



Celebrate Freedom Week

Compilation of Resources

SEPTEMBER 15-19TH, 2014

In May of 2013, the Kansas legislature enacted a law establishing the week containing September 17th as "Celebrate Freedom Week." The law requires all public schools to teach K-8th grade students the history of the founding of the United States. During Celebrate Freedom Week, lessons and activities should emphasize studying the U.S. Constitution, particularly the Preamble and the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence. During this week, special attention should be given on September 17th, which in 2004, was recognized by our U.S. Congress as Constitution Day. It was on this date in 1787 the U.S. Constitution was signed.

Sample School Announcements
Monday, September 15th – Friday, September 19th

A simple way to participate in Celebrate Freedom Week is by acknowledging it with your daily announcements. Below are daily announcements you are welcome to use, or feel free to create your own.

Monday, September 15th

Happy FREEDOM! It's Celebrate Freedom Week; a time for us to reflect and be thankful for the freedoms granted by America's founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..." These famous words sparked the founding of the United States of America. How will you celebrate the rights and freedoms established for you by this historically significant document? Let's all take a moment today to celebrate our freedoms!

Tuesday, September 16th

Happy LIBERTY! Let's continue to celebrate the freedoms and liberties granted by our Constitution! For your listening pleasure, here's a little Constitution rap...enjoy...

"Authority, Responsibility, Privacy, Justice –
These are the words that mean so much to us

The Constitution is made up of these four words.
It's the law, the rules, for us to follow.
It's the highest law in our land.
It was written in 1787, by more than just one hand.

The framers were a group of men who wrote it –
John Adams, Ben Franklin, and George Washington, too,
And that's to name just a few.

But nothing is perfect and
Changes were needed.
The Bill of Rights were these ten changes.
They are the first ten amendments of the Constitution.

The Constitution gives us rights,
Things all people have,
Just because they are alive.

The Constitution says how the government works.
It creates the president, the Congress,
And the Supreme Court, too.

Just remember the Constitution keeps us safe,
Free, and it is fair for all.
So don't forget those four very important words:

Authority, Responsibility, Privacy, Justice –
These are the words that mean so much to us.”
(Rap taken from Constitution Day rap created by the Center for Civic Education)

Wednesday, September 17th

Hey, hey what do you say, it's Constitution Day! Hip, Hip, Hooray! Did you know the United States Constitution is the oldest and shortest written Constitution of any major government in the world? The 4,400 words of the U.S. Constitution became the cornerstone of the United States government when it was signed into existence by 39 delegates on September 17th, 1787. Today, along with students all over the nation, we will be celebrating the rights, responsibilities and opportunities granted to U.S. citizens by this essential living document. So, put on your party hats and let's celebrate, the Founding Fathers way!

Thursday, September 18th

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Do these words sound familiar to you? Do you know what they mean? These words make up the one of the most important parts of the Constitution – the Preamble. The Preamble explains who created the Constitution and the basic purposes of the United States government. Did you notice that it starts with, “We the People...?” These words are extremely important. Take a moment and think to yourself, why are they so important, why would they hold so much meaning? (Pause...) These three words symbolize that the power to govern belongs to the people. The people established the Constitution, creating a government to protect their rights and wellbeing. A government established for the people, by the people, certainly gives us a reason to celebrate! YAY for the power of the people!

Friday, September 19th

This week we celebrated freedom by learning about and honoring famous documents and people, such as the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and America's Founding Fathers. The founders exercised wisdom and foresight to ensure the Constitution would remain a living document for centuries by including the provision of the Constitution that allowed for the addition of amendments. The first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, have become as essential to the American system of government as the Constitution itself. Do you know what rights are guaranteed to you in the Bill of Rights? If not, how could you find out? Take some time to ask your teachers, families, and friends about the rights granted in the Bill of Rights. As we conclude Celebrate Freedom Week, let's remember that we all play a role in guaranteeing freedom and equality to each other. We all have important rights and responsibilities to uphold; we all have the power to be good citizens of our families, schools, community, and country.

Resources, Questions, Activities Grade Band K-2

Focus Questions:

- How does being a good citizen benefit your family, school and community?
- Why do we need rules?
- How are rules determined?
- Why would rules ever change?
What would happen in your family and school community if there were no rules?
- How have important people in history influenced our nation?
- Why do we use symbols to represent our state and our country?
- What national & cultural holidays/festivals do people celebrate in the United States and why?
- Why should we do the “right” thing even when no one is looking?
- What makes someone a good citizen?

Activities:

- 1) Read out loud to students statements from Declaration of Independence...“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...” Follow up with a class discussion that focuses on helping students understand the statements by making personal connections.
 - (1) What does being equal mean to you?
 - (2) How are we all equal in the classroom?
 - (3) How are you equal at home?
- 2) Show an [image](#) of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, then show image of fireworks (pull any image from Google images). Ask students, what do these images have in common? How are they connected? Follow up discussion questions:
 - (1) Why do we celebrate the 4th of July?
 - (2) How do you celebrate the 4th of July?
 - (3) How does celebrating the 4th of July make you a good citizen?
- 2) Lead students through a discussion and activity about the need for rules. Ask, “Why do we need rules” and “Why would rules ever change?” Then develop a set of classroom rules together. As rules are being developed, discuss the ways in which we should treat each other – focus on how behaviors can promote equality and citizenship. Ask students to agree to follow the rules and sign the list. Keep it on display for the year and refer to it to teach citizenship. Idea is to create your own class Constitution.

- 3) Watch the School House Rocks video, [The Constitution](#). The show students an image of the original [Constitution](#). Ask students to create a Wordle using words that describe the Constitution and our freedoms. Discuss the symbolism of the Constitution as well as the rules it establishes.
- 4) Read through [Orb and Effy Learn about Authority](#) created by the Civic Center. Book, activity and discussion prompts can be found on the Curriculum Resources Page – Elementary Social Studies Kindergarten.
- 5) Read through book, vocabulary and statements on [“What is Authority?”](#), designed by the Civic Center. Activity can be found on the Curriculum Resource Page – Elementary Social Studies 1st and 2nd.
- 6) Develop a freedom collage or wall. Each day ask students to pin images, words, thoughts, they are thankful for and/or responsibilities they have as citizens on the wall. At the end of the week, use the wall to lead a class discussion on what it means to be a good citizen.
- 7) To Sign or Not to Sign – The Power of a Signature. [Lesson plan](#) and [video clip](#) from National Constitution Center.
- 8) [The Preamble](#) – Elementary school lesson plan that utilizes a short clip from the movie, *We the People*. Students are introduced to the Preamble of the Constitution. They will examine its significance and wording.
- 9) Interview project – ask students to interview three adults and ask, “What does the Constitution mean to you?” They are to bring their recorded answers back to class and share with a partner or small group. Have each partnership or group develop a definition for the Constitution based on the answers they received from their interviews. Share all definitions with the class and take a class vote to see which definition they would like to adopt for their class definition of the Constitution. You may find you’ll need to compromise, if so, use the compromise as a learning opportunity to discuss how the Founding Fathers had to compromise to get the Constitution ratified.
- 10) Ask students to write down what they think they know about the Preamble to the Constitution. Then, do a class read aloud to the book, *We the Kids* by David Catrow (see your library media specialist for a copy of the book). After reading the book, watch the School House Rocks video, [The Preamble](#). Ask students to return to their list of what they thought they knew about the Preamble and confirm which thoughts were correct and which thoughts were incorrect. Then ask them to write down what additional information they would like to learn about the Preamble. Discuss their curiosities and why it was important to have a Preamble and the significance of the wording, “We the People.”

Resources, Questions, Activities

Grade Band: 3-5

Focus Questions:

- What are my rights and responsibilities as a citizen of my community?
- Why do communities need rules/laws?
- What makes someone a good citizen?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens who live in other communities throughout the United States; how do they compare to the rights and responsibilities of citizens within my local community and my state communities?
- What were the consequences of colonists resisting British policies?
- How were the rights of colonists different from those of citizens living in Britain?
- Why were the rights laid out in the Declaration of Independence significant?
- How did winning the Revolutionary War create changes in America?
- What choices and consequences did the writers of the Constitution face (e.g. slavery, religion, federalism, suffrage, etc.)?
- Why was the Bill of Rights drafted and ratified? How does it impact citizens today?
- In what ways does the Constitution influence your daily life?

Activities:

- 1) [Declaration of Independence Differentiated Learning Activity](#) from the Library of Congress. Students will examine the Declaration of Independence, identify key concepts, and develop and evaluate alternative word choices in the Declaration. They will compose arguments and defend their decisions. Lesson can be done in its entirety or pick one or two activities.
- 2) Read through [Kid's Version of the Bill of Rights](#), ask students to write down the ten rights of the Bill of Rights in their own words and draw a picture that symbolizes each right. Alternative – instead of drawing a picture, find a picture/image online and describe how image illuminates the right.
 - i) Follow up activity – make a classroom Bill of Rights. Ask all students to sign it. Lead a class discussion focused on the significance of their signature.
- 3) [We the People – “Taxation without Representation” simulation](#) from Discovery Education. This is a game/simulation to help demonstrate one of the reasons why the American colonies fought the Revolutionary War.
- 4) [Hey King: Get Off Our Backs!](#) Lesson plan from iCivics. Students will learn about British policies and responses to colonial concerns and how those concerns lead to the writing of the Declaration of Independence. In addition, they will analyze ideas set forth in Declaration of Independence and the consequences of the various Acts by the British government (Stamp Act, Townshend Act, etc.).
 - i) Note – to view this lesson you need to set up a free [iCivics](#) account.

- 5) [Do I Have a Right?](#) Online game from iCivics in which students simulate running a law firm that specializes in Constitutional Law. The student gets to decide if potential clients have a right. Might be a great follow up activity to reading through the Bill of Rights.
 - i) Note – you will need to set up a free [iCivics](#) account for students to use; suggest making a general account.
- 6) [Bill of Rights game from Constitution Center](#). The National Computer has crashed and students have to restore the Bill of Rights. The game displays the Bill of Rights and students have to find the missing rights or freedoms by clicking on icons in “freedomville.” This could be a follow up activity after reading through and discussing the Bill of Rights or to assess prior knowledge.
- 7) Shhh! We’re Writing the Constitution – [Discovery Education Video](#). You will need to sign up for a free limited account to view. Once you have an account, search for the video. A teachers guide is provided with the video that includes before and after viewing activities. The video is based on the book by Jean Fritz, which can be found in your library media center. Take this activity to the next level by facilitating a discussion based on the choices the Founding Fathers made when writing the Constitution and the consequences of those choices.
- 8) [Docs Teach Lesson Plan – Finding American Symbols](#). Students will identify symbols used in the original design of the Great Seal of the United States (1782) and assess how symbols connect with important American ideals, emphasizes ideals voiced in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights.
- 9) Develop a freedom collage or wall. Each day ask students to pin images, words, thoughts, they are thankful for and/or responsibilities they have as citizens. At the end of the week, ask the students to use the thoughts and images as evidence to answer questions such as: How does the Bill of Rights impact citizens today and in what ways does the Constitution influence your daily life?
- 10) To Sign or Not to Sign – The Power of a Signature. [Lesson plan](#) and [video clip](#) from National Constitution Center.

Resources, Questions, Activities Grade Band: 6-8

Focus questions:

- How does a political system influence a culture?
- In what ways did the government system in Rome influence the government system in the United States?
- How do beliefs and ideas pose challenges for people living together?
- Under what circumstances, if ever, should individuals fight for the rights of others?
- To what extent did women's suffrage impact Kansas' politics and culture?
- What were choices made by the creators of the U.S. Constitution and what were the consequences of those choices?
- To what extent did the Declaration of Independence influence the Constitution?
- To what extent does the work of the Founding Fathers embody America's democratic ideals?
- How did the expansion of U.S. territory impact the roles, responsibilities and relationship between the American government and its citizens?
- To what extent does the Constitution influence the rights, responsibilities and lives of American citizens?

Activities/Resources:

- 1) [Declaration of Independence: Rough Draft to Proclamation](#) lesson plan from the Library of Congress Education Resources website. Students compare and analyze differences between Jefferson's original rough draft of the Declaration of Independence with the final version of the document. Students analyze and compare primary source documents and evaluate the choices Jefferson made while editing.
- 2) [You've Got Rights](#) – lesson plan from iCivics. Students compare positions of Federalists and Anti-Federalists as they pertained to the Bill of Rights. They will identify the rights granted and categorize them as individual freedoms, protection from government power, or rights of the accused. Extension activity asks them to predict what would happen if any of the amendments to the Constitution were missing. One activity within the lesson simulates the future (2056) when a new government is put in place due to an alien invasion.
- 3) [Docs Teach activity – Prequel to Independence](#). Students sequence key events leading to the Declaration of Independence by placing documents in chronological order (online activity).
- 4) [Docs Teach activity – We the People](#). Students examine and compare original and final drafts of the Constitution. Strong emphasis on analyzing the words, "We the People," in the preamble.

- 5) [Do I Have a Right?](#) Online game from iCivics in which students simulate running a law firm that specialize in Constitutional Law. The student gets to decide if potential clients have a right. Might be a great follow up activity to reading through the Bill of Rights. Note – will need to set up a free iCivics account – suggest making a general account all students can use.
- 6) [Bill of Rights game from Constitution Center.](#) The National Computer has crashed and students have to restore the Bill of Rights. The game displays the Bill of Rights and students have to find the missing rights or freedoms by clicking on icons in “freedomville.” This could be a follow up activity after reading through and discussing the Bill of Rights or used to assess prior knowledge.
- 7) Develop a freedom collage or wall. Each day ask students to pin images, words, thoughts, they are thankful for and/or responsibilities they have as citizens. They could pin observations they make of rights and responsibilities of citizens as they go about their daily life. At the end of the week, ask the students to use the thoughts and images as evidence to answer the question: to what extent does the Constitution influence the rights, responsibilities and lives of American citizens?
- 8) To Sign or Not to Sign – The Power of a Signature. [Lesson plan](#) and [video clip](#) from National Constitution Center. A version of this lesson plan can also be located on [Docs Teach](#).
- 9) [The Preamble](#) – Middle school lesson plan that utilizes a short clip from the movie, *We the People*. Students analyze the significance of the words, “We the People,” and evaluate how the meaning has changed over time. Students will examine the Preamble and other historical documents, such as Abigail Adams letter to John Adams (1776), the Three-Fifths Compromise from the U.S. Constitution (1787) and illustrations/images.
- 10) [Constitution Day Resources from the Bill of Rights Institute.](#) A collection of games, video clips, and lesson plans to learn more about the Constitution. They created a [lesson plan](#) specifically for middle school students. The activities include evaluating why we have a national government, reviewing the purpose of the seven articles of the Constitution, analyzing how the structure of the government promotes and protects individual liberties and freedoms, and finally evaluating how the U.S. Government is meeting its purposes today.

Additional Online Resources

[50 Core Documents](#)

[Almost Painless Guide to the U.S. Constitution](#) – access video (need to have a Johnson County library account to access)

[Bill of Rights Institute](#)

[Bill of Rights Game](#)

[Bill of Rights Rap](#)

[Center for Civic Education](#)

[Congress for Kids](#)

[Docs Teach](#)

[Fascinating Facts about the Declaration of Independence](#)

[Founders Online Quiz](#)

[iCivics](#)

[KSDE HGSS Resource Page](#)

[KSDE Celebrate Freedom Resources](#)

[Lesson plans based on the upcoming movie, *We the People*.](#)

[Library of Congress Educational Resources](#)

[National Constitution Center](#)

[National Archives Teachers' Resources](#)

[Naturalization Test](#)

[PBS Learning Source](#)

[Social Studies Central](#)

[Teaching American History](#)

[The New York Times Learning Network](#)