

LESSON TITLE

Debating Hypothetical Constitutional Issues - Rupert Leeming
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LESSON GOAL(S)	ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S)
Students will understand how the constitution is a document that is constantly being debated, and that there are multiple interpretations of the constitution.	Why is the constitution an effective framework for government?

CIVICS STANDARDS ALIGNMENT (STATE STANDARDS & C3 FRAMEWORK)

What standards from the NH State Standards and/or from the C3 are emphasized in the lesson?

STATE STANDARDS		C3 STANDARDS	
Nature and Purpose of Government	X	Civic & Political Institutions	X
Structure of NH & U.S. Government	X	Participation & Deliberation	X
World and U.S.'s place in it		Process, Rules, and Laws	X
Rights & Responsibilities	X		

COMMON CORE LITERACY STANDARDS

What Common Core Literacy Standards are emphasized in the lesson?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS	X
CRAFT AND STRUCTURE	X
INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS	X
RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY	X

LESSON PLAN

Identify the steps needed to successfully facilitate the lesson plan

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break students into groups of four or five. Give each group a copy of the constitution. 2. Working in groups students should read the constitution and create a constitution map. This map of the constitution could be created as a digital infographic or a large poster paper. It is important that this be a visual and not just a written summary or paraphrasing of the constitution. Essentially group members should have to work to imagine how to design a government that would be based on the constitution. Considering using the metaphor of a blueprint to help them “see” what they are trying to create. 3. To help ensure each group shares evenly distributed responsibility for the final work product work process each group member should have a clear role within the group. One strategy for assigning roles would be to assign sections of the constitution to each group member and have each group member responsible for sharing out with

the rest of the group.

3. Prompt groups to identify, institutions, powers, and limitations (it may be helpful to define these terms for the class).

4. After students have completed their maps in groups have groups share out and make a common map of the constitution as a class.

5. Next distribute the three hypotheticals and their supporting questions. Working individually or in pairs students should read the hypotheticals and answer the questions, including giving their opinion on the issue.

6. When students have had time to prepare their thinking for each hypothetical engage in roundtable debate on each of the hypothetical issues, giving balanced time for each issue. Be sure to help student keep their debated oriented towards the significance of the constitution relative to the issues.

ASSESSMENTS

What assessment tasks will students complete as the culmination of the lesson?

Have students take their notes in preparation for the debate, notes & new ideas they garnered through engaging in debate with their classmates and completed a typed report on each hypothetical. For each hypothetical students should first state their opinion and then respond to each of the “questions to consider” explaining how they relate to their opinion. Encourage students to refer to specific pieces of the constitution in crafting their work product.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Are there any other materials or outside resources that are needed to facilitate the lesson/assessment tasks?

HYPOTHETICAL I. The State of New Hampshire has passed a right to die law which allows mentally competent, terminally ill adult New Hampshire residents to voluntarily request and receive a prescription medication to hasten their death. Two physicians must certify that the person is terminally ill. Using your copy of the US Constitution argue that this law either does or does not violate the constitution.

Questions to consider:

1. Does Congress have the power to regulate this matter under Article I of the US Constitution? (check Sections 8 & 9)

2. Is this a power denied to the States under Article I, section 10?

3. Is this a power reserved to the States?

4. Is this a right of the people under the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment?

5. Is this an issue that is supported by the majority of the citizens of the United States?

6. Your opinion

HYPOTHETICAL II. A New Hampshire statute has made it a crime for any parent to use corporal punishment on their children, anywhere in the state of New Hampshire. Does this law violate the US Constitution? (Cite the relevant parts of the Constitution)

Questions:

1. Does this law affect any rights under the Bill of Rights?

2. Does New Hampshire have important state interests in passing this law?

3. Do parents have important rights at stake here?

4. Would the majority of New Hampshire citizens support this law?

5. Your opinion.

HYPOTHETICAL III. The Kearsarge Regional School District has banned students from wearing T shirts that promote the use of firearms, citing the spate of recent school shootings. Does this rule violate the US constitution? (Cite the relevant parts of the constitution)

Questions.

1. What is (are) the constitutional right(s) at stake here?
2. What are the school district's interests in regulating what students can and cannot wear?
3. What rights/ interests do the students have?
4. Your opinion.