

## 10. Living Our Values | Lesson Plan

What kind of citizen must live in a Republic?

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Students will understand that truth does not change based on people's actions or opinions, and will apply the Law of Identity to evaluate ideas about the Founders and the Constitution.

### Learning Objectives:

- Explain the Law of Identity and how it shows that truth does not change based on people's actions or opinions.
- Distinguish between truth and human behavior, recognizing that people can know what is right and still fail to live by it.
- Identify examples of hypocrisy and explain why hypocrisy reveals a failure in a person, not a failure in the truth itself.
- Evaluate ideas about the Founders and the Constitution by asking whether a principle is true, rather than judging it solely by the actions of the people who stated it.
- Describe why a free and stable civilization depends not only on good laws, but on people who are willing to live according to what is right.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Law of Identity:** Something is what it is. If it is true, it is true.
- **Truth:** What is real and correct and does not change from person to person. It applies at all times, in all places, for all people.
- **Opinion:** A personal belief or judgment that can vary from person to person and is not always based on fact.
- **Morality:** The understanding of what is right and wrong, and the responsibility to live according to what is right.
- **Hypocrisy:** When a person claims to believe what is right, but fails to act according to that belief.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

Academic Subject Areas: U.S. Constitution, U.S. History

### What You'll Need

- Video: History in 5: *The Constitution Explained: Living Our Values* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: History in 5: *The Constitution Explained: Living Our Values* (Click [Here](#))
- Supplies: Paper, pencil, timer

### Lesson Plan (55-60 minutes)

**Warm Up:** (5 minutes)



1. Teacher Prompt (display on the board or read aloud): Have you ever done something wrong... but still knew what the right thing was? In other words, can someone believe that something is right, even know that it is right, but still fail to do it? (Give some examples of knowing the rules but still breaking them.)
2. Call on 2-3 students. Write short responses on the board. (Key idea to surface: People can fail to live up to what is true... but that does not make the truth change.)
3. Explain that logic is a way of thinking that helps us test whether an idea is true. Long ago, the Greek thinker Aristotle helped explain three important ground rules for clear thinking. These are called the Laws of Thought:
  - **Law of Identity:** If something is true, then it is true.
  - **Law of Non-Contradiction:** Something cannot be both true and not true at the same time.
  - **Law of the Excluded Middle:** Something is either true or not true; there is no middle option.
4. Explain that this lesson will focus on the **Law of Identity**. Sometimes students may hear statements such as, "That is your truth," or "That may be true for you, but not for me." Explain that these kinds of statements usually refer to **opinion**, not truth. By definition, truth is stable and applies to everyone. Opinions may differ from person to person, but truth does not.
5. Place a t-chart on the board with "Truth" on one side and "Opinion" on the other. Ask students to offer up examples of both. For instance:
  - Chocolate ice cream is the best.
  - $2 + 2 = 4$
  - Stealing is wrong.
  - Homework is too hard.
  - Recess should be longer.
  - Lying means saying something that is not true.
6. Note to teachers: As an ongoing practice, help students correctly identify truth and opinion throughout the day and week, or however long it takes to really solidify this concept.
7. Explain that the Founders were humans who had excellent understandings about truth, government, and humanity. We need to take a look at what they built, and the truths that they based their idea on, so that we can protect the ideas of our Constitution both today and for generations to come. Today's lesson explores the idea that even imperfect people can know what is true, live it out, and teach it to others.

#### **Truth and the Human Condition:** (12-15 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of 3–4. Give each group at least three Scenario Cards (on the last page of the lesson plan).
2. After students read their Scenarios, distribute the worksheet (one per student). Direct students to complete the **scenario questions** section as a group, but save the Comprehension Questions for later.

3. Directions for the Scenarios:
  - Read and discuss each scenario on the cards.
  - Students may connect the scenarios to their own experiences, but they should not accuse or call out other students by name. Explain that these scenarios were chosen because they reflect common human failures, not because they are unusual.
  - After discussing each scenario, students should write a response that identifies the truth in the situation and explains how that truth still applies, even when people fail to live up to it.
  - Remind students that the situation does not change the truth. The truth remains the same, even when people ignore it, reject it, or fail to practice it.
4. As groups work, circulate and prompt students to think about questions such as: Are some truths universal (apply to everyone)? How can we know?
5. Share Out and Class Comparison: Invite groups to share patterns they noticed in the scenarios, while keeping the discussion respectful and focused on ideas rather than on judging people.
  - Facilitate a brief class discussion by selecting 2–3 scenarios that clearly reveal both a moral truth and a human failure to live up to it.
6. Save the remaining worksheet sections until after students have watched the video and received direct instruction.

**Founders Purpose:** A Moral Challenge (5-10 minutes)

1. **Direct Instruction:** This lesson teaches students that truth is not invented by feelings, crowds, or circumstances. It is something real that can be known, lived out, and taught to others. Although people may fail to live consistently by what is true, their failure does not make truth unknowable or false. A healthy civilization depends on people who are willing to recognize truth, take responsibility for their failures, and strive to live according to what is right.
- Truth and the Law of Identity: Today's lesson introduced the principle from logic called the Law of Identity: If something is true, then it is true. This means that
  - Truth does not change depending on the situation.
  - Truth does not change depending on the person.
  - Truth does not change when people fail to follow it.
  - People may ignore the truth, reject the truth, even fail to live by the truth, but the truth itself does not change.
- Truth is knowable: Explain that some principles are true whether we like them or not. Some actions are right, and some are wrong. If students can know that cheating, stealing, lying, and disrespect are wrong, then they already understand that truth can be known.
- Truth is livable: People may fail to live by what is true, but that does not mean truth is impossible to live by. It means people must practice virtue, self-government, and take responsibility when they fall short.

- Truth is teachable: If truth can be known, then it can also be taught. Imperfect people can still teach true principles, and students should learn how to judge those principles by whether they are true, not merely by whether the person teaching them lived perfectly.
- The Founders were human beings. The Founders recognized and taught true principles about freedom, government, and human nature. Their personal failures should be judged honestly, but those failures do not erase the truth of the principles they taught.
- A virtuous people do not deny truth because they fail. They admit failure and continue striving to live by what is true.

2. Next, introduce the video. Ask students to watch for the points just discussed above.

**Watch and Discuss:** (7-10 minutes)

1. Watch *History in 5: Constitution Explained: Living Our Values*, uninterrupted.
2. After the video, discuss the following questions to check for understanding and prepare students to complete the worksheet:
  - Did the Founders always live up to their claims that all people are created equal?
  - Is it important to recognize hypocrisy when we see it?
  - Discuss the importance of a strong civilization having both good laws as well as people who are willing to live by what is right.
3. **Teacher tip:** Encourage students to use vocabulary such as *Law of Identity, Morality, Hypocrisy, and truth*.
4. Allow students time to complete the rest of the worksheet. Scaffold and differentiate as needed based on the student.

**Wrap Up:** (5 minutes)

1. Have students complete an exit ticket or door check (spoken or written):
  - What does the Law of Identity teach us about truth?
  - Can a person know what is true and still fail to live by it? Explain.
  - Why is it important to recognize hypocrisy without rejecting what is true?
  - Give an example of something that is true and something that is an opinion.
2. **Success Criteria:**  
A strong response should explain that truth does not change when people fail to live by it, that people can know what is right and still act against it, and that hypocrisy reveals a failure in the person—not a failure in the truth itself. Students should also recognize that a strong civilization depends on people who are willing to live by what is true.
3. Let students know that they have now completed their civilization-building journey by considering not only how governments should be formed, but also what kind of people are needed to sustain a free society. Explain that living our values requires more than knowing what is right—it requires the honesty, discipline, and responsibility to live by it.

## Don't have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)

Distribute 3 to 5 of the **Scenario Cards** to each group of students and invite them to complete the **Truth and the Human Condition** section of the *Living Our Values* Worksheet. Then watch the video "Constitution Explained: Living Our Values" and discuss how imperfect people can still know, live out, and teach others about truth.

## Scenario Cards

*Note: This lesson builds on the previous eight lessons in the Constitution Explained series.*

### **Scenario 1 – Cheating**

A student says, "Cheating is wrong."

Later in the school year, that same student is caught using answers from a friend during a test and says, "Everyone does it anyway."

Questions:

Is cheating still wrong?

Which failed? The truth that cheating is wrong, or the student who cheated?

### **Scenario 2 – Stealing**

A student claims that "Taking things that don't belong to you is wrong."

But then that student took some pencils and erasers out of someone else's desk without asking, claiming that the other student had more than they needed.

Questions:

Is taking things that don't belong to you still wrong?

Does having more than someone else make it right to take their things?

Which failed? The truth that stealing is wrong, or the student who took the items?

### **Scenario 3 – Littering**

Students are taught, "Leave it better than you found it," and repeat it each morning.

But during lunch, many students leave trash scattered around the schoolyard, saying, "It's not a big deal—someone will clean it up."

Questions:

Is it still right to leave things better than you found them?

Does it become okay to make a mess if someone else is expected to clean it up?

Which failed? The truth, or the students who ignored it?

**Scenario 4 – Manners**

A child is taught that it is right to treat others with respect. They are polite to teachers and friends, but often ignore or disrespect people at home, especially when they are in a bad mood.

Questions:

Is it still right to treat others with respect?

Does it change depending on who the person is or how you feel?

Which failed? The principle of respect, or the child who did not practice it consistently?

**Scenario 5 – Courage**

A student says that you should not give up what is right just because others make fun of you.

But when classmates laugh at him for saying something true, he changes his position to fit in.

Questions:

Is it still right to stand by what is true and right?

Does peer pressure make something true or false?

Which failed? The principle of courage, or the student who gave in?