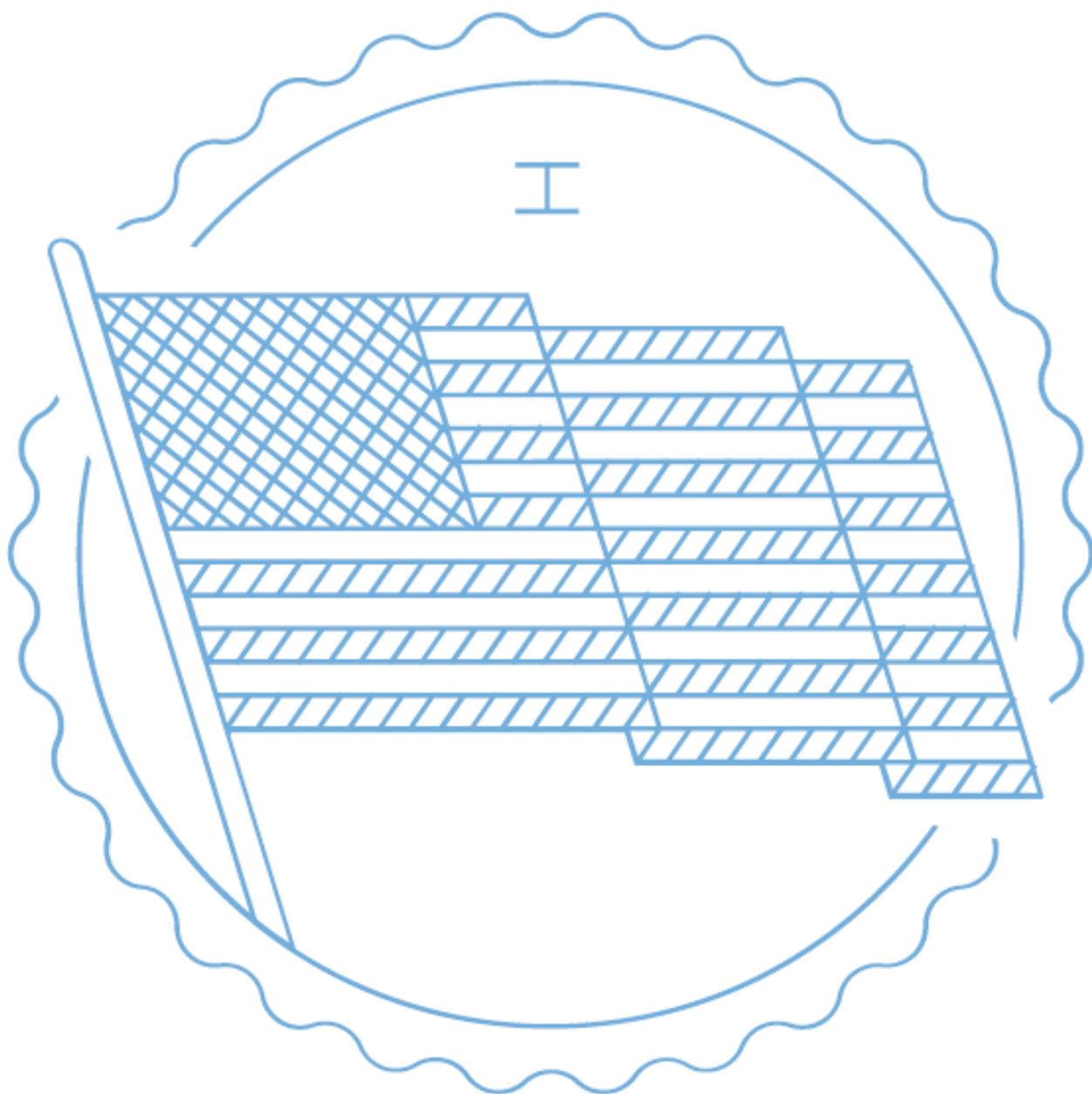


INTERACTIVE

CONSTITUTION

**CLASSROOM
EXCHANGES**



NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



INTERACTIVE

CONSTITUTION

CLASSROOM EXCHANGES

Throughout the school year, teachers can register their classes to discuss a big constitutional question with a classroom somewhere else in the United States. The National Constitution Center facilitates these dialogues by pairing classrooms, connecting them with an expert moderator, and setting up videoconferencing sessions.

Before an Exchange

After signing up for an exchange online, teachers prepare their students using the Center's *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition*, which presents the full text of the Constitution, with essays written by leading legal scholars from the right and the left, paired with each other to explore areas of agreement and disagreement, providing a balanced explanation of the history, structure, and significance of nearly every section of the Constitution.

The essays are written in terms that all ages, from middle and high school students to adult learners, can understand. The *Classroom Edition* includes lesson plans for high school students and modules on the First Amendment and other parts of the Constitution that set current constitutional questions for discussions such as: Does the First Amendment protect hate speech?

Sample Classroom Exchange

Each exchange is moderated by a constitutional expert, including National Constitution Center educators or volunteer federal or state judges who have been trained to ensure nonpartisan neutrality and cultivate civil dialogue. The goals of the dialogues are to empower student voice through healthy, civil dialogue around constitutional issues. Here are examples of what happens during each exchange:

- **Welcome & “Essential Question”** The trained moderator will welcome the students and present a difficult constitutional question such as a specific court case asking to what extent the Constitution protects controversial speech, or the right to privacy from a search.
- **Guided Discussion of Constitutional Principles** The moderator will introduce key principles and cases necessary for students to help debate and discuss the Essential Question, and students will be asked to present the best constitutional arguments for and against the proposition.
- **Debate and Dialogue** The moderator will then re-introduce the Essential Question and invite students from one classroom to respond while asking students from the other classroom to listen actively. Then, the classrooms will then reverse roles.
- **Practical and Relevant Discussions** The moderator will then introduce examples of the Essential Question and how it plays out in the real world. Students will then expand the dialogue to engage in the practice of constitutional discussions and understanding of the law.
- **Redirecting Rhetoric** Sometimes during an exchange, students will begin arguing in favor of a personal political or policy preference, or rely on passionate rhetoric instead of constitutional reason. The moderator will use these as opportunities to reinforce the importance of focusing on what the Constitution permits or prohibits, rather than what students prefer, and to teach students to make reasoned arguments.

