

5th Grade

# Discover America

Course 6 - Teacher Guide



**COURSE 6: CREATING THE  
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

# Table of **Contents**

3	<b>Themes + Values</b>
4	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
5	<b>Key Terms</b>
6	<b>Introduction</b>
9	<b>Lesson</b>
16	<b>Vision Board</b>
17	<b>Knowledge Check</b>
18	<b>Answer Key</b>
19	<b>Student Text</b>
20	<b>Resources</b>
21	<b>Notes</b>

5th Grade

# Teacher Guide



## Key Themes

- Freedom
- Independence

## Core Values

- Community
- Faith
- Life
- Liberty

# Learning Objectives

## Students will be able to:

- Define faith and explain the role faith played in the formation of the government.
- Explain religious freedom, including why it should be protected.
- Define the three branches of government.
- Explain the roles of the three branches of government and how they relate to checks and balances.
- Explain the rights and freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights.



# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

## Key Terms

- 01 **Bill of Rights** - a list of rights that American citizens have.
- 02 **checks and balances** - a system to ensure that no branch of government has too much power.
- 03 **constitution** - a set of rules that guides how a country works.
- 04 **executive branch** - President and Vice President of the United States.
- 05 **government** - a system of rules and the people who make and enforce them.
- 06 **judicial branch** - the branch of government that reviews laws and determines if they are fair.
- 07 **preamble** - an introduction that explains the purpose or goals of a formal document.

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Introduction

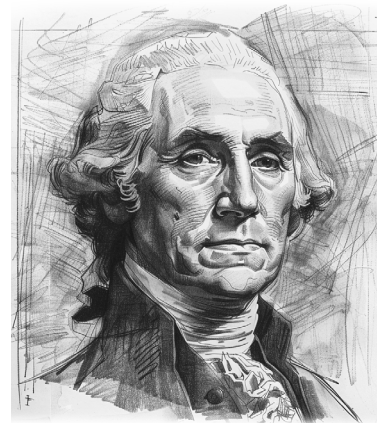
## **ASK** Students

How was the United States government created?

(allow students to respond)

## **TELL** Students

Think about what you have learned about the American Revolutionary War. Specifically, think about the significant challenges faced by George Washington and his Continental Army, including the difficult defeat they experienced at the Battle of Long Island. However, they made a comeback, with pivotal moments like Washington's daring crossing of the Delaware River and victories at Princeton and Saratoga. Later in the war, the French joined the fight and, with George Washington's leadership, played a crucial role in the Continental Army's decisive triumph at the Battle of Yorktown. This victory effectively marked the end of the Revolutionary War, resulting in a win for the Patriots.



George Washington

## **ASK** Students

What did the end of the American Revolutionary War mean for the colonists?

(allow students to respond)

# Introduction

## **TELL** Students

After the American Revolutionary War, the colonists created a document to establish the new system of **government** in the United States.

## **ASK** Students

What was this document called? What did it establish?

(allow students to respond)

## **ASK** Students

What does 'powers' mean?

What does 'separation' mean?

What does 'separation of powers' mean?

(allow students to respond)

# Introduction

## TELL Students

Learning how our government works is important. It helps you grow to be an informed citizen. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the formation of the United States government.

## WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Episode:  
*The Constitutional Convention*



Scan Me!



# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## **ASK** Students

What inspired the colonists to fight for their independence?

(allow students to respond)

## **TELL** Students

Faith is an important concept in understanding the history of the United States. It means having complete trust or confidence in something or someone, even if you can't see or touch it. It is like believing in something strongly.

When the American founders and leaders talked about faith, they weren't just talking about religious faith. They had faith in the idea of creating a new nation and believed they could make a new government work.

After winning the American Revolution and gaining independence from Britain, the early Americans faced challenges. They needed to figure out how to create rules and a government that would protect the freedoms and rights that they believed came from God.

The Continental Congress was a group of leaders who played a big role in shaping the new nation. They declared independence, organized the fight against the British, and helped establish the first central government of the United States. It was a significant step in building the country we know today.

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## TELL Students

Please read the following passage with a partner:

*In the past, when the Patriots and American leaders declared their independence from Britain, they had strong faith in the idea that all people are created equal and have rights given to them by their Creator. This faith continued as they created a new government and wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.*

*Before the Constitution, the colonies followed the Articles of Confederation, but those articles created a weak central government that couldn't settle disputes between the states. Despite the challenges, the early American leaders held onto their faith, which had helped them gain independence.*

*During the Constitutional Convention, there were many disagreements among the leaders about how the new government should work. They had to compromise on things like how the Senate would be elected, representation based on population or land size, and the powers of the President. Slavery was also a big issue at the time.*

*After a lot of debate and compromise, they agreed on the Constitution, and a new system of government was born. This Constitution became the fundamental laws of the United States, protecting the basic rights of its citizens. It also created a federal government, meaning that power is shared between the national and state governments.*

*To make sure no one branch of the government became too powerful, they separated the powers by dividing it into three branches: the legislative branch (Congress makes laws), the **executive branch** (the President carries out laws), and the **judicial branch** (the courts interpret laws). This separation of powers was key to creating a strong and balanced government.*

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## ASK Students

What was required to reach an agreement at the Constitutional Convention?

What are the three branches of government?

(allow students to respond)



The Constitutional Convention

## WATCH

Learn More With Liberty Video:  
*Rights and Freedoms in the Bill of Rights*



Scan Me!

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## TELL Students

To make sure the **Constitution** was accepted by all the states, they had to make some compromises. Some people who didn't like the Constitution said it didn't do enough to protect individual rights. They wanted something called the **Bill of Rights** to make sure those rights were protected.

The Bill of Rights is made up of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. These amendments were added to address the concerns of the critics and ensure that individual rights were safeguarded.

Now, let's talk about the first three amendments in the Bill of Rights:

**1. The First Amendment:** It protects important freedoms like freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government. This means people can speak their minds, practice any religion, and express their ideas freely.

**2. The Second Amendment:** This one says that people have the right to own and carry guns. It's about protecting the right to bear arms.

**3. The Third Amendment:** This amendment says that the government can't force people to let soldiers live in their homes. It's about protecting people's privacy and property.

So, these amendments were added to the Constitution to make sure that individual rights were respected and to get the states' approval for this important American document.

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## ASK Students

What did the Bill of Rights ensure?

(allow students to respond)

## TELL Students

The Bill of Rights also ensures other personal freedoms.



The Bill of Rights

**4th Amendment:** This amendment protects your privacy. It says that the government can't search your home, your things, or you unless they have a good reason, like a warrant from a judge. It is like having a lock on your door to keep your stuff safe.

**5th Amendment:** This amendment is all about fairness. It says that if you're accused of a crime, you have rights. You don't have to say anything that might get you in trouble, and you can not be tried for the same crime twice. It also says the government can't take your stuff or your land without giving you fair payment.

**6th Amendment:** This one is about making sure you get a fair trial. You have the right to a speedy trial by a jury of your peers, and you get to know what you're accused of. You can also have a lawyer to help you in court.

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

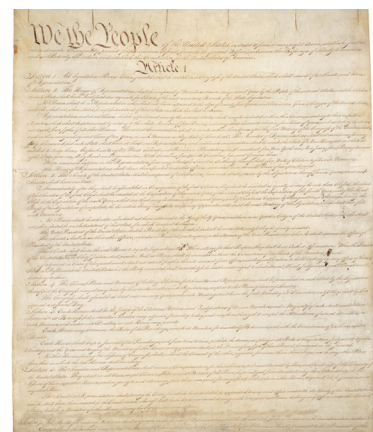
**7th Amendment:** This amendment deals with civil trials. If you have a disagreement with someone and it goes to court, you have the right to a jury trial in certain cases. It helps people settle disputes fairly.

**8th Amendment:** This amendment is about being fair and not cruel. It says that punishments for crimes can't be too harsh or cruel. You can't have a punishment that doesn't fit the crime.

**9th Amendment:** This one says that just because these rights are listed in the Bill of Rights doesn't mean you don't have other rights, too. You have lots of other rights that might not be written down here.

**10th Amendment:** This amendment talks about powers. It says that if the Constitution doesn't give the federal government a certain power, then that power belongs to the states or the people. It's like making sure everyone knows who is in charge of what.

So, these amendments make sure that people have rights, are treated fairly, and that the government can't do things that are too harsh or unfair. They are an important part of our Constitution.



U.S. Constitution

# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## ASK Students

What freedoms are protected by the Bill of Rights?

Is religious freedom protected?

(allow students to respond)

## WATCH

Optional Course Video:

*Learn More With Liberty: The Separation of State and Church*

Scan Me!



*Please utilize this additional resource to further the discussion on course content with your students.*

# Creating the American Government

# Vision Board

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## **ASK** Students

What role did faith play in the Constitutional Convention?

(allow students to respond)

## **TELL** Students

Our Founding Fathers had faith that inspired their actions. Faith is a belief in something you can not see. Brainstorm ideas about hopes and dreams that students have.

Give each student a large piece of construction paper, magazines, writing utensils, scissors and paste. Explain that students will create their own Vision Board. Tell students that their **Vision Board** should reflect the faith they have in themselves to accomplish something that has yet to happen.

Ask students to look through magazines and cut and paste useful pictures onto their vision board. Students may also illustrate or write on their Vision Board. You may also use the Vision Boards to create a Vision Wall, encouraging students to look back to the Vision Wall during hard days to inspire them to persevere.



# Creating the American Government

# Knowledge Check

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Read each question and answer set carefully. Circle the correct answer.*

- 01 What did the Constitution create?  
a) A new system of justice  
b) A new system of law-making  
c) A new system of rights  
d) A new system of government
- 02 Which freedom is NOT protected in the first three amendments of the Bill of Rights?  
a) Religious freedom  
b) Freedom of speech  
c) Freedom for slaves  
d) Freedom of the press
- 03 Which right is not established in the first three amendments of the Bill of Rights?  
a) The right to own property  
b) The right to peacefully come together and protest  
c) The right to complain to and ask for help from the government  
d) The right to keep and carry guns
- 04 Which protection/right was not part of amendments 4-8 of the Bill of Rights?  
a) Protection from unreasonable property searches and unreasonable evidence retrieval  
b) Protection from taxation  
c) The right to due process of law  
d) The right to not self-incriminate
- 05 According to the tenth amendment, who retains the powers not granted to the central federal government by the Constitution?  
a) The Supreme Court  
b) God  
c) The British  
d) The states or the people

# Creating the American Government

## Answer Key

- 01 What did the Constitution create?
- a) A new system of justice
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# Creating the American Government - 5th Grade

## Student Text

*In the past, when the Patriots and American leaders declared their independence from Britain, they had strong faith in the idea that all people are created equal and have rights given to them by their Creator. This faith continued as they created a new government and wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.*

*Before the Constitution, the colonies followed the Articles of Confederation, but those articles created a weak central government that couldn't settle disputes between the states. Despite the challenges, the early American leaders held onto their faith, which had helped them gain independence.*

*During the Constitutional Convention, there were many disagreements among the leaders about how the new government should work. They had to compromise on things like how the Senate would be elected, representation based on population or land size, and the powers of the President. Slavery was also a big issue at the time.*

*After a lot of debate and compromise, they agreed on the Constitution, and a new system of government was born. This Constitution became the fundamental laws of the United States, protecting the basic rights of its citizens. It also created a federal government, meaning that power is shared between the national and state governments.*

*To make sure no one branch of the government became too powerful, they separated the powers by dividing it into three branches: the legislative branch (Congress makes laws), the executive branch (the President carries out laws), and the judicial branch (the courts interpret laws). This separation of powers was key to creating a strong and balanced government.*

# Creating the American Government

# Resource List

- 01 [www.2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/ar/14313.htm](http://www.2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/ar/14313.htm)
- 02 [www.archives.gov/education/lessons/slave-trade.html](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/slave-trade.html)
- 03 [www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights/how-did-it-happen](http://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights/how-did-it-happen)
- 04 [www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution](http://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution)
- 05 [www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/articles-of-confederation](http://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/articles-of-confederation)
- 06 [www.bensguide.gpo.gov/j-states-ratification](http://www.bensguide.gpo.gov/j-states-ratification)
- 07 [www.constitutioncenter.org/blog/on-this-day-james-madison-introduces-the-bill-of-rights](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/blog/on-this-day-james-madison-introduces-the-bill-of-rights)
- 08 [www.constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution)
- 09 [www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41357.html#fn6](http://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41357.html#fn6)
- 10 [www.heritage.org/the-constitution/commentary/what-the-constitution-really-says-about-race-and-slavery](http://www.heritage.org/the-constitution/commentary/what-the-constitution-really-says-about-race-and-slavery)
- 11 [www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/siege-of-yorktown](http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/siege-of-yorktown)
- 12 [www.history.com/topics/early-us/federalist-papers](http://www.history.com/topics/early-us/federalist-papers)
- 13 [www.history.state.gov/milestones/1776-1783/continental-congress](http://www.history.state.gov/milestones/1776-1783/continental-congress)
- 14 [www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/convention-and-ratification.html](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/convention-and-ratification.html)
- 15 [www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/shays-rebellion/](http://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/shays-rebellion/)
- 16 [www.nps.gov/articles/constitutionalconvention-june20.htm](http://www.nps.gov/articles/constitutionalconvention-june20.htm)
- 17 [www.senate.gov/civics/common/generic/Virginia\\_Plan\\_item.htm](http://www.senate.gov/civics/common/generic/Virginia_Plan_item.htm)

