Free Constitutional Classes from the National Constitution Center
for the 2020-2021 School Year

As students, teachers, and parents prepare for remote learning in the fall, the National Constitution Center is thrilled to offer free, live classes on the Constitution and nonpartisan online education materials that can support middle school, high school, and college students across America. The remote learning initiative featuring synchronous and asynchronous classes will allow learners of all ages to engage with the text, meaning, and history of the U.S. Constitution wherever learning takes place. Classes last spring had over 32,000 participants and helped make the NCC the fourth most visited museum website in America. Guest scholars included filmmaker Ken Burns, journalist Emily Bazelon, and historian Eric Foner.

The 2020-2021 classes will be launched by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, and will cover a range of topics such as the Electoral College, free speech and freedom of religion, federalism, the Second Amendment, and more. We hope teachers and students of all ages, especially those in underserved communities will join us online wherever they are learning to engage in civil dialogue around the constitutional issues at the heart of American life.

Full details, including weekly schedules and topics, and registration, are available here.

Teachers interested in joining our national advisory council and receiving professional support for the NCC classes throughout the year can sign up through the same page.

2020-2021 Exchange Program

Launching on August 31, 2020, the Exchange Program offers free live online classes on relevant constitutional topics for middle school, high school, and college level students, allowing learners to practice civil dialogue skills; apply critical thinking and active listening; and learn about the Constitution and how it affects their lives.

All programs are a unique way to build constitutional knowledge using the National Constitution Center’s acclaimed online learning platform, the Interactive Constitution, and include opportunities for students to engage with constitutional experts and guest scholars.

Students, teachers, and parents can join these live conversations from anywhere in the United States on Zoom through a home computer, tablet, or phone. The classes are also archived and livestreamed on YouTube. To provide teachers with options that best suit their needs, as well as to provide the general public an opportunity to learn from these engaging sessions, the Center offers both public and private Scholar Exchanges, as well as Peer-to-Peer Exchanges.

Scholar Exchanges

Students connect with National Constitution Center scholars for an interactive online class about the Constitution. Part lecture and part lively conversation, the Scholar Exchanges give students the opportunity to learn about constitutional issues, past and present. Each session begins with a current constitutional event that engages students of all ages in a relevant discussion. These free public sessions are accessible to the public so that learners can join in a constitutional discussion with National
Constitution Center scholars, including President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen and Chief Learning Officer Kerry Sautner, on core topics such as the First Amendment’s freedom of speech and press and the Fourth Amendment’s search and seizure. Open-source, 30-45 minute sessions take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, September 2020 - May 2021, with separate sessions for middle school students and high school and college students. The full schedule is listed below and available here. The high school and college sessions are recorded, streamed live on YouTube, and archived on our website.

In addition, Teachers can request private exchanges with a scholar and their classes. This allows students to review the materials one-on-one for clarity or extra support. These sessions are tailored to a particular class’s interest and questions. Teachers can register for the private sessions here.

**Classroom Exchanges for Civil Dialogues: A Student-led Peer-to-Peer Exchange on the Constitution**

The Classroom Exchanges connect middle and high school students across the United States in online civil dialogue using the Center’s Interactive Constitution to teach constitutional principles. Classes interact directly with other classes across the country and apply critical thinking and listening skills to a constitutional issue that matters to them, such as elections or free speech on campus. The Exchanges are moderated by federal judges and National Constitution Center scholars. Teachers can register their classes here.

**Scholar Exchange topics for 2020-2021**

**September 2020**

1. **Constitutional Conversations and Civil Dialogue (Week of August 31)**

   In this session, students will examine the structure and function of the U.S. Constitution, and the methods scholars use to interpret it. Students will be trained in the practice of historical thinking skills as they examine primary sources and hone their constitutional thinking skills by asking “What may the government do?” The session will conclude with the ideas behind the practice of civil dialogue skills where we channel our inner Louis Brandeis who famously remarked, “Come let us reason together!”

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Aug. 31 and Sept. 2 at 12 p.m. ET
   - **Register for High School and College Session** Aug 31. and Sept. 2 at 2 p.m. ET
   - **Register for All Ages Session** Sept. 4 at 1 p.m. ET

2. **Foundations of American Democracy (Week of September 7)**

   In this session, students will examine the form of government established by the Constitution, and its key ideas—including natural rights, the rule of law, and popular sovereignty. By examining the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, students will learn how these two documents set the foundation for American democracy and make possible the freedom that is the birthright of all Americans.

   *Note: There will be no Monday session this week.*

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Sept. 9 at 12 p.m. ET
   - **Register for High School and College Session** Sept. 9 at 2 p.m. ET
   - **Register for All Ages Session** Sept. 11 at 1 p.m. ET
3. **Constitution 101: The Constitutional Convention (Week of September 14)**

In this session, students will examine the issues and events that led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, including the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, Shay’s Rebellion, and the growing need for a new national government. Students will also explore the Convention, and its major turning points and compromises—including the Connecticut Compromise, the Electoral College, the Three-Fifths Compromise, and the Slave Trade Clause.

- [Register for Middle School Session](#) Sept. 14 and 16 at 12 p.m. ET
- [Register for High School and College Session](#) Sept. 14 and 16 at 2 p.m. ET
- [Register for All Ages Session](#) Sept. 18 at 1 p.m. ET

**Constitution Day: Virtual Student Town Hall with Justice Neil M. Gorsuch**

*Constitution Day is on September 17: Constitutional Discussion with Special Guest Justice Neil M. Gorsuch*

Join the National Constitution Center’s in a special Student Town Hall with U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch. Justice Gorsuch will speak about his career, the role of the judicial branch, and what it’s like to sit on the Supreme Court. National Constitution Center President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen will moderate the discussion.

- [Register for Constitution Day Program with Associate Justice Gorsuch](#)

4. **Ratification Debates (Week of September 21)**

In this session, students will explore the battle over the ratification of the Constitution—beginning with Convention delegates like George Mason who refused to sign the Constitution and continuing through the debates between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The class will also examine great works like *The Federalist Papers* (#10 and #51) and *Brutus* #1. Students will explore why this time in America was called a “grand national discussion.”

- [Register for Middle School Session](#) Sept. 21 and 23 at 12 p.m. ET
- [Register for High School and College Session](#) Sept. 21 and 23 at 2 p.m. ET
- [Register for All Ages Session](#) Sept. 25 at 1 p.m. ET

5. **Federalism (Week of September 28)**

In this session, students will explore Federalism and the debate over how to balance the powers of the national government, the powers of the states, and the rights of individuals. The session will examine the debates over Federalism at the Constitutional Convention, how it works, how it has changed over time, how the Supreme Court has addressed it, and how it affects us today.

- [Register for Middle School Session](#) Sept. 28 and 30 at 12 p.m. ET
- [Register for High School and College Session](#) Sept. 28 and 30 at 2 p.m. ET
- [Register for All Ages Session](#) Oct. 2 at 1 p.m.

**October 2020**

1. **Learning about the Electoral College (Week of October 5)**

In this session, students will explore the Electoral College’s controversial origins at the Constitution Convention, the influence of founder James Wilson, and the many attempts to reform it over the years.
The class will also cover the history of presidential elections in America and current constitutional questions on the Electoral College—including a unanimous Supreme Court ruling about faithless electors in June 2020.

- **Register for Middle School Session** Oct. 5 and 7 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** Oct. 5 and 7 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** Oct. 9 at 1 p.m. ET

2. **Article II: The Presidency and the Executive Branch (Week of October 12)**
   In this session, students will explore the powers of the president. The class will take a close look at Article II of the Constitution, which addresses the presidency and the executive branch. Students will cover the role of the president written into the Constitution, major Supreme Court battles over presidential power, and how the president’s powers have expanded over time.

- **Register for Middle School Session** Oct. 12 and 14 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** Oct. 12 and 14 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** Oct. 16 at 1 p.m. ET

3. **Voting Rights Amendments Session (Week of October 19)**
   In this session, students learn about voting rights in America through a historical exploration of the right to vote in America. Where does the Constitution protect the right to vote? What role did the amendment process play in shaping voting rights? What has the Supreme Court said about the right to vote over time?

- **Register for Middle School Session** Oct. 19 and 21 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** Oct. 19 and 21 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** Oct. 23 at 1 p.m. ET

4. **Constitutional Battles of the Branches (Week of October 26)**
   In this session, students focus on separation of powers and how the Constitution set up a system of checks and balances between the different branches of government. Our Constitution set up this system to ensure that no one branch of government would become too powerful, but where did this idea come from and how has this been tested over time in America? From Andrew Jackson and the battle over the country’s national bank to modern conversations around COVID-19, students will engage in a lively and fast-paced conversation.

- **Register for Middle School Session** Oct. 26 and 28 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** Oct. 26 and 28 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** Oct. 30 at 1 p.m. ET

**November 2020**

1. **The Bill of Rights (Week of November 2)**
   In this session, students study the Bill of Rights—its rights, its protections and limitations on government—and the process by which it was discussed, debated, and ratified. Students will also explore how the Bill of Rights affects them today.

- **Register for Middle School Session** Nov. 2 and 4 at 12 p.m. ET
2. Slavery in America: The Constitution to Reconstruction (Week of November 9)
In this session, students engage in a conversation on slavery in America from the Constitution to Reconstruction. This session will explore the Constitution, the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, and the Reconstruction founders’ vision of a “Second Founding” for our nation.

- Register for Middle School Session Nov. 9 and 11 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session Nov. 9 and 11 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session Nov. 13 at 1 p.m. ET

December 2020

1. Article I: How Congress Works – The Legislative Branch (Week of November 30)
In this session, students explore Article I of the Constitution, which defines the powers of Congress. This class examines constitutional debates involving the legislative branch from the Constitutional Convention to the most recent term.

- Register for Middle School Session Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. ET

2. Foundations of American Democracy (Week of December 7)
In this session, students will examine the form of government established by the Constitution, and its key ideas—including natural rights, the rule of law, and popular sovereignty. By examining the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, students will learn how these two documents set the foundation for American democracy and make possible the freedom that is the birthright of all Americans.

- Register for Middle School Session Dec. 7 and 9 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session Dec. 7 and 9 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session Dec. 11 at 1 p.m. ET

3. Supreme Court in Review: Article III – From Judicial Selection to Current Cases (Week of December 14)
In this session, students explore Article III of the U.S. Constitution, which defines the powers of the judicial branch and the Supreme Court. This class covers the nomination and confirmation process of Supreme Court justices and how judicial power (and the Supreme Court’s role) is defined in Alexander Hamilton’s *The Federalist Papers #78* and cases such as *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).

- **Register for Middle School Session** Dec. 14 and 16 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** Dec. 14 and 16 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** Dec. 18 at 1 p.m. ET

**January 2020**

1. **Constitution 101: The Constitutional Convention (Week of January 4)**
   In this session, students will examine the issues and events that led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, including the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, Shay’s Rebellion, and the growing need for a new national government. Students will also explore the Convention, and its major turning points and compromises—including the Connecticut Compromise, the Electoral College, the Three-Fifths Compromise, and the Slave Trade Clause.

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Jan. 4 and 6 at 12 p.m. ET
   - **Register for High School and College Session** Jan. 4 and 6 at 2 p.m. ET
   - **Register for All Ages Session** Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. ET

2. **Canonical/Landmark Cases Class (Week of January 11)**
   In this session, students explore the history of the Supreme Court and landmark Supreme Court cases from *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) to the Roberts Court. Great session for students to preview and investigate the Supreme Court cases to encourage further study of government.

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Jan. 11 and 13 at 12 p.m. ET
   - **Register for High School and College Session** Jan. 11 and 13 at 2 p.m. ET
   - **Register for All Ages Session** Jan. 15 at 1 p.m. ET

   In this session, students explore the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement; the Warren Court; and landmark civil rights laws enacted by Congress—including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—and how they have been interpreted by the Supreme Court.

   *Civic Holiday Event for MLK Week*

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Jan. 18 and 20 at 12 p.m. ET
   - **Register for High School and College Session** Jan. 18 and 20 at 2 p.m. ET
   - **Register for All Ages Session** Jan. 22 at 1 p.m. ET

4. **Article V: The Amendment Process (Week of January 25)**
   In this session, student will explore amending the U.S. Constitution. What is the amendment process, when has it been done before, and why did the framers write this into the Constitution in the first place?

   - **Register for Middle School Session** Jan. 25 and 27 at 12 p.m. ET
February 2020

1. First Amendment: Speech and Press (Week of February 1)
   In this session, students will examine the historical context and the drafting of the First Amendment—focusing especially on the factors motivating America’s founding generation. Students will also examine various types of speech, including symbolic speech, hate speech, and political speech. Students will learn that in America, speech can only be limited by the government when it is intended to and likely to cause imminent violence. Exploring when the government has the authority to restrict speech, students will learn about areas of consensus among scholars, judges, and citizens; the strongest constitutional arguments on each side of contested issues; and U.S. Supreme Court cases that have addressed free speech rights.
   - Register for Middle School Session Feb. 1 and 3 at 12 p.m. ET
   - Register for High School and College Session Feb. 1 and 3 at 2 p.m. ET
   - Register for All Ages Session Feb. 5 at 1 p.m. ET

2. First Amendment: Religion Clauses (Week of February 8)
   In this session, students will examine the historical context and the drafting of the First Amendment’s free exercise and establishment clauses. Students will examine the protections enshrined in the First Amendment’s religion clauses. They will explore the Interactive Constitution to study the religion clauses’ text and history and how the Supreme Court has interpreted them over time. Finally, students will compare and contrast the questions, opinions, and dissents in a series of Supreme Court cases to define when the free exercise and establishment clauses do and do not limit government action.
   - Register for Middle School Session Feb. 8 and 10 at 12 p.m. ET
   - Register for High School and College Session Feb. 8 and 10 at 2 p.m. ET
   - Register for All Ages Session Feb. 12 at 1 p.m. ET

3. First Amendment: Assembly and Petition (Week of February 15)
   In this session, students will engage in a conversation on the First Amendment’s assembly and petition clause, and how these freedoms are defined in an age of new technology.
   - Register for Middle School Session Feb. 15 and 17 at 12 p.m. ET
   - Register for High School and College Session Feb. 15 and 17 at 2 p.m. ET
   - Register for All Ages Session Feb. 19 at 1 p.m. ET

4. Civil Liberties Overview (Week of February 22)
   In this session, student will explore civil liberties—the basic individual rights of all citizens, as expressed in the Bill of Rights and reinforced by the 14th Amendment. The Constitution, and (especially) the Bill of Rights, guarantees many of these liberties, but have they always been respected? This class will explore civil liberties through the Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments.
   - Register for Middle School Session Feb. 22 and 24 at 12 p.m. ET
   - Register for High School and College Session Feb. 22 and 24 at 2 p.m. ET
   - Register for All Ages Session Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. ET
March 2020

1. Amendment Review: 27 Amendments in 27 Minutes...27 Minutes—Give or Take a Few! (Week of March 1)
In this fast-paced and fun session, students will review all of the 27 amendments added to the Constitution, and explore the big ideas and changes that each one has made on our system of government. Be ready for a quick review of over 230 years of constitutional history!

- Register for Middle School Session March 1 and 3 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session March 1 and 3 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session March 5 at 1 p.m. ET

2. 19th Amendment: Women’s Right to Vote (Week of March 8)
In this session, students will trace the roots of the women’s rights movement—from early reform efforts in the 1800s to the ultimate decision to pursue voting rights. This class will explore the constitutional arguments over women’s suffrage, study the historical context of the fight for suffrage over 70 years, and cover the tactics suffragists used to persuade state legislatures and the national government to recognize voting rights for women.

- Register for Middle School Session March 8 and 10 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session March 8 and 10 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session March 12 at 1 p.m. ET

3. Slavery in America: The Constitution to Reconstruction (Week of March 15)
In this session, students engage in a conversation on slavery in America from the Constitution to Reconstruction. This session will explore the Constitution, the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, and the Reconstruction founders’ vision of a “Second Founding” for our nation.

- Register for Middle School Session March 15 and 17 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session March 15 and 17 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session March 19 at 1 p.m. ET

4. Battles for Equality in America: The 14th Amendment (Week of March 22)
In this session, students explore the 14th Amendment and the battles for equality in America. The class examines the clauses of the 14th Amendment and the battle over their meaning from Reconstruction to the Supreme Court’s landmark decision on marriage equality in Obergefell. This session will explore the America’s first and second civil rights movements, the Constitution and women, and modern interpretations of the 14th Amendment.

- Register for Middle School Session March 22 and 24 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session March 22 and 24 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session March 26 at 1 p.m. ET

April 2020 (APGOPO/APUSH month in review)

1. Constitution 101: The Constitutional Convention (Week of April 5)
In this session, students will examine the issues and events that led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, including the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, Shay’s Rebellion, and the growing need for a new national government. Students will also explore the Convention, and its major turning points and the compromises—including the Connecticut Compromise, the Electoral College, the Three-Fifths Compromise, and the Slave Trade Clause.

- **Register for Middle School Session** April 5 and 7 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** April 5 and 7 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** April 9 at 1 p.m. ET

2. **The Bill of Rights (Week of April 12)**
In this session, students study the Bill of Rights—its rights, its protections and limitations on government—and the process by which it was discussed, debated, and ratified. Students will also explore how the Bill of Rights affects them today.

- **Register for Middle School Session** April 12 and 14 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** April 12 and 14 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** April 16 at 1 p.m. ET

3. **AP Court Case Review (Week of April 19)**
In this fast-paced and fun session, students will review the top 15 Supreme Court cases from a typical course of study for an AP Government class. This class helps students better understand these landmark Supreme Court cases and the U.S. Constitution’s foundational principles. Cases include *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), *Schenck v. United States* (1919), *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), *Baker v. Carr* (1963), and 10 more canonical cases. Great session for middle school students to preview and investigate the Supreme Court cases to encourage further study of government.

- **Register for Middle School Session** April 19 and 21 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** April 19 and 21 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** April 23 at 1 p.m. ET

4. **Founding Documents (Week of April 26)**
In this fast-paced and fun session, students will review America’s founding documents from a typical course of study for an AP Government class. This class helps students understand these essential documents better—including their fundamental ideas and the major principles underlying the U.S. Constitution. Primary sources include the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of the Confederation, the Constitution (including the Bill of Rights), *The Federalist Papers* (#51, #70, #78), *Brutus #1*, and Martin Luther King Jr.’s *Letter from the Birmingham City Jail*.

- **Register for Middle School Session** April 26 and 28 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** April 26 and 28 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** April 30 at 1 p.m. ET

**May 2020**

1. **Fourth Amendment: Privacy in a Digital Age, Policing in America, and Search and Seizure (Week of May 3)**
In this session, students will examine the historical context and the drafting of the Fourth Amendment. Students will explore what the Fourth Amendment says and means. This lesson will allow students to examine the Fourth Amendment text, history, and interpretation, describe key terms and ideas (like searches, seizures, and privacy), and define some of the key debates about where the Fourth Amendment is headed in an age of new technology.

- **Register for Middle School Session** May 3 and 5 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** May 3 and 5 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** May 7 at 1 p.m. ET

2. **Second Amendment (Week of May 10)**

In this session, students will engage in a conversation on the Second Amendment, and its protection of the right to keep and bear arms. This exchange introduces students to different viewpoints and debates surrounding the Second Amendment by using the National Constitution Center’s *Interactive Constitution*. Students will analyze the Second Amendment’s text and history, how the Second Amendment shaped its core protections, and how the Supreme Court has interpreted it over time. Through these discussions, students will build understanding of the resources and methods used by Supreme Court justices and constitutional scholars when analyzing and forming opinions this provision. Students will identify key points of agreement and disagreement from essays by constitutional scholars Nelson Lund and Adam Winkler in the Constitution Center’s *Interactive Constitution*. Students will be able to trace the historic development of the Second Amendment with help from the Common Interpretation and Matters of Debate essays, and use evidence from the readings to explore modern interpretation of the Second Amendment.

- **Register for Middle School Session** May 10 and 12 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** May 10 and 12 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** May 14 at 1 p.m. ET

3. **Supreme Court in Review: Article III – From Judicial Selection to Current Cases (Week of May 17)**

In this session, students explore Article III of the U.S. Constitution, which defines the powers of the judicial branch and the Supreme Court. This class covers the nomination and confirmation process of Supreme Court justices and how judicial power (and the Supreme Court’s role) is defined in Alexander Hamilton’s *Federalist 78* and cases such as *Marbury v. Madison* (1803). This session will go right to present day and review the current term to date!

- **Register for Middle School Session** May 17 and 19 at 12 p.m. ET
- **Register for High School and College Session** May 17 and 19 at 2 p.m. ET
- **Register for All Ages Session** May 21 at 1 p.m. ET

4. **Constitutional Battles of the Branches (Week of May 24)**

In this session, students focus on separation of powers and how the Constitution set up a system of checks and balances between the different branches of government. Our Constitution set up this system to ensure that no one branch of government would become too powerful, but where did this idea come from and how has this been tested over time in America? From Andrew Jackson and the battle over the country’s national bank to modern conversations around COVID-19, students will engage in a lively and fast-paced conversation.
- Register for Middle School Session May 24 and 26 at 12 p.m. ET
- Register for High School and College Session May 24 and 26 at 2 p.m. ET
- Register for All Ages Session May 28 at 1 p.m. ET