



GRADE 6+

## Federalism | Lesson Plan

What is Federalism?



Students learn about federalism, why the Founding Fathers divided powers between federal and state government branches, and how the Constitution protects the rights of American citizens.

### Learning Objectives:

- Analyze why the Founding Fathers used federalism to divide powers among the state and federal governments.
- Discern why the Articles of Confederation ultimately failed and was replaced by the Constitution.
- Discuss how the 14th Amendment helps protect the American people by ensuring that the rights listed within the Constitution are respected.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Federalism:** a system of government in which power is shared between the central (national) government and individual political units (states or provinces).
- **14th Amendment:** ensures that states and local governments must generally respect the rights listed in the Bill of Rights and future amendments to the Constitution.
- **Articles of Confederation:** a founding document of the United States and original framework of governance which ultimately failed because it made the federal government too weak and was replaced by the Constitution.

**Educational Standards:** History, Civics, Western Civilization, Government, American Values

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: Federalism*.



Scan to watch video.

- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: Federalism*. ([Download PDF](#))

## Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

### Warm-Up: What is federalism? (10 mins.)

1. Ask: *Would you want to be king of our class for a day? If you were a king and could make the rules, what would you decide to do?* Allow students to share answers.
2. State: *As a teacher, I may not like all of your decisions if you were king. The Founding Fathers knew that our nation would function better by dividing the powers between the national government and the states. This is called federalism. Let's learn about how this system helps provide balance to our government.*
3. Display a copy of Street Smarts: Federalism Worksheet on a screen in the classroom.
4. Have a student read each statement aloud and attempt to answer them as a class. Invite students to share out (or do this part independently).

### Watch and Complete: (25 mins.)

1. State: *Let's play a fun game and see if we got it right.*
2. Watch the video.
3. Pause after each question and allow students to try to answer.
4. Play the video to reveal if students were correct or incorrect.

### Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Allow students 10 minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Collect as formative assessment or discuss in class.

## Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.