

What Inspired the Ideas of the Constitution?

U.S. Government

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	100 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

How are societies governed? What influenced the framers in writing the Constitution?

Summary

Students will examine primary source documents that influenced the framers in the writing of the Constitution.

Snapshot

Engage

Students will examine a famous painting of the signing of the Constitution and participate in a brainstorming activity OR students discuss how school rules are needed as a metaphor for the need for Constitutional "rules".

Explore

Students will rewrite the Preamble to the Constitution using more modern language.

Explain

Students will analyze documents that influenced the Constitution through an anticipation guide activity

Extend

Students will create a color, symbol, and image that best represents the basic ideas of the Constitution.

Evaluate

The anticipation guide and the Constitution color-symbol-image activity will serve as the evaluations.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.2: The student will describe the historical and philosophical foundations of the republican system of government in the United States.
USG.2.1: Summarize the major documents contributing to the formation of constitutional government in the United States, including the Magna Carta, the Mayflower Compact and the English Bill of Rights.
USG.2.3: Evaluate the necessity of a written constitution to set forth enumerated powers, to organize government,and to distribute powers among the three branches of government, the states,and the people.

Attachments

- Abridged Magna Carta with Annotations - Spanish.docx
- Abridged Magna Carta with Annotations - Spanish.pdf
- Abridged Magna Carta with Annotations.docx
- Abridged Magna Carta with Annotations.pdf
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet - Spanish.docx
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet - Spanish.pdf
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet.docx
- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet.pdf
- English Bill of Rights - Spanish.docx
- English Bill of Rights - Spanish.pdf
- English Bill of Rights.docx
- English Bill of Rights.pdf
- Petition of Right 1628 - Spanish.docx
- Petition of Right 1628 - Spanish.pdf
- Petition of Right 1628.docx
- Petition of Right 1628.pdf
- Scene_at_the_Signing_of_the_Constitution_of_the_United_States.jpg
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide - Spanish.docx
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide - Spanish.pdf
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide - Teacher Answer Key.docx
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide - Teacher Answer Key.pdf
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide.docx
- The Constitution Anticipation Guide.pdf
- The Mayflower Compact 1620 with Annotations - Spanish.docx
- The Mayflower Compact 1620 with Annotations - Spanish.pdf
- The Mayflower Compact 1620 with Annotations.docx
- The Mayflower Compact 1620 with Annotations.pdf
- The Preamble to the Constitution Student Handout - Spanish.docx
- The Preamble to the Constitution Student Handout - Spanish.pdf
- The Preamble to the Constitution Student Handout.docx
- The Preamble to the Constitution Student Handout.pdf

Materials

- Copy of painting "Scene of the Signing the Constitution" by Howard Chandler Christy for teacher use
- Post-it notes (Optional)
- Preamble student handout
- Constitution Anticipation Guide student handout
- Constitution Anticipation Guide - Teacher Answer Key
- Group copies of the Mayflower Compact, Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and English Bill of Rights

- Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet or blank paper
- Colored pencils for Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet handout

Engage

On the class projector, display the painting of "Scene of the Signing the Constitution" by Howard Chandler Christy. Ask students to use a Post-it note or piece of scratch paper and write anything they know about the Constitution or this scene about the Constitutional Convention.

Teacher's Note

One variation is to project the painting on the wall of the classroom and have students place the Post-it notes on the painting itself. Typical responses might be "that is George Washington standing up," "Benjamin Franklin is seated in the middle," "The convention was held because the Articles of Confederation were not working," or "men from the colonies came to write the Constitution".

Once students have written something they know, gather all the Post-it notes or scratch paper and share the responses aloud. Summarize what students have written. You may wish to add information about the Constitutional Convention. Further information about the Constitutional Convention can be found at: http://www.history.com/news/7-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-constitutional-convention and http://teachingamericanhistory.org/convention/.

Alternative Engage Activity—The teacher places 3 school rules on the board. An example might be that all students will be tardy after the second bell rings. Ask students to read silently the three rules and discuss with an elbow partner the following questions: Go through the questions one at a time. Randomly, ask different partners to share their answers as you go through the questions. T

1. What is the reason that schools have rules?
2. What would happen without rules?
3. What would happen if our country did not have rules or laws?
4. How do we as a country decide upon the rules we follow?

The most important question is number four. The Constitutional Convention of 1787 created a framework from which “rules” were determined for the new government. Previous rules had not worked --the Articles of Confederation. Make it clear to the class that the Constitution has been the U.S. government's guiding document for 229 years. It has gone through some revisions by the addition of amendments, but it remains the legal and binding document of our country with its citizens. What or who inspired the framers to create the Constitution and choose the rules that they did? Ask for any responses from the students.

Explore

To understand what the basic idea for a Constitution was all about, the framers began with a Preamble, or mission statement of what the Constitution was designed to do. To understand their ideas about the purpose of a government, students will rewrite the Preamble in their own words using more modern language where needed.

Pass out "The Preamble to the Constitution Student Handout." Pair students and ask pairs to rewrite the Preamble by summarizing it into a few statements of no more than 25 words or less. Allow 15 to 20 minutes for the rewrite activity.

Have pairs share what they wrote as the summary of the Preamble. After most (or all) pairs have shared, discuss the following questions as a class in a 10-minute discussion:

- What do you believe these phrases actually mean? Secure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty. (Discuss each phrase separately.)
- What big idea did the framers want for this new government?
- Who should have the most power in this government?

Teacher's Note- Class Discussion

The framers were concerned that the Articles of Confederation did not promote peaceable co-existence among the colonies nor that it would be able to raise enough money for a common defense should a foreign power wish to wage war. Colonies saw themselves as separate and independent of each other. The framers wished to promote a general welfare so no colony was taken advantage by another colony. They wished for peace (domestic tranquility) through a common set of laws. The big idea (or ideas) were justice and liberty for all with the people holding the most power through a representational government.

Explain

Where did the framers get their ideas for the Constitution? Fifty-five delegates, many of them lawyers and previously English citizens, brought ideas with them and debated those ideas for the 3 1/2 months that the Philadelphia convention was in session. Most all of them were very familiar with the contracts and documents that preceded the writing of Constitution. In the following small group activity, students will examine documents that influenced the framers.

Number the students one through four. Have students gather in groups of four where each group number is represented in the group. The groups should each have a one, two, three, and four member.

Pass out "The Constitution Anticipation Guide" to every student. Once students are in groups, have them raise their hands as each number is called out. Pass out the historical documents that corresponds to the group member's number. The numbered documents are:

1. The Magna Carta, 1215
2. The Mayflower Compact, 1420
3. The Petition of Right, 1629
4. The English Bill of Rights, 1689

For example, all students who were numbered as ones in each group should receive the text of the Magna Carta, twos should receive the Mayflower Compact, and so on.

Explain the anticipation guide directions. Read aloud each numbered statement about the Constitution on the anticipation guide. Students are to read the documents that they received and look for ideas and statements in their document that may have influenced the way the Constitution was written. Once they find something that they believe influenced the writing of the Constitution, they are to write down that quote or phrase and the name of the document beneath the Constitutional article or amendment.

Teacher's Note - Anticipation Guides

The document may only have one or two statments that pertain to the anticipation guide. Group members will have to work together to share all of their documents to complete the anticipation guide. A teacher's answer key is provided under Attachments. However, anticipation guides are designed to make the student think for themselves, so if a student or group can provide reasoning and proof of their phrase/quote and its relationship to the Constitution, then the teacher should accept the answer. For more ideas on how to use anticipation guides, go to: https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/anticipation-guides

Once it is determined by the teacher that the anticipation guides are completed by the groups, go over the answers that the group members found. The anticipation guide activity can take almost an entire class period if the discussion is robust. Accept answers that can be proven through quotes or phrases from the various historical documents. It is also important to go through the anticipation guide as a class discussion so that group members hear more about the other documents (that they did not read) and their influence on the Constitution.

Extend

Read only the Constitution statements on the anticipation guide over again. Remind students of these articles and amendments and the work they also did with the Preamble to the Constitution. Pass out the "Color Symbol Image Activity Sheet" to each student. Individually, students will create a Color-Symbol-Image (CSI) of what the Constitution means and will explain their reasoning for each of their choices. For example, a student may say: "I chose the color brown because the Constitution is like the ground, the foundation of our country, like the earth." "I chose paper for my symbol because it is a legal, written document." "I chose an image of two people shaking hands because the Constitution is about fairness and equality." *Allow 30 minutes for this activity.*

Teacher's Note - Color Symbol Image Activity

The CSI thinking activity asks students to identify and distill the essence of ideas from their reading and listening to represent the big picture. This activity identifies ideas in a way that doesn't rely so heavily on the use of written or oral language. CSI pushes students to make connections and think metaphorically. Metaphors allow learners to develop understanding by connecting to something they already know. A template is provided for this activity, but some teachers give students blank paper to allow for more creativity.

Evaluate

The Preamble activity, the Anticipation Guide, and the CSI activity can all serve as evaluations at the discretion of the teacher.

Resources

- Bill of Rights 1689. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_of_Rights_1689
- EDSITEment. (2013). Magna Carta with annotations, abridged. Magna Carta: Cornerstone of the U.S. Constitution. Retrieved from http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/magna-carta-cornerstone-us-constitution#sect-activities
- Facing History and Ourselves. (2016). Anticipation guides. Teaching Strategies. Retrieved from https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/anticipation-guides
- Klein, C. (2012, September 17). 7 things you may not know about the Constitutional Convention. Retrieved from http://www.history.com/news/7-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-constitutional-convention
- Lloyd, G. (2016). The Constitutional Convention. Teaching American History. Retrieved from: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/convention/christy/
- The Mayflower Compact (2013). In USHistory.org. Retrieved from http://www.ushistory.org/documents/mayflower.htm
- The Petition of Right. (n.d.). In Constitution Society. Retrieved from http://www.constitution.org/eng/petright.htm