



## Ten Rights Can't Be Wrong!

Julie Weaver  
Charlottesville City Public Schools



**Topic:** History and Social Sciences, U.S. Constitution, U.S. History, Bill of Rights

### Overview

In this lesson students will understand the difficulty faced by the founding fathers in writing the constitution. They will also identify the first ten amendments and create a Bill of Rights for their classroom.

### Grade 5

**Time Allotment:** Four 60-minute sessions

### Learning Objectives

On completion of this lesson students will be able to:

- State reasons why the U.S. Constitution was written.
- Identify and explain the Bill of Rights.
- Apply their knowledge of the first ten amendments by writing a Bill of Rights for the classroom.
- Demonstrate proficiency of word processing skills in order to design a slideshow presentation using PowerPoint.

This lesson addresses Va. SOL History USI.7, English 4.8, 5.8, and Computer/Technology 5.4.

### Materials and Student Handouts

- Directions for the Constitution Game (1<sup>st</sup> page attached)
- 1 envelope containing 12 paper clips, 1 die, and rhymed instructions for each group of 3-4 students (included on Directions for Constitution Game sheet)
- Copy of the Bill of Rights  
([http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html))
- Constitution Game Reflection Sheet (attached)
- Bill of Rights Activity Sheet (attached)
- Planning Sheets for Bill of Rights slideshow (attached)

### Teacher Preparations

- Copy Bill of Rights-one per student.
- Copy Bill of Rights activity sheet-one per student.
- Make overhead of Bill of Rights activity sheet (if needed).
- Copy Constitution Reflection Sheet-one per group of 3-4 students.
- Copy slideshow planning sheets-one per group of 2 students.
- View the Constitution Game's internet site to print instructions on how to prepare the envelopes and directions for the game.
- Enlarge the rhymed instructions and make one copy per envelope.
- Reserve the computer lab, if necessary.

## Materials and Student Handouts

- Bookmark the websites at student stations, as well as the teacher's computer or use the teacher's PortaPortal.
- Preview and download videos Celebrating 200 Years of the American Constitution and The Bill of Rights
- Make, print, and copy rubric- one per student.

## Introductory Activity

### Focus on Media Interaction

After playing a game, the class will discuss the possible problems our founding fathers had in writing the Constitution. From there they will learn about the Constitution by viewing various video clips. Next, students will practice matching/identifying the Bill of Rights by playing games on the internet. Finally, taking all of the information that they have learned, the students will work with a partner to create a Bill of Rights for their classroom using PowerPoint.

### Introductory Activity:

1. Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4 and give an envelope to each group.

**FOCUS:** Let's read and follow the directions for the Constitution Game.

**ACTIVITY:** After the students have created and played their game, pass out and have them complete the Constitution Game Reflection Sheet.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Today we are going to be learning about the Constitution of the United States. You have just finished playing a game where there were no rules or guidelines for you to follow. I would like a volunteer from each group to share the reflection sheet. (Allow students time to share their thought and feelings from the Reflection Sheet.)

**Note:** The teacher may continue to follow the procedures for the Constitution Game from the internet site or use the procedures provided in this lesson.

2. **FOCUS:** How did you feel when you were making up the game? (Write responses on the board.) Did your feelings change while you were playing? Do you think this would have been easier to do if you had clearer directions or guidelines?

3. **FOCUS:** Now I would like to tell you a short story about how our constitution was written. In May of 1787, representatives from 12 states met in Philadelphia, Pa. They were there to improve the Articles of Confederation by creating more unity and cooperation among the states. We know that there were 13 states, but Rhode Island did not send a representative to Philadelphia. Let's imagine how those men must have felt. Well, maybe they felt... (read from the student responses listed on the board).

**FOLLOW-UP:** You were given 12 paper clips to use. Why do you think you were given only 12 paper clips? (*Response: They represented the men in Philadelphia.*) Yes, the paper clips represented the men in Philadelphia. The die was a symbol of the luck that they needed in writing this document. You created a game and they created our constitution and probably felt just like you did today.



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### Learning Activities

**1. FOCUS:** I am going to show you a video clip. I want you to see if you can tell me what the people are celebrating.

**PLAY** the video clip *Celebrating 200 Years of the American Constitution* from the beginning.

**PAUSE** after 33 seconds when the narrator says, "United States of America". Look for the men marching.

**FOLLOW-UP:** What was the significance of this celebration? Accept all reasonable responses.

**2. FOCUS:** How did the constitution bring the 13 states together? Resume the video.

**PAUSE** after the narrator says, "Free citizens of the one nation, the United States of America". (50 seconds). Look for Congress in session.

**FOLLOW UP:** Discuss with students how the constitution brought the 13 states together by creating a national government which unified the states.

**3. FOCUS:** Now we will hear part of a speech given by James Earl Jones. In his speech, he says, "We the people", three times. Why do you think he did this?

Resume the video.

**STOP** after James Earl James says, "We the people", for the third time (1:31 sec.). Look for the airplanes flying overhead.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss with students the importance of his words (accept all reasonable responses).

**4. FOCUS:** Now I am going to show you another video clip that will teach you more about the constitution and the Bill of Rights. In order for the constitution to be accepted each state had to vote. Watch this segment to see how many votes were needed.

**PLAY** the video clip *The Bill of Rights* from the beginning. Pause after the narrator says, "Had to accept it" (11 seconds). Look for the close-up of the delegates.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss why 9 states had to accept the constitution before it could be ratified (accept all reasonable responses).

**5. FOCUS:** There were many debates about our constitution. Let's see if we can find out why some states wouldn't accept it. Resume the video.

**PAUSE** after the narrator says, "Against the government" (29 sec.). Look for the top of the constitution.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss why some states would not accept the constitution. Guide the students to understand that the states wanted a Bill of Rights to protect individuals against the government.

**6. FOCUS:** Where is the Bill of Rights located in the constitution? Resume the video.

**PAUSE:** after the narrator says, "Cannot be overestimated" (35 seconds). Look for the bottom of the constitution.

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**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss with students that the Bill of Rights is located in the first ten amendments. Further the discussion by having the students define the term amendment.

**7. FOCUS:** The Bill of Rights guarantees American certain rights. I want you to see if you can identify some of these rights. Resume the video.

**STOP** when you see Arlen Specter.

**FOLLOW-UP:** What are some of the rights mentioned? (*The right to freedom of religion, speech, assembly, travels protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, arbitrary arrest and punishment.*) What do they mean? (Accept all reasonable responses.)

**8. FOCUS:** We just heard about a few of the rights guaranteed to us in the Constitution. Now we are going to read the entire Bill of Rights to develop a better understanding of them in order to explain what each one means. (Pass out copies of the amendments and Bill of Rights Activity Sheet. Have a copy of the activity sheet on the SMART Board or make an overhead for the overhead projector. The teacher and students will create a simplified version to be copied on to their paper. Call on an individual to read the first amendment.) What freedoms are we entitled to as citizens of the United States? (*Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.*) (The teacher should write these down for the students to copy on their paper.)

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss why this would be an important amendment to the delegates? (*Guide students to the understanding that the colonist left England because they were in search of freedom from the King.*)

After reading the second amendment,

**9. FOCUS:** What is meant by the term militia? (*A group of citizens organized for military service.*)

**FOLLOW-UP:** Have you heard this word before? (*During class discussions we learned that militias were created for many of the battles during the American Revolution.*)

**10. FOCUS:** We know the citizens made up the militias. Let's reread this amendment. What is this amendment saying? (*Guide responses to the people have the right to keep and bear arms.*) (The teacher writes this down for the students to copy on their paper.)

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss why this would be an important amendment to the delegates. (Accept all reasonable responses.)

Follow this procedure for the remaining amendments. Discuss key vocabulary (as needed). Simplify each amendment, as shown below, write it on the overhead/SMART Board, and have the students write it on their Activity Sheet. Follow up each discussion by asking the students why this would be an important amendment to the delegates.

**11. FOLLOW-UP (closure):** Do you think these amendments are still important to the citizens of the U.S. today? Accept all reasonable responses. The following are the remaining amendments simplified for the teacher to use if he/she chooses.

- Amendment III – During peace time, the government can't make its citizens keep soldiers in their homes.
- Amendment IV – People and their homes are protected from unreasonable searches.
- Amendment V – Individuals accused of serious crimes have the right to a trial by jury and may not have to testify against themselves. Their life, liberty, and property may not be taken away from them unfairly.
- Amendment VI – Individuals accused of serious crimes have the right to a speedy and fair trial.
- Amendment VII – People have the right to a jury trial.
- Amendment VIII – Punishment may not be cruel and unusual.
- Amendment IX – Powers reserved to the people.
- Amendment X – Powers reserved to the states.

### **Culminating Activities**

- In the computer lab, students will play a game to see how well they can match/identify the ten amendments. The teacher may use his/her discretion to choose between the concentration and matching game. The teacher may also choose to have the students complete the Bill of Rights quiz (which can also be a part of the assessment).
- The students will create a Bill of Rights for their classroom. Each pair of students will create five amendments (this number can vary to allow for differentiation). The amendments should reflect the rights that all students of their class shall have. The students will complete their draft on the planning sheets provided and include an illustration for each. The pair should edit their amendments checking for correct usage of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. The amendments will be presented in a slideshow presentation using PowerPoint.

### **Assessment**

- The teacher may choose to have the students complete the Bill of Rights quiz.
- A rubric will be used to evaluate the Bill of Rights slideshow presentations. Each slideshow should reflect a basic understanding of the original Bill of Rights and demonstrate the student's ability to transfer his/her understanding of the Bill of Rights to a novel situation in a creative manner.

### **Community Connections**

- Invite an attorney to come in and speak to the students on constitutional law.
- Invite a local senator to speak to the class.
- Take a fieldtrip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. to view the original document.
- Take a fieldtrip to a local courthouse and speak with a judge.

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### **Cross-Curricular Extensions**

#### Language Arts

- Write a letter to the editor of the local paper expressing why the Bill of Rights is important to the citizens of this country.
- Create a Bill of Rights for the school's motto.

#### Art

- Students may choose an amendment and design a mural/collage using pictures from magazines or drawings.

### **About the Author**

Julie Weaver is a teacher at Jackson-Via Elementary School in Charlottesville, Virginia.

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**The Constitution Game Reflection Sheet**

Describe the game you played.


Describe your feelings as you created and played the game.

Player 1:

Player 2:

Player 3:

Player 4:



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**Bill of Rights Activity Sheet**

Amendment I -

Amendment II -

Amendment III -

Amendment IV -

Amendment V -

Amendment VI -

Amendment VII -

Amendment VIII -

Amendment IX -

Amendment X -

**Bill of Rights Slideshow Planning Sheets**

Please make sure your amendments are written in complete sentences. You must also have an illustration for each amendment.

**Slide 1 – Title Slide**

**Slide 2 – Amendment I**



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**Slide 3 – Amendment II**



**Slide 4 – Amendment III**

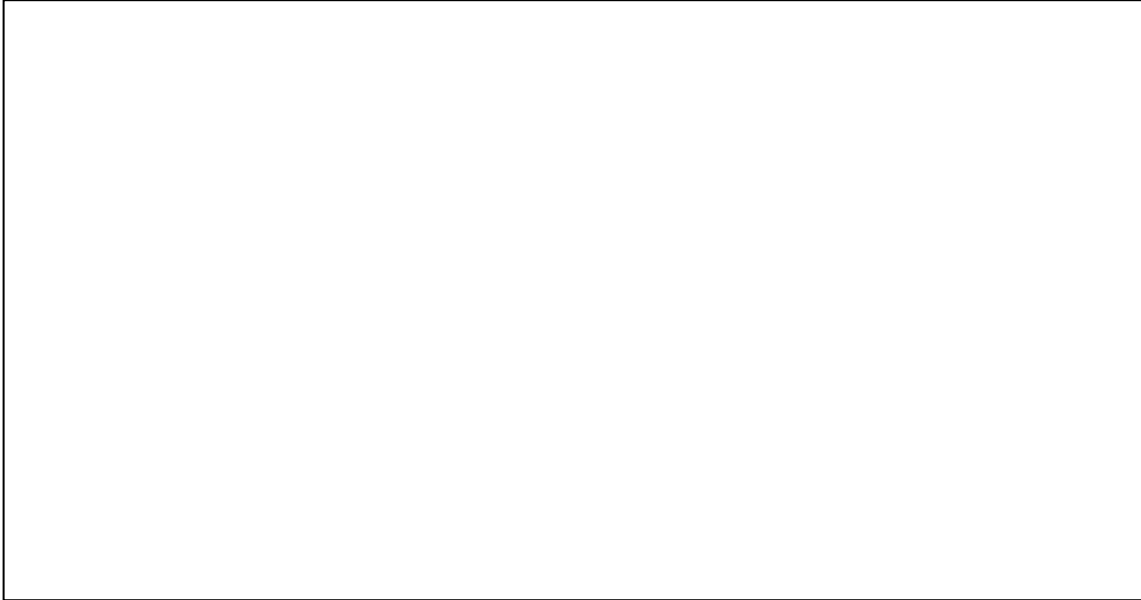




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**Slide 5 – Amendment IV**



**Slide 6 – Amendment V**





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**U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION**

www.archives.gov

March 22, 2003

**Teaching With Documents:  
 Observing Constitution Day**

**The Constitution Game**

The following activity was developed by Rennie G. Quible, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Volunteer Docent, as an introduction to a unit on the Constitution. It is frequently used by NARA volunteers with visiting school groups and by volunteers who visit local schools.

**Standards Correlation:**

**This lesson correlates to the National Standards for United States History:**

- Era 3 - Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)
  - Standard 3A: Demonstrate understanding of the issues related to the creation and ratification of the United States Constitution and the new Government it established.

**This lesson also correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government:**

- Standard II. A. 1: Explain central ideas of American constitutional government and their history.
- Standard V. D. 4: Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs.

**Time required:**

One class period

**Objective:**

To describe how the members of the Constitutional Convention might have felt as they gathered and began the arduous and memorable task of writing the United States Constitution.

**Materials needed:**

Envelopes containing:

- 1 die
- 12 paper clips
- The following rhymed instructions:

It's time to play a little game.  
 No two groups will play the same.  
 What and how is up to you.  
 The group must choose what it will do.  
 Use the things that you find here.  
 It won't take long; you need not fear.  
 In six short minutes you'll share your fame  
 By telling how you played your game.

**Procedure:**

1. Arrange students into groups of three or four.
2. Distribute one prepared envelope to each group, instructing participants to wait for a signal to open

.../print\_friendly.html?page=game\_content.html&title=NARA%20%7C%20Digital%20Classroom%03/22/2003