

We are the Future Contest

Objective: Students will engage in a study of the Constitution to learn about the nature and structure of the United States. The Constitution will be analyzed and discussed as a primary source to understand the form of government and principles of the U.S. This lesson provides students an opportunity to explore how the government works and what the Constitution means to them today. Students will create a song to demonstrate understanding of the Constitution and nature of the U.S. government.

Materials

- projector or internet access for individual students
- George Washington, 1796. Oil on canvas by Gilbert Stuart (Source: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/934>)
- dry erase marker
- whiteboard
- Hard copies for each student or internet access to the biographies of Benjamin Franklin (Pennsylvania delegate), George Washington (Virginia delegate), and Alexander Hamilton (New York delegate) (Source: <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/founding-fathers>).
- Sound device/Computer with speakers and Patriotic Songs: i.e. “God Bless the U.S.A.” by Lee Greenwood, “Yankee Doodle” (Source: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/patriotic-anthems>), “The Star-Spangled Banner” performed by Loe Blacc (Source: https://youtu.be/mg1cb_ftw1c?list=PLZxSSLX6InCS0hy7w1Fz-HvO213OHaiSq).

Inspiration: Using a projector (or devices with internet access), show students George Washington, 1796. Oil on canvas by Gilbert Stuart (Source: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/934>). Direct students’ attention to the rainbow, symbolizing an age of peace after the American Revolution (the period from 1765 to 1783 when colonists in the Thirteen Colonies revolted from the British monarchy—King George III.) Ask students to find other objects in the painting and tell what they might symbolize: medallion (seal of the United States), ink and quill (signing documents, bills, letters), books (Washington’s study of the Roman Republic and history), saber (commander in chief during the American Revolution).

Essential Question/Anticipatory Set: Why is the promise of Article IV, section 4, the guarantee of a republic, significant historically and for people today?

Instruction

Day 1: Teacher will hand out three short biographies about Benjamin Franklin (Pennsylvania delegate), George Washington (Virginia delegate), and Alexander Hamilton (New York delegate) (Source: <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/founding-fathers>). Or students may access the three articles online. Students will read and take Cornell Notes about the three Founding Fathers (George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton). In pairs or as a whole class, students will share and discuss their Cornell Notes.

Day 2: Review with students key vocabulary and concepts, including *republic*, *federalism*, *separation of powers*, *legislative branch*, *executive branch*, and *judicial branch* (on the whiteboard). Next, play samples of patriotic songs, such as “God Bless the U.S.A.” by Lee Greenwood, “Yankee Doodle” (Source: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/patriotic-anthems>), “The Star-Spangled Banner” performed by Loe Blacc (Source: https://youtu.be/mg1cb_ftw1c?list=PLZxSSLX6InCS0hy7w1Fz-HvO213OHaiSq). Pause the songs to discuss the verse (lyrics), refrain (repeated lines), and chorus (main theme or lesson of the song).

Directions for Independent Practice

Create an Original Song about the U.S. Constitution

- i. Topic of the song: The republican structure of the U.S. government, “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government” (U.S. Constitution: Article IV, section 4).
- ii. The song must provide evidence, support, and examples from ***509 B.C. to 1788 A.D*** to thoroughly explain the topic. **Article IV, section 4** must be explained within the song. This includes ties between the ***Roman Republic*** and events ***leading up to and around*** the creation of the Constitution.
- iii. Include an original title
- iv. Create an original verse (lyrics).
- v. Create an original refrain (repeated lines). A refrain is typically two lines and/or the title that is repeated at the end of each verse.
- vi. Include a chorus: the main theme or lesson of the song. The chorus contains the main message of the song, expresses the theme or moral, and the refrain the last part of the chorus. You may structure the song using point-by-point method, each single stanza (verse) alternates between items or subtopics. Or the block method, a presentation of all facts and supporting details about one item or subtopic followed by the facts and supporting details about the next item in the next stanza (verse).

vii. The song must maintain a scholarly, educational, spirit. A quality song will demonstrate a full understanding of the topic, glide smoothly, will be creative, and original. Vivid, detailed images, adverbs, figures of speech, analogies, or metaphors, and intensely felt emotion make the song come alive. Length: 800 to 1,000-words total for the song. Time/Due Date: Five days. Song must be submitted on turnitin.com. The song will then be assessed for plagiarism, feedback provided, and scored.

Wrap-up: Place students in small groups. Remind students of discussion guidelines, such as 1. Be an active member. 2. Be assertive (not aggressive, not passive), polite, and listen to others without interrupting and without being distracted. 3. Be a leader, each person will take ownership for his or her work, participation, and quality of the discussion. Students will then share and discuss their songs. Have students add additional details they learn about the Constitution to their Cornell Notes.