

Grade Levels: 9th-12th (Designed for AP Human Geography, AP U.S. History, and AP Government)

Time Frame: 2-3 Weeks (Adaptable)

Redrawing Democracy is an interdisciplinary, standards-aligned PBL unit that enables students to investigate political representation, redistricting, and gerrymandering through the lens of Georgia's districts. Using real demographic data, GIS tools, and Supreme Court cases, students explore the past and present of electoral boundaries and design fairer alternatives. The unit concludes with students presenting their redesigned maps to a real-world audience, such as local policymakers, school boards, or organizations like Fair Districts Georgia. This project enables students to become the change-makers educators hope they will be in their communities, while preparing them for the analytical rigor of AP exams.

Customization Options

- **Course Flexibility:** Designed for AP Human Geography, AP U.S. History, and AP Government. Can be tailored to general-level civics or history classes.
- **Location-Specific:** Focused on Georgia maps and voting districts, but editable to apply in any state or district.
- **Tech-Friendly or Print-Based:** It fully supports digital implementation (Dave's Redistricting Tool, ArcGIS, Canva) but is adaptable for non-digital or low-tech classrooms.
- **Product Variation:** Students may submit a policy pitch, infographic, public service announcement, or digital map presentation.
- **Time Modifiable:** Core activities can be completed within 10 class periods, but extensions may expand into a 3-4 week civic action unit.

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Understand the historical and legal foundations of representation and redistricting in the U.S.
- Analyze real demographic and voting data to evaluate district maps.
- Apply mathematical reasoning to test for fairness in representation.
- Use spatial analysis tools (GIS) to design more equitable voting districts.
- Communicate civic arguments through visual, written, and oral formats.

Timeline Overview

Week 1: Understanding Representation & Redistricting

- Historical context: The Constitution, Federalism, Voting Rights Act
- AP Skill Focus: SCOTUS case analysis (Baker v. Carr, Shaw v. Reno)
- Georgia context: Review of Georgia's district history and current controversies

Week 2: Data Analysis & Map Redesign

- Demographic data: Population density, race, income (using Census.gov and Georgia Open Data Portal)
- Mapping tools: Dave's Redistricting Tool, ArcGIS Online
- Math applications: Polsby-Popper score, efficiency gap

Week 3: Public Presentation & Policy Pitch

- Students present redesigned districts and written justifications
- Optional: Presentations to Fair Districts GA, local community members, or class panels

Final Products

- Redrawn district map (digital or paper)
- Written justification or policy proposal
- Visual or multimedia presentation
- Student reflection on democratic values and civic responsibility

Assessment Tools

- Rubrics for data analysis, design logic, communication, and civic impact
- Self and peer reflections
- Teacher checkpoints for formative feedback

Technology & Tools

- Dave's Redistricting Tool
- ArcGIS StoryMaps
- Census.gov and Georgia Open Data
- Canva or Google Slides for visual communication

Georgia/College Board Standards Alignment

AP Human Geography (College Board):

- Unit 4: Political Patterns and Processes
- Topics: Political boundaries, redistricting, gerrymandering
- Skills: Spatial analysis, data interpretation, argumentation

AP U.S. History (College Board):

- Periods 3-9: Representation, Civil Rights, Federalism
- Skills: Historical reasoning, sourcing, continuity, and change

AP U.S. Government (College Board):

- Unit 1 & 2: Democracy & Federalism
- Unit 5: Political Participation
- Skills: SCOTUS case analysis, foundational document application, argument writing

Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE): SSCG2: Analyze the importance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights **SSCG3:** Explain the concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances **SSCG6:** Analyze the legislative branch and congressional leadership, including the redistricting process **SSCG7:** Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of political parties, interest groups, and mass media **Map & Graph Interpretation:** Included in both U.S. History and Government GSE standards

Ideal For:

- AP teachers looking to make content more meaningful and interdisciplinary
- Schools and districts looking to align civic learning with math and tech skills
- Educators wanting to connect national themes to local relevance
- Those preparing students for both the AP Exam and lifelong civic engagement