



GRADE 6+

The Constitution | Lesson Plan

What is the United States Constitution, and how did it shape the structure of our federal government?

Students learn about the United States Constitution, a founding document that established the governing principles of our country. They'll join Uncle Sam as he quizzes kid contestants about the Constitution and complete a fun follow-along worksheet.

Learning Objectives:

- Define what the Preamble of the Constitution is.
- Describe how the Constitution limits the powers of government through the separation of powers and checks and balances.
- Students will recognize that the Bill of Rights comprises the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- Distinguish how the Constitution safeguards and limits individual rights.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Constitution:** The Constitution is the founding document that created the governing principles of the United States that are still in effect today. With its original seven Articles, the Constitution establishes the structure of the federal government.
- **Preamble:** The Preamble is the introductory section of the Declaration of Independence. It begins with the phrase, "We the People..."
- **Amendment:** An amendment is a term used to describe a change to the Constitution.
- **The Bill of Rights:** The Bill of Rights is the name of the first ten amendments to the Constitution.
- **Checks and Balances:** Checks and balances are a system in which different branches of government share power and can prevent each other from taking certain actions. This system is designed to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

Educational Standards: Civics, American Values, U.S. History

What You'll Need

- Video: [Street Smarts: The Constitution](#)



Scan to watch video.

- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: The Constitution* ([Download PDF](#))
- List of classroom or school rules to display (poster, handbook, or on screen).

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Ask: *Let's look around our classroom. What document(s) explicitly lays out ways for our classroom to run safely and smoothly? Does a document exist for our school that lists guidelines for students of all grades to follow?*
2. Students will share their answers in a brief discussion. If needed, guide the students to your classroom/school rules. Briefly go through your class rules. Ask: *Why does our classroom need a set of rules? Why would our school need a set of rules? What would happen if these rules were not in place?*
3. Ask: *Now, that's how we make sure everyone is set up for success at school (providing every student at school with a conducive learning environment, letting students know what is expected of them, etc.), but how do we make sure that citizens of our country know what is expected of them? Is there a document/list of rules telling Americans their rights?*

Students: *The Constitution!*

4. Say: *Today, we are going to learn about the Constitution of the United States and the role it has played in shaping our federal government.*
5. Display a copy of *Street Smarts: The Constitution* Worksheet on a screen in the classroom.
6. Call on a couple of students to read each statement aloud/preview the statements before they watch the video.

Watch and Complete: (25 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause after each question, and allow students to try and answer.
3. Continue to pause periodically so students can complete the worksheet/fill in the answers.
4. Model how to fill in the first blank. Students can copy down your response. As a class, fill in the next blank. Have students turn and talk to a deskmate to fill in the next blank. Then the students fill in the remaining answers independently.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Allow students 5 minutes to complete the remainder of the worksheet independently.
2. Collect as formative assessment or discuss in class.
3. Closing Questions: *What is the United States Constitution? What is the Preamble? How does the Constitution limit the powers of government through the separation of powers and checks and balances? What does the Bill of Rights contain?*

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.