



Honoring the Spirit of America

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“THE BILL OF RIGHTS”

Grade: 6-8
Social Studies

Objective

- Demonstrate an understanding of and an appreciation for our Bill of Rights.

Character Education Words

- Patriotism
- Responsibility
- Loyalty

Teacher’s Overview

- 1 The goal of this lesson is to facilitate students' understanding of and appreciation for the Bill of Rights by making the students aware of what these rights are and mean.
- 2 The primary vehicle for this process will be discussion, as most of the Rights are written above the comprehension level of pre-teen children. It is essential to this lesson that the teacher talk with the students at length about each Right and provide examples of how life might be without them.

Materials

- Activity packet
- Notebook paper (optional)
- Drawing/coloring materials

Introduction

- 1 Journal/Discussion: Do you think you have enough rights as an American citizen? What rights do you feel you deserve that you don't have?
- 2 Ask them if they know of any rights they have as students in your classroom.
- 3 From there, build on the idea of the importance of rights, and tell them that

the nation's founding fathers understood this importance.

The Bill Of Rights Lesson Plan

Activity

- Activity A: pass out the activity packet and read with them the introductory paragraph about the creation of the Bill of Rights. From here you have a choice of directions you might take. With a group of students who have a clear understanding of the Rights, you might wish to let them work independently or with a partner. With a group who might have trouble understanding the Rights, you might consider taking them through Activity A as a group discussion. Either way, have students record answers on paper.
- Activity B, if you've covered Activity A sufficiently, the students should be able to work independently, creating a comic strip of a scene where someone's rights are violated. Then they create a second scene where that victim stands up for himself or herself by quoting the specific Amendment that addresses the right that was violated.

Independent Practice/Reflection

Allow students the opportunity to share their work with the whole class. Students in other groups will guess which

Assessment

- Rubric for presentation of artwork or skits by groups

Enrichment Activities

- *Drama* - For students, who do not have confidence in their drawing skills; have them design a skit showing the same kind of scenes instead of drawing their bill of rights.
- *Literature* - Have students raid the library for books they've read where the character(s) have had to struggle to protect specific rights. Then they scan the book to refresh their memory, and they present a short oral book report to the class, highlighting the issues the character(s) had dealing with rights.

Activity A

- 1 Take a look at each of the first Ten Amendments. Think about what they mean. Try to imagine what kind of country America would be if any one of these rights were not honored and protected in our country.
- 2 Write your responses on your own sheet of paper or discuss them with your class.

Activity B

- 1 Draw two comic book scenes. Pick one of the rights mentioned above in one of the first ten amendments.
- 2 In the first scene, show someone having this right violated by the government or by another person.
- 3 In the second scene show that person standing up for him or herself by quoting the amendment that talks about that right.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

When America's founding fathers came up with the Constitution, they had a hard time convincing some of the colonies to sign it. One of the reasons some people wouldn't sign it was because it didn't have a *Bill of Rights*. A constitution is a set of rules the government has to follow. One thing that the founding fathers wanted to be sure of was that America wouldn't become another England, the country they had just fought a war against to get their freedom. They wanted the common citizens of America to be protected from a government that might abuse them. A Bill of Rights would be a special part of the Constitution that has rules that keep the government from being too hard on its own people. So, in order to get some of the colonies to sign the Constitution, the makers of the Constitution had to promise to put a Bill of Rights in there right away. And they kept their promise. They added to the Constitution ten basic rights that they felt every American should have and that the government should honor and protect. This Bill of Rights is the first ten *amendments* - or changes - to the United States

Constitution.

The Bill Of Rights Lesson Plan

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #1?

Amendment II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #2?

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #3?

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #4?

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due

process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #5?

The Bill Of Rights Lesson Plan

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #6?

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #7?

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #8?

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #9?

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

Question: What would America be like if we didn't have Amendment #10?

Teacher Name:

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Content	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
Volume	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation.	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time.	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time.	Volume often too soft to be heard by all audience members.
Collaboration with Peers	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group but sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Often is not a good team member.
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no more than one word.	Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about	Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but	Very little use of facial expressions or body language. Did not generate much interest in

	the topic in others.	enthusiasm about the topic in others.	seem somewhat faked.	topic being presented.
Vocabulary	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Extends audience vocabulary by defining words that might be new to most of the audience.	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Includes 1-2 words that might be new to most of the audience, but does not define them.	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Does not include any vocabulary that might be new to the audience.	Uses several (5 or more) words or phrases that are not understood by the audience.
Posture and Eye Contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.