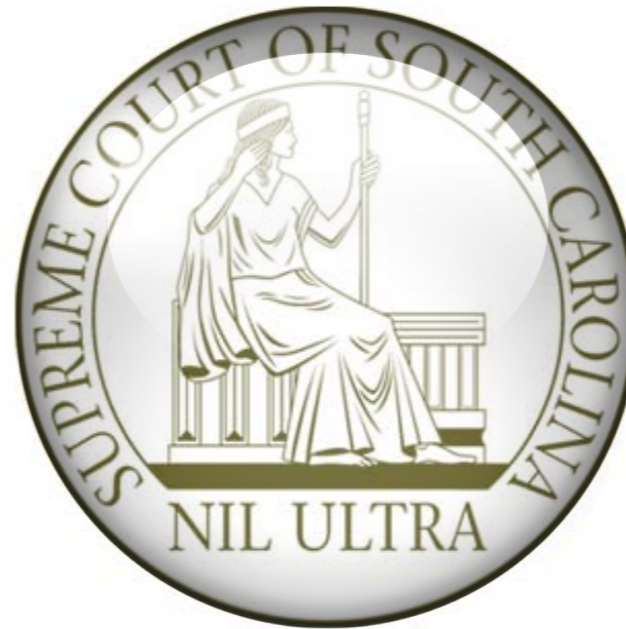

SOUTH CAROLINA



JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

iCivics:

**How Can the Legal Profession and
Alabama Schools Get Involved?**

Chief Justice Jean Hofer Toal

September 7, 2010

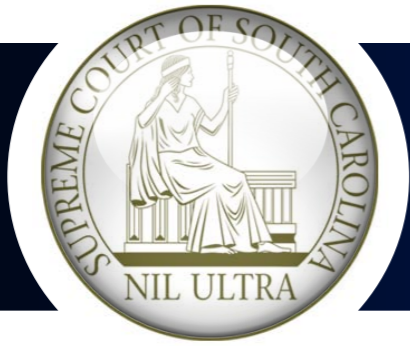


Our Courts – Origin

- **Our Courts (now iCivics) is a web-based education project designed to reinvigorate civics teaching and learning**
- **Spearheaded by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor**
- **Idea formed at a 2006 Conference on the State of the Judiciary hosted by Justices O'Connor and Breyer at Georgetown Law School**
- **Conference participants were concerned with the increase in attacks on the judiciary and identified the need for broader civics education**

our courts





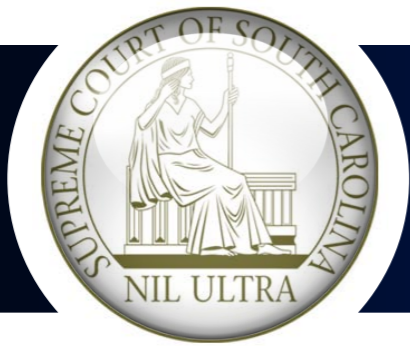
Our Courts – The Need

15% of Americans can name the Chief Justice of the United States

22% of 8th graders are proficient in civics

36% of Americans can name the three branches of government

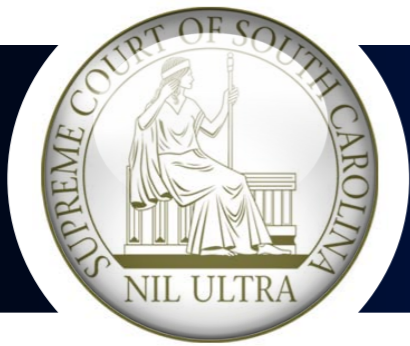
66% of Americans can name a judge on American Idol



One Solution – Our Courts

- **In 2007, Justice O'Connor hosted a conference with teachers from around the country to determine what they need to better educate young people about civics**
- **Teachers recommended:**
 - **Begin in middle school**
 - **Provide off-the-shelf solutions**
 - **Update curriculum for the 21st Century student**





One Solution – Our Courts

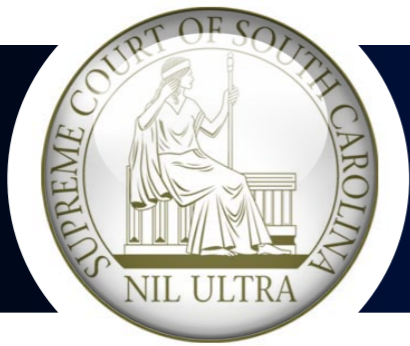
44

average number of hours students spend in front of a screen each week

97%

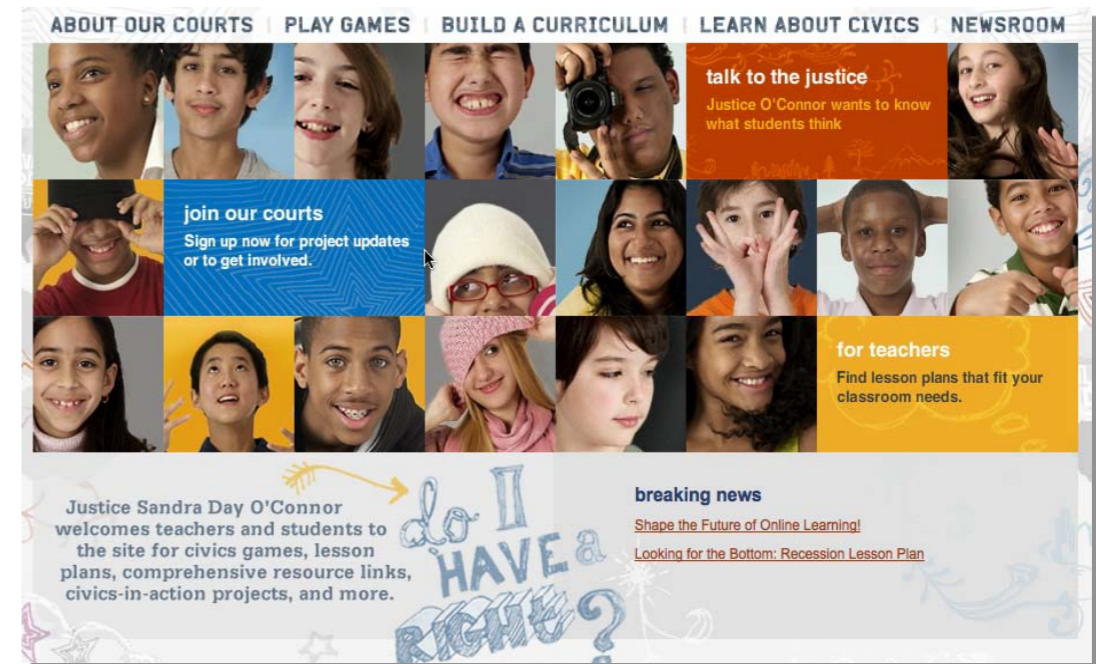
of American teenagers play video games

- **Digital Media: Reach kids with the media they are already using**
- **Internet facilitates new methods of civic engagement**
- **Games, like civics, are about navigating a system to get things done**
- **Games are goal-oriented, provide immediate feedback, and inspire inquiry**
- **Games require little preparation from teachers**



Our Courts

- In February 2009, www.ourcourts.org was launched
- More than 325,000 unique visitors to date
- Features include:
 - Online games
 - “Talk to the Justice” message board with Justice O’Connor
 - Civics in Action project board
 - Educational videos
 - Premier lesson plans





Lesson Plans

➤ Ready-to-use, standards-based lesson plans:

- Designed for the real classroom
- Engaging for students

➤ Topics Include:

- Purpose and Powers of Government
- Declaration of Independence
- Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Rule of Law
- Role of the Courts
- Supreme Court and Judicial Review
- Three Branches of Government
- Federalism

WANTED—A "JUST RIGHT" GOVERNMENT Name: _____

our courts

When the colonists declared independence from Britain, they had a pretty good idea of what they wanted in a new government. In fact, they said it loud and clear right in their Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these _____ to be self-evident, that all men are created _____, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable _____, that among these are _____, and the pursuit of _____."

Sounds great! Where do I sign up?

The Declaration goes on to say that:

- The purpose of government is to "_____ these _____"
- Government gets its _____ from the "_____ of the _____"
- People have a right to create a _____ government if the old one isn't meeting these goals.

All right, then! We're ready to create a new government! But wait—maybe it's not so easy.

The First Attempt: These Articles Ain't Workin'!

The Americans wrote their first plan for _____ in a document called the _____ of Confederation. The year was _____.

- ⇒ Each state was _____ and had its own _____
- ⇒ Each state sent _____ to the "Congress of the Confederation"
- ⇒ The Congress was the only _____ government. There was no _____.
- ⇒ In Congress, each state got _____ vote.

Hey, This is Great!

- States get to keep their _____ and _____
- No _____ telling the states what _____ to _____
- Congress had the power to create a _____ to protect all the _____

But Wait...

- Congress has no way to _____ its _____
- That meant states could _____ laws _____
- Congress did not have the power to collect _____ to pay for the military _____
- The Articles could only be _____ if _____ states agreed _____

our courts

Name _____ Teacher's Key _____

Date _____

THREE BRANCHES WORD SEARCH SCRAMBLE: KEY

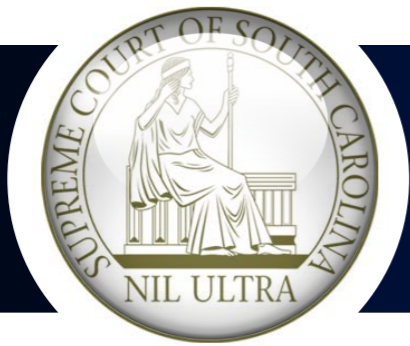
Executive

Legislative

Judicial

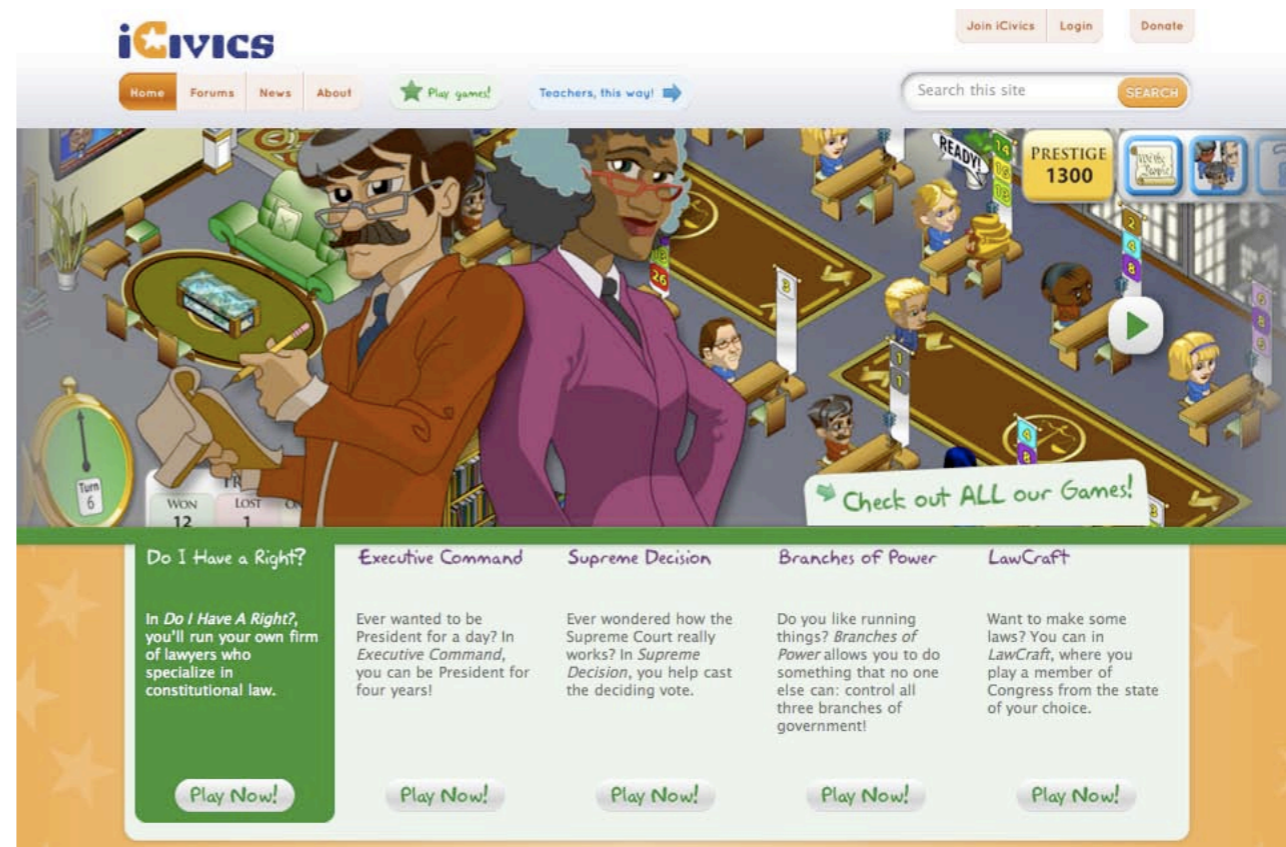
Directions: Find and circle each word in one of the three puzzles above. Next to each word, write E if you found it in the Executive Branch puzzle, L if you found it in the Legislative Branch, and J if it was in the Judicial Branch.

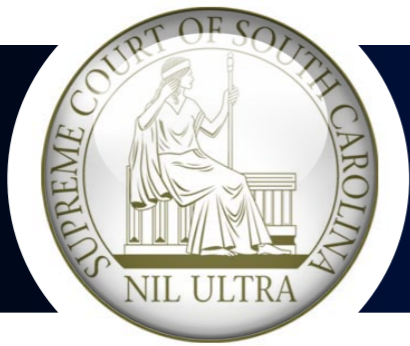
__E__agenda	__L__congress	__J__jury	__J__trial
__J__appeal	__L__court decision	__J__justice	__L__two thirds
__E__appoint	__L__create laws	__L__override	__J__verdict
__L__bill	__E__decision	__E__pardon	__E__veto
__E__cabinet	__E__departments	__E__president	__E__vice president
__E__carry out laws	__J__evidence	__L__representative	__L__vote
__J__case	__E__four year term	__L__senator	
__L__committee	__J__judge	__L__statute	



iCivics

- In May 2010, the website was expanded and renamed [iCivics](http://www.ICivics.org) to meet the growing demand from educators who wanted the website to cover a greater range of civics topics
- iCivics now addresses all three branches of government





Classroom Games

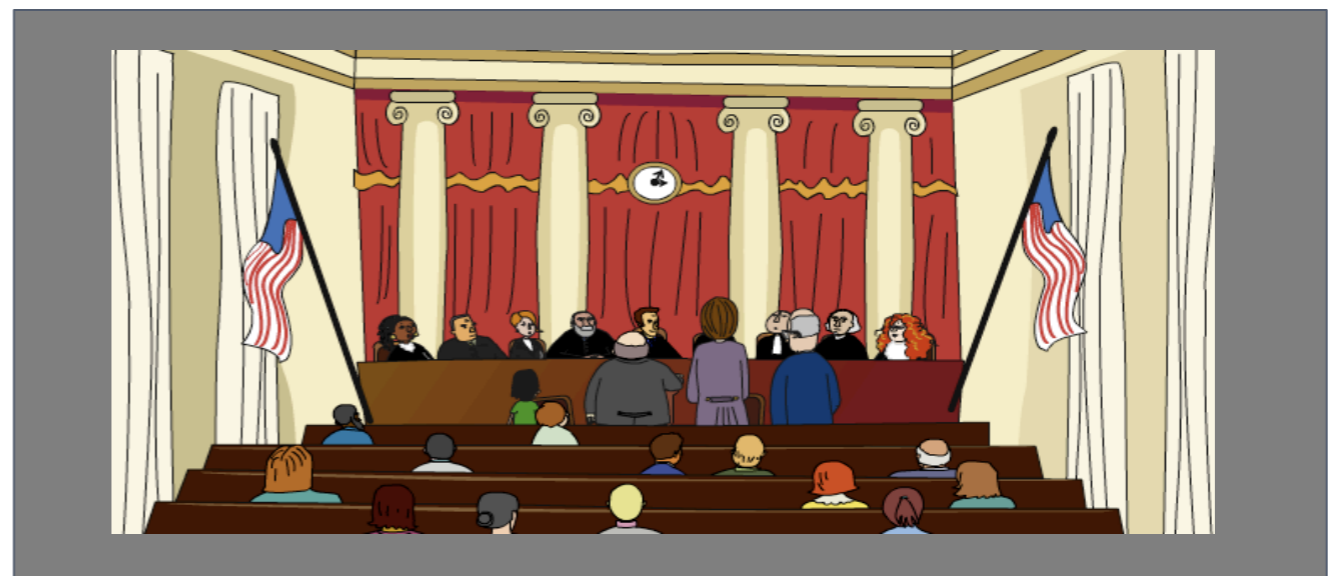
- Games are powerful learning tools that can promote civic engagement across age, economics and other differences
- **60%** of visitors to the iCivics website go directly to the games
- The first set of games focused on the courts and constitutional rights:

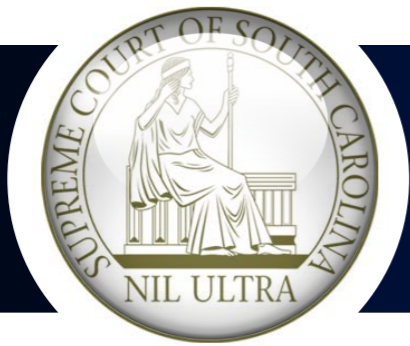




Game – “Supreme Decision”

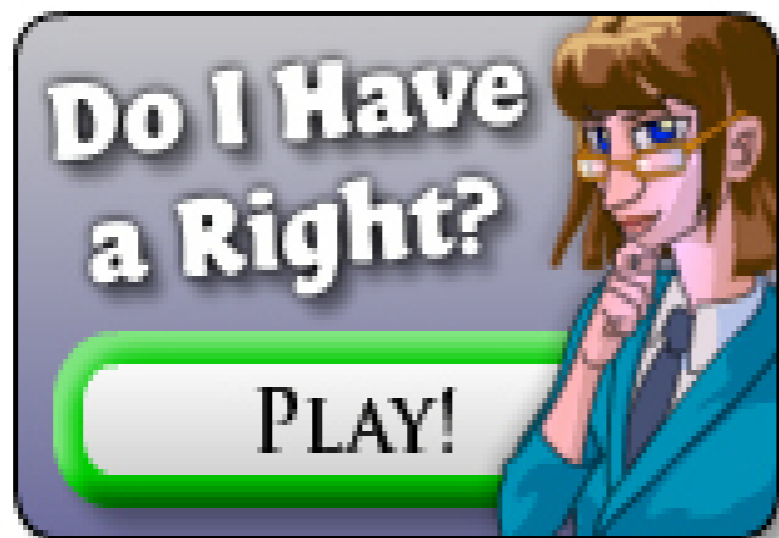
- **Students are introduced to judicial reasoning by allowing them to help make decisions in the Supreme Court**
- **Each student plays a law clerk to a Supreme Court Justice and helps to decide a fictional case about a student’s rights in school**
- **The fictional case can be decided either way, but the student must understand the legal issues to help the Court make a decision**

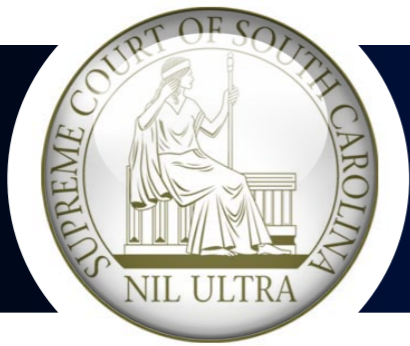




Game – “Do I Have a Right”

- The student runs a constitutional law firm and explores the Bill of Rights to provide legal advice to a client
- The student must match a client to a specialist lawyer who handles particular constitutional rights
- This fast-paced game requires student to learn the amendments in order to score points

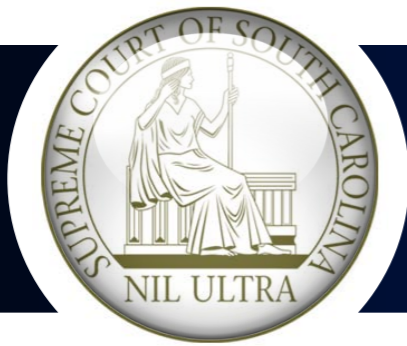




Game – “Argument Wars”

- Allows the student to argue a landmark Supreme Court case by advancing arguments and sound support
- The student must critically evaluate support for key arguments
- Current cases include:
 - Brown v. Board of Education
 - New Jersey v. T.L.O.
 - Gideon v. Wainwright
 - Texas v. Johnson
 - Miranda v. Arizona





New Classroom Games

- **iCivics introduced three new games where students can now:**
 - **Play legislators trying to pass laws in response to citizen concerns**
 - **Learn about the President's daily challenges by proposing an agenda to Congress, signing bills into law, commanding the military during war, etc.**
 - **Or play all three branches of government at once!**

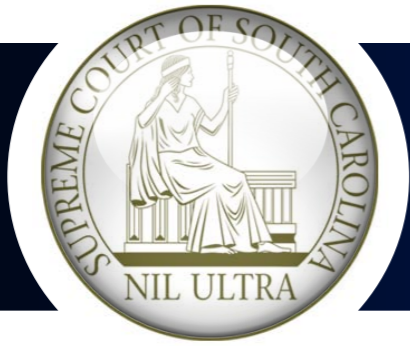




Proven Results

- **iCivics' games and lessons have been proven effective by multiple independent evaluations**
- **An evaluation of “Supreme Decision” and “Do I Have a Right” with more than 500 students from 13 states found:**
 - **Students improved by 14% between pre- and post-test after playing the games**
 - **57% of students who played “Do I Have a Right” in school played that game at home in their free time**
 - **84% of students said the games were interesting and fun**
 - **All of the teachers said they would use the games and lesson plans again, and would recommend iCivics to other teachers**

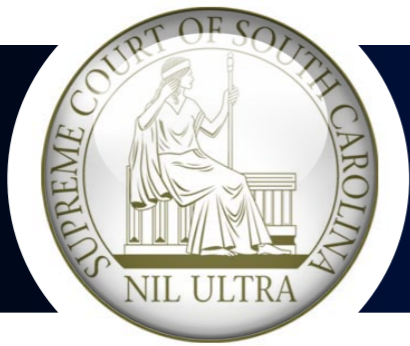




Proven Results

- In April 2010, an independent evaluation of “**Branches of Power**” revealed:
 - Students improved by 46% between pre- and post- tests after playing the game and using the corresponding lesson plans
 - 78% of students felt they had a better understanding of how government works after playing

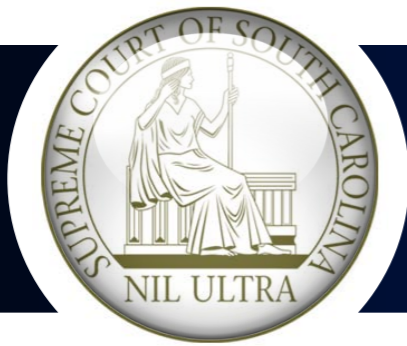




South Carolina's Pilot Program

- **Dr. Jane Brailsford created a two-week curriculum pilot program for 8th graders at Gilbert Middle School to test the iCivics games:**
 - **Nearly 200 middle school students participated**
 - **4 groups of students met for an hour each day to play the web-based games, hear speakers, and participate in collaborative learning**
 - **Students received Chic-Fil-A coupons for participating**
- **The Young Lawyers Division of the SC Bar is a pilot partner and will provide students with a shadowing opportunity in the fall along with tours of the local courthouses**





Pilot Program Success

- **Teachers said they have never seen middle school students so actively engaged for such an extended period of time**
- **Gilbert Middle School will offer iCivics as an exploratory class next year and will repeat the 2 week pilot program**
- **Dr. Brailsford applied for funding to replicate the pilot program in another 3-4 school districts**
- **As a result of the successful pilot, the South Carolina Department of Education has accepted iCivics as a supplemental social studies curriculum**

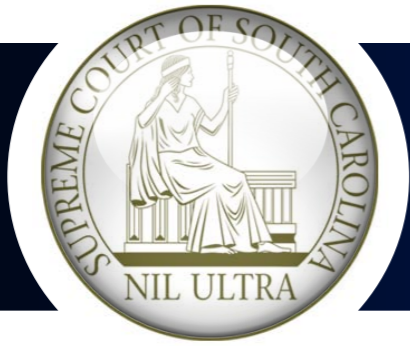




iCivics Pilot in Your State

- **iCivics is a free, accessible resource for both teachers and students**
- **Teachers have access to ready-to-use, standards-based lesson plans:**
 - **Designed for the real classroom**
 - **Engaging for students**
 - **Teachers simply print materials, follow instructions, and teach**
 - **All resources aligned to state standards**
- **Teachers can also use iCivics to setup classes, discussion forums, and assign and track content for student completion**

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Student</u>
Set up unique classes	Complete and track assignments
Create and track assignments	Join class forums
View specific state standards	Track game progress (coming soon)



Get Involved

- Volunteer to be the iCivics' spokesperson in your state
- Encourage teachers in your state to become an iCivics' pilot classroom to test and evaluate the latest games and lessons
- Sign up for an iCivics.org account
- Join the mailing list
- Contact iCivics at **(202) 661-6527** or **jeff.curley@icivics.org**

