European Union Governance

**Grades:** 6 through 12

**Time:** Step 1 [Precursors A & B] 1 hour each; Steps 2 & 3—1 to 1 ½ hours each.

**Objectives:**
1. Students will understand the structure and function of the primary governing institutions of the European Union; and,
2. Students will understand how legislation is initiated and passed by the European Union.

**Materials Needed:**
   
   Other websites that are appropriate for this task:
   - [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/internat/eu/lowdown/eu_info_1.shm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/internat/eu/lowdown/eu_info_1.shm)
   - [www.unc.edu/depts/europe/confernces/eu/Pages/eu3.htm](http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/confernces/eu/Pages/eu3.htm)
   - [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/04/eu_institutions/html](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/europe/04/eu_institutions/html)
2. Overhead or LCD projection screen for slides
3. Attached worksheets

**Procedures:**

**Step 1: Precursors to Lesson**

It is presumed instructor has provided and dissected via class discussion a working definition of the European Union. One that I prefer is:

The European Union is an alliance of member European countries that have joined together to work on common economic, political and social goals, while retaining their sovereignty as independent countries in all other ways.
Precursor A. It is also recommended students be familiarized with the steps taken to form the European Union, to wit, the multiple treaties that laid the foundation for the Maastricht Treaty. Pages 2 and 3 of *The European Union: A Guide for Americans* details this process and lends itself to timeline or comprehension based questions. This process can be compared to the founding documents of the USA wherein there were basic agreements that we supplemented as events changed that eventually led to the Constitution. The resources detailed above may also be used for these purposes and can serve as one differentiation tool based on reading level proficiency.

Precursor B. Students should be familiar with the member countries. This is easily taught by using blank Europe political maps which students may label to identify member countries. The website *The European Union: A Guide for Americans*—class set of hardcopies or computers with internet access to locate on-line at: http://www.eurunion.org/infore/euguide/euguide2007.pdf

Blank outline maps are available at www.enchantedlearning.com

**Step 2: Lesson Procedures—Part A**

1. Students will use websites or hardcopies of publications to research aspects of: European Parliament; Council of the European Union; European Commission; Court of Justice; and Court of Auditors.
2. Armed with these tools the students will complete attached worksheet A.
3. Teacher reviews assignment and discusses when completed.

**Step 3: Lesson Procedures—Part B**

2. Discuss the fact the EU has legislative processes, too. Both involve compromise and negotiation of several governmental bodies, with many similarities and a few differences. Students will complete diagram decision-making process within the EU. Students are given shell diagram to complete during class. Depending on class ability these can be completed via: notes and discussion; providing inserts and research resources to allow student to complete; or by providing inserts for students to glue in place as discussion occurs.
3. Students complete a Venn Diagram comparing US and EU process using this class work and prior portfolio notes.
Assessments:

- Informally all work is review in class together during discussion with students providing feedback/answers.
- All work for unit is incorporated into a complete unit graded via a rubric with specific weights given to each assignment for completion and accuracy.
- Both lessons will be formally assessed as part of a EU unit test
- US vs. EU Legislative Process Venn Diagram will be graded on accuracy—it is modified by setting number of elements to be included in diagram and/or partially filling in diagram elements.

**NCSCOS**: 6th grade Social Studies Goal 9—Objectives 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, and 9.04; Goal 10; Objectives 10.01, 10.02, 10.03 and 10.04.

Kimberly Ball
Social Studies Teacher
Heritage Middle School
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Governing Institutions of the European Union: Structures and Functions

Directions: Students will conduct research using the materials provided to learn about five main institutions of the EU. Using the information learned: cut out the fact tabs and match each to its category on the worksheet. Once checked, glue tabs in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Institution</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of the European Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Court of Auditors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Court of Justice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[Worksheet A]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Makes sure money is spent properly</th>
<th>Negotiates treaties with other countries</th>
<th>Serve 6 year renewable term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximately 785 members from every EU country</td>
<td>Implements programs and policies passed by Parliament and Council</td>
<td>Makes sure budget managed well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main decision-making group</td>
<td>Made up of 27 commissioners—president and 26 members</td>
<td>Sit in political party, not country sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assures laws are written &amp; used properly</td>
<td>Adopts new laws with Parliament</td>
<td>Adopts new laws with Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sure laws and regulations are used</td>
<td>Decides budget with EU Parliament</td>
<td>Decides budget with EU Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions of Commission and Council</td>
<td>Settles disagreements between EU and other persons and groups</td>
<td>Proposes new laws to Parliament and Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runs day-to-day duties</td>
<td>Ministers for every country meet regularly to discuss problems and solutions</td>
<td>Coordinates economic policies of member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected every 5 years by EU citizens</td>
<td>May be dismissed by Parliament</td>
<td>Decisions made by vote—bigger the country’s population the more votes they get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate police and court efforts on criminal matters</td>
<td>Selected by member country governments &amp; approved by EU Parliament</td>
<td>Develop Common Foreign and Security Policy based on guidance from Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal is to act in best interest of EU</td>
<td>Makes sure EU acting democratically</td>
<td>27 judges—one from each member country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges appointed by Council</td>
<td>Appointed for 5 years</td>
<td>Serve 6 year renewable term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European Union Legislation Flowchart Inserts

Directions: Each item fits into the flowchart. Using research or class notes place the item in the correct part of the flowchart.

Parliament considers proposed law and Council’s feedback and has 3 options…

Approves proposed Law
Proposed law dies

Rejects proposed Law
New Law Adopted by EU

European Council consults the European Economic and Social Committee AND Committee of the Regions to negotiate with member countries about proposed law.

Asks for changes or amendments to proposed law

European Commission drafts proposed new law after discussion of existing problem for EU members

Conciliation Committee formed to make changes and rewrite proposed law
The European Union: How Legislation Is Passed

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Part B