

Teacher's Name:

Employee Number:

School:

SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON PLAN- SS.3.C.3.4
Recognize that the Constitution of the United State is the supreme law of the land.

1. **Title: U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land**
2. **Overview - Big Ideas:**

Enduring Understandings

- Understand the purpose of the Constitution
- Recognize how the Constitution organized the government
- Comprehend how the Constitution limits the powers of our government
- Understand how the Constitution protects basic rights
- Be aware of why the Constitution is known as “the supreme law of the land”
- Understand the meaning of the preamble of the Constitution

Essential Questions – (What provocative questions will you use to foster inquiry, understanding and transfer of learning?)

- What is the purpose of the Constitution?
- How did the Constitution create a federal system of government?
- What are the three branches of the federal government?
- How does the Constitution limit the powers of the three branches of government?
- How does the Constitution protect the rights of citizens?
- Why is the Constitution known as “the supreme law of the land?”

- What is the meaning and significance of the preamble?

3. Lesson Objectives:

Standards - Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies

Third Grade NGSSS-SS Benchmarks Relevant to this Lesson

- SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United State is the supreme law of the land.

Tested Seventh Grade NGSSS-SS Benchmarks Relevant to this Lesson

- SS.7.C.1.6 Interpret the intentions of the Preamble of the Constitution.
- SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances.
- SS.7.C.2.5 Distinguish how the Constitution safeguards and limits individual rights.

- 4. Key Vocabulary:** natural rights, constitution, federalism, federal, executive, legislative, judicial, House of Representatives, Senate, representatives, senators, checks and balances, Bill of Rights, supremacy law, appoints, federal courts, commander in chief, judicial review, unconstitutional, preamble, justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare

- 5. Evidence of Student Understanding (Assessment) in this Lesson:**
What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson?

After students complete this lesson, they will have an understanding of the purpose of the Constitution and how the Constitution organizes government. They will also understand how the Constitution limits the powers of government. At the same time, students will know how the Constitution protects citizens' basic rights. Students will understand the meaning and significance of the preamble. Finally, students will know why the Constitution is known as "supreme law of the land."

What will students be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skills?

Students will identify the purpose of the Constitution and know how the Constitution organizes government. Students will know how the Constitution creates a balance of power among the three branches of government. Students will know what the preamble means and why it is significant to the people of the United States. Students will know how the Constitution protects individual rights as well as why the Constitution is called “the supreme law of the land.”

*Both **formative and summative assessments** are included*

6. Materials Needed: *(Resources you will use in this lesson)*

Attachment A: Reading associated with the lesson: “The U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land.”

Attachment B: Written assignment, “Creating a School Government”

Attachment C: Post-Quiz

7. Steps to Deliver the Lesson:

A detailed, step by step description of how to deliver the lesson and achieve the lesson plan objectives

- a. Lesson Opening: Ask students to pretend that they are living in an isolated area such as a forest, desert, or any other deserted area. In that place, there is no government. Here are some of questions students should consider: *Would you have any rights? Who would govern you and your family? What rules would you and your family follow? What would life be like for you and your family? What would happen if a stranger or an outsider arrived and wanted to stay with you? What would happen if someone was stronger or smarter than the rest of the family members?* After students discuss questions in a small group setting, the class can come together and share ideas and suggestions. With students, formulate a generalized statement which

best captures the essence of the need for rules and for creating laws so that members of a society can get along and work together.

- b. Reading: Use any reading strategy (choral, buddy, jump in, silent, etc.) which is appropriate for your students to read Attachment A: “The U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land.” Check for understanding through class discussion.
- c. Have students work in pairs and help them define appropriate vocabulary associated with the lesson, using meaningful context. Reread material for further clarification.
- d. Have students work in several different groups. Have the various groups analyze the different sections or phrases in the preamble. Discuss ideas among the class members.
- e. Work in cooperative groups to complete Attachment B: “Creating a School Government” (written assignment) and check for understanding.
- f. To conclude, have students take the post-quiz associated with this lesson (Attachment C). Go over quiz with students and check for understanding.

8. Specific Activities: (From Guided to Independent):

Activities designed to facilitate the gradual release of teacher responsibility, from teacher-led to independent.

- a. When students finish reading the material in Attachment A, they will work on Attachment B (Creating a School Government) in cooperative groups.
- b. Have students share their work (ideas, solutions, suggestions, etc.) with the entire class, including the assignment on the preamble.
- c. Provide “buddies” for ELL and ESE students as needed.
- d. Model assignments as appropriate.

9. Differentiated Instruction Strategies:

How to accommodate a variety of student learning needs, remediation strategies as well as enrichment strategies.

- a. Provide individual assistance for students having difficulty with the reading material while the rest are working independently.
- b. Provide individual assistance in a small group setting for students having difficulty with written work.

10. Technology Integration:

Activities incorporating technology; e.g., address lesson content through online resources.

- a. Have students visit: www.bensguide.gpo.gov to learn about the structure and function of the three branches of the federal government, the division of power as well as the relationship among local, state, and federal governments.
- b. Have students visit the following website to access the online version of the U. S. Constitution: <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html>
- c. For further clarification or study, students may also access a “kid friendly” version of the U.S. Constitution: <http://www.usconstitution.net/constkids4.html>

10. Lesson Closure:

Methods to draw ideas together, review concepts, etc.

- a. After completing the post-quiz and reviewing answers with students, ask them the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the Constitution?
 - How did the Constitution create a federal system of government?
 - What are the three branches of the federal government?

- How does the Constitution limit the powers of the three branches of government?
- What is the meaning and significance of the preamble?
- How does the Constitution protect the rights of citizens?
- Why is the Constitution known as “the supreme law of the land?”

b. For home learning, have students write a letter to the teacher explaining what they have learned about the Constitution.

Attachment A

Reading #1: “The U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land”

In 1781, after the Revolutionary War, the thirteen American colonies came together under a document called the Articles of Confederation, written by the Founding Fathers who believed that individuals needed government to guarantee their basic rights. The Founding Fathers believed that people had **natural rights** and these were the right to live without fear, the right to be free, and the right to own things or property. The Articles of Confederation gave each of the states the right to govern itself. However, Americans soon realized this type of government was weak because it did not allow the national government authority to unify the states, make any decisions concerning the states or even collect money.

As a result, the Founding Fathers set out to draft or write another document called the **Constitution**, which was adopted in 1787 and ratified in 1788. A constitution is a set of rules and laws explaining how a government is organized. In other words, it is a plan to let the citizens know what is expected of them, what the laws are, and how the government will work. The purpose of the Constitution was to create a national or **federal** government. The Constitution also specified the power given to the national government, the power given to the states, as well as the guaranteed rights of individual citizens. The rights of individual citizens are found in a section of the Constitution known as the **Bill of Rights**. Some of these basic rights are: freedom of speech and religion, having a trial by jury and an attorney to represent you, and being able to vote. When the Founding Fathers signed the Constitution, the national government and state governments shared the power to rule our nation and this system became known as **federalism**.

Under federalism, the Constitution gave the national government the authority to work with foreign governments. The national government was also given the power to create an army and a navy for the purpose of defending the nation as well as the power to declare war. The Constitution gave the national government the authority to establish post offices and print money. The federal government has the power to control foreign and

domestic trade, too. On the other hand, the Constitution gave the states the power to take care of issues dealing with health and safety, establish local government, conduct elections, issue licenses, trade within each of the individual states and ratify amendments. The Constitution specified that the national and state governments would share authority to control taxes, participate in road construction, establish courts and banks, borrow money and create laws.

The federal government, whose seat is in Washington, D.C., has three branches: the **executive**, the **legislative** and the **judicial**. The U.S. Constitution specifies the distinct duties of each of the branches and, as a result, separates power among the three. The executive branch implements or enforces the laws. The president of the United States is the head of the executive branch. He has the power to act as **commander in chief** of the armed forces, appoint judges to the Supreme Court, make treaties and veto bills from Congress. The judicial branch refers to the courts. Judges and justices interpret the laws. One of the most important powers of the judicial branch is **judicial review**. This means that courts have the right to declare a law made by Congress **unconstitutional**. Unconstitutional means that a law is illegal or not allowed by the U.S. Constitution. The legislative branch refers to Congress whose duty it is to make our laws and revise existing ones. Congress is made up of two houses: the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. Each state has the right to representation from the House of Representatives depending on its population. These members are known as **representatives**. Each of the states has the right to two **senators**, regardless of its population. When a senator or a representative wants to create a law, they must write a bill and present it to Congress. Some of the powers Congress has are: imposing taxes, declaring war, raising an army and navy, printing money and creating courts. It should be noted that the Founding Fathers who wrote the national Constitution included a system of **checks and balances** so that none of the three branches would become more powerful than the others. For instance, the president can veto a bill but, congress has the power to approve the same bill if two-thirds of each house agrees. Another example is that while the president is commander in chief, only congress can declare war. Yet, another example is that even though the

president **appoints** or chooses all judges in the **federal courts**, the Senate must approve all appointments.

The Constitution places limits upon national and state governments. For example, the federal government cannot make laws that favor trade in one state over others or spend money without a law that approves such action. State governments cannot coin or print money, make treaties with other nations or declare war. At the same time, the Constitution limits both the national and state governments in some areas such as denying persons freedom of religion or freedom of speech.

There is a passage in the U.S. Constitution which is known as the **supremacy clause**. This means that states cannot make laws that are in conflict with the United States Constitution or in conflict with the laws made by the U.S. Congress. This is why the U.S. Constitution is called “**the supreme law of the land.**”

Attachment B

Assignment #1 – Creating a School Government

Instructions: Work in cooperative groups and as you explore each of the options and create a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the choices. Share your findings with the class.

1. Your principal has asked you and your classmates to organize a school government. What might you do? What kinds of things would you have to consider? Would you include a plan or constitution? How about certain powers such as legislative, judicial and executive? Would you give all the powers to a class president? Why or why not? Would you give all the powers of your class government to the class president and vice president? Why or why not? Would you give the power to three different groups of students? Why or why not?

Low Complexity Items:

1. What is federalism?
 - a. having a national government rule the country
 - b. having the national and state governments rule together
 - c. having an executive branch rule the nation
 - d. having a government rule in Washington, D.C.

2. What was the purpose of the United States Constitution?
 - a. to create a state government
 - b. to plan an executive branch
 - c. to bring in new justices and judges
 - d. to create a national government

3. Which branch of government interprets the laws?
 - a. legislative
 - b. senate
 - c. judicial
 - d. executive

Moderate Complexity Items:

4. If one state's population is larger than another, how does that affect the number of senators they have?
 - a. Both states have the same number
 - b. Both states have a different number
 - c. It depends on the state's location
 - d. Some states do not qualify to have senators

5. Which of the following refers to the rule that state governments cannot make laws that conflict with those of the U.S. Constitution?
- a. checks and balances
 - b. federalism
 - c. bill of rights
 - d. supremacy clause
6. Which of the following examples is not included in the Bill of Rights?
- a. freedom of speech
 - b. employment
 - c. voting
 - d. freedom of religion

High Complexity Items

7. If the president vetoes a bill, what can senators and representatives do?
- a. Write letters to the commander in chief asking that he reconsider the matter and change his mind.
 - b. Explain the matter to the justices on the Supreme Court and ask that they declare it unconstitutional.
 - c. Speak with the president's cabinet and ask for guidance according to the supremacy clause.
 - d. Congress has the right to pass the bill if two-thirds of each house approves it.
8. Why did the Founding Fathers balance the powers of our government?
- a. so that the executive branch would always be the most powerful
 - b. so the power would be distributed equally among the branches
 - c. so the laws would never be unconstitutional
 - d. so the legislative branch would always be in control

9. “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 the 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.”

This passage from the U.S. Constitution, Article II, The Executive Branch deals with qualifications for President of the United States. Based on these qualifications, which of the following people could not be a presidential candidate?

- a. Your 37 year old sister who was born in Miami, Florida and who dreams of one day being the first female president.
 - b. Your uncle who is a college professor, 43 years of age and born in Philadelphia.
 - c. Your teacher who was born in Alaska 36 years ago and now lives in Pembroke Pines.
 - d. Your 50 year old neighbor, who was born in the U.S., lived in Cuba since the age of two and returned to the U.S. when she was 48.
10. “Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approves he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections...”

Based on this passage from Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, which of the following best describes its purpose.

- a. powers delegated to Congress
- b. power of impeachment
- c. president’s veto power
- d. jurisdiction of federal courts

Answer Key

1. B
2. D
3. C
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. D
8. B
9. D
10. C

Civic Integration
Lesson Plan Quiz Blueprint
NGSSS-SS Main Benchmark: SS.3.C.3.4
Title of Lesson: U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land
Grade Level: 3rd Grade
Pacing Guide Connection: 3rd Grade Civics

Question #	Benchmark Grade Level	Benchmark 7th Grade Tested	Answer	Complexity Level
1	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances.	B	Low
2	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	D	Low
3	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	C	Low
4	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	A	Moderate
5	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	D	Moderate
6	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.2.5 Distinguish how the Constitution safeguards and limits individual rights.	B	Moderate

7	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	D	High
8	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	B	High
9	SS.3.C.3.4 Recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	D	High DBQ
10	SS.7.C.3.8 Analyze the structure, functions, and processes of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.	SS.7.C.1.7 Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through separation of powers and checks and balances	C	High DBQ