



Fundamental Principles of the Bill of Rights

Lesson plan by Kali Cohn

Grade and Subject Area

Kindergarten through 2nd grade social studies

Lesson Description

Students will learn about the United States Constitution by discussing the fundamental parts and breaking into groups to create their own constitutions.

Required Materials

Attached supplementary materials.

Time Allotted

One class period

Objectives

Students will understand the basic principles inherent in the United States Constitution.

Introduction/Anticipatory Set

Teacher will show a series of pictures related to US government and ask students to identify the images. (See attached). Teacher will explain that the theme connecting all of the pictures is the US Government, which was created by the Constitution (last picture).

Input/Modeling

1. Teacher will begin discussion about the Constitution. Suggested prompt questions:
 - a. Who has heard of the Constitution?
 - b. Does anyone know what it is? What does the Constitution do?
2. Teacher will explain that the Constitution was a document created by men in the times of George Washington to create rules for the country. There were many rules for making the country work. The document set up a government for the people, explaining how the government would work and what rights the people would be guaranteed.
 - a. Follow-up discussion: Define the terms "government" and "right" through student participation. Teacher should ask what is "government" (e.g. the system that rules a country) and what is a "right" (what someone is allowed to do).
 - b. Students should give examples of elements of government. Teacher should encourage students through questions to identify three parts of the government. Teacher should define the following terms:
 - i. Congress: People who make the laws
 - ii. President: Person who makes sure everyone follows the laws

- iii. Judges: Make sure the laws are fair and applied correctly.
- c. Students should give examples of rights in their lives. Teacher should ask what sort of rights they have in the classroom. Teacher should ask what sort of things they are allowed by the Constitution. Major topics that should be touched upon:
 - i. Freedom of Speech (Freedom to say things)
 - ii. Freedom of Press (Freedom to write things)
 - iii. Freedom of Religion (Freedom to practice or not practice any religion)

Guided Practice

1. Teacher will prepare flashcards and place them in a bag. Students will pick a card out of the bag and identify whether it is a rule or a right. (See attached flashcards).
2. Teacher will break students into groups. Each group will have a country name. The students in the group will make constitutions with two categories: rules and rights. They must include the following rules:
 - a. Will there be a President? What is the youngest the President can be? What will his powers be?
 - b. Will the people of the country vote for the President?
 - c. Will there be a Congress? What will its powers be?
 - d. Will there be Judges? What will their powers be?
 - e. What are the people allowed to do?
3. Students will share with the rest of the class their Constitutions.

Closure

Teacher will review what the Constitution is, what government means, and what rights are. Teacher will define these terms on the board for students.







**I CAN SAY:
I DON'T LIKE THAT LAW!**

**I CAN WRITE:
THOSE ARE THE BEST
COOKIES IN THE LAND!**

I CAN BE ANY RELIGION

**THERE WILL BE A
PRESIDENT**

**THE PEOPLE WILL VOTE
FOR THE PRESIDENT**

**CONGRESS WILL MAKE
THE LAWS**

**I CAN WRITE:
I LOVE ICE CREAM!**

**I CAN SAY:
HANNAH MONTANA IS
THE BEST!**

**JUDGES WILL MAKE
SURE RIGHTS ARE
FOLLOWED**

**I CAN HANG OUT WITH
MY FRIENDS.**

I CAN WRITE:

**THE BEARS ARE THE
BEST FOOTBALL TEAM
IN THE WORLD.**

**THERE WILL BE A
CONGRESS**

THERE WILL BE JUDGES

**THERE CAN BE NEW
STATES**

I CAN SAY:

**DOGS ARE MY FAVORITE
ANIMAL**

**THE PRESIDENT MUST
BE 35 YEARS OLD.**