



DISCOVER AMERICA

Pocket Constitution Teacher Guide

2nd Grade



Foundations of Freedom:
Understanding and Using your Pocket Constitution

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Themes & Values

Key Themes

- **We the People:** Unity and Democracy
- **The Framework of Government:** Checks and Balances
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** The Bill of Rights
- **Living Document:** Amendments and Adaptability
- **Constitution in Everyday Life:** Practical Applications

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty
- Life



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain that the Constitution is the fundamental rule book for the United States, guiding how the country is governed and protecting the rights of its citizens.
- Recognize and describe the Preamble, articles, sections, and clauses in the Constitution, understanding how these parts help organize the government's rules.
- Discuss specific rights protected by the Bill of Rights, such as freedom of speech and the right to a fair trial, and understand the corresponding responsibilities that come with these rights.
- Relate the principles of the Constitution to their own lives by identifying ways in which the rules and rights it establishes help them in school, at home, and in their communities.



Key Terms

- 1. Amendment:** a change or addition designed to improve the original document.
- 2. Article:** a chapter in the U.S. Constitution that explains how part of our government works.
- 3. Bill of Rights:** the name for the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- 4. Clause:** a sentence or a specific point within a section in the U.S. Constitution which explains particular rules or ideas very clearly.
- 5. Congress:** the part of the United States government that makes laws. It is made up of two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- 6. Eighth Amendment:** prohibits excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment.
- 7. First Amendment:** protects the freedoms of speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government, ensuring that individuals can express their beliefs and ideas without government interference.
- 8. Fifth Amendment:** ensures that no one can be forced to testify against themselves in court, and guarantees due process of law.
- 9. Fourth Amendment:** protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures of their property.
- 10. Ninth Amendment:** acknowledges that people have rights that are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution.

11. Preamble to the Constitution: declares the beliefs, principles, and aims of the U.S. Constitution.

12. Second Amendment: allows people to own and carry weapons.

13. Section: a smaller part of an article in the U.S. Constitution that gives more details about specific rules or jobs in the government.

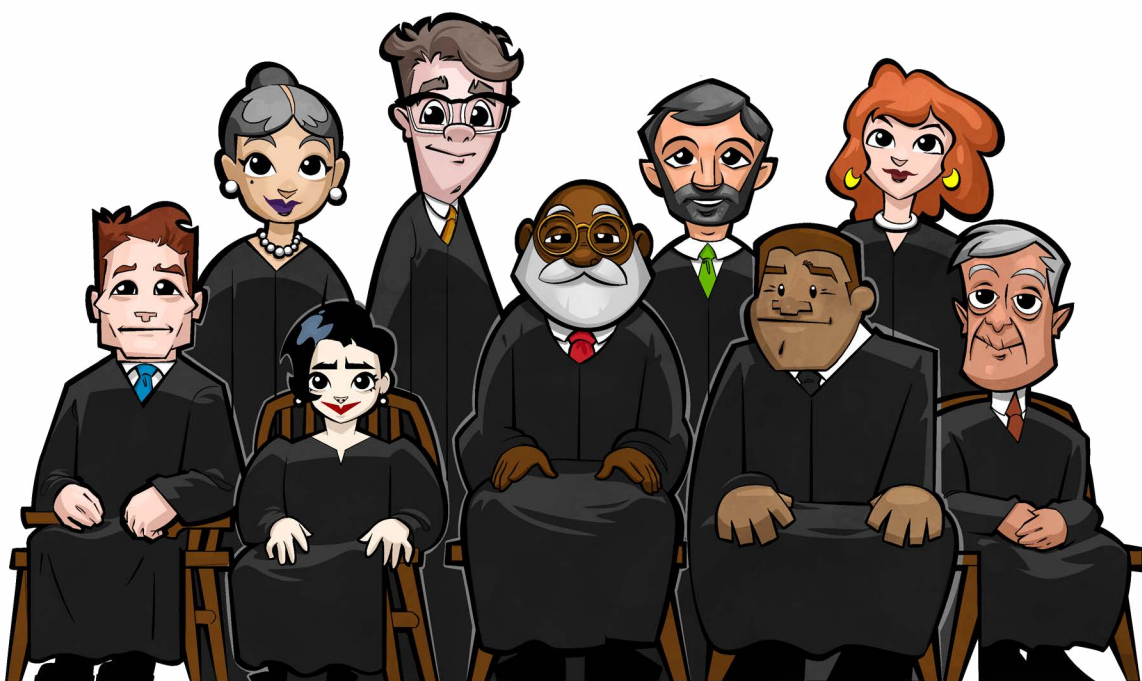
14. Seventh Amendment: extends the right to a jury trial in federal civil cases.

15. Sixth Amendment: provides the right to a speedy and public trial by jury, representation by an attorney, and the chance to confront witnesses.

16. Supreme Court: the highest court in the United States, which is made up of nine judges.

17. Tenth Amendment: states that powers not given to the federal government by the Constitution belong to the states or to the people, maintaining a balance of power.

18. Third Amendment: prevents soldiers from taking over private homes without permission.



Lesson

TELL Students

Today, we are going to explore a very important document called the Constitution. This smaller version of the Constitution is called a pocket Constitution. [Show pocket Constitution.] This small book holds the fundamental rules that guide our nation. Let's begin by opening our pocket Constitutions to the preamble. The word "preamble" refers to the introduction of an important document that explains the reason and the purpose of its content. The **Preamble to the Constitution** declares the beliefs, principles, and aims of the United States Constitution, the basic framework for the system of government. Please open your pocket Constitution and turn to the Preamble.

ASK Students

What is the Preamble?

TELL Students

The Preamble is the very beginning of the U.S. Constitution, serving as its introduction. It tells us why this important document was written and sets the stage for the rules and laws that follow. It starts with the words "We the People," which means that the Constitution isn't just a set of rules for one person or a small group. It is instead an agreement by everyone in the country to work together for a fair and peaceful society. This part of the Constitution is like a promise that helps everyone understand the purpose of the rules it contains—to ensure justice, liberty, and happiness for all citizens.

ASK Students

Can everyone find the phrase “We the People” and read it aloud with me?

TELL Students

“We the People!” This means everyone in the country, including us. It says that we all agree to follow these rules to have a fair and free life. Now, let’s learn about the branches of government. Please turn to Article I.

ASK Students

What do you notice about this part of your pocket Constitution?

TELL Students

There are ten sections inside Article I. The U.S. Constitution is organized into parts called articles and sections, much like a book is divided into chapters and paragraphs. Each article focuses on a major aspect of how our government works, such as the role of Congress in Article I, the President in Article II, and the courts in Article III. Within these articles, sections break down the information further, grouping together related rules or duties to provide explanations. For instance, in Article I, different sections discuss the specific powers of Congress, how laws are passed, and other legislative responsibilities. [Point out each section using a smart board and a copy of the pocket Constitution.] This structure helps organize and clarify the responsibilities and processes in our government.

ASK Students

What do you think would happen if the U.S. Constitution didn’t have articles and sections to organize how our government works?

TELL Students

If the U.S. Constitution didn't have articles and sections to organize how our government works, it would be much harder for everyone to understand the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the government. This could lead to confusion and inefficiencies because people would not be clear about who is supposed to do what. Having a well-organized Constitution helps ensure that everything runs smoothly and that the laws and processes are clear to everyone. In the U.S. Constitution, an **article** is like a big chapter that tells us about a main part of how our government works, such as what Congress or the President does. A **section** is a smaller part of an article that gives more details about specific rules or jobs in the government, like how laws are made or what powers the President has. A **clause** is even smaller, like a sentence or a specific point within a section, which explains particular rules or ideas very clearly, such as the requirement that the President must be at least 35 years old.

ASK Students

What is a clause?

TELL Students

Clauses are smaller parts within sections of the Constitution. Think of them as important sentences or paragraphs that explain one specific rule or idea. [Point out a clause for students in their pocket Constitution.] For example, in a section about making laws, a clause might explain just one rule about how a law gets approved. This helps everyone understand the rules better and know exactly where to look if they have a question about how something works. Clauses help organize our government's rules.

ASK Students

Why is it helpful to have clauses in the Constitution that explain each rule clearly, like the one we just looked at in your pocket Constitution?

TELL Students

Having clauses in the Constitution that explain each rule clearly is very helpful because it makes it easier for everyone to understand exactly what the rules are and how they are supposed to work. This clarity helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures that the government functions smoothly. Now, let's learn about Article I of the Constitution, which focuses on the legislative branch, the part of our government that makes laws. This article sets up Congress, which is divided into two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. **Congress** is an important part of our government in the United States that makes the rules and laws we all follow. It is like a big team split into two smaller teams (Senate and House). People from all over the country choose representatives to go to Congress and speak up for what they need and want. These representatives talk about different ideas, vote on them, and work together to make sure the laws are fair and help everyone.

ASK Students

What two smaller teams make up Congress?

TELL Students

The Senate has 100 members, two from each state, so every state has the same number of senators to make things fair. The House of Representatives has 435 members, but states with more people have more members, kind of like how a class with more students might need more helpers. Together, they work on important jobs like deciding how to spend money, making new laws, and making sure the rules are good and fair for everyone. They meet in a special building called the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Now, turn to Article II, which describes the job of the President.

ASK Students

Can anyone find a picture or symbol that might represent the President?

TELL Students

The White House is where the President lives and is shown here [Point to White House above Article Two.] Article II gives us a lot of good information about the role of the President and Vice President. Next, let's find Article III. This article discusses the Supreme Court and the judicial system. The **Supreme Court** and the judicial system are like the referees of our country's laws. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. It is made up of nine judges, called justices, who make decisions on really important legal questions that affect the whole country. They look at the laws and the Constitution to decide if something is fair or if it needs to be changed. They have the important job of making sure the laws follow the country's rule book, the Constitution. Their decisions help everyone understand the rules better. Besides the Supreme Court, there are other courts and judges all over the country, and they all work together as part of the judicial system. This system helps solve disagreements, make sure people follow the laws, and ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

ASK Students

What is the job of the Supreme Court justices, and how do they decide who is right in a disagreement?

TELL Students

The job of the Supreme Court justices is to make sure that the laws in our country match what our Constitution says. When there is a disagreement about the laws, the justices listen to all the details, think very carefully, and then decide who is right based on what the Constitution says. Their decisions help everyone understand the laws better. Now, let's find the Bill of Rights at the end of the Constitution. [Give students time to turn to the Bill of Rights.] The **Bill of Rights** is the name for the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. An **amendment** is a change or addition designed to improve the original document. These amendments were added to protect the basic rights of all citizens, like freedom of speech, the right to practice any religion, and the right to a fair trial. These rights are very important because they help make sure everyone is treated fairly under the law.

ASK Students

Can anyone find the First Amendment?

TELL Students

The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights is very important because it protects several key freedoms for everyone in the United States. The **First Amendment** protects the freedoms of speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government, ensuring that individuals can express their beliefs and ideas without government interference. It says that the government cannot make rules about what religion to follow, so people can choose their own religion or not follow one at all. It also protects the freedom to say what you think, without getting in trouble with the government, and the freedom to gather in groups peacefully to protest or for other reasons. Lastly, it guarantees that people can ask the government to fix problems without fear of punishment. This amendment helps make sure that everyone can share their ideas and beliefs freely.

ASK Students

Why is the First Amendment important?

TELL Students

The First Amendment is important because it lets everyone in our country share their ideas and beliefs without getting in trouble, helping us all learn from each other and making our country a better place. There are ten amendments in the Bill of Rights, each protecting specific aspects of American freedom and ensuring fair treatment under the law. [Have students refer to the associated icon in their pocket Constitution as you discuss each amendment.] The **Second Amendment** allows people to own and carry weapons for protection. The **Third Amendment** prevents soldiers from taking over private homes without permission. The **Fourth Amendment** protects individuals from

unreasonable searches and seizures of their property. The **Fifth Amendment** ensures that no one can be forced to testify against themselves in court, and guarantees due process of law. The **Sixth Amendment** provides the right to a speedy and public trial by jury, representation by an attorney, and the chance to confront witnesses. The **Seventh Amendment** extends the right to a jury trial in federal civil cases. The **Eighth Amendment** prohibits excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment. The **Ninth Amendment** acknowledges that people have rights that are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. Finally, the **Tenth Amendment** states that powers not given to the federal government by the Constitution belong to the states or to the people, maintaining a balance of power.

ASK Students

For our final activity, please choose one amendment that interests you, and share why it might be important to us today. [Give students time to discuss with a partner or a group of students.]

TELL Students

I chose the Second Amendment because it talks about safety. Each amendment plays an important role in protecting our rights. As we wrap up today's lesson, remember that the Constitution is the cornerstone of our government. It is important to understand and uphold the Constitution because it protects our freedoms and guides how our country is run. You may keep your pocket Constitution in your desk to help you as you continue learning about our country and the freedoms you enjoy in the United States. Now, let's watch an episode of "Star Spangled Adventures" to learn how the Constitution was created.

WATCH

[Star Spangled Adventures Ep. 6: The Constitutional Convention](#)

My Rights and Responsibilities

Objective

Help second graders understand how the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, protects their freedoms and responsibilities in real life.

Materials

- Pocket Constitutions for each student
- Large poster or whiteboard
- Sticky notes
- Markers
- “My Rights and Responsibilities” worksheet

Introduction

- Begin by reviewing that the Constitution is like a special rule book that helps everyone in the country live together peacefully.
- Explain that the Bill of Rights, which is part of the Constitution, protects important freedoms for everyone.

Brainstorming

- Ask students to think about different things they do every day, like speaking in class, playing with friends, going to school, or practicing their religion.
- On the poster or whiteboard, create two columns labeled “My Rights” and “My Responsibilities.”
- Encourage students to share examples of rights (e.g., speaking in class, playing freely) and discuss the corresponding responsibilities (e.g., listening to others, playing fairly).

Interactive Pocket Constitution Exploration

- Have students open their pocket Constitutions to the Bill of Rights.
- Guide them to find the First Amendment and discuss how it protects their right to speak and believe what they want.
- Continue with one or two other amendments, like the Fourth Amendment (protection from unfair searches) or the Sixth Amendment (right to a fair trial).

“My Rights and Responsibilities”

- Distribute the “My Rights and Responsibilities” worksheet to each student.
- Ask students to draw or write about a right they have and the responsibility that goes with it. For example, “I have the right to play with my friends” and “I have the responsibility to share and be kind.”

Class Sharing and Reflection

- Allow students to share their worksheets with the class, explaining the right and responsibility they chose.
- Discuss how following these rights and responsibilities helps everyone live together happily and safely.

Wrap-Up

- Recap how the Constitution protects their rights and how it also reminds them of their responsibilities.
- Encourage students to keep their pocket Constitution in a special place at their desk to remind them of the important rules that help everyone get along.

Extension

- Create a class “Rights and Responsibilities” chart that can be displayed in the classroom as a reminder of what they learned during this activity.

My Rights and Responsibilities Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

My Rights	My Responsibilities

The Constitution Song

Objective

Help second graders learn about the Constitution through a fun and engaging sing-along activity.

Materials

- Lyrics to “The Constitution Song”
- Tune: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”
- A simple rhythm instrument (optional), like a tambourine or clapping hands

“The Constitution Song” (To the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”)

Constitution, you’re the key,
To our nation, strong and free.
With your rules so fair and bright,
Guiding us to do what’s right.

“We the People” leads the way,
Helping us each and every day.
Constitution, you’re the key,
To our nation, strong and free.

Introduction

- Explain to the students that they are going to learn a special song about the Constitution, which helps guide our country with important rules.
- Talk briefly about how singing helps us remember important things.

Learn the Tune

- Sing the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” together with the students, just using the melody to get them comfortable.

Teach the Lyrics

- Introduce the first two lines of the song, singing them slowly and having the students repeat after you.
- Continue teaching the lyrics in small chunks, making sure the students feel confident before moving on to the next part.

Sing Together

- Once the students are comfortable with the lyrics, sing the entire song together.
- Encourage the students to use rhythm instruments or clap along to keep the beat.

Reflection and Discussion

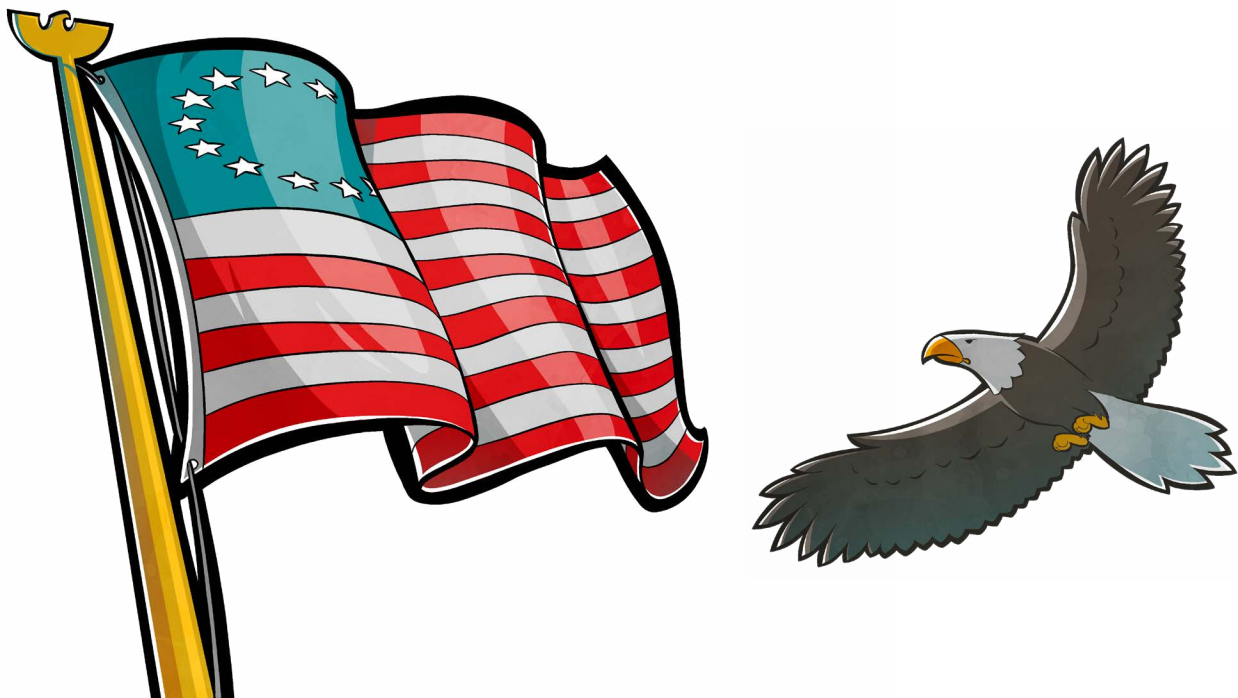
- After singing, ask the students what they think the song is saying about the Constitution.
- Reinforce the idea that the Constitution is like a rule book that helps keep our country strong and free.

Encore!

- Sing the song one more time, encouraging the students to sing with confidence and enthusiasm.

Extension

- Create a class performance where students sing the song for other classes or during a school event.
- Add hand motions to each line of the song to make it more interactive.



Resources List

- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/kidsyouth/how-big-are-the-heads.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/carving-history.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/the-workers.htm#:~:text=Over%20the%20fourteen%20year%20period,fatalities%20during%20the%20carving%20work.>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/housedivided.htm#:~:text=%22A%20house%20divided%20against%20itself,thing%2C%20or%20all%20the%20other.>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/memorial-history.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/playourvisit/index.htm#:~:text=Just%20over%20two%20million%20people%20visit%20Mount%20Rushmore%20each%20year.>
- » <https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/trip-ideas/story/75-surprising-facts-about-mount-rushmore>
- » <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2018/06/26/50-years-later-the-st-louis-arch-emerges-with-a-new-name-and-a-skeptical-view-of-western-expansion/>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/playourvisit/architect.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/playourvisit/materials-and-techniques.htm>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/statistics-data/design-construction-stats/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/exhibits/bridging-the-gate-the-beginning/>
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