

Title:	Mini-Unit on the Bill of Rights
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Grade Level	Grades 3-5
Brief Description	Students will explore the text of the Bill of Rights, identify the meaning of the first ten Amendments, and make connections among the amendments to their own lives.

Common Core Standards:

Speaking and Listening Comprehension and Collaboration	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1. 4.1, 5.1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1b, 4.1b, 5.1b CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1d, 4.1d, 5.1d CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.2, 4.2, 5.2
Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.4, 4.4, 5.4
Text Types and Purposes	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1. 4.1, 5.1
Represent and Interpret Data	CCSS.Math.Content.3.MD.B.3

Objectives:

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding and communicate the meanings of the 10 Amendments of the Bill of Rights. They will be able to identify the rights that mean the most to them. They will be able to connect the relevance of the amendments in connection with their own lives.

Materials:

Photocopies of Bill of Rights
Index cards
Crayons/colored pencils
Graph paper
Vocabulary list

Resources:

National Constitution Center Classroom Ready Resource –“Decoding the Bill of Rights”
www.archives.gov The Bill of Rights, a transcription

Activities:

For each Amendment, discuss the meaning, define vocabulary. Discuss origin/historical reason for each Amendment. Cite relevance in past and also today.

Ask students to (at first, individually) put each amendment in his/her own words (or draw a picture to explicate meaning.)

Have a class discussion and agree as a class on a class summary for each Amendment. . Create a shared class document with Constitutional amendments paraphrased by the class and distribute to students. Before discussion, identify rules for gaining the floor, listening to others, speaking one at a time, etc.

Each student creates a set of 10 cards – one card for each Amendment summary and an accompanying drawing/visual.

Questions:

If you had to pick the most important 3, 4, or 5 (depending on student grade or level) Amendments/Rights, which would you select and why?

Write a paragraph for each of the Amendments you choose, explaining how the amendment affects your life. Remember to use a topic sentence, two or three supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

For example:

“ Amendment 3 states that your home is your own, and no soldier or person can stay there without your permission. This is important to me because I wouldn’t want a stranger to come live in my home. This would invade my privacy and make me feel uncomfortable. When my family moved into our home, it was for us and our guests only. I like having my privacy and so this amendment is very important to me. “

Have each student present his/her most important amendments to the class. Encourage students to speak clearly and at an understandable pace. Give class members a chance to comment or ask questions.

Suggested Rubric for Mini-Unit on Bill of Rights

1. Student demonstrates clear understanding of each amendment through illustration and/or written piece.

Limited

Proficient

Advanced

2. Student understands the relevance of selected amendments in his or her life by verbalizing his or her reasoning and making connections.

Limited

Proficient

Advanced

3. Student demonstrates understanding of rules of presentation and discussion.

Limited

Proficient

Advanced

Connections:

As a math connection, create a graph of amendments identified as most important to class members. Put cards out on the table, graph on the board, and then have students create their own graphs on graph papers.

Discuss: For example: Which amendment/s got the most votes? Why? Which amendment/s got the least? Why? What does the graph show about which rights the class as a whole values most? Which rights are less important to the class as a whole?

Differentiation Strategies:

In place of writing, students could illustrate or present ideas orally.

Teachers can modify numbers of amendments discussed, depending on student.

Some students will work better independently, others will learn better in a small group.

Advanced students could write a longer paper to include more amendments, they could create a diorama or poster to demonstrate the importance of one or more amendments, they could compare our rights with rights in another country, they could do a social action project reaching out into the community intervening at the local, state, or federal levels.

Additional Resources

Recommended Vocabulary List by Amendment - Bill of Rights

Amendments	Vocabulary	
I	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. establishment 2. prohibiting 3. abridging 4. press 5. assemble 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. petition 7. redress 8. grievances
II	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. regulated 2. militia 3. the right to bear arms 4. infringed 	
III	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. quartered 2. consent 3. prescribed 	
IV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. effects 2. seizures 3. violated 4. warrants 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. probable cause 6. oath 7. affirmation
V	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. capital crime 2. infamous crime 3. Grand Jury 4. Jeopardy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Deprived 6. Due process 7. compensation
VI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prosecution 2. accused 3. impartial jury 4. ascertained 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. compulsory 6. counsel 7. defence – defense
VII	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. suits 2. common law 3. preserved 	
VIII	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. excessive 2. bail 3. inflicted 4. imposed 	
IX	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. enumeration 2. construed 3. disparage 4. retained 	
X	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. delegated 2. powers 3. prohibited 	

	4. reserved 5. respectively
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Teaching the Constitution Resources Available Online:

Search Terms

- Common Core App available for free.
- Youth in Government
- Facing History and Ourselves
- Deliberating in a Democracy
- iCivics
- KidsVoting USA
- We the People
- Project Citizen
- Nhsocialstudieseducation.wikispaces.com
- Glog
- StreetLaw
- TeachingAmericanHistory.org
- ProCon.org
- Teaching Tolerance
- Responsive Classroom – Hopes and Dreams, Classroom Constitution
- School House Rock – We the People, How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Shh...We're Writing the Constitution – Reader's Theatre
- Lawyer in the Classroom week – mock trial
- Peer Mediators
- Crfcelebrateamerica.org
- Newseum 1st Amendment exhibit online
- National Constitution Center Classroom Ready Resource –“Decoding the Bill of Rights”