



Lesson 2: ***The United States Constitution***

Objectives:

1. To be able to discuss the historical background of the writing and ratification of the Constitution.
2. To be able to record the duties and responsibilities of the three branches of government.
3. To be able to discuss why the Constitution was and continues to be a remarkable document.

Materials:

Book: *A More Perfect Union* by Betsy Maestro
Book: **Library Lion** by Michelle Knudsen
PowerPoint “Branches of Government”
Branches of Government Flip Book Handout
We the Civics Kids student magazine for Lesson 2
Activity: *No Animals in the Library*
Student Voice Bulletin Board Activity
Literacy Link with bookmark: *I Took My Frog to the Library* by Eric Kimmel

Common Core Standards:

- CCSS-ELA-Literacy RL 4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS-ELA-Literacy RI 4.3 Explain events, procedures, ideas or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- CCSS-ELA-Literacy W 4.1 Write opinion piece on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
 - W4.1b Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- CCSS-ELA-Literacy SL 4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners and texts, building on each others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS-ELA-Literacy L 4.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

National Standards for Civics and Government

NSS-C. K-4.1 What is Government?

What is Government and What Should It Do?

- Where do people in government get the authority to make, apply, and enforce rules and laws and manage disputes about them?
- What are some of the important things governments do?
- What is the difference between limited and unlimited government?

NSS-C. K-4.2 Principles of Democracy

How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

- What is the United States Constitution and why is it important?
- Who represents you in the legislative and executive branches of your...national government?



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Lesson Procedures: Session 1

1. Read and discuss *A More Perfect Union* to provide an historical background.
2. Play the School House Rock video, “The Preamble”, from YouTube or the *America School House Rock* DVD. Discuss the information in the Preamble with the events of the Constitutional Convention presented in the book

Lesson Procedures: Session 2

1. Distribute **We the Civics Kids** student magazine for Lesson 2. Discuss the cover story titles. Introduce Judge Rendell and her position as a federal judge.
2. Read the interview, allowing time for discussion after each Q and A.
3. Play the School House Rock video, “Three-Ring Government”, from YouTube or the *America School House Rock* DVD. Reinforce the three parts of the government and the role of each.

Lesson Procedures: Session 3

1. Distribute handouts for the Branches of Government flip book and provide oral directions for construction.
 - a. Cut out the four panels.
 - b. Fold each panel on the dotted line so the tab is behind the printed page.
 - c. Open each panel and stack. Put Legislative panel on the bottom. Place the Judicial panel on top lining up the folds. Next place the Executive panel and lastly the Branches of Government cover.
 - d. Fold all the tabs under and staple.
2. Once all flip books have been assembled, begin the PowerPoint on the three branches of government. Stop at the end of each branch to allow each student to complete the information for that branch in his/her flip book.
3. Review lesson information with a “Name That Branch” oral game:
 - a. “I am the branch that has two houses. Who am I?”
 - b. “I am the branch that decides if a law follows the Constitution. Who am I?”
 - c. “One of the jobs in my branch is the commander in chief. Who am I?”
 - d. “In my branch I am known as the upper house. What is my branch and who am I?”
 - e. “The Department of Education is found in my branch. Who am I?”
 - f. “One chief justice and eight justices are part of my branch. Who am I and what is my branch?”



Lesson Procedures: Session 4

1. Remind students that the branches of government are responsible for making and interpreting the law. This is a challenging job. Why is it challenging?
2. Read the book **Library Lion** by Michelle Knudsen highlighting that it is sometimes necessary to consider exceptions to a law.
3. Distribute and introduce *No Animals in the Library* activity sheet. Have students work in partners to complete the activity.
4. Have the class report out their responses to the exceptions by a raise of hands. Ask students to share their reasons for the exception.

Other Suggested Readings

- Literacy Link book with bookmark: *I Took My Frog to the Library* by Eric Kimmel
- *We the Kids* by David Catrow: Supplementary literature

Tech Connections:

- **Schoolhouse Rock: Constitution Preamble:** YouTube
- **Constitution Day: Scholastic:**
http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/constitution_day