



THE RACE FOR THE STATE

(Two 50-minute classes)

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students determine which character traits are common in past and present governors of their individual states. Students identify day-to-day duties and responsibilities in which the governor participates.

MATERIALS

Computer/Internet Access	“Requirements to be Governor” informational handout
“Character Cluster for the Perfect Governor” graphic organizer	Poster Board
Markers	

GET READY

- ✓ Secure access to computers or computer lab with internet access.
- ✓ Make copies of the “Character Cluster for the Perfect Governor” and “Requirements to be Governor” sheets for each team.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Go through the “Requirements to be Governor” informational handout with your students, making sure they understand the roles of the governor and how the governor is elected in your state.
- ✓ Use the current governor of your state to demonstrate to the students how to use the “Character Cluster” sheet.

- ✓ Each student will then select a past governor of their state to research. It is recommended that each student select a different governor.
- ✓ Students will research essential characteristics of this former governor using the web sites listed.
- ✓ Referencing their websites, have each student complete the “Character Cluster” worksheet for their selected governor.
- ✓ After completing the Character Cluster graphic organizer, place students into groups of four. Comparing their organizers, each group will determine the common characteristics among the governors.
- ✓ Using those characteristics, each group will create a “Want Ad” poster, advertising for a new governor. Posters should include the following information:
 - Legal requirements (which vary by state)
 - Ideal personal characteristics
- ✓ A classroom discussion should follow to analyze results. This discussion can revolve around why certain characteristics appear essential to candidates being selected for this position.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Will the characteristics that you determined to be common be the same in fifty or one hundred years? Why or why not?*
- ★ *In your opinion, what is the most important personal characteristic for a governor to have?*
- ★ *Do other elected officials need these personal characteristics as well?*
- ★ *How do the characteristic traits of governors seem to change over time?*
- ★ *Do other elected officials need these traits as well?*



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(Continued)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ★ *National Governor's Association web site:*
<http://www.nga.org/> (scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on the beige box that says "Governors"; then you may select your state from the U.S. map)

- ★ *Look for web sites that publish the constitution for your particular state. For example, the Kansas constitution can be found at the following web site:*
<http://kslib.info/constitution/art1.html>



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Character Cluster for the Perfect Governor

Name: _____ Date: _____

Governors Being Compared

Characteristics		

Conclusions:



Requirements to be Governor

Each state in our country has its own governor that serves as the chief executive of the state. Because each state operates independently of all other states, there are no federal qualifications for the office of governor. Rather, each state sets its own requirements for who can and cannot become governor.

All governors are elected directly by the citizens of their state. Citizens are only eligible to vote for the governor of their own state, not the governor of any other state. The governor of each state must not hold any other public office while serving in this position. Additionally, all governors serve terms of four years, and must be re-elected to serve an additional term.

Because each state has its own regulations concerning the governor, many qualifications for governors vary. For example, although governors serve a term of four years, some states have restrictions on how many terms the governor can serve. For example, in Virginia, a governor can only serve one four-year term, but in Kansas the governor may serve two four-year terms. However, in New York, there are no restrictions and the governor may serve as many times and he or she is elected. In some states, including New Jersey, the governor must have been a resident of the state for at least seven-years prior to being elected. Other states require that governors live in the United States for a certain number of years, too.

The governor is the leader of the executive branch of the state, and therefore has control over the legislature, the state militia, and serves as the leader of his or her political party. The governor appoints people to be in charge of various government agencies and has control over a variety of other appointments including, in some cases, judges, lawyers, senators, and boards of commissions. The governor also serves as the ceremonial head of the state and participates in activities such as ribbon-cuttings and parades.

Many states also hold elections for the job of Lieutenant Governor. A lieutenant governor is similar to the vice-president because he or she takes over if the governor can no longer serve in that office. As the successor to the office of governor, a lieutenant governor is subject to the same regulations and qualifications of the governor.