Constitution Day and Citizenship Day Instructional Resources

Background Information, Lesson Plans, and Internet Resources for the

Elementary Classroom

Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Department of Social Sciences
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Introduction

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is a combined event that is annually observed in the United States on September 17th. This event commemorates the formation and signing of the Constitution of the United States on September 17, 1787. It also recognizes all who, by birth or naturalization, have become U.S. citizens. On Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, an event which falls during Constitution Week, people in the United States recognize the anniversary of the U.S. Constitution and the efforts and responsibilities of all citizens.

In the summer of 1787, delegates convened in Philadelphia to create “a more perfect union” and to craft the country's constitution. They worked to develop a framework that would provide balance and freedom, taking into account federal and state interests, as well as individual human rights. The delegates signed the Constitution of the United States on September 17, 1787. By June 21, 1788, the U.S. Constitution was effective, having been approved by nine of the 13 states.

With regard to recognizing citizens, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst advocated a day to celebrate U.S. citizenship in 1939. In 1940, the Congress created “I Am an American Day” to be celebrated on the third Sunday in May. On February 29, 1952, President Harry Truman signed into law “Citizenship Day.” It was established to replace “I Am an American Day.” On August 2, 1956, the Congress requested that the president proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as “Constitution Week.” One more change was made to the event when a federal law enacted in December 2004 designated September 17 as “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.”

Per federal legislation, all schools and federal agencies are required to hold educational programs celebrating the U.S. Constitution. Additionally, Florida State Statute 1003.42 requires the study of “the history, meaning, significance, and effect of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States and amendments thereto, with emphasis on each of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights and how the Constitution provides the structure of our government.”
An Instructional Note to Teachers about Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day celebrates both the anniversary of the U.S. Constitution and the rights and responsibilities of all citizens. The celebration is an important part of the cultural heritage of the United States because it recognizes the value of the American experiment, and the success of a nation of free people whose rights and liberties are protected by a written constitution.

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day are required topics of instruction. Per federal legislation, all schools and federal agencies are required to hold educational programs celebrating the U.S. Constitution. These resources also support the requirements of Florida Statute 1003.42 requiring the study of the “the history, meaning, significance, and effect of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States and amendments thereto, with emphasis on each of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights and how the Constitution provides the structure of our government.”

This school year, September 17, 2017 falls on a Sunday. Schools are encouraged to plan appropriate instructional activities prior to the nationwide commemoration. In addition, content, concepts, and skills related to the U.S. Constitution and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are an integral part of social studies instruction year-round. Teachers are highly encouraged to utilize the resources and lessons found in this instructional resource guide to reinforce the importance of the U.S. Constitution throughout the school year.

To assist schools, staff in the Department of Social Sciences has developed this instructional resource guide which includes:

- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION** - This section includes detailed background and reference information on the U.S. Constitution, including the document’s founding principles and its history. Copies of the U.S. Constitution, the Preamble, and Bill of Rights are also included.

- **LESSON PLANS** - This section includes detailed primary and intermediate lesson plans with all support materials needed to teach about the U.S. Constitution. Several of the lesson plans directly support the Benchmarks tested on the 7th grade Civics End-of-Course Exam.

- **INTERNET RESOURCES** - Additional lesson plans and background information may be found on the websites listed in this section of the guide.

- **ELEMENTARY CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCES** – Additional lesson ideas are included to support the core value of “respect,” which has been designated by the District for the month of September.
Background Information

- What is a Constitution? - Content Background Information for the Teacher
- Historical Background Information on the U.S. Constitution – World Book Advanced (2014)
- The American Founding Fathers
- About the Founding Fathers
- Founding Mothers
- Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution
- Maps of the 13 Colonies
- Image of the U.S. Constitution
- The Sections of the U.S. Constitution
- The Preamble to the United States Constitution
- The Constitution of the United States of America, including the 27 Amendments
- Summary of the Bill of Rights
What is a Constitution? - Content Background Information for the Teacher

The following information from the Center for Civic Education (www.civiced.org) is provided as background information for teachers.

What Is a Constitution?

A constitution is a set of fundamental customs, traditions, rules, and laws that set forth the basic way a government is organized and operated. Most constitutions are in writing, some are partly written and partly unwritten, and some are not written at all.

If you study a country’s constitution, you will be able to answer the following questions regarding the relationship between the government and its citizens.

Government

- What are the purposes of the government?
- How is the government organized?
- How is the government supposed to go about doing its business?

Citizens

- Who is a citizen?
- Do citizens have any power or control over the government? If so, how do citizens exercise their powers?
- What rights and responsibilities do citizens have?

By this definition of a constitution, nearly every nation has a constitution. Good governments and bad governments have constitutions. Some of the worst governments have constitutions that include lists of the basic rights of their citizens. A list of rights does not mean that the citizens actually enjoy those rights.

What Is a Constitutional Government?

Having a constitution does not mean that a nation has a constitutional government. If, for example, a constitution provides for the unlimited exercise of political power by one, a few, or many, it would not be the basis for a constitutional government. If a constitution says that power is to be limited, but it does not include ways to enforce those limitations, it also is not the basis for a constitutional government. The principles of constitutional and limited governments are intertwined. Limited governments are characterized by restraints on power, such as laws that both the rulers and the governed must obey, and free and periodic elections. The opposite is unlimited government, in which those who govern are free to use their power as they choose, unrestrained by laws or elections. Aristotle described unlimited government as tyranny.
Today the terms *autocracy, dictatorship, or totalitarianism* frequently are used to describe such governments.

**What Are the Characteristics of the Higher Law?**

In a constitutional government, the constitution, or higher law, has the following characteristics:

- It sets forth the basic rights of citizens.
- It establishes the responsibility of the government to protect those rights.
- It establishes limitations on how those in government may use their powers with regard to citizens’ rights and responsibilities, the distribution of resources, and the control of conflict.
- It can be changed only with the widespread consent of the citizens and according to established and well-known procedures.

**What Are Rights?**

Rights are moral or legal claims justified in ways that are generally accepted within a society or the international community.

**Where Do Rights Come From and How Do They Relate to One Another?**

Rights set individuals or groups apart from each other and entitle them to be treated in a particular way. Most Americans think about their place in society and the world in terms of their rights. However, rights are complicated.

**Who May Hold Rights?**

Rights may be held by individuals, classes or categories of individuals, or institutions.

- **Individuals** - The idea that individuals can hold rights reflects the belief that humans should be considered autonomous and self-governing. This includes the belief that each individual should possess certain fundamental rights, such as those to freedom of thought and conscience, privacy, and movement. The emphasis on the rights of individuals is reflected in natural rights philosophy and exemplified in the Declaration of Independence by the statement that “all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness.”

- **Classes or categories of individuals** - These commonly are created by constitutions and statutes and provide a basis for treating categories of people
differently. For example, the United States Constitution protects the right of persons eighteen years of age or older to vote. By the laws of several states, only people who have joined a political party can participate in that party’s primary, or nominating, elections.

- Institutions - Institutions such as schools; government institutions at the local, state, and national levels; unions; universities; business partnerships; and corporations also hold certain rights.

What Are the Common Categories of Rights?

- **Personal rights** - These relate to individual autonomy, including freedom of thought and conscience, privacy, and movement. The idea that human beings are autonomous, self-governing individuals with fundamental rights is central to the natural rights philosophy of John Locke. The rights of life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness are said to come from God or nature. The purpose of government is to protect those rights.

- **Political rights** - These rights address political participation and also are granted by the constitution or statutes. Examples are the right to vote and to engage in political activities, such as supporting particular candidates for office or running for office.

- **Economic rights** - These include choosing the work one wants to do, acquiring and disposing of property, entering into contracts, creating and protecting intellectual property such as copyrights or patents, and joining labor unions or professional associations. Most economic rights trace to constitutions or statutes. Many people consider economic rights associated with property ownership to be personal rights as well.

Source: Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Historical Background Information on the United States Constitution

The excerpt below on the history of the United States Constitution is from the on-line edition of the World Book Advanced Encyclopedia (2014) available for students and teachers through the Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ Department of Library Media Services. To access the full article:

1. Visit Library Media Services at http://library.dadeschools.net/ (Password needed. Check with the Media Specialist.)
2. Click the On-line Data Bases and select World Book Advanced Online Reference Center
3. Search for “U.S. Constitution.”
4. Click on the article entitled “Constitution of the United States.”

The full-article is an overview of the U.S. Constitution. The excerpt below provides basic information on the development and ratification of the document and an overview of the Bill of Rights.

Constitution of the United States

The Constitution of the United States sets forth the nation's fundamental laws. It establishes the form of the national government and defines the rights and liberties of the American people. It also lists the aims of the government and the methods of achieving them.

The Constitution was written to organize a strong national government for the American states. Previously, the nation's leaders had established a national government under the Articles of Confederation, but the Articles granted independence to each state. They lacked the authority to make the states work together to solve national problems.

After the states won independence in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), they faced the problems of peacetime government. The states had to enforce law and order, collect taxes, pay a large public debt, and regulate trade among themselves. They also had to deal with Indian tribes and negotiate with other governments. Leading statesmen, such as George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, began to discuss the creation of a strong national government under a new constitution.

Hamilton helped bring about a national convention that met in Philadelphia in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation. However, a majority of the delegates at the convention decided instead to write a new plan of government—the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution established not merely a league of states but a government that exercised its authority directly over all citizens. The Constitution also
defined clearly the powers of the national government. In addition, it established protection for the rights of the states and of every individual.

The Supreme Law of the Land

The Constitution consists of a preamble, 7 articles, and 27 amendments. It sets up a federal system by dividing powers between the national and state governments. It also establishes a balanced national government by dividing authority among three independent branches—the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. The executive branch enforces the law, the legislative branch makes the law, and the judicial branch interprets the law. The executive branch of the national government is usually represented by the president, the legislative branch by Congress, and the judicial branch by the Supreme Court. This division of the government into three branches is known as the separation of powers. Each branch can use its powers to check and balance (exercise control over) the other two.

Federal powers listed in the Constitution include the right to collect taxes, declare war, and regulate trade. In addition to these delegated, or expressed, powers (those listed in the Constitution), the national government has implied powers (those reasonably suggested by the Constitution). The implied powers enable the government to respond to the changing needs of the nation. For example, Congress had no delegated power to print paper money. But such a power is implied in the delegated powers of borrowing and coining money.

There are some powers that the Constitution does not give to the national government or forbid to the states. These reserved powers belong to the people or to the states. State powers include the right to legislate on divorce, marriage, and public schools. Powers reserved for the people include the right to own property and to be tried by a jury. In some cases, the national and state governments have concurrent powers—that is, both levels of government may act. The national government has supreme authority in case of a conflict.

The Supreme Court has the final authority to explain the Constitution. It can set aside any law—federal, state, or local—that conflicts with any part of the Constitution.

The Need for the Constitution

The government established by the Articles of Confederation was not strong enough to govern the new nation. For example, it lacked an executive branch and a system of national courts. It could not regulate trade between the states or tax the states or their citizens. In addition, it could not maintain its own army. The government was little more than an assembly of the representatives of 13 independent states. Before almost any measure could be adopted, it had to be approved by at least 9 of the states.
In 1783, after the Revolutionary War, the nation entered a period of unstable commercial and political conditions. Alexander Hamilton and his supporters would have had little success in their campaign for a new constitution if conditions had been better. Some historians have painted the troubles of the new republic in much too gloomy colors. But little doubt remains that the situation became steadily worse after 1783. Each state acted almost like an independent country. Each ran its own affairs exactly as it saw fit, with little concern for the needs of the republic. The states circulated a dozen different currencies, most of which had little value. Neighboring states taxed each other’s goods. The United Kingdom refused to reopen the channels of trade that the colonies had depended on for their economic well-being. The state legislatures refused to pay the debts they had assumed during the Revolutionary War. Many states passed laws that enabled debtors to escape paying their obligations.

Worst of all, some people began to think once again of taking up arms in order to solve their problems. In western Massachusetts in 1786, hundreds of farmers under Captain Daniel Shays rebelled against the state government in Boston. State troops finally put down Shay’s Rebellion. George Washington and other leaders wondered whether the colonies had rebelled against the United Kingdom in vain. They felt it was time to end these troubles and bring peace and order by forming a new national government. This new government would have to be strong enough to gain obedience at home and respect abroad.

Representatives from five states met in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1786. They proposed that the states appoint commissioners to meet in Philadelphia and consider revising the Articles of Confederation. Congress agreed to the proposal and suggested that each state select delegates to a constitutional convention.

The Constitutional Convention

The convention was supposed to open on May 14, 1787. But few of the 55 delegates had arrived in Philadelphia by that date. Finally, on May 25, the convention formally opened in Independence Hall. Twelve states had responded to the call for the convention. Rhode Island refused to send delegates because it did not want the national government to interfere with its affairs.

Of the 55 delegates, 39 signed the United States Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787. One of the signers was John Dickinson of Delaware, who left the convention but asked another delegate, George Read, to sign for him. William Jackson of Philadelphia, a former major in the Revolutionary War who was chosen to serve as the convention secretary, witnessed the signatures. The delegates included some of the most experienced and patriotic men in the new republic. George Washington served as president of the convention. Benjamin Franklin, at the age of 81, attended as a representative of
Pennsylvania. The brilliant Alexander Hamilton represented New York. James Madison of Virginia received the title of "Father of the Constitution" with his speeches, negotiations, and attempts at compromise. Madison told the delegates they were considering a plan that "would decide forever the fate of republican government." He kept a record of the delegates' debates and decisions.

Other men who had much to do with writing the new Constitution included John Dickinson, Governor Morris, Edmund Randolph, Roger Sherman, James Wilson, and George Wythe. Morris was given the task of putting all the convention's resolutions and decisions into polished form. Morris actually "wrote" the Constitution. The original copy of the document is preserved in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C.

Several important figures of the time did not attend the convention. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were absent on other government duties. Samuel Adams and John Jay failed to be appointed delegates from their states. Patrick Henry refused to serve after his appointment because he opposed granting any more power to the national government. Three leading members of the convention—Elbridge Gerry, George Mason, and Edmund Randolph—refused to sign the Constitution because they disagreed with parts of it.

The Background of the U.S. Constitution

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention relied greatly on past experience as they worked to create a new government. They recalled many important events in the development of constitutional government. These included the granting of Magna Carta, an English constitutional document, in 1215 and the meeting of the Jamestown representative assembly in 1619. Some of the American Colonies also served as examples of constitutional forms of government. While colonial governments had weaknesses, they had progressed beyond other governments of their time in achieving liberty under law.

All American states established constitutional governments after they declared their independence from the United Kingdom in 1776. In 1777, John Jay of New York had helped write a constitution for his state. John Adams of Massachusetts had helped write the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. Delegates to the convention in Philadelphia used many ideas and words from the constitutions of these and other states.

The delegates also drew on their own experiences. Franklin had proposed a plan at the Albany Congress of 1754 to unify the colonies under a central government. Washington remembered his own problems during the war when, as commander in chief, he had to work with the frequently divided Continental Congress. Almost every delegate to the convention had served as a soldier or administrator of the government. They often disagreed on details but were united in wanting the new government to be strong
enough to rule the nation. They also wanted it to respect the liberties of the states and of the people.

The Compromises

The task of creating a new government was not easily accomplished. Disputes among the delegates nearly ended the convention on several occasions. For example, delegates from the large states disagreed with those from the small states about representation in the national legislature. The larger states favored the Virginia Plan, under which population would determine the number of representatives a state could send to the legislature. The small states supported the New Jersey Plan, which proposed that all the states would have an equal number of representatives. The Connecticut delegates suggested a compromise that settled the problem. Their plan provided for equal representation in the Senate, along with representation in proportion to population in the House of Representatives. This proposal became known as the Connecticut Compromise or the Great Compromise.

Compromises also settled conflicts over the issue of slavery. The delegates from the Northern states wanted Congress to have the power to forbid the foreign slave trade. Most Southern delegates did not wish Congress to have this power. A compromise decided that Congress would not be allowed to regulate the foreign slave trade until 1808. Another compromise involved the question of how to count slaves in determining how many members of Congress a state could have. Slaves were not considered citizens, and so the convention agreed that only three-fifths of a state's slaves could be counted.

The delegates agreed that each state should hold a special convention to discuss and vote on the Constitution. They also decided that as soon as nine states had ratified (approved) the Constitution, the Constitution would take effect and they could begin to organize the new government.

Ratifying the U.S. Constitution

Less than three months after the Constitution was signed, Delaware became the first state to ratify it, on Dec. 7, 1787. New Hampshire was the ninth state, putting the Constitution into effect on June 21, 1788. But the Founding Fathers could not be sure that the Constitution would be generally accepted until the important states of New York and Virginia had ratified it. Powerful organized opposition to the Constitution had developed in these two states and in others. Such people as Elbridge Gerry, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and George Mason spoke out against ratification.

Critics objected that a bill of rights had not been included, that the president had too much independence, and that the Senate was too aristocratic. They also thought
Congress had too many powers and the national government had too much authority. Friends of the Constitution rallied support for ratification. They became known as Federalists. Their opponents were called Anti-Federalists. The two groups promoted their causes in newspapers, in pamphlets, and in debates in the ratifying conventions. The groups developed into the first American political parties.

Virginia ratified the Constitution on June 25, 1788, and New York did so on July 26. Early in January 1789, all the ratifying states except New York selected presidential electors in their legislatures or by a direct vote of the people. On February 4, the electors named George Washington as the first president of the United States. The first Congress under the Constitution met in New York City on March 4. Washington was inaugurated on April 30. North Carolina and Rhode Island refused to approve the Constitution and take part in the new government until Congress agreed to add a bill of rights.

The Bill of Rights

The Federalists might never have obtained ratification in several important states if they had not promised to support amendments to the Constitution. These amendments were written to protect individual liberties against possible unjust rule by the national government. Most state constitutions that were adopted during the Revolution had included a clear declaration of the rights of all people. Most Americans believed that no constitution could be considered complete without such a declaration. George Mason of Virginia was responsible for the first and most famous American bill of rights, the Virginia Declaration of Rights of 1776. He and Patrick Henry might have prevented ratification of the Constitution in Virginia if the Federalists had not agreed to their demands for amendments.

James Madison led the new Congress in proposing amendments. He suggested 15 amendments, and the Congress accepted 12 of them to be submitted for approval by the states under the amending process outlined in the Fifth Article of the Constitution. By Dec. 15, 1791, enough states had approved 10 of the 12 amendments to make them a permanent addition to the Constitution. These amendments are known as the Bill of Rights.

One of the two unapproved amendments dealt with the size of the House of Representatives. It would have changed representation from no more than one representative for every 30,000 people to one for every 50,000 people. The other unapproved amendment provided that whenever Congress changed the salaries of its members, the change could not take effect until after the next election of representatives had been held. This amendment was ratified in 1992.
The Development of the U.S. Constitution

Through the years, the Constitution has developed to meet changing needs. James Madison declared, "In framing a system which we wish to last for ages, we should not lose sight of the changes which ages will produce." The Constitution was designed to serve the interests of the people—rich and poor, Northerners and Southerners, farmers, workers, and business people.

The Anti-Federalists accepted defeat when the Constitution was adopted and set about to win power under its rules. Their action set a style for American politics that has never changed. Americans sometimes feel dissatisfied with the policies of those who govern. But few Americans have condemned the constitutional system or demanded a second constitutional convention.

Delegates to the Constitutional Convention believed strongly in the rule of the majority, but they wanted to protect minorities against any unjustness by the majority. They achieved this goal by separating and balancing the powers of government. Other basic constitutional aims included respect for the rights of individuals and states, rule by the people, separation of church and state, and supremacy of the national government.

The American Founding Fathers

Definition - The Founding Fathers of the United States of America were prominent statesmen, patriots, and political leaders who made major contributions to the establishment of a new American nation by:

- supporting or participating in the American Revolution;
- signing the Declaration of Independence; and/or
- framing and establishing the U.S. Constitution.

Many Founding Fathers contributed to the creation of the new nation by taking leadership roles in all three actions!

Founding Fathers and the U.S. Constitution - Many of the Founding Fathers attended the Constitutional Convention in 1787, where the U.S. Constitution was hammered out and ratified. In all, 55 delegates attended the sessions from May 14 to September 17, 1787. Although the Convention had been officially called to revise the existing Articles of Confederation, many delegates had much bigger plans. Men like James Madison and Alexander Hamilton wanted to create a new government rather than fix the existing one. The delegates elected George Washington to preside over the Convention. The United States Constitution was adopted on September 17, 1787 with 39 signatures before being distributed to the states for ratification.

Other Founding Fathers were not at the Constitutional Convention, but made significant contributions in other ways. Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence, was serving as ambassador to France at the time of the Convention. He kept abreast of the proceedings in Philadelphia by carrying on correspondence with James Madison. John Adams, as ambassador to Great Britain, wrote "Defense of the Constitution of the Government of the United States of America." Thomas Paine wrote the influential pamphlet "Common Sense," which immeasurably influenced the philosophy reflected in the Declaration of Independence. One of the U.S. Founding Fathers, Patrick Henry, was initially opposed to the very idea of the Constitution! He wanted to keep the Articles of Confederation, the predecessor to the Constitution. However, when an agreement was made to add a "bill of rights" to the Constitution, Henry fought hard for its ratification.

About the Founding Fathers

The following Founding Fathers, among others, played a major role in the development of the U.S. Constitution.

George Washington (1732-1799)

Highest Political Office: President (1789-1797)

Other Accomplishments: Led the colonial forces in the Revolutionary War.

The staid portraits of George Washington accurately reflect the personality of the father of the nation. He was a man of few words, whose political ascension was attributable to his strength of character, rather than his intellect.

A huge man for his day, Washington stood 6’ 3 1/2” tall with enormous hands. Washington had pockmarked skin as a result of a teenage case of smallpox, and a shy disposition that was the result of a domineering mother. Twice he proposed to women, and twice he was rejected. He finally married Martha Custis, the richest widow in Virginia.

He had lost almost all his teeth by the time he was president, leaving him with badly sunken cheeks that were stuffed with cotton for portraits. Contrary to popular belief, George Washington never had wooden teeth! His teeth were made mostly of lead fitted with human, cattle, and hippopotamus teeth. Some were carved from elephant and walrus tusks.

In his will, he freed all 300 of his slaves permanently.
The popular tale of Washington and the cherry tree, historians say, was almost certainly
untrue.

**His Politics:** Washington was a Federalist, so he favored a strong central government. He also had a strong affinity for aristocrats. During the Constitutional Convention, he spent much of his time at the mansion of Robert Morris, the richest man in America. His closest political ally was Alexander Hamilton, whose policies inevitably leaned toward the upper classes.

Washington was the only president to win unanimous approval (all of the votes cast) by the Electoral College. He did it twice.

In office, Washington served the nation best by keeping the government stable. He advocated a strong national defense, and kept the country out of the escalating tension between England and France.

His health failing, Washington begged out of the presidency after one term. Men from both sides of the political fence urged him to remain in office, however, so he stayed on. His second inaugural address may reveal his enthusiasm for the second term. At 135 words, it is the shortest inaugural address in history.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** Alexander Hamilton

**What He Said:** “Government is not reason, it is not eloquence - it is a force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.”
James Madison (1751-1836)

Highest Political Office: President (1809-1817)

Other Accomplishments: Helped draft Virginia’s state constitution when he was 25. That document later became the model for the U.S. Constitution. He served as Jefferson’s Secretary of State.

Madison was a soft-spoken and tiny man - about 5’4” and less than 100 pounds. Even his nickname was diminutive: “Jemmy.” He was too small to serve in the Revolutionary War, and turned to politics instead.

Madison, “the Father of the Constitution” - the most important legal document in modern history - never received a law degree.

Even in his 40s, Madison was a lonely and single man. That changed when Aaron Burr introduced him to Dolley Todd. The couple married when Madison was 43, and never had children.

Dolley Madison earned a place in history when she stole away from the White House with crucial government documents as the British stormed the capital during the War of 1812.

Madison was the last Founding Father to die at the age of eighty-five in June, 1836.
His Politics: His presidency was marred by the War of 1812 - the only war in which U.S. soil was overrun by enemy forces. The war was precipitated by the widespread sentiment that the U.S. was destined to conquer Canada, then a British territory.

Aside from the war that nearly cost him his reelection, Madison’s two terms were also memorable for the fact that both of his vice presidents died while in office.

Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers: Jefferson and Madison were close friends throughout their lives: Madison was Jefferson’s protégé. After their presidencies, each spent many days at the other’s estate. Jefferson named one of the bedrooms at Monticello “Mr. Madison’s room.”

What He Said: On the War of 1812: “I flung forward the flag of the country, sure that the people would press onward and defend it.” Under the new Constitution, the nation’s powers will be “derived from the superior power of the people.”
Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

Highest Political Office: President (1801-1809)

Other Accomplishments: Drafted the Declaration of Independence. He served as Minister to France (a pivotal diplomatic position) as the Constitution was being drafted.

Jefferson was nicknamed “Long Tom” because he stood 6' 2 1/2" tall, with long, slender limbs. He had carrot-red hair that paled with age. A fiddle player, Jefferson wooed his wife with violin serenades. Jefferson eschewed the uniforms of nobility, choosing instead to dress himself in sometimes dirty and tattered clothing.

Although his wife died at the age of 33, Jefferson never remarried. He did, however, allegedly father five children by Sally Hemings, one of his slaves.

Jefferson suffered from migraine headaches throughout his life, and bathed his feet in cold water daily to avoid colds.

Jefferson was the quintessential Renaissance man and has been described as a(n): lawyer, linguist, diplomat, astronomer, naturalist, political philosopher, educator, statesman, president, “farmer,” musician, scientist, inventor, agriculturalist, horseman, geographer, theologian and paleontologist. Jefferson was fluent in Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, German, and was a supporter of equal rights and education for women, the right of all to have a free public education, a free library system and the creation of
decimal system of weights and measures. He is also considered one of the preeminent architects in the history of the country.

**His Politics:** Jefferson was a Republican, which at that time was the party of the common man. He envisioned a nation built on agriculture, not industry. The formal name for the “Republican” Party of Jefferson was the Democratic-Republican Party from which our present day Democratic party evolved. (The Republican party of today was created in 1854 by the joining of anti-slavery Democrats, the Free Soil Party and factions of the Whig Party.) The formal name of the opposing party (led by Alexander Hamilton) was the Federalist Party.

Jefferson was renowned for being a terrible public speaker due to a speech impediment, although he is certainly regarded as one of the most facile writers ever to hold the office of the presidency. He alone wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence.

He doubled the land size of the United States when he made the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon. Napoleon needed cash to conquer Europe; Jefferson wanted the land to safeguard against a future French invasion and to encourage his vision of American being a land of small independent (yeoman) farmers. The selling price: $15 million.

After his two terms as president, Jefferson retired to his Virginia estate, Monticello. He spent much of his time pursuing his dream of establishing a university. That dream was realized when he founded the University of Virginia.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** Although his closest friend among the founding fathers was James Madison, Jefferson’s most memorable friendship was with John Adams. The friendship developed when they both worked on the committee that was responsible for the Declaration of Independence. Their friendship turned to a bitter rivalry, however, when they joined opposing political parties. They reconciled after both finished their presidencies, and they kept up a steady correspondence. They both died on July 4, 1826 - the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. On the day he died, Adams opened his eyes and whispered his last words: “Thomas Jefferson lives,” he said. Jefferson had died earlier that day.

**What He Said:** “A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.” “Science is my passion, politics my duty.”
John Adams (1735-1826)

Highest Political Office: President (1797-1801)

Other Accomplishments: First vice-president. He helped draft the Declaration of Independence and negotiate the peace agreement with Great Britain to end the Revolutionary War. He served as Minister to Great Britain.

Nicknamed “Atlas of American Independence,” John Adams was a short (5'7”), plump man with an ego as big as his waistline. He felt it was beneath him to shake hands with anyone; he bowed instead. Adams was not alone in this practice, however. George Washington also preferred to bow rather than shake hands.

Born and raised in what is now Quincy, Massachusetts, Adams was a lawyer by trade. He was the longest living American president. He died at the age of 90, in Quincy. Adams was the first president to occupy the White House. The nation moved its capital from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., during his administration.

His Politics: Adams was a Federalist, and, as such, he held a more elitist view of government than his Democratic-Republican rivals.

The first truly defense-minded president, Adams built the U.S. Navy to the point where it could compete with that of any nation.
Probably his most enduring political legacy was that he appointed John Marshall as Supreme Court Chief Justice. His most ignominious political legacy was his signing of the “Alien and Sedition Acts,” which made it a crime to criticize the government (violators could be imprisoned).

Adams was most proud of the fact that he avoided war with France at the turn of the century, in the face of strong public opinion in favor of war. This, along with his perceived overspending on defense, led to his defeat in his re-election campaign.

Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers: Thomas Jefferson was, by turns, both his closest associate and most loathed political enemy. They ended their lives as friends, dying on the same day, 50 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

What He Said: “Let the human mind loose. It must be loosed. It will be loose. Superstition and despotism cannot confine it.”
Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

**Highest Political Office:** Minister to France

**Other Accomplishments:** Franklin was one of the three Americans to sign the peace treaty with England that ended the Revolutionary War. He also helped write the Declaration of Independence, and was the oldest delegate at the Constitutional Convention.

Of the Founding Fathers, Franklin was easily the most unusual character. He made enough money from his publishing business - primarily on receipts from Poor Richard's Almanac - to retire at age 42. He then devoted his life to writing, science, and politics.

Among his many inventions, Franklin created bifocal glasses. He did so because he didn’t like to carry two pairs of glasses with him.

Franklin had one illegitimate son, William, who became the Governor of New Jersey. William supported the British in the Revolution. That move resulted in the permanent estrangement of father and son.

**His Politics:** Franklin’s political activism had peaked long before the American party system fully evolved, but he was philosophically closer to the tenets of the Democratic-Republican party.
He was suspicious of strong central governments and governors, be they kings or presidents. Indeed, Franklin advocated a three-person presidential committee rather than having a single president. Of the proposal to have a one-man president, he said, “The government is likely to be well-administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism.” Nonetheless, in Franklin’s will, he bequeathed his walking stick to President Washington.

Franklin had a restless and ravenous mind. He eschewed normal work patterns, preferring instead to set his own pace, and ignoring appointments if he was interested enough in a conversation. He also possessed the largest private library in America. Not all of his ideas won wide acceptance. A case in point: Franklin’s choice for the national bird was the turkey.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** Thomas Jefferson. When Franklin died, Jefferson implored President Washington to hold a day of mourning. Washington balked, not wishing to set a precedent.

**What He Said:** “Our Constitution is in actual operation. Everything appears to promise that it will last. But in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.” At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention Franklin observed the symbol of the sun at the top of George Washington's chair and mused: “I have the happiness to know it is a rising sun and not a setting sun.”
Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804)

Highest Political Office: Secretary of the Treasury

Other Accomplishments: Along with Madison and John Jay, he authored the Federalist Papers, rallying support for the new Constitution. He led the effort to convene the Constitutional Convention when the nation was verging on anarchy.

Hamilton called for a meeting of all 13 states at Annapolis, Maryland in September, 1786 to discuss the economic situation in the country at that time. However, only five states sent representatives. There were not enough states for a quorum and the conference had no real authority. Undaunted, Hamilton then requested permission from the Congress of the Confederation (under the Articles of Confederation) to invite representatives from the thirteen states to assemble in Philadelphia with the express purpose of “revising” the Articles of Confederation. Behind closed doors and with no real authority, the delegates decided to write an entirely new constitution.

Hamilton was consumed by his passion for a nation built around a strong and fiscally stable central government. He was born out of wedlock in the West Indies, and moved to the colonies at the age of 17. His father, a Scottish trader, went bankrupt when Hamilton was 15, and the boy went to work in a counting house to help support the family.
Fresh out of Columbia University, he organized artillery regiments in New York for the Revolutionary War, and from 1779 to 1781 he was Washington’s chief aide. When Washington assumed the presidency, he named Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury.

Ironically, before Washington was elected president, Hamilton was one of a group of politicians who felt that the U.S. needed a king. The group wrote to Prussia’s Prince Henry and asked if he wanted the job. Before he replied, the group changed its mind.

**His Politics:** Hamilton was the one who most advocated an elitist political vision. He believed that the intellectual aristocracy should rule the nation.

Hamilton’s political legacy is embodied in the Federal Bank. He led the effort to establish the first such bank, which he saw as critical for sustaining the government’s fragile finances. His opponents saw the bank as an evil tool for expanding the power of the federal government, at the expense of the states. Hamilton is regarded as the “Father of the National Debt” because he felt that a national debt was really a “blessing.” The more money the government owed to the people of the country, the more the people had a stake in the success of the country!

When Jefferson ran for president in 1800, he and Aaron Burr (both Democratic-Republicans) tied. The election went to the Federalist-controlled House. Hamilton, founder of the Federalist Party, convinced his colleagues to elect Jefferson over Burr. Burr then campaigned for governor of New York. Again, Hamilton swayed voters against Burr. Finally, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. Fatally wounded by his rival, Hamilton died one day later.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** George Washington

**What He Said:** “The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.”
Highest Political Office: Member, Virginia Constitutional Convention (1776); Delegate, Constitutional Convention (1787)

Other Accomplishments: Helped create the Virginia Bill of Rights and Virginia Constitution.

Although George Mason refused to sign the Constitution, his ideas still had a major effect on the fabric of American political thought. He was one of the richest planters in Virginia and was involved early in his life with western land speculation. Mason served for a brief time in the Virginia House of Burgesses along with his close friend, George Washington. He was more concerned with the types of public duties that did not bring the kind of recognition that his contemporaries were interested in. However, he was one of the most fundamental thinkers of the American Revolution and formed a close philosophical alliance with Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, James Madison, and George Washington.

His Politics: Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence was influenced greatly by Mason’s work on the Virginia bill of rights, and Mason’s ideas also had an impact on the development of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution. He eventually
opposed the Constitution because of the compromise concerning slavery (known as the 3/5 Compromise) and the failure of the delegates to include a Bill of Rights. These objections to the Constitution became the focal point for the anti-federalists during the ratification process. He was chosen the first Senator from Virginia but refused the seat in 1789. Mason has been called the American example of the Enlightenment.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** George Washington, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson

**What He Said:** "It is easy to foresee that there will be much difficulty in organizing a government upon this great scale, and at the same time reserving to the state legislatures a sufficient portion of power for promoting and securing the prosperity and happiness of their respective citizens. Yet, with a proper degree of coolness, liberality, and candour (very rare commodities by the bye) I doubt not but that it may be effected."
Gouverneur Morris (1725-1816)

Highest Political Office: U.S. Minister to England (1790-1791); U.S. Minister to France (1792-1794); United States Senator (1800-1803)

Other Accomplishments: Signer of the Articles of Confederation; Member, Continental Congress (1777-1778); Assistant Minister of Finance (1781-1785); Member of the Constitutional Convention (1787); Chairman of the Erie Canal Commission (1810-1813).

During his lifetime, Gouverneur Morris was a successful politician, diplomat and writer. He was a strong supporter of the federal constitution although he was not a strong supporter of the “power” of the people (he initially opposed the American Revolution because he felt it was controlled by the “mob”). He had a wooden leg due to a carriage accident.

His Politics: He was in favor of senators being chosen for life, significant property qualifications to vote, direct election of the president by the elite qualified voters, and representation in Congress based on taxation. “The mob begin to think and reason. Poor reptiles! They bask in the sun, and ere noon they will bite, depend on it. The gentry begin to fear this.” It has been recorded that Gouverneur Morris spoke more than anyone at the Constitutional Convention (173 times). He was made the chairman of the Committee of Style and was responsible for the “wording” of the Constitution. He took twenty-three proposed resolutions and condensed them into the
seven major articles contained in the Constitution. Morris declined Alexander Hamilton's request to help write the Federalist Papers, and during the “fight” for ratification he played no significant part. After Alexander Hamilton was killed by Aaron Burr in 1804, Morris prepared the eulogy.

Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers: Alexander Hamilton, George Washington

What He Said: "I cannot conceive of a government in which there can exist two supremes."

“I came here (to the Constitutional Convention) as a representative of America. I flatter myself that I came here in some degree as a representative of the whole human race.”
Highest Political Office: United States House of Representatives (1788-1791); United States Senator (1791-1793).

Other Accomplishments: Member, Continental Congress (1774-1781, 1783 and 1784); Helped draft the Declaration of Independence; Helped draft the Articles of Confederation; Was responsible for the Great Compromise (Connecticut Compromise) at the Constitutional Convention.

Sherman was a self-made man, married twice and fathered fifteen children. Before the Revolutionary War he held positions in the Connecticut government in all three branches (legislative, executive, and judicial). He was a political conservative, but strongly favored the American Revolution once it began. Sherman was in support of the colonial boycotts of the 1760’s and was in charge of the New Haven committees of correspondence (organizations that promoted inter-colonial communication). He was not known as a gifted speaker, but he toiled hard in various committees in order to make sound and lasting policy. However, at the Constitutional Convention he did speak 138 times on various issues, and only James Madison, James Wilson, and Gouverneur Morris spoke more often. Roger Sherman was the second oldest delegate there (right
behind 81 year old Benjamin Franklin). Thomas Jefferson once remarked, “There is Mr. Sherman of Connecticut, who never said a foolish thing in his life.”

**His Politics:** He was in favor of the President being appointed by the Legislature for a three year term of office. However, his most important accomplishment was the compromise on representation in Congress he suggested that broke the “deadlock” between large and small states. This compromise was called the “Great Compromise”, and it showed the delegates that they could and should compromise in order to accomplish the writing of a new constitution. Thus, the Constitution has been characterized historically as a “bundle of compromises”. He was, however, opposed to a separate “bill of rights” to be added to the Constitution. By the time Sherman served in the United States Congress he was an advocate of the Federalist philosophy. He ended up supporting Alexander Hamilton’s financial program of assumption of state debts, the establishment of a national bank, and enactment of a tariff to help the young nation to stabilize its economy.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** William Johnson

**What He Said:** “The question is, not what rights naturally belong to man, but how they may be most equally and effectually guarded in society.”

“When you are in a minority, talk; when you are in a majority, vote.”
Highest Political Office: Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court

Other Accomplishments: Member, Continental Congress (1775-1777; 1782; 1783; 1785-1787); Signer of the Declaration of Independence; First Professor of Law at Philadelphia College (1790).

James Wilson was an early supporter of the American Revolution and gained much notoriety with the publication of his “Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament”. However, he became very conservative in his later years and was the target of public indignation. He was born in Scotland, came to New York during the time of the Stamp Act (1765), and eventually studied law under John Dickinson in Pennsylvania. He eventually became the first professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania in 1791.

It was said of James Wilson that “when Wilson speaks, he wastes no time and considers no man’s feelings.”

His Politics: He emerged as a political leader after the American Revolutionary War. As a member of the Congress of the Confederation (1783; 1785-1786) under the Articles of Confederation, he was strongly in favor of an amendment to permit the government the power to tax.
He was a strong supporter of a republican form of government in which the people choose the representatives in government, and was in favor of the "power" of the people during a time period when many of the political visionaries did not believe in democracy. The democracy that we know today did not really take shape until the 1820’s with the advent of Andrew Jackson. Wilson felt that people and their individual rights took priority over those of property rights, and was opposed to slavery. He also believed in the concept of “federalism” in which there was a division of power between the states and national government. However, the final authority ultimately went to the central government. At the Constitutional Convention he was a leader of the many floor debates and a member of the committee chosen to draft the Constitution. He then led the fight for ratification in Pennsylvania, which became the second state to approve the new Constitution.

**Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers:** John Rutledge

**What He Said:** “The government ought to possess not only first the force but secondly the mind or sense of the people at large. The legislature ought to be the most exact transcript of the whole society.”

“Why should a national government be unpopular? Will a citizen of Delaware be degraded by becoming a citizen of the United States?”

“Federal liberty is to states what civil liberty is to individuals ... I do not see the danger of the states being devoured by the national government.” On the contrary, I wish to keep them from devouring the national government.”
Edmund Randolph (1753-1813)

Highest Political Office: U.S. Attorney General and U.S. Secretary of State

Other Accomplishments: Helped draft the constitution for the state of Virginia; Member, Continental Congress (1779-1782); Governor of Virginia (1786-1788); Member, Virginia Ratification Convention; chief counsel for Aaron Burr during his treason trial (1807).

Edmund Randolph graduated from the College of William and Mary and practiced law until the American Revolutionary War disrupted his personal and professional life. At the outbreak of the war in 1775, his father, mother, and sisters moved back to England. Randolph supported the rebellion and served for a short time as an aid to General George Washington, but soon returned to Virginia to become the youngest member of the convention to write Virginia’s state constitution. He then became the mayor of Williamsburg and later the “state’s” attorney general.

His Politics: Randolph’s political experience also involved becoming a member of the Continental Congress, Governor of Virginia, and a delegate to the Annapolis Convention of 1786.

He was chosen to be a delegate to the U.S. Constitutional Convention in 1787, and is best known for presenting a proposal supporting the large states known as the Virginia
Plan. The plan called for a bicameral legislative body and each state represented by population with the first house (representatives) elected by the people and the second house (senators) elected by the first house. The Virginia Plan eventually became part of the Great Compromise or Connecticut Compromise submitted by Roger Sherman. He also wanted a committee of three to act as president. Randolph also served on the Committee on Detail that prepared a first draft of the new constitution. However, because of philosophical differences over the final Constitution, he refused to sign it. He did eventually support its ratification when the agreement was made to include amendments to protect the rights of individuals and the states (Bill of Rights). Randolph referred to the Constitution as “the anchor of our political salvation”.

Closest Associate Among the Founding Fathers: Thomas Jefferson

What He Said: “There are great reasons when persons with limited powers are justified in exceeding them, and a person would be contemptible not to risk it.”

Source for all Founding Fathers biographies: ConstitutionFacts.com,
**Founding Mothers: Women’s Roles in American Independence**

by **Jone Johnson Lewis**

You’ve probably heard of the Founding Fathers. Warren G. Harding, then an Ohio Senator, coined the term in a 1916 speech. He also used it in his 1921 presidential inaugural address. Before that, the people now referred to as Founding Fathers were generally just called “the founders.” These were the people who attended the Continental Congress meetings and signed the Declaration of Independence. The term also refers to the Framers of the Constitution, those who participated in forming and then passing the United States Constitution, and perhaps also those who took an active part in the debates around the Bill of Rights.

But since Warren G. Harding’s invention of the term, the Founding Fathers have generally been assumed to be those who helped form the nation. And in that context, it’s appropriate to also talk about the Founding Mothers: women, often the wives, daughters, and mothers of the men referred to as Founding Fathers, who also played important parts in supporting the separation from England and the American Revolutionary War.

Abigail Adams and Martha Washington, for instance, kept the family farms running for many years while their husbands were off on their political or military quests. And they were supportive in more active ways. Abigail Adams kept up a lively conversation with her husband, John Adams, even urging him to “Remember the Ladies” when asserting human rights of the individual in the new nation. Martha Washington accompanied her husband to winter army encampments, serving as his nurse when he was ill, but also setting an example of frugality for other rebel families.

And other women took more active roles in the founding. Here are some of the women we could consider Founding Mothers of the United States:
If George Washington was the Father of His Country, Martha was the Mother. She ran the family business – the plantation – when he was gone, first during the French and Indian Wars, and then during the Revolution. And she helped set a standard of elegance but simplicity, presiding over receptions in the presidential residences first in New York, then in Philadelphia. But because she opposed him running for the presidency, she did not attend his inauguration.

For additional information on Martha Washington and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/martha-washington-biography-3528101
In her famous letters to her husband during his time at the Continental Congress, she tried to influence John Adams to include women’s rights in the new documents of independence. While John served as a diplomat during the Revolutionary War, she took care of the farm at home, and for three years she joined him overseas. She mostly stayed home and managed the family’s finances during his vice presidency and presidency.

For additional information on Abigail Adams and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/abigail-adams-biography-3525085
Betsy Ross. © Jupiterimages, used with permission

We don’t know for sure that she made the first American flag, but she represented the story of many American women during the Revolution anyway. Her first husband was killed on militia duty in 1776 and her second husband was a sailor who was captured by the British in 1781 and died in prison. So, like many women in wartime, she took care of her child and herself by earning a living – in her case, as a seamstress and flag maker.

For additional information on Betsy Ross and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/betsy-ross-biography-3530269
Married and mother of five sons, Mercy Otis Warren’s brother was very involved in the resistance to British rule, writing the famous line against the Stamp Act, “Taxation without representation is tyranny.” She was probably part of discussions that helped initiate the Committees of Correspondence, and she wrote plays that are considered part of the propaganda campaign to coalesce opposition to the British.

In the early 19th century, she published the first history of the American Revolution. Many of the anecdotes are about people she knew personally.

For additional information on Mercy Otis Warren and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/mercy-otis-warren-biography-3530669
Some women literally fought in the Revolution, even though almost all the soldiers were men. Mary Hays McCauly is known for taking her husband's place loading a cannon at the battle of Monmouth, June 28, 1778. Her story inspired others.

For additional information on Molly Pitcher and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/molly-pitcher-biography-3530670
If the stories of her ride are true, she was the female Paul Revere, riding to warn of an imminent attack on Danbury, Connecticut, by British soldiers.

For additional information on Sybil Ludington and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/sybil-ludington-biography-3530671
Born in Africa and kidnapped into slavery, Phillis was bought by a family who saw to it that she was taught to read, and then to more advanced education. She wrote a poem in 1776 on the occasion of George Washington’s appointment as commander of the Continental Army. She wrote other poems on the subject of Washington, but with the war, interest in her published poetry waned. With the war’s disruption of normal life, she experienced hardships, as did so many other American women and especially African American women of the time.

For additional information on Phillis Wheatley and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/phillis-wheatley-biography-3528281
During the American Revolution, she supported the American side and even wrote a pamphlet about the role of women in wartime. Adams was the first American woman to make her living by writing; she never married and her books, on religion and on the history of New England, supported her.

For additional information on Hannah Adams and her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/hannah-adams-biography-3528782
In addition to her long-forgotten essay "On the Equality of the Sexes," written in 1779 and published in 1780, Judith Sargent Murray—then still Judith Sargent Stevens—wrote about the politics of the new nation of America. They were collected and published as a book in 1798, the first book in America self-published by a woman.

For additional information on Judith Sargent Murray her role as a Founding Mother, visit https://www.thoughtco.com/judith-sargent-murray-3529443

Source: Thought Co., https://www.thoughtco.com/who-were-the-founding-mothers-3530673
Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution

- The U.S. Constitution has 4,400 words. It is the oldest and the shortest written constitution of any government in the world.

- Of the typographical errors in the Constitution, the misspelling of the word "Pensylvania" above the signers' names is probably the most glaring.

- Thomas Jefferson did not sign the Constitution. He was in France during the convention, where he served as the U.S. minister.

- Jacob Shallus, a Pennsylvania General Assembly clerk, "penned" the Constitution for a fee of $30 (approximately $261.45 today). Governor Morris was responsible for the wording of the Constitution. It was stored in various cities until 1952, when it was placed in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. During the daytime, pages one and four of the document are displayed in a bullet-proof case. The case contains helium and water vapor to preserve the paper's quality. At night, the pages are lowered into a vault, behind five-ton doors that are designed to withstand a nuclear explosion. The entire U.S. Constitution is displayed only one day a year, September 17, the anniversary of the day the framers signed the document.

- Thirty-nine men signed the U.S. Constitution.

- James Madison, "the father of the U.S. Constitution," was the first to arrive in Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention. He arrived in February; three months before the convention began, bearing the blueprint for the new U.S. Constitution.

- At least seven constitutional amendments were passed in order to reverse a Supreme Court decision. Some of the notable ones: The Thirteenth Amendment (1865), barring slavery, and the Fifteenth Amendment (1868), protecting the citizenship of African Americans, effectively overturned the Dred Scott v. Sandford decision of 1857. The Sixteenth Amendment (1913) gave Congress the power to levy an income tax, thereby overturning Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co. (1895). And the Twenty-Sixth Amendment (1971) overturned Oregon v. Mitchell (1970) which, among other things, held that Congress could not regulate the voting age in state elections. The amendment set the voting age at 18 years.

- When it came time for the states to ratify the U.S. Constitution, the lack of any bill of rights was the primary sticking point.
Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution (continued)

• The U.S. Constitution does not set forth requirements for the right to vote. As a result, at the outset of the Union, only male property-owners could vote. African Americans were not considered citizens, and women were excluded from the electoral process.

• The Great Compromise saved the Constitutional Convention, and, probably, the Union. Authored by Connecticut delegate Roger Sherman, it called for proportional representation in the House, and one representative per state in the Senate (this was later changed to two.) The compromise passed 5-to-4, with one state, Massachusetts, "divided."

• Patrick Henry was elected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, but declined, because he "smelt a rat."

• Because of his poor health, Benjamin Franklin needed help to sign the U.S. Constitution. As he did so, tears streamed down his face.

• The oldest person to sign the U.S. Constitution was Benjamin Franklin (81). The youngest was Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey (26).

• When the U.S. Constitution was signed, the United States population was 4 million. It is now approximately 325 million. Philadelphia was the nation's largest city, with 40,000 inhabitants.

• The first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution was Delaware, in December, 1787, three months after the framers had adjourned the convention in Philadelphia. When New Hampshire ratified on June 21, 1788, it was the ninth state to do so. By the ratification requirements set forth in Article VII, the U.S. Constitution was now officially established.

• Until the Seventeenth Amendment was ratified in 1913, Senators were chosen by a state's legislators. As a result, the Senate brimmed with men who obtained their positions through political patronage. Finally, under threat of a Constitutional Convention on the matter, Congress proposed this amendment.

• The 14th and 15th Amendments were passed in 1868 and 1870, respectively. Initially meant to preserve personal freedoms of African Americans, they now stand, in large part, for the idea that the U.S. Constitution implies, but does not enumerate, certain fundamental rights for all citizens.
Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution (continued)

- To amend the U.S. Constitution, a proposal must gain the support of two-thirds of the House and Senate, and three-fourths of the states. As a result, of the thousands of proposed amendments, only 27 have passed. Amendments must be proposed either by a two-thirds vote in Congress, or by a Constitutional Convention. Such a convention can only be held if two-thirds of the states' legislatures support it.

Source: http://www.constitutionfacts.com/us-constitution-amendments/fascinating-facts/
The Original 13 British Colonies
In North America
1763-1776

Source: World Atlas
The Original 13 British Colonies
In North America
1763-1776
We the People

Article I

Section 1. All legislative Powers hereby granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty-five Years, and been a Citizen of the United States for seven Years, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and Direct Taxes shall in all Cases, except in Relation to Slaves when included in a Census or Enumeration returned by them, be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding those only in Fortification, three fifths of all other Persons.

The Revenue of the United States shall be managed as will be most for the general Good, subject to the approval of the Executive Power, which will have Power to suggest the Measures. No Tax or Duty shall be laid which may be injurious to Trade or Industry.

No Capitation, or other direct Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration hereinbefore directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another; nor shall Vessels going to, or coming from the Ports of one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Senator or Representative shall, directly or indirectly, receive any Emolument of any Kind whatever from any Person or Corporation, Nor shall they be allowed any COMPENSATION for Services in any Legislative Body.

In all Controversies arising under this Constitution, or between a State and Citizens of another State; in all other Cases before the Supreme Court, when in his Judgment it becomes necessary, the Judge shall have Power to issue writs of Writs of Error and Remand for the Correction of Errors, and for the Union of States, when the same shall be presented by the United States Attorney General, and a Justice of the United States Supreme Court in such Cases shall have Power to determine the same, as near as may be, according to the Rules of the Common Law.

Section 3. The Congress shall have Power to establish a uniform Rules of Naturalization, and the Uniformity of the Laws on the Subjects prescribed in this Constitution, shall be so far as may be consistent with the Constitution, the Rule of Naturalization.
The Sections of the U.S. Constitution

The Preamble

The first sentence of the U.S. Constitution is called the preamble. It reads:

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity. Do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The preamble does not give or limit powers. It explains the purpose of the U.S. Constitution and sets the stage for the 7 articles and the first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, which follow.

The first three words of the preamble, "We the People," may be the three most important words in the history of our nation.

The Articles

The main body of the U.S. Constitution is made up of seven articles. The Articles explain how the government works. They also carefully describe the rules for electing government officials, Members of Congress and the President. The U.S. Constitution is based on the separation of powers. It divides power between the three separate branches of the government. They are the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. The U.S. Constitution also separates powers between the national and state governments.

Article I - The role of the legislative branch is discussed in Article I. The legislative branch includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. Together they are called Congress. Members of the House of Representatives are often referred to as members of Congress, but Senators are always called Senators.

Article II - Rules for how the President and the Vice President are elected are defined in Article II. It also defines the responsibilities and powers of the President and the executive branch.

Article III - The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and lower courts. Article III states that Supreme Court Justices (judges) can hold office for life, unless they are removed, impeached, or convicted of a crime. It also says that anyone accused of committing a federal crime has the right to a trial by jury.
Sections of the U.S. Constitution (continued)

**Article IV** - Article IV discusses the relationship between states and the national or federal government. It also outlines the rules for admitting new states to the Union.

**Article V** - The Founding Fathers realized that over time, the government might need to make changes, called amendments, to the U.S. Constitution. Two thirds of both houses of Congress must agree to propose an amendment. It takes the approval by three fourths of the states to make an amendment become law.

**Article VI** - Article VI states that the U.S. Constitution is the highest law of the land. Federal and state officers and judges must uphold the U.S. Constitution.

**Article VII** - The names of the men who signed and ratified, or approved the Constitution, are in Article VII. It confirms the establishment of the U.S. Constitution.

**Bill of Rights**

The United States Constitution has 27 Amendments. The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was ratified, or approved, in 1791. It outlines the basic rights and freedoms of American citizens.

**Amendment 1** - The First Amendment protects the rights of every American. It defines the freedoms of religion, speech, and press. Most Americans believe that the First Amendment guarantees their most important rights.

**Amendment 2** - The Second Amendment guarantees Americans the right to bear arms, or own guns.

**Amendment 3** - The Third Amendment prevents the government from forcing citizens to shelter soldiers in their homes.

**Amendment 4** - The Fourth Amendment protects the privacy of American citizens. It prohibits, or prevents, unnecessary or unreasonable searches of a person's property.

**Amendment 5** - In the Fifth Amendment, all Americans are guaranteed the right to a fair and legal trial. It also protects someone from testifying against him- or herself under oath.

**Amendment 6** - A right to a speedy trial is guaranteed in the Sixth Amendment.
Sections of the U.S. Constitution (continued)

Amendment 7 - The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a trial by jury in civil, or private, legal cases where damages are more than $20. Civil cases solve disagreements between citizens.

Amendment 8 - Unreasonable bail or fines and cruel and unusual punishment are prohibited in the Eighth Amendment.

Amendment 9 - The Ninth Amendment recognizes that Americans have additional rights that are not listed in the U.S. Constitution.

Amendment 10 - The Tenth Amendment says that the powers not given to the United States government by the U.S. Constitution belong to the states or to the people.

Other Amendments were added to the Constitution over the years, and more may be added later. The U.S. Constitution currently contains 27 amendments. Below are some of the highlights of the 17 Amendments added after the Bill of Rights was ratified.

The Thirteenth Amendment became law in 1865. It makes slavery and other forms of forced labor, illegal.

Ratified in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment stated that no citizen should be denied the right to vote on the basis of race or color.

In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote.

Source: adapted from the National Constitution Center, www.constitutioncenter.org.
Preamble to the
United States Constitution

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

NOTE: This copy includes the original spelling of “defense” and the original capitalization.
Preamble

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I

Section 1.

All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states, and the electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature. No person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen. Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the state of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chose three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any state, the executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies. The House of Representatives shall choose their speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.
Section 3.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each state, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the Senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the legislature of any state, the executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.

No person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present.

Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States: but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.

Section 4.

The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing Senators.
The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 5.

Each House shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties as each House may provide.

Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two thirds, expel a member.

Each House shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either House on any question shall, at the desire of one fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

Neither House, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section 6.

The Senators and Representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any speech or debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time: and no person holding any office under the United States, shall be a member of either House during his continuance in office.

Section 7.

All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other Bills.
Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the persons voting for and against the bill shall be entered on the journal of each House respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their adjournment prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

Every order, resolution, or vote to which the concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the same shall take effect, hall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the case of a bill.

Section 8.

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures;

To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States;

To establish post offices and post roads;
To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries;

To constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offenses against the law of nations;

To declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water;

To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years;

To provide and maintain a navy;

To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the state in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings;--And

To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

Section 9.

The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one
thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.

No bill of attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No capitation, or other direct, tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any state.

No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one state over those of another: nor shall vessels bound to, or from, one state, be obliged to enter, clear or pay duties in another.

No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law; and a regular statement and account of receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state.

Section 10.

No state shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marque and reprisal; coin money; emit bills of credit; make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

No state shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing it's inspection laws: and the net produce of all duties and imposts, laid by any state on imports or exports, shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress.

No state shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops, or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another state, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.
Article II (2)

Section 1.

The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same term, be elected, as follows:

Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

The electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for President; and if no person have a majority, then from the five highest on the list the said House shall in like manner choose the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each state having one vote; A quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the Vice President.

The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors, and the day on which they shall give their votes; which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty five years, and been fourteen Years a resident within the United States.
In case of the removal of the President from office, or of his death, resignation, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by law provide for the case of removal, death, resignation or inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what officer shall then act as President, and such officer shall act accordingly, until the disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated times, receive for his services, a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2.

The President shall be commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices, and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law: but the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.

The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.

Section 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and
expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

Section 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil officers of the United States, shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

Article III (3)

Section 1.

The judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The judges, both of the supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated times, receive for their services, a compensation, which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

Section 2.

The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under this Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made, under their authority;--to all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls;--to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction;--to controversies to which the United States shall be a party;--to controversies between two or more states;--between a state and citizens of another state;--between citizens of different states;--between citizens of the same state claiming lands under grants of different states, and between a state, or the citizens thereof, and foreign states, citizens or subjects.

In all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and those in which a state shall be party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. In all the other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Congress shall make.

The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury; and such trial shall be held in the state where the said crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any state, the trial shall be at such place or places as the Congress may by law have directed.
Section 3.

Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted.

Article IV (4)

Section 1.

Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof.

Section 2.

The citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states.

A person charged in any state with treason, felony, or other crime, who shall flee from justice, and be found in another state, shall on demand of the executive authority of the state from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the state having jurisdiction of the crime.

No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

Section 3.

New states may be admitted by the Congress into this union; but no new states shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other state; nor any state be formed by the junction of two or more states, or parts of states, without the consent of the legislatures of the states concerned as well as of the Congress.
The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state.

Section 4.

The United States shall guarantee to every state in this union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened) against domestic violence.

Article V (5)

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress; provided that no amendment which may be made prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article; and that no state, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

Article VI (6)

All debts contracted and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.

This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.
Article VII (7)

The ratification of the conventions of nine states, shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the states so ratifying the same.

Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the states present the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the independence of the United States of America the twelfth. In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Signatories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Washington</td>
<td>Presidt. and deputy from Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts:</td>
<td>Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Wm. Saml. Johnson, Roger Sherman</td>
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<td>New York</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton</td>
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<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Wil. Livingston, David Brearly, Wm. Paterson, Jona. Dayton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>B. Franklin, Thomas Mifflin, Robt. Morris, Geo. Clymer, Thos. FitzSimons,</td>
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<td>Jared Ingersoll, James Wilson, Gouv Morris</td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
<td>James McHenry, Dan of St Thos. Jenifer, Danl Carroll</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>John Blair, James Madison Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Wm. Blount, Richd. Dobbs Spaight, Hu Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>J. Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney, Pierce Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>William Few, Abr Baldwin</td>
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Amendments to the Constitution of the United States

Amendment I (1791)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II (1791) (2)

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III (1791) (3)

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV (1791) (4)

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V (1791) (5)

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI (1791) (6)

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses
against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

**Amendment VII (1791) (7)**

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

**Amendment VIII (1791) (8)**

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

**Amendment IX (1791) (9)**

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Amendment X (1791) (10)**

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

**Amendment XI (1798) (11)**

The judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by citizens of another state, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

**Amendment XII (1804) (12)**

The electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate;--The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted;--
the person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

Amendment XIII (1865) (13)

Section 1.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV (1868) (14)

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.
Section 2.

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such state, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such state.

Section 3.

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any state, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any state legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any state, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4.

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any state shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5.

The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
Amendment XV (1870) (15)

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XVI (1913) (16)

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census of enumeration.

Amendment XVII (1913) (17)

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each state, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislatures.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any state in the Senate, the executive authority of such state shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, that the legislature of any state may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

Amendment XVIII (1919) (18)

Section 1.

After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.
Section 2.

The Congress and the several states shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several states, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the states by the Congress.

Amendment XIX (1920) (19)

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XX (1933) (20)

Section 1.

The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Section 2.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3.

If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified,
declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

Section 4.

The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5.

Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states within seven years from the date of its submission.

Amendment XXI (1933) (21)

Section 1.

The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2.

The transportation or importation into any state, territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several states, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the states by the Congress.
Amendment XXII (1951) (22)

Section 1.

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

Section 2.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states within seven years from the date of its submission to the states by the Congress.

Amendment XXIII (1961) (23)

Section 1.

The District constituting the seat of government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a state, but in no event more than the least populous state; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the states, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a state; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.
Amendment XXIV (1964) (24)

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXV (1967) (25)

Section 1.

In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

Section 2.

Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

Section 3.

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Section 4.

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.
Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

Amendment XXVI (1971) (26)

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXVII (1992) (27)

No law varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives shall take effect until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.
Summary of the Bill Of Rights

The United States Constitution has 27 Amendments. The first 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was ratified, or approved, in 1791. It outlines the basic rights and freedoms of American citizens. A summary of the first ten amendments follows.

**Amendment 1** - The First Amendment protects the rights of every American. It defines the freedoms of religion, speech, and press. Most Americans believe that the First Amendment guarantees their most important rights.

**Amendment 2** - The Second Amendment guarantees Americans the right to bear arms, or own guns.

**Amendment 3** - The Third Amendment prevents the government from forcing citizens to shelter soldiers in their homes.

**Amendment 4** - The Fourth Amendment protects the privacy of American citizens. It prohibits, or prevents, unnecessary or unreasonable searches of a person's property.

**Amendment 5** - In the Fifth Amendment, all Americans are guaranteed the right to a fair and legal trial. It also protects someone from testifying against him- or herself under oath.

**Amendment 6** - A right to a speedy trial is guaranteed in the Sixth Amendment.

**Amendment 7** - The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a trial by jury in civil, or private, legal cases where damages are more than $20. Civil cases solve disagreements between citizens.

**Amendment 8** - Unreasonable bail or fines and cruel and unusual punishment are prohibited in the Eighth Amendment.

**Amendment 9** - The Ninth Amendment recognizes that Americans have additional rights that are not listed in the U.S. Constitution.

**Amendment 10** - The Tenth Amendment says that the powers not given to the United States government by the U.S. Constitution belong to the states or to the people.
Lesson Plans and Classroom Activities for the Elementary Classroom

• Rules and Laws Protect Individual Rights and Property – Primary

• The U.S. Constitution – The Supreme Law of the United States – Primary

• The U.S. Constitution and Flag Activity - Primary

• The U.S. Constitution – The Supreme Law of the United States – Intermediate

• Matching Game – Primary and Intermediate

• The Biography of James Madison, the Father of the U.S. Constitution - Intermediate

• The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution – Intermediate

• What Responsibilities Accompany Our Rights? – Intermediate

• Creating A Classroom Constitution – Intermediate
CONSTITUTION DAY AND CIVICS DAY ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Primary Grades

TITLE: Rules and Laws Protect Individual Rights and Property

OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will discuss how rules and laws protect their individual rights at home, school, and in the community.

2. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

SUGGESTED TIME: 30 minutes

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

TEACHER’S NOTE: This lesson provides an opportunity to introduce the importance of the U.S. Constitution to younger students by presenting the concepts of rights and personal property through real-world scenarios. The lessons that follow build on the basic concepts introduced in this brief lesson.

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to name or list items that they or their parents own (e.g., house, car, clothes, toys). Explain that these items are called personal property and that they have the right to own them. Rules (laws) protect the right to own property and to keep people from taking what does not belong to them. As citizens, we all have the responsibility to respect these laws.

2. Read the scenario below to students:

   **Scenario #1**: It’s the first day of school and you just put all of your new school supplies in your desk. You spent Saturday morning shopping for the supplies with your family and you’re excited about getting your favorite binder, pens and other supplies. But, when you come back to your classroom after lunch, you see a classmate take your new binder from your desk.

3. Discuss the following questions:

   - What would you do if this really happened?
• Do you think it’s right or fair that someone can take your things from you without your permission? Why or why not?

• What are some rules in your classroom that help protect your personal property?

4. After discussing the scenario, explain to students that their classroom rules help to protect their personal property and other rights. Point out specific classroom rules that reinforce the importance of maintaining respect for the rights of others. Remind students that it is not right for someone to take another person’s possessions. Tell students that, as their teacher, you would help them in a situation such as this.

5. To further reinforce the importance of the protections (rules and laws) in place to protect personal property and the importance of being a good citizen and responsible person, read the following second scenario to students.

   Scenario #2: A friend of yours received a brand new bike for his birthday. He was so excited to get this beautiful bike. He showed his new bike to you and to a couple of other boys and girls. Later, you saw one of the boys take the bike without asking and hide it in his garage.

6. Discuss the following questions:

   • Do you think it’s right and fair that someone can take things that do not belong to them? Why or why not?

   • What would you do if this really happened to your friend? Would you be a good citizen and responsible person by telling a parent or other adult what you saw happen?

   • Are there laws and rules that protect your personal property?

7. Explain that laws have been established to protect the rights and property of all Americans. We have a document called the Constitution of the United States that provides special rules called laws for all of us and for our government. The U.S. Constitution is the supreme (highest) law of the land (nation).

8. Show students the image of the U.S. Constitution found in the Background section of this instructional resource guide.
9. Point out that the U.S. Constitution also includes the Bill of Rights that provides us with many rights and freedoms, including the protection of personal property. Explain that all citizens in the United States have certain rights just because they live here and these rights are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and its amendments. Emphasize that rules help protect a person’s rights.

**TEACHER’S NOTE:** For older students, you may want to provide a copy of the Bill of Rights and discuss Amendments III and IV as they apply to private and personal property. (A copy of the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, is provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide.)

10. End the lesson by reviewing key vocabulary terms: the Constitution of the United States, Bill of Rights, personal property, and rights. Explain that many countries in the world do not fully protect the rights and freedoms of their citizens. Also review how classroom rules help protect students’ individual rights. Use specific examples to demonstrate this.

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGY:** Classroom discussion

**MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED:** Copy of the scenarios (provided in the lesson plan); image of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide); Bill of Rights (optional; provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide)

**SOURCE:** Adapted from Junior Achievement
GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Primary Grades

TITLE: The U.S. Constitution – The Supreme Law of the United States

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS.

1. The student will recognize the importance of rules and laws to a community and nation.

2. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

3. The student will recognize that the U.S. Constitution protects the individual rights of citizens.

4. The student will identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. To illustrate the importance of rules, have students list and discuss school and classroom rules. Ask: Why do we have classroom and school rules? Do they help us get along and work together? Do they help us remember what is right and fair? Remind students that the class and school rules help them be safe so they can learn and have fun at school.

2. Explain that laws are special rules that all people in a community or country know must be followed and obeyed. Laws help us remain safe and free.

3. Ask students: What are rights? Have students share what they think rights are. Tell students that rights are protections that people have just because they are alive. Ask students to name some of the rights we have as citizens.

4. Show the image of the U.S. Constitution provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide. Identify the document, and tell students the U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the United States. Explain that “supreme” mean the highest law in the nation. The U.S. Constitution also protects our rights. The U.S. Constitution was written over two hundred years ago and was signed
on September 17, 1787.

5. Read aloud the document entitled, “The United States Constitution” (provided).

Possible Discussion Questions and Answers:

- What is a law? (A law is a set of rules we all must live by. We must obey laws.)

- What’s the supreme or highest law in the United States? (The U.S. Constitution is the highest law of the land.)

- What does the U.S. Constitution describe? (It describes how our government works.)

- What are the three branches or parts to the U.S. government? (The three branches or parts are the executive branch (The President), the legislative branch (Congress), and the judicial branch (the courts).)

- Why did the framers add a Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution? (Because some people were afraid that the U.S. Constitution did not protect the individual rights of people.)

6. Re-examine the image of the U.S. Constitution. As closure, read aloud “The Constitution Poem” (provided).

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Class discussion and participation

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Reading on the U.S. Constitution (provided); image of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide); The Constitution poem (provided)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: Make a list of important rights and freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. (e.g., freedom of speech, assembly, press, and religion; the right to vote). Have students find or draw pictures that illustrate one or more basic rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

SOURCE: adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
The United States Constitution

The Basics

Laws are set of rules that we live by. The U.S. Constitution is the highest or supreme law in the United States. The U.S. Constitution describes how the government works. It establishes the office of the President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court.

The Bill of Rights is also an important part of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights lists many rights of the people, like freedom of speech and religion. Rights are protections that all people have just because they are alive. By listing the rights, everyone knows these rights are special. They cannot be taken away.

History

The U.S. Constitution was written in 1787. It is over 200 years old. In 1787, a group of men met to write the Constitution. They did not like the way the new country was moving ahead. They made the country stronger by creating the U.S. Constitution. We call these men The Founding Fathers. Some of the Founding Fathers are very famous. George Washington was a Founding Father. So was Ben Franklin and James Madison. The Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia during a hot summer. They had a lot of disagreements about how the country should move forward. In the end, they agreed to the words in the U.S. Constitution. They knew they had to agree. If they did not agree, the new nation might fail.
The United States Constitution continued

After the Founding Fathers wrote the U.S. Constitution, they asked the states to approve it. It took some time, but all the states did approve it.

Some people did not like the U.S. Constitution. Some were afraid because it did not do enough to protect the rights of the people. It had no bill of rights. Promises were made to add a bill of rights. After the Constitution passed, the Bill of Rights was added. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments or changes to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights is very important. The Bill of Rights protects many rights of the people.

The U.S. Constitution is the highest or supreme law in our nation. It helps our nation remain strong and free. It protects our citizens. It outlines our rights. The U.S. Constitution is important for all Americans.

Source: Adapted from http://www.usconstitution.net/constkidsK.html
The Constitution Poem
by Teri Delich

The Constitution is the law,
The highest in the land.

And everyone in the U.S.A.
Is expected to obey.

The president, the Congress, and the judges too,
All have different jobs and know just what to do.

They all work together for the rights we share—
So we can be free and the rules be fair.

Now—
Put your hands together,
Shout a hip-hip-hooray
For the Framers of this law
On Constitution Day!

Source: Poem from the lesson plans developed by the Center for Civic Education for Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Primary Grades

TITLE: The U.S. Constitution and Flag Activity

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS.

1. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

2. The student will identify important facts about the U.S. Constitution and its history.

3. The student will recognize symbols and individuals that represent American constitutional democracy.

4. The student will conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.(FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Review the information covered in the previous lesson entitled, “The U.S. Constitution – The Supreme Law of the United States,” including the image of the U.S. Constitution. If necessary, re-read the overview of the U.S. Constitution from the previous lesson.

2. Share the following explanation of the states that participated in the writing of the new U.S. Constitution:

   Today, there are fifty states in the United States. When the Constitution was created over 200 years ago, there were only thirteen states. Twelve states were represented at the Philadelphia Convention: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Rhode Island did not send a representative to the convention.
Show students the location of the states that participated in the Constitutional Convention. (Maps of the 13 original colonies/states are found in the Background section of this instructional resource guide.)

3. Explain that students will be creating a flag that represents the first 13 states, including Rhode Island. The flag will also help us learn some important facts about the U.S. Constitution and its history.

4. As a class, and using the materials provided with this lesson plan, create the flag poster as follows:

   a. Create a large flag template on a classroom white board or on a large poster board. (See the template provided.)

   b. Distribute the thirteen fun fact stars. (These can have the fun facts already printed on them, or you can have the students write assigned facts on the stars.)

   c. Distribute the thirteen red and white state strips (Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Georgia, and Rhode Island).

   d. Have students come up to the teacher-made flag poster one at a time, read their fun facts, and place them on the poster to form a circle of thirteen stars.

   e. Other students will come up to the teacher-made flag poster, read the name of the state on his or her stripe, and place it on the poster to begin the stripe pattern.

   f. Continue alternating between stars and colored stripes until the flag poster is complete.

   g. Discuss the flag as a whole and how it represents what Americans live for based on the laws of the U.S. Constitution.

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGY:** Participation in discussion and flag activity.

**MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED:**

a. Maps of the first 13 colonies/states (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide);
b. Image of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide);

c. Thirteen flag star cut-outs (template provided);

d. Constitution Fun Facts for the Flag Activity (provided);

e. Seven strips of red construction paper, with the name of one of the thirteen original states written on each;

f. Six strips of white construction paper, with the name of one of the thirteen original states written on each;

g. White poster board with a blue construction paper rectangle glued to the top left-hand corner to represent where the stars should be on a flag; and

h. One Constitution Fun Flag – Blank (provided)

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:** Distribute individual copies of the Constitution Fun Flag Worksheet for students to color at home.

**SOURCE:** Lesson and flag template adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Flag Star Cut-Outs
Use the facts below to fill in the stars.

The U.S. Constitution is the highest or supreme law of the land.

The U.S. Constitution creates the office of the president, the Congress, and the courts.

Rights are things that all people have just because they are alive.

The U.S. Constitution was written more than two hundred years ago.

The Founding Fathers were a group of men who wrote the U.S. Constitution.

The first ten amendments (changes) to the U.S. Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights.

The Congress makes the laws, and the people elect the members of Congress.

The president enforces the laws.

The courts decide what the law means when there are questions about it.

The U.S. Constitution was created so that all people would be treated fairly.

The states worked to create the U.S. Constitution.

Rhode Island was not represented at the Philadelphia Convention.

The U.S. Constitution is a basic plan that helps people live together in peace and happiness.
CONSTITUTION DAY AND CITIZENSHIP DAY ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Intermediate Grades

TITLE: The U.S. Constitution – The Supreme Law of the United States

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS. Objectives that support the Tested Benchmarks for the 7th Grade End-of-Course Exam (EOC) in Civics are noted with TB.

1. The student will recognize the importance of rules and laws to a community and nation.

2. The student will identify how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the Constitution. (TB)

3. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

4. The student will recognize that the U.S. Constitution protects the individual rights of citizens.

5. The student will explain the viewpoints of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists regarding the ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights. (TB)

6. The student will identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. To illustrate the importance of rules, have students list and discuss school and classroom rules. Ask: Why do we have classroom and school rules? Do they help us get along and work together? Do they help us remember what is right and fair? Remind students that the class and school rules help them be safe so they can learn and have fun at school.

2. Explain that laws are special rules that all people in a community or country know must be followed and obeyed. Laws are enforced and help protect the “many from the few.” Laws help us remain safe and free.
3. Ask students: What are rights? Have students share what they think rights are. Tell students that rights are protections that people have just because they are alive. Ask students to name some of the rights we have as U.S. citizens.

4. Show the image of the U.S. Constitution provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide. Identify the document, and tell students the U.S. Constitution is the supreme or highest law of the United States. The U.S. Constitution also protects our individual rights. The U.S. Constitution was written over two hundred years ago and was signed on September 17, 1787.

5. Assign the reading of the document entitled, ‘The United States Constitution” (provided).

6. Have student write and/or discuss the questions regarding the reading (provided).

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGY:** Class discussion and participation

**MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED:** Reading and questions on the U.S. Constitution (provided); image of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide).

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:** Make a list of important rights and freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. (e.g., freedom of speech, assembly, press, and religion; the right to vote). Have students find or draw pictures that illustrate one or more basic rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

The United States Constitution

The U.S. Constitution has served as "the Supreme (highest) Law of the Land" in our nation for more than two centuries. It is the world's oldest written constitution still in use.

The U.S. Constitution is a system of laws and beliefs that defines the rights of American citizens. It also outlines what the government can and cannot do. It further provides the framework for the national government. It also divides responsibilities between the national government and the state governments.

One of the important ideas or principles on which the U.S. Constitution is based is the separation of powers between the three branches of the federal government. The legislative branch (Congress) has the power to create laws. The executive branch (headed by the president) has the power to enforce laws. The judicial branch (the Supreme Court and other federal courts) has the power to determine if laws are "unconstitutional."

Why the Constitution Was Written?

When the United States won its independence from England in 1781, most Americans felt a stronger loyalty to their state rather than the new United States. Most people did not wish to create a strong national government that had too much power. They had just fought a war to free themselves from such a government. The nation's leaders organized the new American government under the Articles of Confederation. The Articles gave each state more power than the national government. The main purpose of the Articles was to establish a way the states could co-operate if they needed to defend themselves against a foreign enemy.

In 1786, leaders in Virginia passed a resolution calling for delegates from the 13 states to meet in Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss the nation's problems and to make the government more effective. Only twelve delegates (representatives) from five states attended this Annapolis Convention, so the delegates decided to hold another meeting the following year.
The United States Constitution continued

The Constitutional Convention

On May 25, 1787, delegates from twelve of the states (all except Rhode Island) met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention. In attendance were many talented scholars, philosophers, war leaders, and politicians. These men are now called the Founding Fathers or Framers. They included George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton helped organize the Constitutional Convention. Gouverneur Morris from Pennsylvania headed up the committee that actually wrote the U.S. Constitution. George Washington, from Virginia, was president of the convention. James Madison, also from Virginia, earned the nickname "Father of the Constitution" because his brilliant ideas kept the convention moving forward when problems developed.

At the meetings, a major argument developed between the delegates of the large and small states as how to be fair in sharing power. States with large populations supported the Virginia Plan. The plan was designed to give states with large populations a larger share of decision-making power. States with smaller populations supported the New Jersey Plan. This plan said every state would have the same representation within the government.

The convention came to a standstill until the delegates from Connecticut suggested the Great Compromise. In this plan, a two-house legislature or Congress was suggested. The House of Representatives would be elected according to the size of the state’s population. The Senate would have equal representation from each state no matter what its size. Once this compromise was made, the delegates agreed on most of the remaining issues.

On September 17, 1787, the U.S. Constitution was signed by 39 of the original 55 delegates. A few had already left for home. Three delegates did not sign because they doubted the new U.S. Constitution would work.
The United States Constitution continued

Ratifying the U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution was signed by most of the delegates who created it, but at least 9 of the 13 the states still had to ratify or approve it. Delaware was the first state to approve the U.S. Constitution. But the remaining drive for ratification was not easy.

Those who supported the U.S. Constitution were known as Federalists. They started a campaign in support of the U.S. Constitution by publishing essays in New York newspapers called The Federalist Papers. People who opposed the U.S. Constitution were known as Anti-Federalists. They worked to defeat ratification. They believed the U.S. Constitution would make the national government too powerful. Others argued that the document did not contain a bill of rights, which would guarantee citizens certain privileges that the government could never take away from them. In response to the opposition, John Hancock from Massachusetts proposed that a bill of rights be added as the first group of amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Ratification in Massachusetts and almost all the other states depended on the understanding that a bill of rights would be the new government's first job.

On June 21, 1788, the U.S. Constitution went into effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the document. New York and Virginia followed soon after.

Amending the Constitution

The first Congress to meet under the new U.S. Constitution met in New York City on March 4, 1789. The bill of rights was proposed and the new government began to change, or amend, the document.

In 1791, the first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were added to the U.S. Constitution. These ten amendments define and protect the rights of the American people. In total, 27 amendments have been made to the U.S. Constitution.

Source: Adapted from an article in Grolier (2003)
Questions on the U.S. Constitution

Name: ______________________________________________________________________

1. List three things the U.S. Constitution does:
   a. _________________________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________________________

2. What are the three branches of the national government? Describe the responsibility of each of the three branches.
   a. _________________________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________________________

3. What plan was the original U.S. government organized under? Why was this government too weak to be effective?

4. What was the purpose of the Constitutional Convention in 1787?
Questions on the U.S. Constitution (continued)

5. Who served as president of the Convention? Who is known as the “Father of the U.S. Constitution”? Why did he earn this name?

6. Describe the argument that occurred between the large and small states at the Convention. Describe the compromise that settled the argument.

7. Describe the efforts made by the Federalists and Anti-Federalist during the time before the U.S. Constitution was ratified?

8. What are the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution called?
GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Primary and Intermediate Grades

TITLE: Matching Game

OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will recognize key images/symbols related to the U.S. Constitution, rights, and early U.S. history.

2. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

TEACHER’S NOTE: This game may be played by either primary or intermediate students. Adapt the lesson as needed to make it grade and age-appropriate.

1. Review the introductory information on the U.S. Constitution from previous lessons.

   Show the image of the U.S. Constitution provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide. Identify the document, and tell students the U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the United States. Explain that “supreme” mean the highest law in the nation. The U.S. Constitution also protects our rights. The U.S. Constitution was written over two hundred years ago and was signed on September 17, 1787.

2. Review or re-read aloud the age-appropriate reading entitled, “The United States Constitution.” (Primary and intermediate readings were provided with previous lessons.)

   Possible Discussion Questions and Answers:

   • What is a law? (A law is a set of rules we all must live by. We must obey laws.)
• What’s the supreme or highest law in the United States? *(The U.S. Constitution is the highest law of the land.)*

• What does the U.S. Constitution describe? *(It describes how our government works.)*

• What are the three branches or parts to the U.S. government? *(The three branches or parts are the executive branch (The President), the legislative branch (Congress), and the judicial branch (the courts).)*

• Why did the framers add a Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution? *(Because some people were afraid that the U.S. Constitution did not protect the individual rights of people.)*

3. Explain that in today’s lesson, students will play a matching game. They will look at pictures of important people, places, and events in our history that help tell the story of our Constitution and our country.

**TEACHER’S NOTES:**

**PREPARING FOR THE MATCHING GAME:**

• The game is best played by 4-5 student groups. If time and materials are limited, the game may be played as a whole group activity.

• Create 4-5 game boards either on large sheets of butcher paper or on the white board. If playing the game as a whole group activity, use the white board to create one game board. A template game board is provided with this lesson.

• Print one set of matching game pieces (i.e., images/pictures) for each of the 4-5 groups or one set if playing the matching game as a whole group activity. The matching game pieces (pictures/images) are provided.

• Possible answers to the Matching Game are also provided.

**RULES OF THE MATCHING GAME:**

• Explain to students that the game board is divided into the following categories: American Symbols, The Constitution, Early American Leaders and Founding Fathers, and Our Rights. *(Teacher explains and gives examples of each category.)*
• Explain to students that individual students will draw one matching game piece (image/picture) from the stack and decide where it best belongs on the game board; i.e., which category the picture represents. (Teacher and students demonstrates with one or two game cards for practice. It is possible for some matching game pictures to be placed in more than one category. See the possible answers provided with this lesson.)

4. Play the matching game. After students have played for ten minutes, have them clean up the game and settle down into their seats.

5. As closure, show each picture to the students, and have them describe something that they have learned about that image.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Classroom discussion and participation in the matching game.

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Readings on the “United States Constitution” (provided for both primary and intermediate students in a previous lesson); Matching Game Board (template provided); Matching Game images/pictures (provided); Matching Game Answers (provided)

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Have students find or draw additional pictures related to the categories included in the Matching Game (American Symbols, The Constitution, Early American Leaders and Founding Fathers, and Our Rights.)

SOURCE: Adapted from a lesson idea developed by the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Matching Game Board (Template)

**TEACHER’S NOTE:** To play the matching game, students select a matching game piece (image/picture) and place it on the board under the category they feel is the best match. For example, a picture of the Statute of Liberty would best be placed under American Symbols. A picture depicting voting would best be placed under the category of Our Rights. In some instances, matching pieces may be placed under more than one category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Symbols</th>
<th>The Constitution</th>
<th>Early American Leaders and Founding Fathers</th>
<th>Our Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching Game Picture</td>
<td>Correct Category or Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Flag</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Liberty</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle Sam</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald Eagle</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House</td>
<td>Symbols or Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Monument</td>
<td>Symbols or Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberty Bell</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt. Rushmore</td>
<td>Symbols or Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>Leaders or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>Constitution or Leaders (Note: Jefferson did not attend the Constitutional Convention.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Franklin</td>
<td>Leaders or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Adams</td>
<td>Leaders or Constitution (Note: Adams did not attend the Constitutional Convention.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison</td>
<td>Leaders or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail Adams</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy Ross</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Constitution</td>
<td>Constitution or Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington/Jefferson/Franklin</td>
<td>Constitution or Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signing of the Constitution</td>
<td>Constitution or Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill of Rights</td>
<td>Constitution or Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Game Picture</td>
<td>Correct Category or Categories</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Amendment (poster held by two boys)</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Vote</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Religion (religious symbols)</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution (The five major world religions. Symbols left to right and top to bottom: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Speech</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom of the Press</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;St&lt;/sup&gt; Amendment List of Rights</td>
<td>Rights or Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bill of Rights

Congress of the United States,

First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Source: http://blogs.northcountrypublicradio.org/allin/files/2013/01/1stamendment.jpg
First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
Exclusive: There is no democracy without press freedom!
Do you know your 1st Amendment Rights?
1) Freedom of Religion
2) Freedom of Speech
3) Freedom of Press
4) Right to Assembly
Right to Petition

Source: https://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/538/flashcards/678538/jpg/1amend.1316095940358.jpg
CONSTITUTION DAY AND
CITIZENSHIP DAY ELEMENTARY
LESSON PLAN

GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Intermediate Grades

TITLE: The Biography of James Madison, the Father of the U.S. Constitution

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS.

1. Identify James Madison as a Founding Father and a leader in developing the U.S. Constitution.

2. Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. (FS)

3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Show students the images of several Founding Fathers (provided).

   Ask students if they can identify any of the Founding Fathers. (Students are more likely to identify George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson; however, many/most will not be able to identify James Madison, the focus of this lesson. NOTE: Neither Thomas Jefferson or John Adams attended the Convention. Jefferson was serving the U.S. in France and Adams was serving the U.S. in Great Britain.)

   TEACHER’S NOTE: Those who made significant intellectual contributions to the Constitution, directly or indirectly, are called the "Founding Fathers" of our country. The term "framers" is sometimes used to specify those who helped "craft" the Constitution. (See the articles entitled, “The American Founding Fathers" and “About the Founding Fathers" found in the Background section of this instructional resource guide.)

2. Explain that in this lesson, students will be reading about the life of James Madison, a very important Founding Father, and a man known as “The Father of the U.S. Constitution.”
3. Define “biography.” (The life story of a person.) Explain the difference between a “biography” and “autobiography.” (The life story of a person written by the person himself.)

4. Pass out copies of the reading and questions entitled, “Biography of James Madison (1751-1836), Father of the U.S. Constitution” (provided).

Define and discuss key social science vocabulary terms/concepts found in the reading including: U.S. Constitution, legislature, American Revolution, Continental Congress, Articles of Confederation, delegate, Constitutional Convention, branches of government, checks and balances, ratify, Federalist Papers, Bill of Rights, War of 1812, Star Spangled Banner.

5. Read aloud and discuss the biography of James Madison. Clarify the vocabulary and concepts presented in the reading.

6. Have students re-read the “Biography of James Madison (1751-1836), Father of the U.S. Constitution” and answer the questions in writing.

7. As closure, review the students’ answers, with additional attention given to the last question regarding Madison’s nickname as the “Father of the Constitution.”

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Discussion and reading/question activity

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Images of Founding Fathers (provided); “Biography of James Madison (1751-1836), Father of the U.S. Constitution” (provided); Questions (provided)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. Find or draw pictures of other Founding Fathers.
2. After reading the biography of Madison, ask students to identify character traits that he exemplified; e.g., leadership, responsibility. Draw or find pictures that represent these character traits.

SOURCES: Biography adapted from www.ducksters.com and www.enchantedlearning.com; all images of Framers found on Google at https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RNLS_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbnid=v86dVdNvR8IJM&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WiAodExMGvA&dpr=1
Portraits of Founding Fathers

George Washington

Source:
https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RLNL_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbnid=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WIaodExMGvA&dpr=1
Portraits of Founding Fathers

Thomas Jefferson

Source:
https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RNLG_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbnid=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WiAodExMGvA&dpr=1
Portraits of Founding Fathers

Benjamin Franklin

Source:
https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RL NLG_enUS556US556&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbs=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WIAoMGvA&dpr=1
Portraits of Founding Fathers

Alexander Hamilton

Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RNLG_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WiAodExMGvA&dpr=1
Founding Fathers

John Adams

Source:
https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RLNLG_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WiAodExMGvA&dpr=1
Portraits of Founding Fathers

James Madison

Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=images+Founding+Fathers&rlz=1C1RLNL_enUS526US526&espv=2&biw=1920&bih=979&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0CB0QsARqFQoTCKeJ7vL2-8YCFY2WIaodExMGvA&dpr=1
Biography of James Madison (1751-1836)
“Father of the U.S. Constitution”

Introduction

James Madison was the fourth president of the United States. However, he is most famous for his work in helping to create the U.S. Constitution. He is known as the “Father of the Constitution.”

Early Years

Madison grew up on a tobacco farm in the colony of Virginia. He had eleven brothers and sisters, although several of them died at a young age. James was a sickly child and liked to stay inside and read. Fortunately, he was very intelligent and did very well in school.

He attended the College of New Jersey which today it is known as Princeton University. He learned a number of languages and studied history and law, as well. He graduated in just two years. After college, Madison went into politics and within a few years became a member of the Virginia legislature. Madison helped write the Virginia Constitution in 1776. Madison and Thomas Jefferson also became close friends at that time.

During the American Revolution (1776-1783)

The thirteen colonies fought for their independence from Great Britain in the American Revolution (1776-1783). During the fight for independence, Madison became a member of the Continental Congress where he represented the colony of Virginia. Here he became an influential member and worked hard to keep the states united in the war for independence against the British.

Working on the U.S. Constitution

After the American Revolution ended, the new United States of America formed a government under the Articles of Confederation. After several years of struggling under the Articles of Confederation, Madison and others believed it was time for the U.S. to create a stronger, more effective government. Delegates or
representatives from the states were asked to attend a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787.

Madison was one of the delegates from Virginia at the Constitutional Convention. Many delegates at the convention only wanted to update the weak Articles of Confederation. Madison disagreed and led the effort to develop a new constitution and a strong federal government. He believed in forming a government composed of three branches – legislative, executive and judicial branches. He also thought it was important for each branch of government to have the ability to check and balance the power of the other branches so that no branch could have too much control. These ideas were included in the new U.S. Constitution written at the Constitutional Convention. Madison also participated in editing the final draft of the U.S. Constitution. Madison’s leadership and ability to solve problems through compromise at the Constitutional Convention earned him the nickname “Father of the Constitution.”

The new Constitution had to be ratified (approved) by the states. The idea of a strong government was not popular with everyone. Some feared a strong government might have too much power. Others worried that the new Constitution did not have a bill of rights to protect the basic freedoms and rights of citizens.

James Madison wrote many essays called the Federalist Papers to help convince states to ratify the Constitution and the new government. These papers described the benefits of a strong and united government.

The Constitution was ratified in 1789 and it became the supreme law of the United States. Madison then went on to serve four terms in the United States House of Representatives. During that time he helped the Bill of Rights get passed into law, protecting the basic rights of citizens. Later, he became the Secretary of State for his friend President Thomas Jefferson.

**James Madison’s Presidency**

James Madison was elected as the fourth president of the United States in 1808. The main event during Madison’s presidency was the War of 1812 with Britain. France and Britain were at war. Madison did not want to enter the war, but Britain was seizing U.S. trade ships. Madison finally felt he had no choice and in 1812
Biography of James Madison (continued)

he asked Congress to declare war on Britain. Unfortunately, the U.S. was in no position to fight the British and lost many battles, including one where the British marched on Washington D.C. and burned the White House and the Capitol. However, the final battle of the war, the Battle of Orleans, was a victory led by General Andrew Jackson. This helped the country to feel they had done well and raised Madison's popularity.

During Madison's term as President, the "Star-Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key, steamboats began to operate, gaslights were introduced, many new roads were being built (mostly by private companies), parts of Florida became U.S. territory, and Native Americans lost lands and power in many areas.

Final Years

Madison retired to Montpelier, his home in Virginia, in 1817. Late in life, he worked in the Virginia Constitutional Convention, helped Jefferson establish the University of Virginia, and worked against slavery. Madison died on June 28, 1836. He was 85 years old. He was the last person alive who had signed the U.S. Constitution.

Source: adapted from www.ducksters.com and www.enchantedlearning.com
Questions - Biography of James Madison

Name: __________________________________________________________

1. Describe the early years of James Madison’s life in Virginia.

2. After graduation from college, what did Madison do?

3. What was the first form of government in the U.S. called? What did Madison believe about this government?

4. Describe the contributions made by Madison to the writing of the new Constitution:
Questions - Biography of James Madison (continued)

5. Why did some people oppose a new, stronger government?

6. After the Constitution was ratified (approved), how did Madison serve his country?

6. What war occurred during Madison’s presidency?

7. What other important events happened during the time Madison was President?

8. Madison was nicknamed “The Father of the Constitution.” Explain why you agree or disagree with this nickname. Use information from the reading to explain your opinion.
CONSTITUTION DAY AND CITIZENSHIP DAY ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Intermediate Grades

TITLE: The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS. Objectives that support the Tested Benchmarks for the 7th Grade End-of-Course Exam (EOC) in Civics are noted with TB.

1. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

2. The student will explain how government was established through a written Constitution.

3. The student will describe how government gains its power from the people.

4. The student will describe the purpose of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

5. The student will interpret the intentions of the Preamble of the Constitution. (TB)

6. The student will analyze key phrases in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

7. The student will identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (FS)

8. The student will participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Distribute copies of the reading entitled, “The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution” (provided).

2. Read the section of the reading entitled “Purpose of the Lesson,” and consider the objectives of the lesson.
3. Ask students to then read the section, “What Do You Think the Purpose of Government Should Be?”

Working with a partner, students should read the three questions and discuss possible answers. They should be encouraged to examine their own experiences and to form opinions. Have several pairs share their responses with the class.

4. Have students read the final section, “What Does the Preamble Say?” Ask them why the first words of the Preamble are so important. Emphasize to the students that in our country, the power of government belongs to the people.

5. Pass out copies of the assignment entitled, “Problem-Solving Group Activity” (provided).

Organize the class into six groups and assign each group one of the phrases from the Preamble. Follow the directions on the problem-solving activity. Allow students to use references including dictionaries, encyclopedias, textbooks, and online resources to help them in answering the three questions on the assignment.

6. Ask each group to make a brief presentation to the class on the phrase in the Preamble they studied.

OPTIONAL:

a. You may wish to have each group develop a skit that portrays its assigned phrase. Each group should present its skit and the rest of the class should guess which phrase of the Preamble is being portrayed. Each group should present its skit before it discusses its answers to the questions in the problem-solving activity.

AND/OR

b. Each group may draw a picture depicting the phrase of the Preamble that is being represented. The rest of the class should guess which phrase of the Preamble is represented. Each group should present its drawing before it discusses its answers to the questions in the problem-solving activity.

7. Conclude the lesson by discussing the following questions:
• What basic ideas about the purposes of our government are included in the Preamble?

• Some people have said the most important words in our U.S. Constitution are the first three words of the Preamble, “We the People.” Explain why you agree or disagree with this opinion.

• Explain these terms: preamble, justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Participation in group work.

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Copies of “The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution” (provided); copies of the “Problem-Solving Group Activity” (provided).

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: The people who worked on writing the Preamble were William Samuel Johnson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Rufus King, and Gouverneur Morris. Have students read more about these men and share what they learn with the class.

SOURCE: adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

Purpose of the Lesson

The Framers wrote an introduction, also called a preamble, to the U.S. Constitution.

The Preamble states the purposes of our U.S. Constitution. It includes some of the basic ideas about government. When you finish this lesson, you should be able to explain these ideas.

What Do You Think the Purpose of Government Should Be?

Before you learn about the purposes stated in the Preamble, let’s look at your own ideas. Then we can compare your ideas with those in the U.S. Constitution.

Work with a partner and answer the following questions:

a. What is government?
b. What is a purpose?
c. List three purposes that you think a government should have. Then explain why you think they are important.

What Does the Preamble Say?

The Preamble to the Constitution explains who created the U.S. Constitution and the basic purposes of our government.

“We the People” are the first words in the Preamble. These words are very important. They show that the power to govern belongs to the people. The people established the U.S. Constitution. They used it to create a government to protect their rights and their welfare.

The ideas in the Preamble are so important that you should study them carefully. To do this, first read the entire Preamble.
What Does the Preamble Say? (continued)

_The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States_

“We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

You can see the Preamble contains a lot of words that are not easy to understand when you first read them. But, if you study them, you will find they are not that difficult.

Source: adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Problem-Solving Group Activity

Students’ Names: ____________________________ Group # __________

Directions:

Let’s examine the basic ideas in the Preamble to see how important they are to all of us. To do this, your class has been divided into six groups. Each group has been assigned to study ONE of the important parts of the Preamble listed below.

What group have you been assigned to work with?

- Group #1 - We the People do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
- Group #2 - establish justice
- Group #3 – insure domestic tranquility
- Group #4 – provide for the common defense
- Group #5 – promote the general welfare
- Group #6 – secure the blessings of liberty

Each group should answer the following questions about the part of the Preamble it is studying. Be prepared to explain your group’s answers to the rest of the class.

   a. What does the part of the Preamble you are studying mean? Explain.

   b. Why is it important?

   c. What does it have to do with protecting your rights and well-being?
GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Intermediate Grades

TITLE: What Responsibilities Accompany Our Rights?

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS. Objectives that support the Tested Benchmarks for the 7th Grade End-of-Course Exam (EOC) in Civics are noted with TB.

1. The student will recognize that the U.S. Constitution protects the individual rights of citizens.

2. The student will recognize that all rights also have corresponding responsibilities.

3. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

4. The student will distinguish how the Constitution safeguards and limits individual rights. (TB)

5. The student will identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. As an introduction to the lesson, discuss the following:

   • Do you have the right to offer opinions on important issues in the United States? Give examples.

   • What guarantees your right to your opinion? (First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – freedom of speech, press, assembly)

   • Does freedom of speech mean you can say anything you want, whenever you want? Discuss examples where free speech is limited (e.g., endangering others by falsely yelling “fire” in a crowded movie theatre; telling lies when testifying in court; threatening to hurt someone else)
2. Define and discuss right (something that a person should be allowed to have, get, or do, like the right to vote) and responsibility (a duty or task that you are required or expected to do).

Ask: Do we have any responsibility to protect not only our own rights, but the rights of others, as well? Explain that in this lesson students will discuss important questions about the responsibilities of citizens.

3. Read and discuss the handout entitled, “Is a Good Constitution Enough?” (provided)

4. Divide the class into five groups and complete the assignment entitled, “Rights and Responsibilities” (provided). In this exercise, each group will think about and discuss a basic right we have as Americans. Have each group develop answers for the question they are assigned.

5. Ask each group to read the scenario they were given and to answer the accompanying questions. Discuss each group’s responses.

6. As closure, discuss the following:
   
   • What are some of the most important responsibilities you have in order to protect your rights?

   • What responsibilities should you take to protect the rights of others? Why?

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Group work and discussion

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Handout “Is a Good Constitution Enough?” (provided); Handout “Group Activity – Rights and Responsibilities” (provided)

SOURCE: Adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Is a Good Constitution Enough?

The Framers or authors of the U.S. Constitution planned our government carefully. They organized it so its powers were limited. They separated and shared the powers of the federal government among three different branches – the Executive Branch (represented by the president), Legislative Branch (represented by Congress), and the Judicial Branch (represented by the Supreme Court and other federal courts). They balanced the powers among these branches. They provided ways each branch could check or limit the powers of the other branches. Finally, they added a Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights protects our rights from unfair treatment by our national, state, and local governments.

Some of the Framers believed they had organized the government very well. They believed the way they planned the government was enough to make sure our rights and welfare would be protected.

Other Framers did not fully agree. They did agree that the way the government was organized was very important. However, they believed that the government would only work well if there were good people leading it. They also believed it would only succeed if the citizens were good citizens.

Today, most people agree that a well-written Constitution is not enough to protect our rights. We need to elect leaders who will make and enforce laws that protect our rights and promote our welfare.

However, even a good Constitution and good leaders may not be enough. If we want to protect our rights and welfare, we, the people, have certain responsibilities to fulfill. Let's examine what some of these responsibilities might be.

What Responsibilities Go Along With Our Rights?

Most of us agree we all should have certain basic rights. For example, we all want the right to speak freely. We want the right to believe as we wish. We also want to be able to own property and to travel wherever we want to go. Is it fair to say that if we want these rights, we must also take on some responsibilities? Let's examine the responsibilities or duties that come with these rights.

Source: Adapted from the Center for Civic Education, www.civiced.org
Group Activity – Rights and Responsibilities

Group 1. Freedom of Expression - Your government cannot unfairly limit your right to speak freely. Think about the responsibilities that might go along with this right. Suppose you attend a meeting of students in your school. The group is supposed to suggest rules for the playground. You have the right to speak and give your suggestions.

1. What responsibilities should you have in the way you speak and in what you say? List and explain these responsibilities.

2. What responsibilities should other students at the meeting have toward your right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.

3. What responsibilities should you have toward the other students' right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.

4. What might happen to the right to free speech if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Group 2. Freedom of Religion - Your government cannot interfere with your right to believe as you wish. It cannot unfairly limit your right to practice your religious beliefs. Think about the responsibilities that might go along with this right.

1. Suppose you believe in a particular religion. You attend religious services in your community. List and explain what responsibilities you should have in the way you practice your religious beliefs.

2. Suppose there are people in your community who believe in different religions or in no religion at all. List and explain what responsibilities they should have to protect your right to practice your religious beliefs.

3. List and explain what responsibilities you should have to protect other people's right to practice their religious beliefs or not to have any religious beliefs.

4. What might happen to the right of freedom of religion if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?
**Group 3. The Right to be Treated Equally** - Your government may not favor some people over others because of such things as their age, sex, ethnicity, or religion. Think about the responsibilities that might go along with this right.

1. Suppose people in your community are planning a picnic for the public. List and explain what responsibilities they might have to be fair to you no matter what your age, sex, ethnicity, or religion may be.

2. Suppose you were helping to plan the picnic. List and explain what responsibilities you think you should have to other people no matter what their age, sex, ethnicity, or religion might be.

3. What might happen to the right to be treated equally if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

**Group 4. The Right to be Treated Fairly by Your Government** - Your government must be fair to you when it is gathering information and making decisions. Think about the responsibilities that might go along with this right.

1. Suppose someone has accused you of doing something wrong in your school or community. What responsibilities should that person have toward you? List and explain those responsibilities.

2. Suppose you have accused others of doing something wrong in your school or community. What responsibilities should you have toward them? List and explain those responsibilities.

3. What might happen to the right to be treated fairly if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?
Group 5. The Right to Vote and Run For Public Office - When you are eighteen, you will have the right to vote. You will also have the right to run for public office if you want to. Think about the responsibilities that might go along with this right

1. Suppose you are about to vote in an election. You can vote for or against five proposed laws. You must also choose between two people running for Congress. What responsibilities should you have? List and explain those responsibilities.

2. Suppose some friends, neighbors, and others in your community do not agree with the way you are going to vote. List and explain what responsibilities they have toward your right to vote.

3. Suppose you do not agree with the way some of your friends, neighbors, and others in your community are going to vote. List and explain what responsibilities you should have toward their right to vote.

4. What might happen to the right to vote if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?
GRADE LEVEL: Social Studies – Elementary - Intermediate Grades

TITLE: Creating a Classroom Constitution

OBJECTIVES: Objectives from the Florida Standards are noted with FS.

1. The student will recognize the importance of rules and laws to a community and nation.

2. The student will identify the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the United States.

3. The student will describe how government gains its power through the people.

4. The student will recognize that the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights protects the individual rights of citizens.

5. The student will be able to name and describe key components of the U.S. Constitution, including the Preamble, articles and amendments.

6. The student will identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (FS)

7. The student will participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations. (FS)

8. The student will describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect. (FS)

SUGGESTED TIME: 1-2 hours
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Review the earlier lesson entitled, “The U.S. Constitution – The Law of the United States.” Explain that the U.S. Constitution is the supreme (highest) law in our land. It explains how our whole government works and lists the basic freedoms that all Americans enjoy. Ask: Why is it so important? Point out that because of the U.S. Constitution, our leaders can’t make a new law that is illegal and in violation of the Constitution. Because of the U.S. Constitution, the students in your class can practice any religion they like and share their opinions freely. Help students understand that the U.S. Constitution was written more than 200 years ago, but is still very important in our lives today.

2. Explain that the U.S. Constitution is divided into the following sections:
   a. The Preamble explains who is writing the U.S. Constitution and why.
   b. The Articles explain how our government works. There are seven Articles in the document.
   c. The Amendments are changes or additions to the U.S. Constitution. The first ten amendments are the Bill of Rights. These ten amendments name the rights or freedoms that Americans have. After the first 10 amendments, the U.S. Constitution includes other amendments that have been added over time. There have been 27 amendments added to the U.S. Constitution.

3. Have students read “The Sections of the U.S. Constitution” found in the Background section of this instructional resource guide to learn more about the Preamble, Articles, and Bill of Rights.

   **TEACHER’S NOTE:** The teacher may choose to have students read the full text of the U.S. Constitution found in the Background section of this instructional resource guide in addition to reading the article entitled, “The Sections of the U.S. Constitution.”

4. Discuss the sections of the U.S. Constitution to be sure students understand the purpose of each section. This is critical before students are asked to work to develop a Classroom Constitution.

   **TEACHER’S NOTE:** Sample student constitutions are provided with this lesson as examples. While these samples do not fully follow the template found in this
lesson, they are still good examples to help students get started with the assignment.

5. Distribute the handout “Classroom Constitution” (provided) and explain that students will use what they have learned about the U.S. Constitution to create a constitution for the classroom. Review the directions and have students work independently or in groups.

6. For each section on the handout, invite a few student volunteers to share their ideas for the class constitution. Compile the best suggestions to create a real class constitution. Create a clean, polished version of the document and have all students sign it.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: Participation in class or group assignments, including the development of the classroom constitution.

MATERIALS/AIDS NEEDED: Copies of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide); copies of the article entitled “The Sections of the U.S. Constitution (provided in the Background section of this instructional resource guide); copies of the “Classroom Constitution” activity (provided); and sample Student Constitutions (provided).

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: If classroom technology is available, have students play the U.S. Constitution game developed by Scholastic. The game may be accessed at: https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/activities/teaching-content/celebrate-constitution-game/

SOURCES: Adapted from a lesson developed by Scholastic.
Sample Student Constitutions

Source: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/1f/9b/56/1f9b56fe9a773c4c8e6f4df9f9dd33c8.jpg

Source: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/a3/20/df/a320df483e04d544b0b759c78df49c03.jpg
Classroom Constitution...We the Students

The U.S. Constitution is the highest or supreme law of the land. It tells how our government works and describes the rights and responsibilities of every American citizen.

You have learned about the importance of having a written set of laws called a constitution. Use the U.S. Constitution as a guide to help you write a constitution for your classroom. Follow the guidelines below for help.

**Preamble** – The U.S. Constitution begins with a statement called the Preamble. It explains that the U.S. government was established by the people. It also describes the goals of the U.S. Constitution: to guarantee justice, peace, and liberty for our nation’s citizens. What are your goals for the classroom? Write them here.

We, the students of _____________________ (teacher's name), share the goals of:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Articles - The U.S. Constitution tells how our government will work. It describes the three branches of U.S. government and how decisions will be made. It explains the responsibilities that the President, Congress and the courts will have. What will the government of your classroom be like? What responsibilities will the principal and teacher have? What responsibilities will the students have? Describe your classroom government here.

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Bill of Rights – The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights describes the basic freedoms or rights all Americans enjoy. These include freedom of speech, the right to practice any religion, and the right to a fair trial. What are some rights the students in your classroom should have?
When people have rights, they also have responsibilities. For example, Americans have the responsibility to serve on a jury when they are called. What responsibilities will citizens of your class have?

Describe your rights and responsibilities here.

**Rights:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Responsibilities:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Source: adapted from Scholastic

Internet Resources for Teaching About The U.S. Constitution
**Internet Resources for Teaching About the U.S. Constitution**

**Citizenship Activity Pack** – Suggestions on how students can get involved as citizens.  

**Citizenship Activity Pack: Agents of Change** – Interactive game on citizenship  

**ConstitutionFacts.com** – Multiple teacher and students resources on the U.S. Constitution  
http://www.constitutionfacts.com/

**Games about the Constitution** - Multiple games and quizzes about the U.S Constitution and the U.S government.  
http://www.congressforkids.net/games/billofrights/2_billofrights.htm#

**ICivics** - Lessons, games and activities; free registration required.  
https://www.icivics.org/

**Interactive Constitution** – Simplified commentary on the Constitution  
http://www.phschool.com/curriculum_support/interactive_constitution/

**National Constitution Center** – Official website of the National Constitution Center  
http://www.constitutioncenter.org

**Teaching with Documents: Observing Constitution Day** - Lessons, activities, and simulations using primary source documents from the National Archives.  
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/

**The Bill of Rights Institute** – Resources on the Bill of Rights  
http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/

**We the People...** - Lessons for Constitution Day and Citizenship Day from the Center for Civic Education  
http://www.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/constitution-day-and-citizenship-day
Elementary Character Education
Activities to Support
Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
Elementary Character Education Activities to Support
Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Core Value: Respect

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to helping all students develop the values and strength of character needed for them to become caring, responsible citizens at home, school, and in the community. To support this goal, character education has been an instructional requirement, grades K-12, since 1995.

The foundation of the District’s character education requirement are the nine core values adopted by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida in 1995. The District’s nine core values are: citizenship, cooperation, fairness, honesty, integrity, kindness, pursuit of excellence, respect, and responsibility. Each month a different core value has been designated for emphasis in all classrooms throughout the District.

In September, students need to understand the importance of respect. Respect should include showing regard for the worth and dignity of everyone. Students should learn to respect individual differences and views of others. Respect should include showing regard for oneself, one’s school, and the rules and expectations for behavior in the school and the community.

In addition to the enclosed lessons on the U.S. Constitution, teachers may further emphasize the core value of respect through the following lesson ideas.

- In September, we commemorate Constitution Day (September 17th) and Celebrate Freedom Week (the Declaration of Independence; last week in September). Ask students to think about the men who helped write these documents and the respect they earned for helping to create our new nation (i.e., Founding Fathers). Have students write an essay about one Founding Father explaining what challenges this person met and why they chose this person as an individual that is worthy of respect. Invite students to share essays with other class members.

- Review the Pledge of Allegiance and the Star Spangled Banner. Have students study and discuss the meaning of the words and importance of reciting or singing them with respect; i.e., standing at attention, placement of right hand over one’s heart.

- Identify and study national symbols and documents and their meaning; e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, American flag, Star Spangled Banner, the bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell. Review
and discuss how these symbols illustrate respect for our country. Ask students to research and write about the various symbols of national pride and why they deserve our respect. Present these reports to other class members.

• Talk about how good manners and following classroom rules generate respect. Brainstorm with students and list the characteristics and behaviors related to being respectful. Try the following exercise. Ask students to pass a pencil, book, or other item to a fellow class member. Then, ask the students to return the item to the same person in a respectful manner. Notice how the two actions differed. Ask students to discuss how the two steps were different. Was one exchange more courteous than the other? Did students say please and thank you? Ask students to discuss how it feels to be treated courteously and with respect.

• Review and discuss the following “dos and don’ts” on how to be respectful:

  o Treat other people the way you want to be treated.
  o Be courteous and polite.
  o Listen to what other people have to say.
  o Don't insult people, or make fun of them, or call them names.
  o Don't bully or pick on others.
  o Don't judge people before you get to know them.

• Discuss: Are kids ever picked on at your school? What do they get picked on about (height, weight, appearance, disability, accent, skin color, etc.)? Exactly how are they picked on? How do you think these kids feel about this? How do you feel about it? What can you do to stop this bullying?

• Have students write a letter to an imaginary bully, telling this person what he or she is doing that you don't like, why they don't like it, and how they want this person to behave instead.

• Create a bulletin board entitled “Respectful Students of the Month” or "Uncle Sam Wants YOU to be Respectful.” Tell students that during the month of September, their pictures will be placed on the bulletin board as they demonstrate acts of respect. Post a picture of students “caught in the act” of being respectful. Each day, ask students to select other class members to be posted on the bulletin board.

• Local, national and world events reported in the newspapers or on television often illustrate actions taken by community members or local groups seeking
respect. Discuss local or national events and the actions citizens have taken. Have students look through newspapers and magazines for evidence of community members seeking respect. Create space on a bulletin board or a large poster where students can post these stories.

Other On-going Activities to Promote Character Education

• Invite all students and teachers to an assembly/pep-rally in the school cafeteria, auditorium, or P.E. courts to kick-off character education school-wide. Ask a spirited teacher, parent, principal or guest speaker to motivate students and address character education goals and core values for the coming school year.

• Create a character education steering group made up of administrators, teachers, parents and students that meets regularly to plan activities and events celebrating each monthly value.

• Start a character education book club. Ask the media specialist, language arts or social studies teacher for book recommendations related to the core value of the month. Students should read books related to a particular topic, subject, or author; e.g., books written by a person striving toward a goal. Students may share, discuss and/or report their findings back to the class. Keep a class or personal log of the books read.

• Make character education a regular part of the school day and curriculum. Incorporate student homework related to each designated monthly value. A school newsletter may incorporate information on character education and offer daily suggestions for how to demonstrate each month’s value. Morning announcements may also provide an opportunity to support each month’s designated value.

Source: Activities adapted from Goodcharacter.org, http://www.goodcharacter.com/
Anti-Discrimination Policy
Federal and State Laws

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational programs/activities and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended** - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender.

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) as amended** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40.

**The Equal Pay Act of 1963 as amended** - prohibits gender discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** - prohibits discrimination against the disabled.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** - prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public service, public accommodations and telecommunications.

**The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)** - requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.


**Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA)** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, marital status, or handicap against a student or employee.

**Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992** - secures for all individuals within the state freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status.

**Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)** - Prohibits discrimination against employees or applicants because of genetic information.

_Veterans are provided re-employment rights in accordance with P.L. 93-508 (Federal Law) and Section 295.07 (Florida Statutes), which stipulate categorical preferences for employment._

_In Addition: School Board Policies 1362, 3362, 4362, and 5517_ - Prohibit harassment and/or discrimination against students, employees, or applicants on the basis of sex, race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identification, social and family background, linguistic preference, pregnancy, and any other legally prohibited basis. Retaliation for engaging in a protected activity is also prohibited. Rev. (05-12)