

Exploring the United States Constitution

WebQuest Description:

Grade Level: 3-5

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Constitution, Bill of Rights, Amendments, colonists

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Introduction

You are a United States citizen living in the year 1787. You are among many others who left their homeland in search of a better opportunity. You did not agree with some of the laws of your homeland country. At this time, America consists of 13 colonies, or states that just fought Great Britain for independence. America now has to make its own rules. You want to make sure that the same rules from your homeland are not imposed here. You want freedom to make your own choices. You, along with other colonists, have been asked to find out about the new constitution. You don't really know what it is all about, but since the new rules will affect you and your family, you decide that you must find out as much as you can about this new constitution for yourself and your colony.

Tasks

You, along with selected others, have been designated by your community to find out as much as you can about this new constitution. You are to research as much as you can about this and report back what you find to your community.

Process

Before starting your research, click on the following links to find a tool to help you take notes during this process. Use any of these tools that may be useful to your group. Right click on the link before opening and click on "open in new tab". Then you will be able to go back and forth between your notes page and the webquest page.

Essay Map: <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/essaymap/>

Outline Notetaker: <http://interactives.mped.org/notetaker722.aspx>

Blank Writing Page: <https://penzu.com/pad>

To research this topic, you will visit the following websites and gather important information about the new constitution. Work with your group to take notes of the important information that you find:

- 1) The Constitution, for Kids; <http://www.constitutionforkids.net/preamble/what>; click on all three parts: What is the Constitution?, We the People, and Who wrote the Constitution and why?
- 2) The Constitution for Kids; <http://www.usconstitution.net/constkidsK.html>; view the information for K-3rd grade. If you would like more information, you click on the link for 4th - 7th grade; however, this information is a little harder to understand.
- 3) The original constitution of 1787 contained seven articles. The twenty seven amendments were added as changes to the constitution from the years of 1791 to 1992. The first ten amendments to the constitution are called the Bill of Rights. Look at the link in the resources section at the bottom of the page to see a summary of the constitution and its future amendments.
- 4) Play the Constitution Game on the following website. See if you can correctly identify the different parts of the Constitution. Then click on any tabs to learn more about the Constitution. http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/constitution_day/
- 5) With your group, gather the information that you found in any way that you choose to report back to your fellow colonists. Be creative in your presentations! You will present this information to the colony (class).

Evaluation

Category and Score	Below Average 10 pts	Average 15 pts	Above Average 20pts	Excellent 25 pts	Score
Information	The information is not factual or relevant, or it does not contain any of the important points. Student shows little or no understanding of technology, the Constitution, or assignment.	Information is either not completely factual or relevant, or major important parts are missing. Student does not demonstrate a good understanding of technology, the Constitution, or assignment.	Information presented is factual and relevant to the U.S. Constitution but seems to be lacking a complete understanding of technology, the Constitution, or the assignment.	Information presented is factual and relevant to the U.S. Constitution. Information gathered shows evidence of an understanding of technology and of the Constitution.	25 points
Presentation	Most of the information being presented is unclear, or students presenting do not demonstrate an understanding of the information or the use of technology most of the time.	About half of the information being presented is unclear, or students presenting do not demonstrate an understanding of the information or using technology at least half of the time.	Information presented may be unclear at times or lack creativity. Students presenting do not demonstrate a clear understanding of information being presented at times or a clear understanding of using technology.	Information is presented in a clear, creative manner that is easy to understand. Students presenting demonstrate a clear understanding of using technology to research information.	25 points
Working in groups	The individual student either does not participate in the group, or disrupts the group by not getting along with others or not allowing others to participate.	The individual student participates only about half of the time, or has trouble getting along with others or allowing others to participate in the group.	The individual student participates most of the time with the group, but may at times, have problems participating, getting along with others, or allowing others to participate in the group.	The individual student participates fully with the group, gets along with group members, and allows all members to participate in the group.	25 points
Individual work	The student does not demonstrate an understanding of technology, the Constitution, or assignment at least half of the time.	The student demonstrates an understanding of technology, the Constitution, and assignment half of the time.	The student demonstrates an understanding of technology, the Constitution, and assignment most of the time.	The student demonstrates a clear understanding of technology, the Constitution, and assignment.	25 points
				Total Score	

Conclusion

Congratulations! You should now have enough information about the Constitution and why it was written. Go share this information with the rest of your colony (class)! Be creative in how you present this information, work together with your team to make a plan.

Teacher Page

This webquest was written for grades 3 - 5. For the individual grade level, focus on the content pertinent to the particular grade level expectations. For higher grades or higher level students, on step 2 on the process tab, have students click on the information for grades 4th through 7th.

Missouri Social Studies Grade Level Expectations: Principles of Constitutional Democracy

3rd grade: 1.C. Understanding the main purposes of United States documents: b. Identify the purpose of the Constitution.

4th grade: 1.B. Roles of citizens and governments in carrying out constitutional principles: Identify rights included in the Bill of Rights, including freedoms of religion, speech, press; to assemble peacefully; to petition the government; and to be treated fairly by the government.

1.C. Understanding of the main purposes of United States documents: Explain the main purpose of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

5th grade: 1.A. Principles of constitutional democracy in the United States: b. Identify important principles in the Constitution including: 1. limited government, 2. rule of law, 3. majority rule, 4. minority rights, 5. separation of powers, 6. checks and balances

