



Lesson Plan: Planet Fourth Grade is Researching the U.S. Constitution

Lesson Activity Steps: The lesson can be divided into two or three days (during social studies) depending upon time allotted, or over the course of one day.

Hook: Planet Fourth Grade

Imagine you've landed on a newly discovered planet for fourth graders. You and your crew are responsible for establishing order amongst your population. You have to establish rules and rights of the new *Planet Fourth Grade*. You are to report back to Earth to send more fourth graders when you have produced a document that establishes the order and rights for the planet.

Student Intro Activity After the Hook:

1. Students will be grouped into tables of 4 called "crews."
2. At each table will be a 6 x 4 note card, a writing notebook, and a list of 10 items to place into sequential order of importance.
3. Each group is responsible for choosing one "delegate" from their crew who is responsible, dependable, and fair to others. This delegate will represent the crew on all matters of business and "conventional" meetings to establish the order and rights of its people.
4. "Delegates" from each crew will be given names, tags, yarn. They will be instructed to identify themselves by wearing the "state" name.
5. Have students look at 10 items list and with their crews, order the items from 1- most important to 10-least important. (10 minutes)
6. Crews must choose a recorder to write down the list from 1 to 10.
7. Once each crew has completed their list, have a class discussion about each item and how it is viewed by each group as important.
8. On the whiteboard, the teacher, asking each "delegate" for a group consensus, orders the items on a "class list" of 1 to 10 (by raise of delegate hand, asking who had items of the top (1) to bottom (10) of the list).

Lesson Activity:

This activity comes after students have begun learning about the basics of the Constitution. The students are aware that the foundation of the Constitution begins with a democracy (vs. Great Britain's autocracy). Students also know that the Constitution was written to establish the federal rights and two years after its inception, amendments were created to establish individual rights.



This activity is to engage students in the process of creating individual rights and compare it to the importance of the U.S. constitution's Bill of Rights.

CONSTITUTION LESSON #1

1. Delegates from each crew of Planet Fourth Grade meet at a convention with their list of 10 items to discuss the rights of each crew and establish a Planet Four Grade Constitution.
2. Each delegate is given their time to speak on behalf of their crew to represent their colony. 20-30 minutes
3. During this time, additional crew members sit as the audience during the convention.
4. The conventional "president" (teacher) is in charge of delegating, organizing, and writing Planet Fourth Grade Constitution on a large piece of lined construction paper. The items will be arranged from 1 to 10 as the delegates decide as a group, which items should be listed in which order.
5. A finished Planet Fourth Grade Constitution will be displayed in the classroom at the end of the meeting.
6. Each delegate will then sign the Planet Fourth Grade Constitution.
7. Students will then review the history of the U.S. constitution by watching a U.S. Constitution power point.
8. We will then have a class discussion about the important points of the Constitution.
9. After the discussion, students will create a basic outline of the articles of the constitution in their writing notebooks. Discussing with the teacher, a brief summary of what each article implies.
10. The students will then complete the, *What Do You Know About the Constitution?* Worksheet (See grading rubric)
11. Students then join their crew again for a wrap-up discussion.



BILL OF RIGHTS LESSON #2

Match the Bill of Rights. (This can be done in a separate lesson on day 2 or as an addition to the lesson if time permits.)

12. Ask students why they have rules at school and home and have laws in their community. Explain that rules and laws are important because they protect each citizen's rights. These rights prevent the government from interfering in their lives too much. These rights cannot be taken away.
13. As a class, discuss how the United States Constitution contains the main laws of our country and the first ten amendments of the Constitution guarantee certain freedoms and individual rights. They are known as the Bill of Rights.
14. Display the first 10 amendments on the board or use an overhead projector transparency. Review each amendment with students, clarifying terms and/or concepts as needed.
15. Divide students into groups. Give each group a set of the *Bill of Rights Amendment Cards*. Assign any of the following activities:
 - As with the constitution list, challenge crews to rank amendments from most important amendment(1) to the least important (10).

or

 - Cut the Bill of Rights Amendment Cards apart. Challenge students to match the pictures with their descriptions (Handout 1).

or

 - Cut the Bill of Rights Amendment Cards apart. Have students play concentration by matching the amendment with the appropriate picture/description (Handout 2).
16. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
17. Debrief by discussing the following questions:
 - Is it important for us to have a Bill of Rights? Why or why not?
 - Give an example of how the Bill of Rights protects you?
 - How would your life be different if you didn't have the Bill of Rights?
 - If you could add an amendment to the Bill of Rights, what would it be? Why?



Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:

This lesson involves activities that reach multiple modalities of learning such as written work, creative art, hands-on learning, and group work strategies. It also allows the teacher to give the group a variety of exercises to learn the Big Ideas and Objectives. Students may also complete the extension ideas and use word processing to complete assignments.

Extension Ideas:

Students will complete a computer research activity in the computer lab. (Handout developed, designed, and implemented by the teacher.)

Students will work in the computer lab to create a power point presentation that outlines the constitution (and the Bill of Rights).

Students will complete a brochure outlining the three branches of government, the articles of the constitution, or the Bill of Rights.

Using the internet, have students go to the following website:

http://pbskids.org/stantonanthony/bill_of_rights.html This website contains ideas from kids from all over the country concerning their suggestions for a Kids' Bill of Rights. Have students evaluate one or more of the submitted rights and explain why they agree or disagree with the statement.