



ACTIVITY:

Hook: Build the Foundation

What does it take to create a stable foundation?

Students will work in groups with various types of materials to build a foundation strong enough to hold the weight.

Materials needed:

- Heavy object (large book, laptop computer, full reusable water bottle, etc.)
- Foundation materials of varying strength (paper cups, ceramic coffee mug, lightweight cardboard box, metal cans, etc).
Some of these materials should definitely be able to support the weight of whatever heavy object you select; others should very obviously fail to support it.

1. Break the class up in to small groups. Give each group a foundation material.
2. Give the students a few (2-3) minutes to decide how they'll try to use their foundation material to support the heavy object.
3. Each group will come up and try to support the heavy object with their foundations
4. As each group tries (or fails) to support the heavy object, talk with the class about what they notice about the materials used in each foundation and how each material can (or can't) support a weighty object.
5. After all of the groups have had a turn, ask the students to think about the heavy object as a metaphor for our government, and the foundations as symbols of the principles our government was built upon. Engage the students in conversation about the following questions:
 - a. Why is a strong foundation important when building something substantial?
 - b. What risks do you face if your foundation can't support the structure you're trying to hold up?
 - c. Think about our government. What types of principles would you want to include if you were drafting a new plan for our government?