



## STATE OF NATURE

Begin with a review of what life would be like in a state of nature. Highlight John Locke. What if you lived in a country without a constitution and no written laws or rules to follow. This activity will give students the opportunity to develop their own form of government and how it will operate as well as the rights they will have in this new country.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

As a result of completing the activities in this unit, students will demonstrate the following skills and understandings:

1. Describe an imaginary situation where a state of nature exists.
2. Define the types of government.
3. Understand the need for government and rules.
4. Develop the structure and functions of a government.

### **GRADE LEVEL:**

MS and HS  
Sunshine State Standards:  
Grades 6-8:  
SS.C 1.3 (2)  
SS.C 1.2 (3)  
SS.C 1.3 (5)  
SS.C 2.3 (2)

Grades 9-12:  
SS.C 1.4 (2)  
SS.C 1.4 (3)  
SS.C 2.4 (2)

### **TIME ESTIMATE:**

Two-three class periods of 50 minutes each.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Chart Paper.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Begin with a discussion of the different kinds of governments that exist around the world. Define and characterize these forms of government so students can understand. Locate countries with each type of government (15-30 minutes). This can be done in advance by teacher if the resource person cannot devote two class periods.

This link will provide a short synopsis of the types of governments.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid\\_2150000/newsid\\_2151600/2151601.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_2150000/newsid_2151600/2151601.stm)

2. For homework or in class, have students complete the U.S. Constitution or Florida Constitution Scavenger Hunt (30 minutes). Debrief.



3. Define a state of nature, a situation where no government exists.
4. Imagine that due to a natural disaster, only 300 people survived and were isolated on a small, remote island. The island had enough natural resources for you to live on, but no one had lived there before. When you arrived you had no means of communicating with people in other parts of the world.
5. Ask students who would be in charge. What might happen if no rules were developed? Assign students to groups of five to answer the following questions. Provide chart paper to record their answers and develop their plans (30-45 minutes).
  - a. How will the group organize itself?
  - b. Who will be the leader(s) and how will you select that person or persons?
  - c. Who will make the rules? Who will enforce the rules? Who will interpret the rules?
  - d. How will you keep the people safe?
  - e. Will the people have any rights? Write down the rights you think the people should have.
  - f. Draw a visual representation of your government and describe its structure and function. How would it be similar or different to the government you currently have in the United States?
  - g. Have each group report on its government. How will you get the community to agree to or accept your ideas? Post the charts around the room and debrief (20 minutes).
  - h. Compare with U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, Florida Constitution, and constitutions from other countries (20-25 minutes).