This is the introductory unit to the second semester "Comparing Political Experiences" course which focuses on specific, controversial political issues. The unit uses a comic book format to teach 12th-grade students the fundamental political concepts of system, political-system types, and political experiences which will be used in later units that focus on specific issues. The unit is self-instructional, and students proceed at their own rate. The unit centers around the fictitious planet of Acton which is facing environmental disaster. In searching for a new planet to inhabit, the Actonites experience and learn about many new and diverse political systems. Episode 1 identifies the concept of system and describes a participant political system. Episode 2 describes and applies the concepts of political resources, activities, and maintenance. Episode 3 examines the elite political system and explains the concept of political development. Episode 4 identifies a bureaucratic political system and explains the concept of political conflict. Episode 5 defines a coalitional political system, political change, and the role of the observer in bringing about change. (Author/DE)
In a little-known area of the universe, a mere 25,000 miles from the sun, lies the tiny civilization of Acton. The tremendous solar energy harnessed by the remarkably intelligent beings who live here has provided them with unlimited fuel to power their advanced industries. Life is peaceful here, just as it has been for 6,000 years.

As fate would have it, this tranquil society now must fear for its future. A collision with a meteor has sent Acton inside the sun's gravitational field! Week by week, month by month, the planet falls ever closer to fiery extinction!
THE SLOWLY RISING TEMPERATURE CAUSES SOME STRANGE THINGS TO HAPPEN, DRASTICALLY AFFECTING LIFE FOR THE ACTONITES...

AS GIANT SOUTHERN GLACIERS MELT, RISING TIDES FORCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PLATFORM CITIES.

CROPS ARE SCORCHED BY THE BLISTERING HEAT. SOON THERE MAY BE NO FOOD.

THE SUN’S MIGHTY RAYS BEGIN TO PENETRATE ACTON’S ATMOSPHERE. AS THEY DO, THE THIN LAYER OF PEPIGEN SURROUNDING THE PLANET IS DESTROYED. IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR LIFE ON ACTON TO BREATHE, AND THE SITUATION WILL GET GRADUALLY WORSE AS TIME WEARS ON!
Faced with impending doom, the Planetary Council meets in the actonite capital of Pentagon. The Advisor, oldest and wisest of the Actonites, is the unanimous choice to lead the meeting...

The sun threatens to destroy us!! Each day reports of rapidly deteriorating conditions increase! We must work together to solve our problems or perish!

I can report that platforms in Dacron are complete. Our population is safe for now!

The altitude in upper Dacron is saving us from the water—but we need Pepigen! We in Pouron are nearly out of food!

In nylon the waves are high, platform construction is slow—we may not finish in time!!

It would do you no good to finish—in Hangon we finished months ago, but now the huge waves wash our efforts into the sea!

Let's break it up—I'm starved!

What can be done?
BUT SOON NYLON WILL NEED ALL OF IT’S FOOD JUST TO FEED ITS POPULATION!

...AND MORE PEPIGEN MUST BE SENT TO UPPER DACRON...

BUT WHERE SHALL WE GET MORE?

FOR PLATFORMS WE CAN SHIP MATERIALS FROM JARGON TO ORLON...

IT IS MY OBSERVATION THAT YOU ARE NOT SEEING THE WHOLE PICTURE. ACTON IS A SYSTEM. I HAVE LIVED HERE FOR 6,000 YEARS AND DURING THAT TIME MANY PARTS OF THE SYSTEM HAVE EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS...

"WE HAD A SEVERE PEPIGEN SHORTAGE IN 4083, BUT OUR SCIENTISTS DEvised A WAY TO MANUFACTURE IT SYNTHETICALLY..."

"REACTING TO THE DROUGHT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, WE SUCCESSFULLY CONSTRUCTED CANOPIES BENEATH WHICH WE GREW OUR FOOD..."

"IN 5,200 THE GREAT FLOODS FORCED US TO BUILD OUR PLATFORM CITIES—FORTUNATELY THIS EXPERIENCE PROVIDED US WITH THE SKILLS TO BUILD MORE OF THEM TODAY..."
OUR SUCCESS HAS DEPENDED UPON CONFRONTING ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME. NOW, HOWEVER, IF WE CONCENTRATE ON BUILDING PLATFORMS, OUR CANOPY PRODUCTION WILL SUFFER. IF WE DEVOTE OUR TIME TO PRODUCING NEEDED PEPIGEN, WE WILL NOT HAVE THE FORCES TO CONSTRUCT CITIES. WE EXIST IN A SYSTEM OF INTERRELATED PARTS: THE SUN, THE ATMOSPHERE, THE WATER, THE FOOD, ETC. OUR NEW RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUN HAS PRODUCED CHANGES IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ALL THE OTHER PARTS OF OUR SYSTEM. SUCH IS THE NATURE OF SYSTEMS.

WE CANNOT ALTER OUR COURSE! I PROPOSE THAT WE ABANDON OUR ANCIENT AND SACRED POLICY OF ISOLATIONISM, AND PREPARE TO MOVE OUR SOCIETY TO ANOTHER PLANET!!

AFTER MUCH DEBATE THIS SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE PLAN IS APPROVED...

I PROPOSE WE MOVE TO STEPON, OUR CLOSEST NEIGHBOR!

SHE IS BUT ONE DISSENTER! LET US DO IT ANYWAY!!

SINCE NONE OF US HAVE SEEN WHAT LIFE ON STEPON IS LIKE, I CANNOT GO ALONG WITH THE VOTE! PERHAPS DEATH WOULD BE BETTER!
This bickering is inadvisable. Remember that just as Acton is a system with many interrelated parts, so is this Council. Years ago our ancestors set forth the rules for our 'participant political system. It was agreed that we must share leadership and information, participate equally, and communicate openly. Also, no decision is final unless unanimous. Therefore, because one of our members wishes not to go to Stepon, we must explore some other possibilities.

That's it! Explore! I propose that we send a mission to explore Stepon, as well as some other planets, to gather information!

Yes! A search force!

This proposition is voted upon, and passed by the Council.

And so is conceived...

Operation:

Doomed Actonites Search for a Homeland

AND SO IS CONCEIVED...

OPERATION:

D. Doomed Actonites

A. Search for a Homeland

STOP

Take the Mastery Quiz for Episode 1
Representatives from the Council travel to the Planetary Science Institute to select delegates for their mission:

We must exercise extreme care as we make our choices. Everyone on the planet is depending upon us.

And after exhaustive interviewing and painstaking deliberation, the D.A.S.H. Task Force is formed: it has three members.

I am T.M. I have been selected because of my unusual ability to see beyond people's words, to read their intentions. I shall also navigate our craft, the Citron.

Move is my name. I am a great negotiator. My skills will be useful in dealing with other beings.

I am called Era. I am an expert in the study of other planets. Already I have charted our course carefully.

Ok, T.M., if you really can read minds, snap the fingers of your left hand three times...

A-ha! That was the wrong hand, you phony.
THE D.A.S.H. TASK FORCE CHECKS OUT THE CITRON:

WE MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE INHABITANTS RUN THEIR PLANET FAIRLY.

AS WE EXPLORE PLANETS THAT WILL PROVIDE OUR BASIC PHYSICAL NEEDS, WHAT ELSE WILL WE BE SEARCHING FOR?

THEY SHOULD VALUE KNOWLEDGE, SO THAT WE CAN WORK WITH AND LEARN FROM THEM!

IT WOULD HELP IF THEY POSSESSED GREAT DIPLOMATIC SKILLS, LIKE MOVE. WE WON'T TOLERATE VIOLENCE!

WONDER HOW THIS WORKS...

THOSE ARE THE QUALITIES WE MUST LOOK FOR—THE ADVISOR SAYS THEY ARE EXAMPLES OF POLITICAL RESOURCES—THINGS WHICH PEOPLE IN A GROUP VALUE, AND USE TO GET WHAT THEY WANT.

AND THEY MUST SHARE THEIR WEALTH EQUALLY!
THE D.A.S.H. TASK FORCE PREPARES FOR THE VOYAGE, IN THE COMPANY OF THE ADVISOR.

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED, OUT OF ALL THE ACTONITES, AS THOSE MOST CAPABLE OF SECURING A NEW HOMELAND —

WE UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF FINDING ONE WHICH CONTAINS THE PROPER PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCES.

YES, BUT WHAT ABOUT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES?

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES?

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ARE THINGS PEOPLE DO TO DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES IN A GROUP...

FOR EXAMPLE, ON ACTON PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE IS OPEN TO EVERYONE. WE ENCOURAGE ALL TO USE THEIR KNOWLEDGE...

DECISION-MAKING DEPENDS UPON UNANIMOUS APPROVAL — OPEN COMMUNICATION IS VITAL. WE HAVE AVOIDED A SYSTEM WHERE LEADERSHIP IS BASED UPON MERE AUTHORITY.

SOON:

WHAT...? HEY, LET'S GET GOING!
ONE MORE THING - OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL, AND WE MUST KEEP IT THAT WAY. A SYSTEM OF ONE-MAN RULE, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE...

DOES HE EXPECT US TO REMEMBER THIS?

I'LL MISS THE OLD INSTITUTE...

WE WANT OUR PATTERNS OF RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES TO REMAIN THE SAME - WE WANT OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE SAME WAY - THAT IS CALLED POLITICAL MAINTENANCE.

AS THE GOING-AWAY CELEBRATION BEGINS....

ATTENTION EVERYONE! I HAVE AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR THE ADVISOR!

ALTHOUGH OUR SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE IS VAST, YOU POSSESS GREAT POLITICAL WISDOM - WOULD IT NOT SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL IF YOU ACCOMPANIED US?

I'M NOT ESPECIALLY FOND OF HEIGHTS...

THEN IT IS SETTLED! THE ADVISOR SHALL GO WITH US!

STOP!

TAKE THE MASTERY QUIZ FOR EPISODE 2
The expedition approaches the planet Stepon:

What is that giant machine?

We seem to be picking up speed!

It looks like a great big computer!

With those huge arms?

AND ENCOUNTER THEIR FIRST STEPONTES:

Come on! We must explore the life on this planet!

We can trust these beings...

You're in luck! I shall give you a tour of the area.

AND ENCOUNTER THEIR FIRST STEPONTES:

You must have seen our electro-magnetic power source, CENTRO, from your ship... it takes care of our needs and satisfies most of us...

...but not all of us! As we approach the marketplace note how CENTRO's power keeps all the stores concentrated together... but some groups wish to be independent!
YES, CENTRO IS THE ALL-POWERFUL! TEN YEARS AGO, IT USED TO SEIZE ALL OF OUR PROFITS--
NOW IT TAKES 70%-- BUT SLOWLY THE CENTRO INFILTRATION ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN WEAK-
ENING IT'S POWER--TONIGHT WE SHALL APPLY THE FINISHING TOUCHES! TONIGHT CENTRO WILL DIE!!

I HAVE HAD THIS MISERABLE BASEMENT LOCATION FOR YEARS!
IT'S CENTRO'S WAY OF KEEPING KNOWLEDGE FROM THE MASSES!
I HOPE THE C.I.A. PLOT IS A SUCCESS!

THIS SYSTEM WILL NOT SUIT US! STEPON IS AN ELITE POLITICAL SYSTEM. MOST POLITICAL
RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES IN AN ELITE SYSTEM ARE CONTROLLED BY
AN INDIVIDUAL--

--OR SMALL GROUP.
THE C.I.A. IS JUSTIFIED IN IT'S EFFORTS TO DEFEAT THIS CENTRO!
AND WITH CENTRO DEAD, THE SHOPKEEPERS VOTE TO DISTRIBUTE PROFITS;

A VOTE IS TAKEN TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF SHOPS;

"A 4 TO 1 DECISION TO ROTATE POSITIONS EVERY YEAR!"

SEE HOW THEY CAN NEVER ALL AGREE? THIS IS NOT A PARTICIPANT SYSTEM. WE SHOULD MOVE ON WITH OUR EXPLORATION!
BEFORE YOU LEAVE THIS PLANET, PLEASE NOTICE WHAT HAS OCCURRED HERE. SEE HOW THE STEPONITES FIRST CONTROLLED NO PROFITS, THEN SOME-- AND NOW THEY CONTROL NEARLY ALL!

SEE HOW THE SELLERS HAVE BEGUN TO PARTICIPATE IN MAKING DECISIONS--THE POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS BECOME COMPLETELY DIFFERENT! IT HAS EXPERIENCED DEVELOPMENT.

MAYBE ORGON WILL BE BETTER...

DEVELOPMENT OCCURS WHEN DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES REINFORCE EACH OTHER OVER TIME AND A POLITICAL SYSTEM OPERATES IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

STOP! TAKE THE MASTERY QUIZ FOR EPISODE THREE.
Inhabitants of Orgon Spot
The Citron Approaching:

Hey! An alien spacecraft!
I wonder why the air force didn't warn us!

Welcome to Terrace 83, Section: 804-A, Slot: 6309, Division: 7X. Please fill out four copies of this form, sign them, have them stamped and approved, and go to Room 228.
Thank you! As you can see, our planet is divided into 100 terraces, each with a special function. The higher the terrace, the more important the function!

I'll show you around, but first if you'll just sign 6 copies of this release form...

They ride the vertical file to higher terraces.

Say, bigger type-riders!

The higher the bigger!

Message from terrace: Yessir!

We want a vertical file up here now clear out!

My friends, we cannot exist here. This is a bureaucratic system.

Political resources are stratified across groups and political activities are carried out according to position.
YOU BETCHA! WE HAVE RECENTLY DEVELOPED AN AMAZING SUBSTANCE WHICH IS BOTH DURABLE AND EDIBLE. IT'S CALLED ENDURO-DOUGH!

WE MAKE EVERYTHING OUT OF THIS SUBSTANCE. OUR PEOPLE HAVE BECOME VERY EXCITED ABOUT IT...

ENDURO-DOUGH HAS BEEN TRUCKED ALL OVER ORGON!

"WE NOW HAVE RESTAURANTS EVERYWHERE! AND CLUBS WHERE ORGONITES GATHER JUST TO EAT DELICACIES."

BUT ALL THIS INVOLVEMENT HAS MET WITH DISAPPROVAL UP ON THE HIGHER TERRACES - THEY HAVE BECOME ANGRY...

WELL, ENOUGH TALK! LET'S TRY SOME OUT!

... AND CUTOFF OUR ACCESS TO ENDURO-DOUGH!
But our friends aren't alone with their meal—up on terrace one, the law enforcement officials view their monitor with interest:

So far we have prevented any leaks concerning the development of enduro-dough...

We must stop them!

Halt! Police! Arrest those aliens! Wait... your bill...

Hate to eat and run...

Gotta split!

Put it on my tab!

Suddenly this system seems to have even less to offer...

The chase ends with a dramatic escape!

Just as the orgonites have begun to participate in the system, the top terraces have become ruthless in their control of the people. Also, communication to the lower terraces has been cut. The system is experiencing conflict. Conflict occurs when patterns of resources and activities contradict each other over time, and a political system operates in a different way.

Take the mastery quiz for episode 4.
I wonder where all those Advoconites are going?

How weird!

Advocon looks like five planets...

...connected by bridges...

...and it looks like they're building more!

Curious about life here eh? I suggest you see an observer up in that tower.

I'd be happy to go down and ask some of them...

The observer proves very helpful. Can you tell us anything about political life here?

A few moments later...

...pretty busy place...

Let's have a look through my telescope and I'll try!
Our planet consists of five suits, each suit is strong in a different resource.

"On the Spade suit, many important agricultural products are cultivated."

"The Law suit provides political leadership and skills."

"And the Heart suit develops housing, schools, and hospitals."

"Hobbies and other recreational activities are enjoyed on the Club suit - ideal climate."

O.K., everyone back to work!
... ALL OF OUR POLITICAL DECISIONS ARE BASED ON A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE SUITS...

AND WHAT ABOUT THE BRIDGES?

"BESIDES TRANSPORTING GOODS, THE BRIDGES PROMOTE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. WHEN A CITIZEN FEELS THAT ITS INTERESTS ARE NOT BEING SERVED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES, IT CAN MOVE TO ANOTHER SUIT."

"RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE HAS BEEN MASS MOVEMENT BECAUSE OF MIGRANT LABOR CONDITIONS ON THE SPADE SUIT... "

YOU THERE! A LITTLE MORE WORK O.K.?

"...THE HEART REPRESENTATIVES OPPOSE THESE CONDITIONS, BUT MANY OTHERS SUPPORT THEM, AS CHEAP LABOR KEEPS PRICES LOW..."

AS A RESULT, MANY SYMPATHIZERS ARE MOVING TO THE HEART SUIT. BUT THEIR BATTLE IS A LONG WAY FROM WON.

THE HEARTS MUST BE UNHAPPY. NOT TO MENTION THE MIGRANT WORKERS!

THE ADVISOR TAKES THE OTHERS ASIDE...

THIS IS NOT A PARTICIPANT SYSTEM. IT IS COALITIONAL. MOST POLITICAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES ARE DIVIDED AMONG GROUPS. EVERYONE PARTICIPATES THROUGH REPRESENTATIVES, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS A MINORITY.
WE REALIZE THAT OUR SYSTEM ISN'T PERFECT, SO WE ARE CHANGING IT—OBSERVE OUR NEW POLITICAL HEADQUARTERS, THE KITTY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT THE CENTER OF THE PLANET...

I HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT THIS SYSTEM...

...WHEN COMPLETED, THIS WILL ALLOW FOR BETTER REPRESENTATION, AND MORE DIRECT TRADE!

DID YOU DESIGN THIS KITTY?

PARTLY—ALONG WITH THE OTHER OBSERVERS, I THINK ABOUT HELPING GROUPS ACCOMPLISH THEIR GOALS...

‘‘...WE LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE ADVOCATES’ COMPLAINTS...’’

WE COLLECT INFORMATION SYSTEMATICALLY...

‘‘...WE LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE ADVOCATES’ COMPLAINTS...’’

‘‘...BUT ABOVE ALL, WE AVOID DISTURBING ANYONE—WE BELIEVE IN NON-INTERFERENCE...’’

I'M SICK OF THIS PLACE!
LIE SHALL BE MORE ABLE TO CENTRALIZE OUR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. EVEN THOUGH PATTERNS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES MAY CHANGE, OUR SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE BASED ON MAJORITY RULE.

THAT'S INTERESTING! TELL US HOW THE RITTY WILL HELP ADVOCN.

"... CONTINUE TO OPERATE..."

HEY! THAT'S MAINTENANCE!

NOT SO FAST! THE SYSTEM IS NOT BEING MAINTAINED ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS BEING CHANGED.

POLITICAL CHANGE OCCURS WHEN DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF POLITICAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES ARE INCORPORATED INTO THE SYSTEM, AND IT OPERATES IN THE SAME WAY!

WHAT NEXT?

BACK AT THE CITRON...

IT'S HARD TO TELL HOW CHANGES WILL TURN OUT!

-WHAT NEXT? WE KNOW OF NO OTHER PLANETS WHERE WE CAN SURVIVE! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND A SYSTEM JUST LIKE OURS! I'M CONVINCED THAT THE ONLY SENSIBLE PLACE FOR OUR SOCIETY IS...
STEPON!

ADVOCON!

ORGON!

P-PLEASE BE SERIOUS--ALL OF THOSE PLACES HAVE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL DRAWBACKS... WE REQUIRE A SYSTEM WHERE PARTICIPATION IS...

I THINK THAT THE KITTY, LIKE OUR OWN PLANETARY COUNCIL, WILL PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A FAIR AND JUST POLITICAL SYSTEM.

STEPON SEEMED TO BE SERIOUS--ALL OF THOSE PLACES HAVE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL DRAWBACKS... WE REQUIRE A SYSTEM WHERE PARTICIPATION IS...

I CONSIDER THE KITTY, LIKE OUR OWN PLANETARY COUNCIL, WILL PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A FAIR AND JUST POLITICAL SYSTEM.

GOOD VIBES? NOT ME! I DON'T LIKE TO BE OBSERVED...

BESIDES THOSE LITTLE RADIO GUYS ON STEPON SEEMED REALLY HAPPY...

AND SOME MORE POLICE HARASSMENT! YOU GO, NOT ME!

I SAY THAT WE HEAD BACK TO ORGON FOR SOME MORE OF THAT ENDURO-DOUGH!

PROBABLY HAPPY TO SEE YOU LEAVE!

I THINK THAT THE KITTY, LIKE OUR OWN PLANETARY COUNCIL, WILL PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A FAIR AND JUST POLITICAL SYSTEM.

W-W-WAIT---WE ARE NOT PROCEEDING BY THE RULES--TO MAKE A UNANIMOUS DECISION, FIRST ONE MUST INTRODUCE A PROPOSAL...

O.K.--I PROPOSE WE ABANDON THE POLICY OF UNANIMOUS RULE--OR WE'LL NEVER MAKE A DECISION!

I DISAGREE, SO THE PROPOSAL IS REJECTED...

WHO GAVE YOU THE AUTHORITY TO DECIDE?

IT'S THE SYSTEM...

I COULD GO FOR A NICE SOFT DESK JOB!

FORGET UNANIMITY! I'VE DECIDED TO STAY HERE!

AND I DIG THOSE RADIO FOLKS--MY FAMILY'S MOVING TO STEPON!!!

...B-B-B--BUT--BUT--WHAT ABOUT 6,000 YEARS OF...
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