write and explain a role priority in A.
07:00–13:00	7	B: prefer a river rule, give reasons, bargain, take one ballot and record the actual rule.
13:00–19:00	8–9	C: apply the recorded rule to a flood decision. Record the authorized action and its cost.
19:00–25:00	10–11	D: explain the budget gap, compare funding and control, vote once and record the actual package.
25:00–28:50	12–13	E question one: recommend licensing authority and identify Mina's office and other regions' powers.
28:50–30:00	14	E question two: discuss one concrete fair-assessment action by the chosen office and why it matters.
30:00–32:00	15–16	Name federalism, self-rule, shared rule, delegation, symmetry and asymmetry.
32:00–34:00	17	Compare the mechanisms with Canada and India.
34:00–40:00	18–19	F: classify Pelar independently, mark self-rule and shared rule, compare, receive feedback and revise.
40:00–43:00	20	Debrief actual decisions: authority, consent, resources, control and minority impacts.
43:00–46:30	21	G: write a benefit and cost of an actual result with a because mechanism, then close.
46:30–50:00	21	Reserve for clarification or collection.

Pacing without losing the learning

Protect the two-minute opening read, individual writing in B through F, and the final two-minute G response. If discussion runs long, collect one table's explanation instead of several and use concise answer-sheet feedback. Keep the one-ballot limit in B and D. For a 45-minute period, save one minute in the whole-class debrief and 30 seconds in the closing. Finish at 45:00 while preserving the writing intervals.

Decision rules and river cases

A priorities

A strong answer connects a role priority to a country or role fact. Accept different defensible priorities. Regions contain varied interests; students represent a position rather than every resident.

B the constitutional convention

The current river rule is Regional. Governments choose 1 National, 2 Regional or 3 Joint. Take one simultaneous final ballot using fingers. A change takes effect only if National and at least two regions choose that same changed option. Any other result keeps Regional. Record all four choices. Abstentions, invalid signals and support split between changes do not enact a change. This is Aven's fictional convention rule, not an ordinary national legislative vote.

National gives National binding river authority. Regional leaves each region authority over its own gates, with voluntary cooperation. Joint gives binding common-plan authority to National together with at least two regions. Regional crews operate the gates under every rule. The choice changes decision-making authority, not who physically opens a gate.

C apply the actual rule

The relief channel is in Plain. Open floods 20 Plain farm plots and keeps 80 Coast homes dry. Hold keeps the plots dry and floods 80 Coast homes. Evacuation removes immediate injury risk. There is no compensation fund. Homes and plots are unlike losses; their counts do not establish a complete welfare comparison.

Recorded B rule	Authorization of Open
National	National alone chooses Open.
Regional	Plain alone chooses Open; it may agree voluntarily to help Coast.
Joint	National and at least two regions explicitly choose Open. National, Coast and Ridge may authorize it despite Plain's opposition.

Ask each government for Open or Hold after the speaking block. Apply the recorded authority rule. No authorized Open means Hold. This applies an existing rule; it is not another constitutional-change ballot. Students record the actual action and who bears the stated loss.

Checks that reveal learning

Ask: "Who could authorize this action under your actual rule?" "Whose agreement mattered?" "Could your preferred action differ from the authorized result?" An institutional explanation links the outcome to authority and consent. Do not grade students for choosing your preferred allocation of power.

Clinics licensing and assessment

D why the default is unequal

Regions have equal populations and similar basic clinic needs. The same tax rate raises 8 units in Coast, 5 in Plain and 2 in Ridge because tax bases differ. The numbers represent unequal revenue capacity, not unequal effort or random rewards. Five units is an estimated basic-budget benchmark, not a legal minimum or a promise of equal care. There are 15 units total. No new money, tax changes, borrowing, compensation or side deals enter this round. Flood losses do not alter clinic resources.

Package	Coast / Plain / Ridge	Budget and staffing authority
1 Local current	8 / 5 / 2	Regions
2 Pool	5 / 5 / 5	National
3 Equalize	5 / 5 / 5	Regions, with public reports and a binding 3-unit transfer from Coast to Ridge

Use the same one-ballot change rule as B. Otherwise Local stays. Regions deliver care in every package. Pool and Equalize both close the stated budget gap but allocate control differently. Equalize has no later donor veto: an adopted transfer is binding. A benefit can carry a cost, including loss of local revenue discretion or loss of regional control.

E authority first then fair assessment

Ridge seeks protected teacher licensing because National's exam fits Ridge-language training poorly. Mina is from Ridge's Plain-speaking minority, trained in Plain, and wants to teach in Ridge. Her professional and job-language qualifications are unknown. Every option requires fair review, written reasons and independent appeal. No option guarantees a licence or job.

Question one is a recommendation, without a vote or enactment. Same keeps National licensing everywhere. Ridge only gives Ridge licensing in Ridge, with National elsewhere. All regions gives each region licensing in its own territory. Mina applies to National under Same and to Ridge under either transfer. Under All regions, Coast and Plain also gain licensing power.

Question two assumes the recommended office receives Mina's application. Ask for one specific fair-assessment action and its purpose. Comparing Plain training with published requirements is a sound example. "Be fair" alone needs a concrete action. Regional self-rule can accommodate a regional language while still requiring protection for a minority within that region.

Federalism transfer and the final response

Concepts and comparison

Federalism combines constitutionally protected authority at national and regional levels with regional participation in common government. Self-rule concerns protected regional authority. Shared rule concerns a role in common decisions. Delegated authority can be withdrawn by ordinary law. Symmetry and asymmetry concern formal powers across regions. Unequal revenues alone do not establish asymmetry.

At slide 17, Canada illustrates constitutionally assigned provincial education authority, with constitutional qualifications and specified minority-language education rights. India's Article 371A(1) (a) gives Nagaland's legislature a resolution role before parliamentary laws on specified Naga practices, customary law, related justice and land/resources apply there. It is not a veto over all Union law. These examples illustrate mechanisms; they are not exact versions of Aven.

F independent transfer

Students use the Pelar passage on response page two. Current clinic powers are delegated because Parliament can remove them by ordinary law. The reform is asymmetric because only North Island receives protected fishing-license authority. Protected island health authority illustrates self-rule. Guaranteed island delegates in a common lawmaking council illustrate shared rule. North's protected fishing power is another defensible self-rule example.

Allow three minutes of individual work before comparison. Have students underline a self-rule clause and box a shared-rule clause in the reform passage. After feedback, they revise their existing answers. Revisit the opening judgment: elected regional councils alone do not establish federalism when all regional authority remains withdrawable by ordinary national law.

G evidence of learning

Students name an actual B or C river result or D clinic package and explain a plausible benefit and cost. At least one because should identify who held authority, whose consent mattered, or who controlled budgets and staffing. E is a proposal, so it cannot be reported as an enacted outcome. Defaults are valid results. Look for causal reasoning rather than a preferred amount of centralization.

Sources for the real cases

Canada: Constitution Act, 1867, section 93 and provincial qualifications; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 23. Official consolidated text:
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/FullText.html>

India: Constitution of India, Article 371A(1)(a). Official Legislative Department text:
<https://www.legislative.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/07/359f70a69695affb9d72f8393102bd2e.pdf>

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