



## Lesson Plan: The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means

### Timeframe:

This entire unit, assuming you teach Social Studies for approximately 1 hour per day, 5 days per week, will take between 4 – 6 weeks. This particular lesson, which includes the reading of the book SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution, (allotting for 1 hour per day, 5 days a week) will take approximately 5 to 6 days.

### Hook:

- \*Pass out the Anticipation Guide regarding the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the framing of the United States Constitution. Give the students between 5 – 7 minutes to answer the questions.
- \*Read the questions out loud to the class and ask the students to share their responses.
- \*Have students place the Anticipation Guide in their journal so they can revisit it at the conclusion of the lesson.

### Into:

- \*Pass out student books, SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution!, and allow students between 2 – 4 minutes to browse through the book examining the illustrations so students can make predictions.
- \*Ask students to share their predictions with the class. The teacher can chart these predictions to revisit at the end of the story.
- \*Read the story TO the class. (This part of the lesson should take approximately 3 days. Each day before you begin reading you can have the students respond to a journal prompt regarding the book and the previous days reading.)
- \*Journal Prompts to Consider:
  - \*Name some of the “Founding Fathers” and explain their role at the Constitutional Convention.
  - \*Who was Edmund Randolph and what was the Virginia Plan?
  - \*What prevented many states from immediately adopting the Constitution?
  - \*How did the Constitution fix the shortcomings found in the Articles of Confederation?
  - \*What is the system of checks and balances?



## Through:

- \*Pass out Flip Books and power point handouts to students.
- \*Have students place the title on their flip books and label each tab.
- \*Have students cut and paste each Article under the appropriate tab.
- \*Once all students have completed the above steps begin the power point presentation. The power point presentation should be directly taught. Use the “What it says” slides to discuss such things as spelling, why the Founding Fathers capitalized certain words, and ask the students what THEY think each article means before actually moving to the “What it means” slides.
- \*Students should paraphrase or summarize the “what it means” slide into their own words.
- \*At the completion of the power point, students should be given time to color and illustrate their flip books.

## Beyond:

There are actually TWO beyond activities that can be completed with this assignment.

- \*Have students create a Double Bubble Map where they compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with The Constitution.
- \*Pass out Persuasive Writing Prompt and have students complete the essay on whether or not they think their state should ratify the constitution or not.

## Special Needs of Students Considered in this Lesson:

1. For those English Language Learners and students not yet reading at grade level a series of vocabulary lessons prior to the lessons on the Articles of Confederation, **The Constitution**, and the Bill of Rights, are conducted to help make the material more accessible.
2. For those English Language Learners and students not reading at grade level the story SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution should be read TO the class.
3. Sentence starters can also be posted on the wall for student use when responding to the journal prompts.
4. Illustrations referencing the material in the Constitution also can make the material more accessible for the English Language Learners.



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5. For GATE students, students can be expected to fill in the “What it Means Section” without teacher guidance and then share out to class.
6. GATE students can also be expected to complete the writing assessment with minimal teacher guidance.
7. Multiple lessons throughout this unit rely heavily on Thinking Maps and Foldable books making information more accessible to different learning modalities.

### **Extension Ideas:**

1. Students can write a class or school constitution.
2. Students can research and present an oral/visual report on one of the Founding Fathers.
3. Students can research and present Constitutions from other countries.
4. Students can compare and contrast the Federal Constitution with the Constitution from their state.