

Content: Social Studies – Gail MacGuire Grade 5

Topic: Constitution Day

Essential Understandings: The students will understand the struggles and sacrifices their forefathers endured to develop the guidelines which later became the constitution which guides our nation today. They will develop ownership for paying forward the responsibility of citizenship not only on Constitution Day but every day.

Standards: Civics and Governments (CV: 1) The goal of Civics is to educate students to understand the purpose, structure, and functions of government; the political process; the rule of law; and world affairs. Civics builds on a foundation of history, geography, and economics to teach students to become responsible, knowledgeable citizens, committed to participation in public affairs

SS: CV: 6:1.2: Identify the core ideals and principles of American government by citing documents, e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, or the Bill of Rights.

Teacher Notes:

- King George: England rules
- Colonists fight for their rights and independence-Revolutionary War
- Declaration of Independence-July 1766
- DOI creates 13 colonies (a new nation): free independent states
- Articles of Confederation (1781): lasts 5 years, didn't work well
- Reasons: each state had its own money, no central army, passed laws but could not be reinforced
- Central Government needed to be stronger due to problems
- 55 men worked at the State House in Philadelphia to revamp the Articles
- George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin
- Articles could not be used, so a new Constitution was drafted
- Constitution of the United States and 7 articles were drafted
- All thirteen states ratified (approved) the constitution in June of 1789

Resources:

Shhh....We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz

The Story of the Constitution by Marilyn Prolman

YouTube video: Constitution Rap- Smart Songs

YouTube video: The Constitution of the United States by McSpedden

YouTube video: Schoolhouse Rock: the Preamble

Poster of the Constitution

Poster of the Preamble/meaning sheet

Pictures/artifacts of above important political leaders highlighting their important roles

Plan:

Day #1: Watch the video, The Constitution of the United States

Review the facts by creating a physical timeline using students holding cue cards of events leading up to the Constitution. Students line up and readjust their position as they brainstorm the events.

- Which event came first and why?
- Which event was last?
- How did the events build on one another?

Day #2: Students use “_____” (cues) to create a hard copy of timeline.

Day #3: Watch the video, Schoolhouse Rock: The Preamble

Read the Preamble and meaning sheet of each sentence

Discuss the meanings and the importance of each.

- What were our forefathers trying to achieve with the Preamble?
- What is the purpose of the Preamble?
- Do you think they were more careful this time as opposed to the Articles of the Confederation?
- What did they change from the Articles of the Confederation?

Day #4: Watch the video, Constitution Rap

- Discuss the different scenes depicted in the video.
- What does the different scenes/events say about the Constitution?

Day #5: Journal Writing Topic: Good citizens are personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented.

- What have we learned from our forefathers' commitment to democracy?
- What is our responsibility of citizenship?
- How can we pay forward to insure we are good citizens?

Share out students' ideas on chart paper. Whole group determines which ideas the class will work on. This activity is a springboard for developing ideas about what good citizenship is and what good citizens do.