

# Understanding the Constitution

Program Name Middletown ABLE

Staff Responsible for Lesson Dianne Aiken

Technology	Study / Life skills	EL-Civics	Career Pathways	Police	Paramedic	Fire Rescue	Medical Asst.	EKG / Cardio	Phlebotomy	Practical Nursing	Healthcare	Admin	Pharmacy Tech	IMT	AMT	HVAC	Welding	Other:	
		<b>X</b>																	
Date(s) Used				January 2011															
Civics Category				III. U.S. History and Government and Citizenship															
Civics Objective				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;">1. Government and Law - Identify basic organization of federal government</li> <li>2. Government and Law - Identify people and events in federal government</li> </ol>															
Time Frame to Complete Lesson				Two 1-hour sessions															
EFL(s)				3, 4															
Standard(s)/Components of Performance				<p style="margin: 0;">Listen Actively</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Speak so that Others Can Understand</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Read with Understanding</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Convey Ideas in Writing</p>															
Benchmark(s)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L.3.1. Demonstrate comprehension of sentences of simple topics.</li> <li>• L.3.4. Respond appropriately to simple questions and one-step directions.</li> <li>• L.4.1. Demonstrate comprehension of familiar topics.</li> <li>• L.4.4. Respond appropriately to questions and two-step directions from various listening situations.</li> <li>• S.4.1. Participate in conversations on familiar topics.</li> <li>• S.4.3. Use grammatical structures (e.g., future and common irregularly past tenses) to communicate meaning.</li> <li>• R.3.2. Use strategies to understand text.</li> <li>• R.3.3. Use strategies to monitor decoding and word recognition of simple sentences with familiar vocabulary.</li> </ul>															

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R.4.1. Comprehend information in common forms and simple paragraphs.</li> <li>• R.4.2. Use strategies to understand text.</li> <li>• W.3.2. Organize simple sentences.</li> <li>• W.3.3. Produce simple sentences on familiar subjects.</li> <li>• W.3.4. Illustrate some control of basic grammar.</li> <li>• W.4.2. Organize simple sentences with a beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>• W.4.3. Produce a simple paragraph on a familiar topic.</li> <li>• W.4.4. Use grammatical structures (e.g., future and common irregular past tenses, commonly used adjectives, pronouns, propositions, possessives).</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-made worksheets on the Constitution - vocabulary words, story about a classroom studying the making of the U.S. Constitution</li> <li>• Journal or recording sheets</li> <li>• Vocabulary handouts</li> </ul>
Activities	<p>Note: This project should be initiated only after a study of the Revolutionary War and how it ended.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write vocabulary on the board and pass out a copy to each student.</li> <li>2. Using prior knowledge of the students, see if each of the words can be defined. Teacher can give background as needed.</li> <li>3. Have students cut out each word to use as a vocabulary card.</li> <li>4. Then hand out the worksheet with the definitions. Cut them out.</li> <li>5. As a class, match up the words and definitions. Make sure everyone is correct with the definitions.</li> <li>6. Next pass out the teacher-made story that gives more information about the Constitution.</li> <li>7. Read together and discuss the questions.</li> </ol>
Assessment/ Evidence	Working in teams of two, students can mix up vocabulary

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	words and definitions to try to get them back in order correctly. Students can also participate in discussions using new vocabulary.
Reflection	Students can see the important need for organized governments and how important it is to understand how our government works.

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## Part 1 *Vocabulary for Lesson on the Constitution*

Directions: Ask class to give definitions they already know. Help them with the ones that are unknown. The words and the definitions can be cut out and then matched. Work in pairs and see who can get the right words to the right definitions first.

1. Constitution
2. House of Representatives
3. President, Supreme Court, and Congress
4. 1776
5. England
6. amendments
7. Bill of Rights
8. Colonies
9. 1791
10. rights

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- A. After the war they became known as states.
- B. The enemy of the Americans.
- C. A written document of rules for a country.
- D. Changes in the rules of a country.
- E. The date the Constitution with amendments became the law of the land.
- F. The date the war began.
- G. The 3 parts of the new government
- H. Representatives work here for the people.
- I. The first 10 amendments.
- J. What the government cannot take away from the people in the country.

Answers: 1 C 2 H 3 G 4 F 5 B 6 D  
7 I 8 A 9 E 10 J

## Part 2 –The Making of the Constitution.

Lisa and Rico were in English class. Their teacher had taught them the background of the Revolutionary War. This was the war that involved the colonists (the people in the New World) and the home country of England. It started in 1775 and lasted for about 5 years.

They learned that the colonists wanted to set up a brand new government to make it the best government in the world. Many colonists argued about what the new country should be like. There were many people in the new country, so they decided to send “representatives” to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to work to get the Constitution written.

The Constitution was a set of rules that people in the new country would have to live with. It was very important for everyone to feel protected by the government, but not threatened by it. Many of the men who met together wanted three different parts of the government – The Presidency (Executive), The House and Senate, and the Judges (Supreme Court).

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The representatives worked very hard together, argued a lot, and wrote down the rules and ideas of the Constitution.

Lisa and Rico felt that they understood what the new Americans were trying to do, but were not sure that they fully understood what a constitution was. So they asked their teacher, Ms. Mary, to explain. The teacher then made a spot on the board to fill in some ideas. She asked the students to think about their classroom. She asked them to tell her some of the rules of the room. Many people volunteered, and here are some of their ideas:

No phones      Be good listeners

Raise your hand and answer questions

Clean up the room when you are done.

Have Mary ask the principal if they could have a fiesta soon      Write neatly

Ms. Mary said that the rules made up the Constitution of their room. Even classrooms had to have rules. Ms. Mary would be the representative to ask the principal if they could plan a fiesta.

Rico and Lisa said that they now understood what a constitution was.

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Ms. Mary then told the students that the class may need to add rules to the classroom. Back in 1789 when the Constitution was finished, some representatives felt that some changes needed to be made. They made some good arguments, and so “amendments”, or changes, were added. Then in 1791 the job was done. 10 new rules were added. These became known as the Bill of Rights. America had a new government, a new Constitution, and the document known as the Bill of Rights. The new country would become strong and powerful. This is true even today.

Lisa and Rico thought that learning about the Constitution would help them to understand even more about their adopted country. They were eager to learn more.

### Discussion:

1. What did the colonists think about having a constitution for the new country?
2. Why did they send representatives to write a constitution?
3. Why were the amendments so important?
4. What are the Bill of Rights?