

The Constitution and You

WebQuest Description: You, as an American, enjoy many freedoms that citizens in some other countries only dream of. In this WebQuest, you will learn about the six basic principles of the Constitution and the checks and balances system. You will also discover why they are so crucial to the way you live your life everyday.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: government, Constitution, rights, principles, freedom, limited government, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, federalism, Congress, presidential

Published On: 2008-01-24 19:08:02

Last Modified: 2008-02-11 16:12:29

WebQuest URL: <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=6042>

Introduction

You are a time traveler from 2408. You are a resident of what has endured as the United States of America, but the original Constitution was destroyed in a devastating war in the 2360's. As a result, the country has been operating under total government control, or a dictatorship, since 2370. Tired of the oppression and with memories of the good 'ol days, you have made it your personal mission to invent a time machine in order to obtain the original Constitution and carry it back to 2408. Why retrieve the Constitution instead of some other governmental document? The Constitution was founded on certain beliefs, also known as six basic principles, which you hold very near to your heart. You believe a government must have some sort of fundamental, moral belief system in order to last. You also desire a system of checks and balances to eliminate another dictatorship from being possible. You want to restore justice and freedom to yourself and the citizens of the future United States of America.

Tasks

Your job: 1. Track down the original Constitution. When was it written? Which document did it replace? In what city did the drafting take place? 2. What kind of government does the Constitution establish? Explain this form of government in your own words. 3. Which part of the Constitution serves to establish it as supreme law? Which reasons are listed to describe the necessity for this part of the document? Is this part of the Constitution considered law? Why or why not? 4. Record the Six Basic Principles of the Constitution. 5. Briefly explain each of the Six Principles of the Constitution in your own words. 6. How many amendments does the Constitution contain? Which five are the most important to you? Explain why. 7. Briefly outline the system of checks and balances. Who has power over who? When do they have this power? How does this protect your rights? 8. In a short essay, describe why the Constitution, its six basic principles, and the checks and balances system within the United States government is important to you. How does it affect you? Why is it important to your everyday life?

Process

Below is a list of websites you can use to help you complete your tasks. I have listed them in the order that, in my opinion, will make this easier for you. The first website will help you with the first task, and so on. I have provided you with sheets to record your information. Simply find the correct answer and record it in the appropriate place on the sheet. For tasks that pertain to your own opinions or elaborations, I have provided you with extra paper. When answering these questions, please explain thoroughly in order to display your level of understanding about the topic. When tracking down the Constitution, you must find the year it was written. You must also find out which document it replaced, and where it was drafted. Try this site: <http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution/html> When finding out what kind of government the Constitution establishes, you might try this site: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/documents/constitution/index.html> To determine which part of the Constitution is used to establish it, you may try the: http://www.usconstitution.net/xconst_preamble.html For tasks four and five, you might try: <http://www.whc.net/irish/government/lectures/03-1lec.htm> When researching amendments, try these sites: http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html Use these websites to help with checks and balances: <http://regentsprep.org/Regents/ushisgov/themes/government/checks.htm> For the last question, a website is not needed. Use the knowledge you have gained from this exercise in order to give your opinion. Be detailed and precise. Display the depth of your understanding.

Evaluation

Category and Score	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Very Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Tasks Involving Short Answers				Either correct or incorrect.	%35
Tasks Involving Essay Questions	Makes an attempt to answer the question, but is very unclear.	Displays a limited amount of understanding.	Makes a valid argument, attempts to use knowledge to prove argument, but may be inaccurate.	Makes a valid argument and clearly uses knowledge to support answer.	%65
				Total Score	%100

Conclusion

In this exercise, you have learned some of the major portions of the Constitution of the United States of America. You gained factual knowledge of different parts of this important document, as well as an understanding of how this document affects you. Think about the six basic principles of the Constitution. Which one do you think is the most important? Why is that principle important to you? The Constitution, even though it is over 200 years, still plays a huge role in how you live your life day-to-day. Reflect on what you've learned and your answer to task 6. How would your life be different if you did not have the First Amendment? If you wish to perform further study on the topics covered in this exercise, please refer to the following websites: <http://regentsprep.org/Regents/ushisgov/themes/government/amendments.htm> <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/government/branches.html> <http://www.house.gov/house/Amendnotrat.shtm> <http://clerkkids.house.gov/congress/index.html> <http://www.senate.gov/> <http://www.house.gov/> <http://www.freedomforum.org/>

Teacher Page

This WebQuest can be utilized for both groups of students and individual students. It is designed to allow students to relate their government to their lives. The objectives for this lesson are: 1. Outline the important elements of the Constitution. 2. List the six basic principles of the Constitution. This WebQuest is intended to reinforce Chapter 3, Section 1 of Magruder's American Government textbook.

Standards

Credits

Other