Labor Day Lesson Plan: Unions Today
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/negotiation-labormanagement-simulation

Subject
Economics, government, civics

Estimated Time
Two 45 minute classes or one 90 minute block

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Warm up Activity
Unions in your everyday life

1. Ask students what they know about unions and write answers on boards

Provide students with this definition: an organized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and interests; a labor union.

2. Watch the short video clips that give a brief background on unions and the holiday Labor Day:

   - “A Brief History of Unions” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubIWyT7nGdU
3. Pass out the student handout “Unions Play a Surprising Role in Your Everyday Life” to students and read and watch the video together which provides examples of how the union plays a role in some everyday topics.

Main Activity

“Negotiation”: A Labor/Management Simulation

Now let students authentically experience negotiation!

Objectives:

- to expose students to the dynamics of a labor/management dispute involving a given set of issues
- to instill real world awareness that resolution of conflict often depends on the art of compromise and the acceptance of the need for it
- to observe the difference between mediation and arbitration
- to improve skills in the following area:
  1. analysis of information
  2. creative problem-solving
  3. decision-making
  4. logical thinking
  5. communication skills and public speaking
  6. listening skills
  7. teamwork and leadership skills

Basic Flow of Simulation

1. “Negotiations” scenario (see materials for scenario and demands) will be given to all students at least two days ahead of the start date as well as applications (see materials for applications) to be a Negotiator or Team Leader.

2. Each class will be divided into two equal-sized “teams,” the labor team and the management team.

3. Each team will have its own Team Leader and several teams of Negotiators.

4. The teacher will serve as Mediator/Arbitrator.

5. Each team will be given a list of 12 “demands” that its side will be trying to achieve and each team will be asked to choose its top 6 priorities and work hard to achieve them in any agreed upon contract. (see materials for scenario and demands)

6. There will be several rounds of negotiations. Between rounds, teams will huddle, revise and prepare for the next round.
7. If needed, there will be a final round of negotiation- with an “all-star” team of negotiators appointed by the team leader w/ advice of his/her team.

8. If both teams agree, any unresolved issues will be resolved by an arbitrator (teacher) who will announce the final decisions on the day of class.

9. The end point/goal of “Negotiation” is to achieve a “contract” between labor and management that includes each side’s top priority without each side feeling like it lost. The goal, in short is a “win-win” finish, not a “win-lose” finish.

10. Following final negotiations, the debriefing process will occur. First each student will analyze the process in writing; this will be followed by a class discussion.

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**Proposed Time Sequence**

**Day One:** Brief Introductory Remarks (Teacher)

15 minutes: Opening team meetings

Goals:

1. Achieve a consensus on 6 priority demands
2. Discuss possible responses to opposition demands
3. Team Leader- prepare opening statement
4. Negotiators prepare for round one

5 minutes: Both Team leaders make opening presentations (2 minutes each)

10 minutes: Round 1 negotiations, 5 minutes each side to focus on its two highest priorities; Mediator summarizes (Teacher)

10 minutes: Team Meeting to plan for Round 2

**Day Two:** Brief Introductory Remarks (Teacher)

10 minutes: Round 2- same rules as Round 1; second set of Negotiators; reverse sequence of teams

5 minutes: Team Meeting to plan for Round 3

10 minutes: Round 3- same rules as Round 1 & 2; third set of Negotiators; reverse sequence of teams

5 minutes: Team Meeting to plan Final Round; All-Star Negotiators selected by Team Leaders with the help/advice from teams

10 minutes: Final Round- same rules as rounds 1, 2, 3; All-Star Negotiators; reverse sequence of teams

**Closure:** Offer of arbitration; debrief sheet