



Know Your Rights

The Bill of Rights



Sarah Brewer, Susan McHale

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Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	1-2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	100 minutes
Course	U.S. Government, U.S. History		

Essential Question

What value do people place on individual rights? How does the Bill of Rights protect individual rights?

Summary

Students explore the meaning and application of the Bill of Rights. Working in groups, students summarize each of the amendments in the Bill of Rights in their own words. Next, students practice using their knowledge of the Bill of Rights by determining which amendment could be applied in specific scenarios. Then, students have the opportunity to discuss whether or not "ballot selfies" should be a protected form of freedom of speech. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning. Resources for use in Google Classroom are included.

Snapshot

Engage

Students receive a letter from an alien nation that has invaded and conquered the United States. Per the alien nation, students are only allowed to keep two of their Constitutional rights as outlined in the Bill of Rights. Each student ranks the amendments and chooses two that they value personally.

Explore

In groups, students work together to summarize the first 10 amendments to the US Constitution in their own words. Each student chooses three amendments and creates visual representations for them.

Explain

Students are presented with 10 one-sentence scenarios and work in groups to determine which amendment can be applied to each scenario.

Extend

Students read an article and determine whether or not the "ballot selfie" should be considered a protected form of free speech.

Evaluate

Students reevaluate their choices from the Engage phase. Do they hold the same two rights as their most valuable, or would they change their decision?

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.3.8: Explain how the Constitution of the United States was amended to include the Bill of Rights; identify and analyze the guarantees of individual rights and liberties as expressed in each of the ten amendments.

Attachments

- [Applying the Bill of Rights \(Answer Key\)—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [Applying the Bill of Rights \(Answer Key\)—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)
- [Applying the Bill of Rights—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Applying the Bill of Rights—Know Your Rights - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Applying the Bill of Rights—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [Applying the Bill of Rights—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)
- [Bill of Rights Note Organizer—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Bill of Rights Note Organizer—Know Your Rights - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Bill of Rights Note Organizer—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [Bill of Rights Note Organizer—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Know Your Rights.pptx](#)
- [Letter from an Alien Nation—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Letter from an Alien Nation—Know Your Rights - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Letter from an Alien Nation—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [Letter from an Alien Nation—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Simplified\)—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Simplified\)—Know Your Rights - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Simplified\)—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Simplified\)—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Transcript\)—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Transcript\)—Know Your Rights - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Transcript\)—Know Your Rights.docx](#)
- [The U.S. Bill of Rights \(Transcript\)—Know Your Rights.pdf](#)

Materials

- Letter from an Alien Nation handout (attached; one per student)
- Sticky notes (two per student)
- Whiteboard or wall space
- Bill of Rights note organizer (attached; one per student)
- The U.S. Bill of Rights (Transcript) (attached; optional)
- The U.S. Bill of Rights (Simplified) (attached; optional)
- Applying the Bill of Rights handout (attached; one per student)
- Applying the Bill of Rights (Answer Key) (attached; for teacher's reference)
- Ballot selfies articles (linked below for online reading)
- Internet-connected devices or access to the linked ballot selfies articles
- Know Your Rights lesson slide presentation (attached)

Engage

Use the attached Know Your Rights lesson slides to guide the lesson. Begin by displaying **slides** two and three, which show the title slide and the Essential Questions of the lesson. Move to slide four. Hand out a copy of the attached Letter from an Alien Nation to each student. Tell students that, as of the beginning of class, an alien nation has colonized Earth. The letter explains that, due to the aliens' control, everyone in the classroom and all other United States citizens are now under a different governing body. The class can choose to keep only two amendments from the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution.

Teacher's Note: Prior Student Knowledge

Do not describe each amendment to the class in detail. Keep in mind the importance of allowing students to use their prior knowledge about the Bill of Rights to choose which amendments are most important to them.

Draw students' attention to the list of amendments at the bottom of the letter. Ask students to number the amendments based on which are most valuable to them. Students should rank amendments from one to ten, with one being the most valuable and ten being the least valuable. Once students have finished, move to slide five. Pass out two sticky notes to each student. Ask students to write their number one most important amendment on one sticky note and their number two most important amendment on the other. As they do so, create a number line with the numbers 1–10, as pictured in slide five, by writing on a whiteboard space or hanging the numbers on a wall. This creates the baseline of a bar graph for the [Sticky Bars](#) strategy. Invite students to place their sticky notes above the appropriate number, "stacking" their notes above those of other students to create a bar graph.

Once students have placed their sticky notes and created a bar graph, draw the class's attention to the two most popularly chosen amendments. The sticky bar graph should function as a visual representation of the class's decision. Ask students which rights the majority of students chose as their top two and why they think these were selected. Continue the class discussion for no more than 10 minutes. Make sure the sticky bar graph stays visible and accessible to the class throughout the lesson, as it will be revisited later.

Teacher's Note: Sticky Bar Graph

If you find you will need to take the sticky bar graph down before the end of the lesson, consider taking a picture of the graph and labeling it as Class One, Class Two, etc. Then, upload the picture(s) into the lesson slides around slide 12 for each hour that participated in this lesson.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider using an interactive word cloud application such as [Mentimeter](#). This allows students to vote for each of their top two amendments. Once all of the students have had a chance to add their top amendment to the brainstorm, share the results with the class. You should be able to see what amendment students most commonly submitted. For example, in a word cloud, the amendment most often submitted by your students should appear larger, while less frequently submitted words should appear smaller. You can have two rounds of voting: the first for your students to submit their most important amendments, and a second for students to submit their least important amendments. [Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.](#)

Explore

Divide students into groups of three or four, depending on class size. Pass out a copy of the Bill of Rights Notes Organizer (attached) to each student.

Display slide six. Invite students to, with their group, use the resources provided to summarize in their own words each of the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights. To model what a summary might look like, begin by displaying slide seven. Read the displayed text of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

Consider creating multiple copies of the Bill of Rights Notes Organizer using Google Docs. Assign a group of students to each copy of the handout, and have them collaborate virtually. Students can add notes to the document and collaborate as a group using the "chat" feature in the document. You may also consider making this activity a discussion board post to which your students can respond directly. [Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.](#)

Ask for volunteers to share what different parts of this amendment could mean. Allow time to address the major elements of this amendment through class discussion. Then, move to slide eight. This slide shows an example of a possible student summary. Have each group read about and discuss the amendments in the Bill of Rights, and create a summary in their own words of what each of the amendments mean. Students can write these summaries in the note organizer.

Optional: Attached Bill Of Rights Resources

Two optional resources for this activity are attached: the U.S. Bill of Rights (Transcript) and the U.S. Bill of Rights (Simplified). Consider using one or both of these handouts, or providing other resources of your choice for students to study, such as the Bill of Rights section of your textbook.

Teacher's Note: Difficult Amendments

As students work, walk around the room to check answers. Listen to how different groups summarize each amendment, paying special attention to discussion on amendments five, six, and seven. Students tend to struggle in identifying all parts of the Fifth Amendment and on discerning the differences between amendments six and seven.

After students have finished their summaries, ask for volunteers to share summaries and correct misconceptions. As their classmates share, ask students to add to or change their summaries while participating in the class discussion. Call on someone from each group at least once.

Display slide nine. Ask students to choose three amendments to represent visually. Each group may choose to work together on the same three amendments, or students may choose to work individually. Students can create these drawings in the "Visual Representation" section of their Bill of Rights Notes Organizer. Once students have completed their drawings, consider asking a few students to share how they visually represented one of the amendments.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To make use of this lesson in an online or distance learning environment, consider having students create digital posters with tech tools such as [Popplet](#), [Piktochart](#), or [Canva](#). [Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.](#)

Explain

Now that the class has explored the Bill of Rights, they can apply their knowledge. Distribute the attached Applying the Bill of Rights handout. Display slide 10. Ask students to work with their groups to read each statement and determine which amendment is represented. Students should explain their answers using one or more complete sentences. Students may choose to do this on the handout or on a separate sheet of paper.

Optional: Shortened Activity

If necessary to shorten this activity, consider having students do five of the provided statements rather than all ten. If you choose to do this, consider editing the attached document to reflect the five statements you believe to be most important.

Once students have finished the activity, ask at least one volunteer from each group to share their answers. See the attached Applying the Bill of Rights (Answer Key) for answers to this activity.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

If conducting this lesson in an online or distance learning environment, you may choose to have students collaborate in Google Docs, or you can substitute the activity with a website such as [VoiceThread](#). With VoiceThread, you can upload the examples to the site beforehand. Then, students can choose whether they would like to make a quick video, a voice memo, or a written note to give feedback on other students' posters. [Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.](#)

Extend

Move to slide 11. Explain to students that the Bill of Rights might seem on paper to be a clear list of rights we have as citizens, in reality how these rights are applied in our daily lives is open to a lot of debate. For example, a number of opinions represented in the gun control debate are ultimately tied to how you interpret the rights outlined in the Second Amendment.

Invite the class to look at another example of how First Amendment rights are open to interpretation and debate. Ask the class if they have heard of a "ballot selfie." Based on student responses, fill in any gaps in understanding: a ballot selfie is a selfie that people take in the voting booth while they are casting their ballot. While this seems like an innocent thing to do, the "ballot selfie" has created legal controversy involving much discussion of whether or not U.S. citizens have the right to take ballot selfies. Direct students to read [this online article](#) about ballot selfies found on the USA Today website. You may wish to share this article on the whiteboard and allow students to read it as a class.

Optional: Alternative Articles

If you prefer not to use the above article ("[Justin Timberlake's voting selfie may have broken the law](#)"), consider one of the following on the same topic: [New York Times: "Are Voting Selfies Legal? Not Always"](#) or ["Selfie Control" on page two of the Oklahoma Voter Guide](#). The questions on the Ballot Selfies Article handout work with any of these articles.

After students have read the article, ask them to answer the questions within their groups:

1. Which First Amendment right is debated in this article? Explain.
2. Do you think taking a selfie, in any form, is an expression of our First Amendment rights? Explain.
3. Do you think it is a violation of our First Amendment rights for a state to make taking and sharing "ballot selfies" against the law? Explain.

Possible Student Responses

For the first question, students may respond by arguing that ballot selfies are a form of protected self-expression; therefore, making ballot selfies illegal would challenge the First Amendment right to free speech. For the second question, students may respond by saying that taking a selfie of any kind is a form of self-expression, which is a right guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the first amendment (the right to free speech)—as selfies can be considered an expression of values and opinions, they can be considered a form of speech, and should thus be protected by the Constitution. For the third question, students may respond by arguing that states that make ballot selfies illegal are violating First Amendment rights, because a ballot selfie expresses a political opinion and should be allowed as a form of free speech.

To conclude this discussion, make the point that it is important for us as citizens to know our rights and form opinions about how our rights should be interpreted—this is how we make sure that our rights are protected. Additionally, if you have covered the concept of Federalism, laws regarding ballot selfies are an excellent real-life example of a reserved power.

Optional: Shortened Activity

Depending on your classroom needs and time available, consider having students write out their answers to the questions provided, or use the questions for discussion only.

Evaluate

Ask students to think back to the activity where they selected two rights they valued most and placed their choices on a sticky note bar graph. Display slide 12, along with the bar graph the class created in the Engage section. Now that students have a better understanding of the Bill of Rights and how each amendment might be applied to individual problems in daily life, ask students whether or not they would change their top two most important rights.

Ask students to write an [Exit Ticket](#) that explains their answer to that question: why they chose to keep the two rights they originally chose, or why their answer changed, and their reasoning behind the decision. Have students provide evidence from their research with their reasoning.

Optional: Shortened Activity

Depending on time available, instead of having students write out an Exit Ticket, consider having group discussions on the question and having several people share out.

The Bill of Rights Notes Organizer, Applying the Bill of Rights handout, Ballot Selfie Article Questions and Exit Ticket all serve as assessments of this lesson.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning, consider having your students record their responses in a quick video using an application such as [Flipgrid](#). [Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.](#)

Resources

- Holson, L. (2018, November 6). Are Voting Selfies Legal? Not Always. New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/06/us/politics/ballot-selfie-voting.html?auth=login%20email&login=email>
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- Mandell, A. (2016, October 25). Justin Timberlake's voting selfie may have broken the law. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2016/10/25/justin-timberlakes-voting-selfie-may-have-broken-law/92728472/>
- Salisbury, A. (Ed.). (n.d.). Selfie Control. 2016 Oklahoma Voter Guide. Retrieved from http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kgou/files/092216_OK_Voter_Guide.pdf?_ga=2.66350702.1180070985.1569589393-1428267346.1569589393