

Lesson 15 — The Civic Virtue Climb

Civics · teens–adult (citizenship-class ready) · 30 minutes · one screen, the free game, this page

At a Glance

- Game: The Civic Virtue Climb (free, no login, plays in the browser) — read.globalsovereignuniversity.org/civic-virtue-climb.html. Also on the Homeschool hub: globalsovereignuniversity.org/homeschool.
- Ages & time: Civics · teens–adult (citizenship-class ready) · 30 minutes · one screen, the free game, this page
- Prep (2 min): read the Teaching Creed once, open the game, keep this page beside you. That's the whole setup.

Why this lesson

The machine belongs to whoever understands it — and most citizens were never shown the engine room. This lesson studies the machine, not the drivers: three branches, checks, rights, and the smallest real civic acts. The game supplies the civics; you hold the one rule that makes mixed rooms possible — when partisan heat flares, we're studying the machine today, not the drivers. Naturalization-prep learners get citizenship-test conditioning for free.

What the learner will be able to do

- Explain why three branches instead of one efficient one — and what the designers feared.
- Name a right they'd defend for someone they completely disagree with.
- Identify the smallest real civic act available to them this month.
- Locate one local decision being made right now and read what's actually being decided.

The 30-Minute Climb

How to read this: the gold box in each step is your lesson, word for word — run it exactly. The notes beneath are optional support. "The room/the group" = your family; "host" = you.

1 · The Hook (3 min)

“If government vanished at midnight, what's the first thing you'd miss by morning — and the first thing you wouldn't?”

Say it like this: the midnight question works because it's concrete — roads, water, courts by morning; some forms and some lines, not so much. Both lists teach.

Watch for / if it stalls: if the room turns partisan at the hook, deploy the rule early and cheerfully: machine, not drivers. It will need saying once; say it well.

2 · Play Together (12 min)

Climb ten questions; the system, not a side — if partisan opinions flare, the host's one rule: “we're studying the machine today, not the drivers.” Play together: the group votes before anyone clicks, and every explanation is read aloud — the explanation is the lesson.

Two rituals make it work: (1) everyone votes before anyone clicks, so no one just follows the screen; (2) the explanation is read aloud — the reason, not the right answer, is where the learning is.

Watch for / if it stalls: guard the rule all session — the moment opinions about CURRENT drivers flare, point back at the machine. The room that studies the engine can argue about drivers some other night.

3 • The Talk (8 min)

1. Why three branches instead of one efficient one — what were the designers afraid of? 2. Which right would you defend for someone you completely disagree with? 3. What's the smallest real civic act you could perform this month — not voting, smaller?

You're not fishing for a right answer — you're listening for depth:

- Q1 — the designers feared concentrated power more than they prized efficiency; inefficiency was the price tag on liberty, paid on purpose. Make someone say the trade aloud.
- Q2 — the defend-for-an-opponent question is the virtue in civic virtue. A right defended only for friends is a privilege, not a right.
- Q3 — smaller than voting: attending one meeting, reading one agenda, one public comment. The homework turns this answer into an act.

4 • Solo Climb (5 min)

Five questions. (Naturalization-prep learners: this climb doubles as citizenship-test conditioning.)

Why solo: five solo questions — and for naturalization-prep learners, this is the citizenship test in training clothes; solo conditions match the real exam.

5 • The Takeaway (2 min)

“The machine belongs to whoever understands it.” • Homework: Look up one local decision being made this month — council, school board, county — and read what's actually being decided.

The badge moment: finishing all five steps earns the Bronze ring of this lesson's badge, *The Citizen*. Mark it on the Passport now; the homework is how Silver and Gold are earned during the week.

The Teaching Creed

You are not the expert; the game is. Your job is to vote last, read aloud well, and ask "why?" one more time than feels natural. Celebrate wrong answers loudly — in here, wrong is where the lesson lives.

GENO — the GSU tutor you can actually TALK to, free, 24/7, understands 70+ languages (32 fully optimized) — can explain any answer a second way.

Adapt It & Measure It

Differentiation

- Younger / preteen: the household is the government — who makes rules, who enforces, who judges disputes? Three branches at kitchen scale.

- One child: parent and teen pull up the actual local council agenda together and find one item that touches your own street.
- Large co-op: mock checks-and-balances — three teams (legislative, executive, judicial) walk one made-up law through the machine.
- Reluctant teen: open with the midnight question's second half — what they WOULDN'T miss is an opinion, and opinions are doorways.

Evidence of learning (no exam)

Look for three things — Tried (looked up one live local decision and read what's being decided), Noticed (can explain three-branches-on-purpose in one sentence), Changed (named a right they'd defend for an opponent). Those three words are the whole rubric, and they map onto the badge tiers below.

Gamify It — The Campus Climb

Every GSU lesson is one badge on a 17-badge Climber's Passport, each earned at four depths — the GSU standard Bronze → Silver → Gold → Platinum. All 17 completes the campus.

LESSON 15 BADGE — The Citizen · Bronze — The Climb: finished the 30-minute lesson, all five steps. · Silver — The Try: looked up one local decision being made this month and reported what's actually at stake. · Gold — The Proof: performed one real civic act — attended or watched a meeting, submitted a comment, wrote a representative. · Platinum — The Teacher: ran this lesson as host for someone else. The harvest of a teacher is teachers.

"Every person on Earth is born with an American spirit: an untamed yearning for a better tomorrow." — Dr. Gene A. Constant

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