



Lesson Plan: The U.S. Constitution Bill of Rights

Grade Level: 4th

Context of the Lesson: This 4th grade lesson will help students understand the importance of having rules (laws) in society, learn how they are addressed in the U.S Constitution, and gain an understanding of the Bill of Rights.

Standards Addressed in the Project: History-Social Studies Standards 3.4.1 Students will determine the reasons for rules, laws and the U.S. Constitution. 4.5.1 Students will discuss what the U.S. Constitution is and why it is important.

Objective(s): Students will discuss, create and understand the reasons for some of the laws (rules) that we use in our school and in our nation. (Analysis)



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Big Ideas

The strength of a democracy is equal to the strength of its citizens.

E Pluribus Unum: out of many, one

Essential Questions/Issues:

Is citizenship a right or a responsibility?

Is it necessary to have rules and laws in society? Why or why not?

What does it mean to be an American citizen? Does social capital (involvement) strengthen a republic?

Higher Order Thinking Questions:

Students will compare and contrast the laws (rules) that are needed in our classroom and nation.

They will evaluate, analyze, choose, compare, and select which laws are most necessary to create a healthy, functioning society.



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Assessment:

Students will make posters to display around the school that will explain in children’s language, what the Bill of Rights are, what they mean, and why they are important.

Rubric:

Level of Understanding Demonstrated	4 Advanced	3 Proficient	2 Approaching	1 Naïve
Based on their Poster and Presentation, Students demonstrate understanding.	Drawing is detailed and clearly and effectively represents an understanding of the chosen idea. The explanation clearly demonstrates the idea, and its importance in children’s language.	Drawing is detailed and represents an understanding of the chosen idea. The explanation is clear and the idea is communicated.	Drawing shows some understanding of the chosen idea. The explanation has been attempted, but lacks clarity or relevance.	Drawing is unclear, and the explanation is not easily understood, nor, demonstrates relevance.



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Lesson Activity Steps:

Day 1. Students will talk about where they live using terms such as streets, cities, states, countries, hemisphere, continent, planet, solar system and galaxy. Maps will be used. This will provide some background for the students, since there is often some confusion as to what is a city, state, or country.

Day 1-Hook-“How can we make our Classroom (community) a safe, orderly, fair, and happy place to work and learn?” Students will role- play a classroom that is not a place to learn, using the adjectives above. “This is a question that students, teachers, and people that live in a city, state or country ask themselves when they work to establish rules or laws for a new place to live or work.

Day 1- In small groups, talk about rules or laws that would help us to make this classroom the best possible place to learn. Students will agree on the rules that will be used in the classroom this school year.

Day 2- The class will listen to, sing and learn the “We the People” song from the Schoolhouse Rock video. We will read “We the Kids” by David Catrow. Review the book, stopping for clarification and discussion of terms. List on the overhead each idea from the Preamble to the Constitution and opposite each one the corresponding student definition. 15 minutes.

Day 3- Students will realize that we need laws or rules so that we can live with each other in our country with fewer problems. In the U.S. the main group of laws for our country is called the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights is amendments that were added to the Constitution to clearly detail the basic rights that American citizens have. Students will discuss in small groups, the laws that they think would be good for our country to have? A full class discussion will follow, and the Bill of Rights will be introduced.



CALIFORNIA ON MY HONOR

Curricula for K-12 Civics Education

Day 4- The teacher will show the class the ten first amendments to the U.S. Constitution using the book Constitution Translated for Kids. Using the LCR projector, discuss them.

Day 5- Divide the class into groups and have each group design a poster. First, the class will walk around the school and look at the colors in signs and how they get their attention. Students will receive some lessons in Art and color (prior to making posters using Elements of ART.ppt), so that their displays will be eye catching, clear and easy to understand. (See the rubric grading system). Give each group of students a copy of the Preamble or one of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. Students will then work in groups, showing one of the amendments and what they mean.

Day 6- Students will present their posters to the rest of the class and the observing students will comment and ask questions about the student work. These posters may also be shared with other classrooms. The posters will then be displayed on walls around the school.

Special Needs of students

I usually have English Language Learning students in my classroom, Students will work in groups on their poster, so I place students together in heterogeneous groups that will allow for stronger processing and production. I will also use Sheltered English to help all students understand the lesson. For best results, I suggest grouping gifted learners with students that are at grade level and with ELL students. GATE students will receive extra challenges.

Extension Ideas: Students can take what they have learned, and see how it relates to their daily lives by observing the daily news and events in their community.

Follow up activity: In the spring, I will work with a select group of fifth and sixth grade students that will rehearse and present the musical U.S. Constitution Revivor: Philadelphia (a Bad Wolf Press production). This musical can be found on the Internet at Badwolfpress.com. The students will perform for third-sixth grade students in school assemblies and in an evening performance for parents and the community.



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Materials and Resources Needed:

We The Kids The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States, by David Catrow.

Constitution Translated for Kids by Cathy Travis.

Maps of your city, state, country, world, and Solar System.

Large white construction paper. Crayons, colored pencils and markers.

We the People song from the video Schoolhouse Rock. Overhead projector, LCR projector and/or chart paper.

Elements of ART.ppt

References: H/SS Framework, books listed in materials needed above