

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

★★ Lesson Plan ★★

GRADES
9-12



ABOUT THIS LESSON

In this lesson students will first become acquainted with the language of the Bill of Rights and identify the sections that need further clarification. Then, students will apply their knowledge of the Bill of Rights to images depicting specific liberties. Afterwards, students will reflect on their knowledge and inquire about rights in other settings. A range of assessment options are presented for instructors.

AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND

After a brutal war against the British monarch, failure to establish a balance of power between states in the Articles of Confederation, and the battle over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, Americans pressed their leaders to establish written guarantees of individual liberties. Thus, the Bill of Rights was born two years after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights establishes specific individual liberties whose meaning and extent are still under debated. For example, what is the extent of a person's right to free speech? Can that speech ever be restricted? What is considered cruel and unusual punishment? Do these rights apply to all citizens equally? These questions and others like them underlie over a century of inquiry about the rights and responsibilities of American citizens.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify examples of everyday experiences that illustrate the Bill of Rights.
- Examine how everyday experiences can illuminate deeper questions about the expansion and contraction of individual liberties over time.

STANDARDS

Civic Ideals and Practices. An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society, and is a central purpose of the social studies.

Power, Authority, and Governance. Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance, and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world, is essential for developing civic competence.

GRADE LEVEL(S)

9-12

CLASSROOM TIME

- Two 45-minute class periods

HANDOUTS

- Student Worksheet 1
- Placards A-I
- Student Worksheet 1 Answers

CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Amendments I-X

ACTIVITY

1. Have students examine a copy of the U.S. Constitution by answering the following questions:

- a. Where is the Bill of Rights located in the document?
- b. Have students in pairs read one of the amendments in the Bill of Rights (ensure that collectively, all ten amendments are examined) and identify central words that need further definition. Then, have students write 1-3 questions that would help them and others further clarify the meaning of this right. For example, the First Amendment guarantees' citizens the right of freedom of speech. What does "freedom of speech" mean exactly in today's context? What kinds of speech is protected? What consequences are there for those who abuse individual liberties?

If students do not have access to the U.S. Constitution, an electronic version can be found on the National Constitution Center's website:

- a. <http://constitutioncenter.org/constitution#amendment-list>
- b. Downloadable and printable text: <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/historical-documents/the-constitution>
- c. Spanish translation: <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/historical-documents/the-constitution-of-the-united-states-html-en-espanol>

2. Have students share their responses.

3. Pass out Student Worksheet 1 and explain that students will be looking at images (Placards) in order to practice identifying which of the Bill of Rights and individual liberties are being presented. Each Bill of Right is only represented once, and does not necessarily illustrate all liberties included in the language of each amendment. There are multiple methods an instructor may choose in order to engage students in this activity.

- a. Organize students into small groups and then distribute printed copies of the placards. Each group examines one placard and presents their work to the rest of the class.
- b. Placards are passed around the class so that small groups of students have an opportunity to analyze each one.
- c. Instructor turns placards into a Power Point presentation or transparencies and delivers full group instruction.

ACTIVITY

4. Students will then be asked to formulate questions about each of the scenarios. What questions about citizens' or students' rights do students have? The instructor can use the following prompts to trigger students' thinking:

- a. I wonder if the same right applies when/if...
- b. Do I have the right to _____ while in school?
- c. Are the laws equally applied to everyone?
- d. Do I agree with the way a right is being interpreted?

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

1. Ask students to find their own image or newspaper story that illustrates a particular right and amendment. Then, have them write a short essay explaining which amendment and right is illustrated and the debate surrounding it.
2. Have students investigate a particular constitutional question via a court case and develop a town hall poster. The National Constitution Center's [Town Hall Poster lesson](#) is a useful guide.
3. Students can investigate individual liberties in their own setting—school. The National Constitution Center has developed a series of lessons that provide an innovative way to assess students' understanding of the Bill of Rights.
 - a. [Students' Cyber Speech Rights](#)
 - b. [Students' Fourth Amendment Rights](#)

FURTHER RESOURCES

[A First Amendment Role Playing Activity](#)

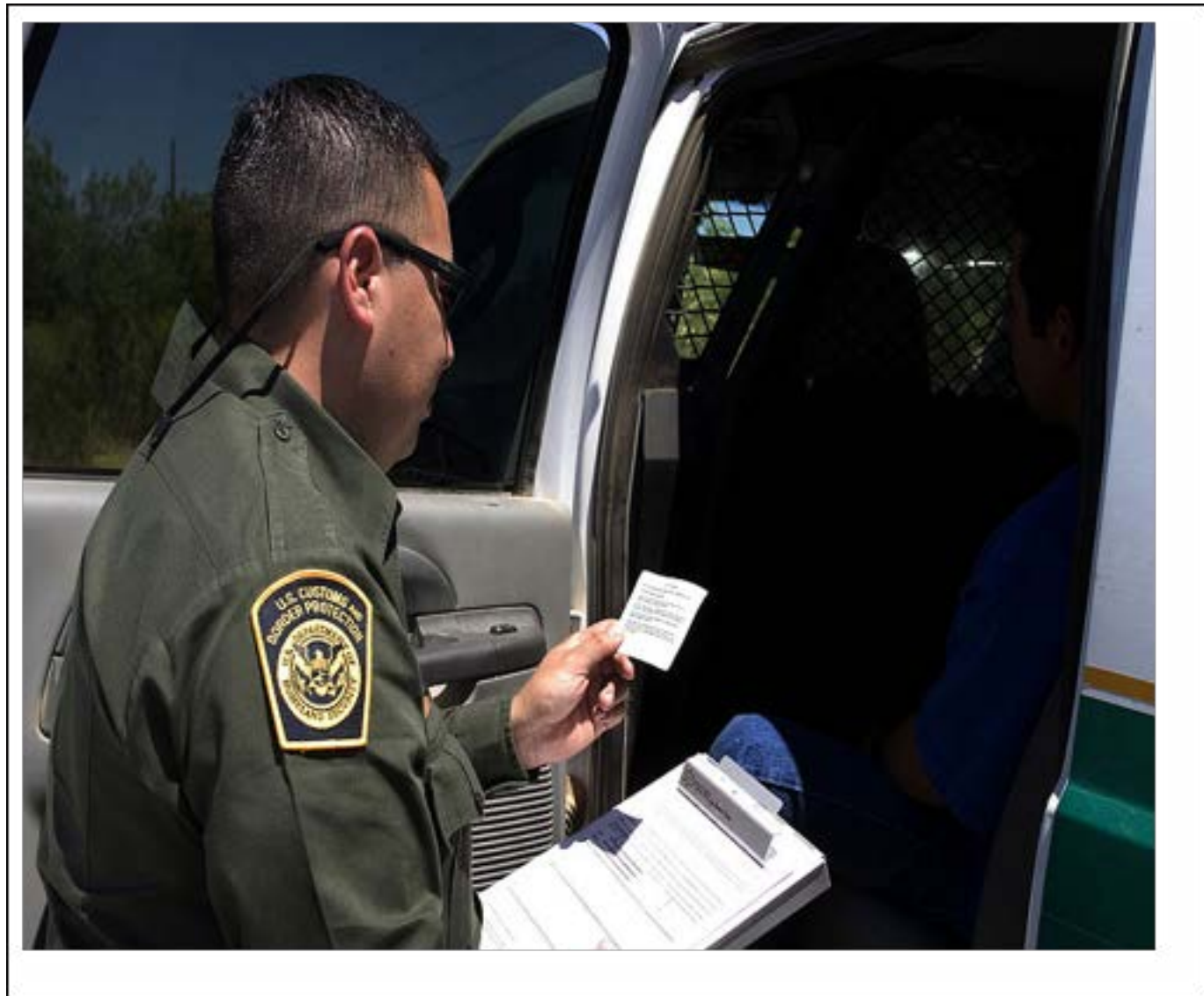
[Honoring Property Rights](#) is a lesson where students get to investigate the right to property in a civil society.

[Picture Books and the First Amendment](#) is a lesson for K-2 students that investigates the meaning of the First Amendment through reading and picture books.

STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

Placard	Amendment Represented	Right Represented	Explain how the right is being represented
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			
I			

PLACARD A



PLACARD B



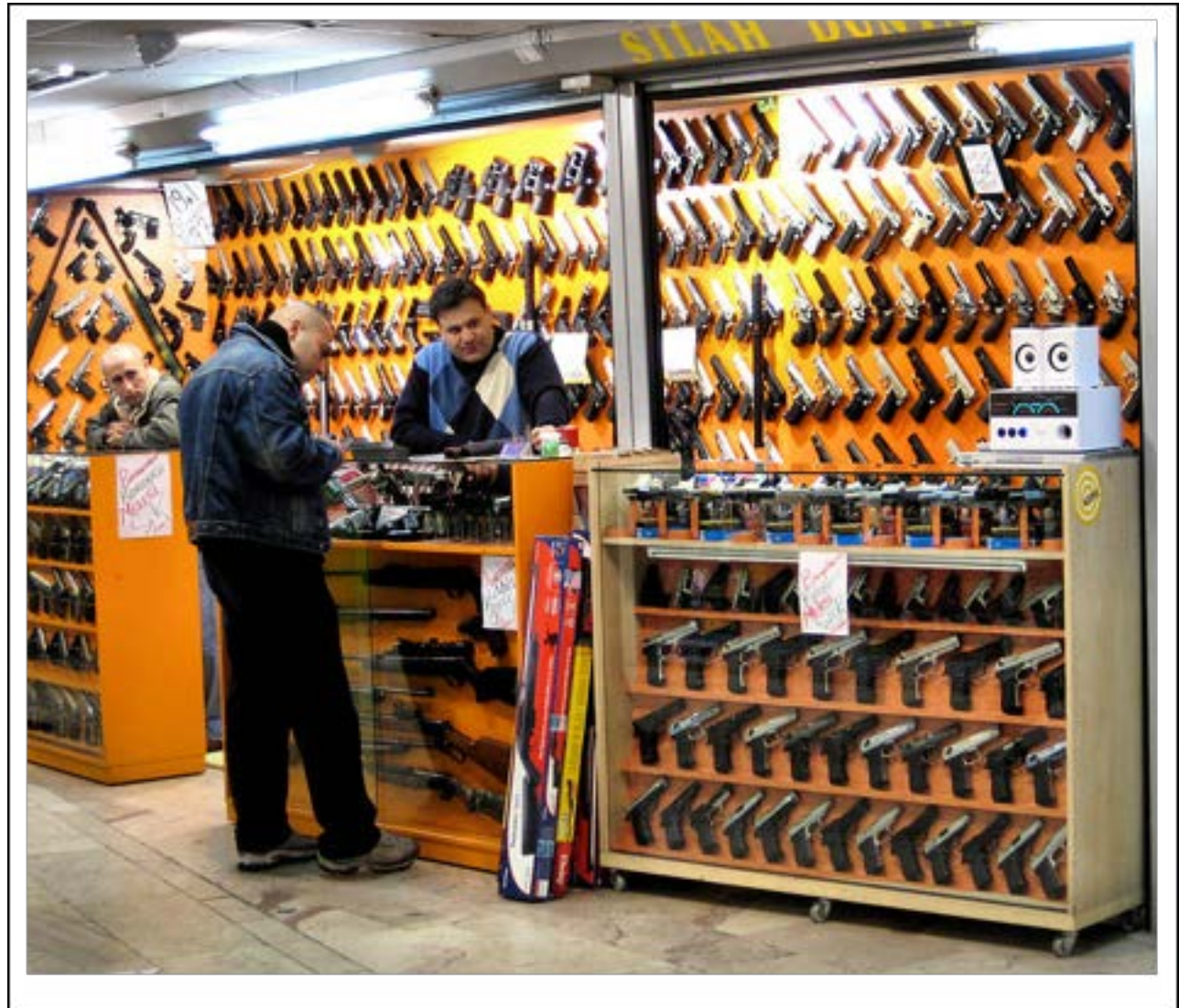
PLACARD C



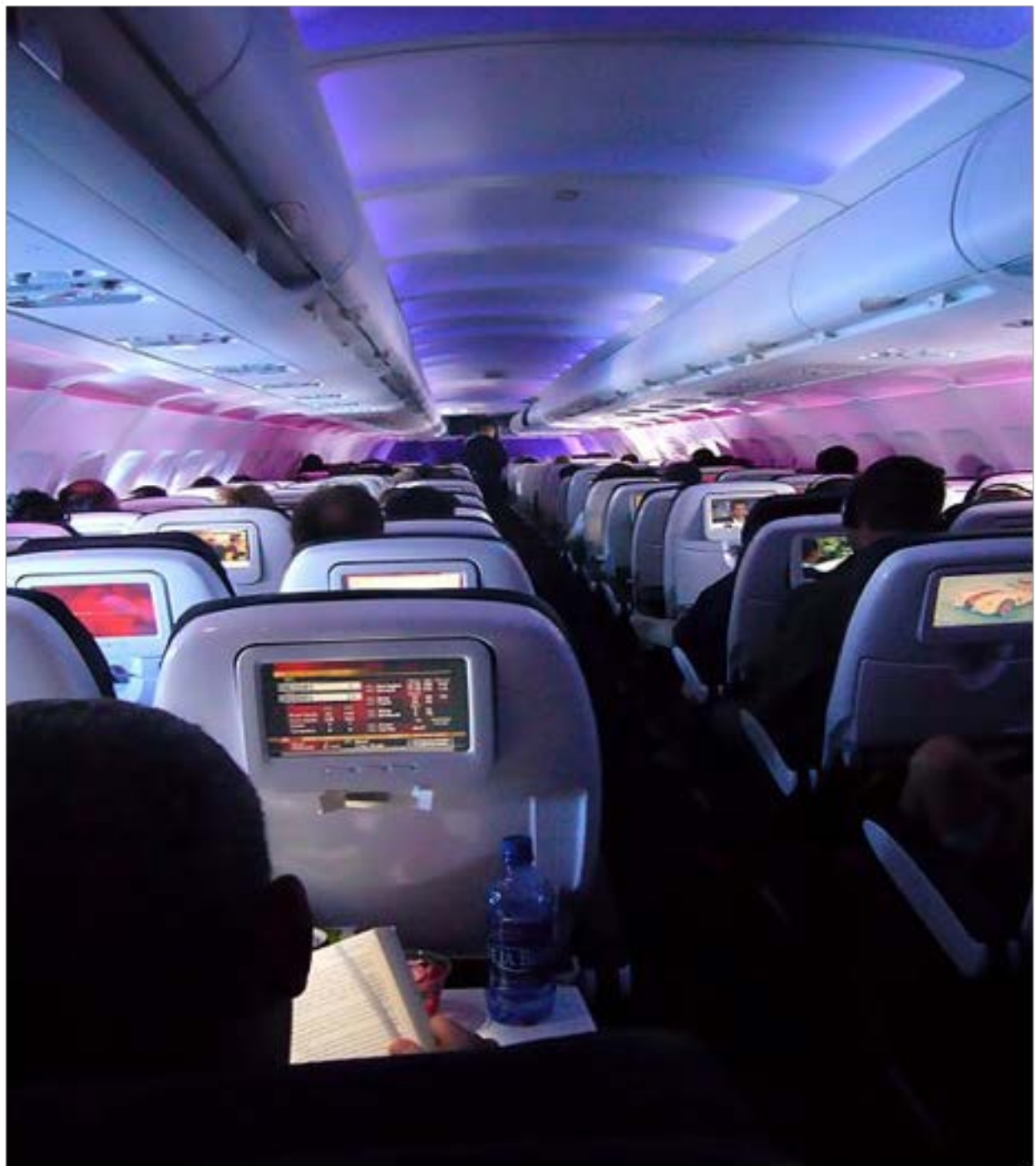
PLACARD D



PLACARD E



PLACARD F




PLACARD G

RT

AO 220B (9/01)

**SUMMONS
FOR JURY
SERVICE**

PLEASE READ
FURTHER
INSTRUCTIONS IN
THE INFORMATIONAL
LETTER INCLUDED WITH THIS
SUMMONS.



TWO DAYS/ONE TRIAL

THE COURT SUMMONS YOU TO APPEAR FOR JURY DUTY BEGINNING ON THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE SHOWN BELOW.

**Report to: JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM - 2ND FL
PHILADELPHIA**

**LOCATION: 601 MARKET STREET
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM - 2ND FL.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106-1797**

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2007

TIME 8:30 AM

JUROR NUMBER:

PHONE NO. TO CALL: 800-829-0189

Privacy Act Statement: Your social security number is requested on a voluntary basis under authority of sections 6041, and 6109 of the Internal Revenue Code. If you earn more than \$600 in compensation as a juror, the court must inform the Internal Revenue Service using your social security number, and it is helpful to us to have your number now. Failure to provide your social security number at this time will not disqualify you from serving as a juror, but it may delay jury service payments to you.

PLACARD H



PLACARD I



STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

Placard	Amendment Represented	Right Represented	Explain how the right is being represented
A	FIFTH	Right to self-incrimination	A border policeman is reading a suspects Miranda Rights.
B	THIRD	Quartering of troops	WASHINGTON (Aug. 17, 2009) Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick West speaks with Sailors at the Navy Bachelor Housing complex at Andrews Air Force Base. The quarters are used by officers and enlisted personnel who are drilling reservists or Sailors.
C	FIRST	Right to assemble	This is an image of anti-War protests in Washington, D.C. on Sep. 24, 2005.
D	EIGHT	Cruel and unusual punishment	This is an image of a wooden electric chair in Florida used to execute convicted criminals. Capital punishment laws vary by state.
E	SECOND	Right to bear arms	This is an image of a customer in a gun dealership. Under certain circumstances, citizens can purchase, carry and fire a gun.
F	NINTH	Rights reserved to the people	The right to travel is not enumerated in the U.S. Constitution, but is a right protected by law under certain circumstances.
G	SIXTH and SEVENTH	Trial by jury	This is a summons for jury duty in a United States district court. Jury duty can take place in civil and criminal suits.
H	FOURTH	Unreasonable searched and seizures	San Francisco police searching a car.
I	TENTH	Rights reserved to the states	This is an image of the front if Atascocita High School in Atascocita, TX. Because education is not enumerated in the U.S. Constitution, states provide public education to all its citizens.

Whether planning a field trip, looking for innovative ways to enhance classroom instruction or seeking a deeper understanding of American history and active citizenship, the National Constitution Center is an educator's ultimate civic learning resource.

Learn more at
CONSTITUTIONCENTER.ORG/EDUCATION

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