

## **EU/US Systems Comparison w/ Station Eleven**

### **Unit Theme: Understanding the Importance of Government**

#### **Novel: Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel**

**Grade Level:** 8th Grade

**Duration:** 5 Class Periods

#### **Objective:**

I can compare and contrast the structures of the United States government and the European Union and understand the key features, functions, and roles of each government system and analyze their significance in the context of the novel "Station Eleven."

### **Day 1: Introduction to Government Systems**

#### **Introduction:**

Start the lesson by asking students what they know about government and its role in society. Discuss their responses and highlight the essential functions of a government, such as maintaining order, providing services, and protecting citizens' rights.

#### **Connect to Station Eleven:**

Refer to "Station Eleven" and its themes. Explain that the story takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where government structures have collapsed, making this an excellent opportunity to examine the importance of government in ensuring stability and security.

#### **Government Structures Overview:**

Provide a brief overview of the United States government system (branches: executive, legislative, and judicial) and the European Union (institutions: European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council).

### **Day 2: Understanding the United States Government**

#### **The Three Branches:**

Dive deeper into the three branches of the United States government (executive, legislative, and judicial). Explain the roles and responsibilities of each branch and how they check and balance each other's powers.

#### **Constitution and Bill of Rights:**

Discuss the significance of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights in protecting citizens' rights and shaping the government's structure.

**Activity: Branches Collage:**

Divide the students into three groups, assigning each group one branch of the U.S. government. Have them create a collage or poster representing the branch's functions and illustrating its importance in the overall government system.

**Day 3: Exploring the European Union****The Institutions of the EU:**

Introduce the key institutions of the European Union (European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council). Explain their roles and how they interact to make decisions and shape EU policies.

**Activity: EU Decision-Making:**

Divide the students into small groups and assign each group a specific EU institution. Have them research and present how decisions are made within their assigned institution and how these decisions affect EU member countries.

**EU vs. USA Discussion:**

Facilitate a class discussion comparing the structures of the United States government and the European Union. Encourage students to analyze the differences and similarities and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each system.

**Day 4: Analyzing Government in "Station Eleven"****Novel Discussion:**

Students will engage in discussion about the portrayal of government and governance in "Station Eleven." Explore how the collapse of traditional government structures impacted the characters' lives and the society depicted in the book.

**Government's Role in Crisis:**

Discuss the significance of government and governance during times of crisis, such as a post-apocalyptic scenario. Analyze how an effective government can provide stability, resources, and protection in challenging times.

**Day 5: Presentations and Reflection****Group Presentations:**

Allow each group to present their collages/posters from Day 2 and their research findings from Day 3. Each group should explain the structure, functions, and significance of their assigned government system.

**Reflection and Closing Discussion:**

Lead a closing discussion where students reflect on the importance of government systems, drawing connections between the lessons from the novel "Station Eleven" and their understanding of real-world governments. Encourage students to discuss the impact of government structures on society, both in times of stability and crisis.

**Assessment/Writing Integration:**

Assign students a writing activity where they individually reflect on/compare and contrast the United States government and the European Union structures effectively and apply their understanding to the novel "Station Eleven."

## **NATO Mini-Unit (For use during Q1, embedded in Cold War/Space Race)**

**Grade Level: 8th Grade (Gifted)**

### **Objective:**

I can understand the origins, purpose, and significance of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) during the Cold War era, particularly the relationship between Europe and America. Students will also explore the role of NATO in the context of the Space Race.

**Duration:** 2-3 Class Periods

### **Materials:**

Map of Europe  
Historical resources about NATO and the Cold War  
Space Race related resources

### **Procedure:**

#### **Day 1: The Origins and Purpose of NATO**

##### **Introduction:**

Ask students what they know about the Cold War and the Space Race. Discuss their responses briefly and create a thinking map on the board with their key points.

##### **Introduction to NATO:**

Present an overview of NATO and its origins. Explain that NATO was established in 1949 as a collective defense alliance between North American and European countries to counter the Soviet Union's threat during the Cold War. Highlight the founding members and the key principles of the alliance.

##### **Europe and America's Motivations:**

Divide the students into small groups and assign each group to research and present the motivations behind the formation of NATO from both European and American perspectives. Each group should discuss the fears, security concerns, and geopolitical reasons that led to the establishment of the alliance.

##### **Class Discussion:**

Have each group share their findings, and encourage the class to engage in a discussion about how these different motivations shaped NATO's purpose and the dynamics of the transatlantic relationship.

## **Day 2: NATO's Role in the Cold War**

### **Recap:**

Start by recapping the previous day's lesson, emphasizing the main points about NATO's origins and its importance during the Cold War.

### **NATO's Actions and Significance:**

Introduce some of the significant events in which NATO played a role during the Cold War. Include the Berlin Crisis, Cuban Missile Crisis, and NATO's policy of deterrence. Discuss how these events impacted the relationship between Europe and America and influenced global politics.

### **Mapping Activity:**

Provide students with a map of Europe and have them mark the member countries of NATO during the Cold War. Discuss the strategic importance of NATO's expansion in Europe and its impact on regional stability.

### **Analyzing Primary Sources:**

Distribute excerpts from speeches, documents, or news articles related to NATO's actions during the Cold War. Have students analyze these primary sources in pairs or small groups and discuss how they reflect the perspectives and strategies of both Europe and America within the alliance.

## **Day 3: NATO and the Space Race**

### **Recap:**

Begin by recapping the previous day's lesson and the role of NATO during the Cold War.

### **Space Race and NATO:**

Explain how the Space Race emerged as a significant aspect of the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Discuss how NATO member countries, particularly the United States, utilized space exploration as a means to showcase technological prowess and ideological superiority.

### **Space Race Achievements:**

Divide the students into small groups and assign each group a specific space-related achievement during the Space Race (e.g., the moon landing, satellite launches). Have them research and present how these accomplishments affected the perception of the transatlantic relationship and influenced the dynamics between Europe and America within NATO.

### **Group Discussion:**

Facilitate a group discussion about the broader implications of the Space Race on international relations, including its impact on NATO's cohesion and role as a defense alliance.

**Assessment:**

- Group presentations on NATO's motivations and the significance of its actions during the Cold War.
- Class participation in discussions about primary sources and the impact of NATO on the transatlantic relationship.
- Group presentations on how specific Space Race achievements affected NATO and the relationship between Europe and America.

**Writing Integration:**

Analyze the long-term significance of NATO on transatlantic relations beyond the Cold War era. Include examples of how NATO has adapted to new challenges and its relevance in contemporary global affairs.