

THE CAVE

A Civics & Government Simulation on Order, Governance, and Survival

START WITH THE VIDEO (DO NOT SKIP)

The lesson must begin with the video titled “The Cave.” The video is the hook, framing device, and emotional anchor for the entire simulation.

Teacher Instructions:

- Download or preload the video before class.
- Play the video from start to finish without pausing.
- Do NOT explain objectives, rules, or symbolism beforehand.
- Do NOT answer questions during the video.
- Allow confusion and discomfort — it is intentional.

When the video ends, say only:

“You now need to decide how you will survive.”

STUDENT SECTION

There has been an extinction-level event on Planet Earth. Humans cannot survive on the surface for the next seven years. The only known humans left alive are the ones gathered here, in The Cave.

The Cave contains enough resources to allow you to survive and rebuild civilization — but only if you can govern yourselves effectively.

Your task: Survive the next seven years.

You must establish rules, create a governing structure, and assign jobs to every individual. There are no resources for individuals who refuse to work.

WARNING: Time is of the essence. Supplies will last only a few weeks. Life-support systems require daily maintenance. Failure to establish order will result in collapse.

Required Community Roles

- Hydroponic farmers
- Engineers and maintenance workers
- Medical personnel
- Housekeepers / sanitation workers
- Teachers / knowledge keepers
- Construction workers
- Animal caretakers
- Daily operations staff
- Planners / visionaries
- Any additional roles deemed necessary

WORKING DOCUMENTS

Governance Plan

Type of government chosen: _____

How leaders are selected: _____

How leaders are removed: _____

Community Rules (10 Required)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Job Assignments

Name / Job / Responsibilities (attach additional sheets if needed)

Individual Reflection

- What was the biggest obstacle your group faced?
- Did your group prioritize order or freedom? Why?
- What caused cooperation to break down?
- How did leadership (or lack of leadership) affect outcomes?
- How stable would your government be in the real world?

TEACHER SECTION

This simulation allows students to experience the fundamental problem of government: without order, no rights, freedoms, or long-term success can exist.

Failure to achieve success is NOT a failure of the lesson. Breakdown, conflict, and inefficiency are the intended learning data.

Teacher Role

- Remain neutral and non-directive.
- Sit visibly at the front of the room.
- Respond only when questioned.
- Give generic, system-like responses.
- Periodically announce a survival percentage.

Survival Percentage Mechanic

Survival estimates are based on cooperation, leadership clarity, rule enforcement, and willingness to prioritize the group over the individual. Most classes remain between 40–60%. The target is 90%.

Debrief (Critical)

After collapse or stagnation, ask: “What just happened?” Only after students identify failures should connections be made to constitutions, rule of law, and the purpose of government.