



WHY Why America? The Constitution and Its Origins

In partnership with the National Archives Museum

Tuesday, December 3, 2019 - National Archives Museum, 10 am -2 pm

TEACHER GUIDE

This engaging, hands-on, event will be led by National Archives experts and will help your students to learn about the Constitution, through the lens of a contract that bound the new nation together. We have developed these resources and lesson plans to assist you in preparing your students to attend the Why America National Archives field trip, or to follow along at school if you are unable to attend. The materials are designed to support the Common Core State Standards for ELA and the DC Social Studies Standards, as well as build civic literacy and supporting experiential, project based learning.

OVERVIEW

WHY Why America? The Constitution and its Origins: Students will be introduced to the Constitution as the contract that bound the new country and its origins. This theme of the contract - what it is, how it functioned, was paid for, managed and maintained will continue through the whole season as the contract that bound the new country and its origins.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE TRIP

Part 1: Meet James Madison, the Father of the Constitution

Students will hear from James Madison himself on the major role he played in drafting and the ratification of the Constitution (via historical interpreter)

Part 2: Introduction to the National Archives

What is the purpose of each of the Founding Documents? Together, we'll build a house to find out:

- The Declaration of Independence (the Foundation)
- The Constitution (the Walls/Structure)
- The Bill of Rights (the Roof)
- Can you make changes to a house? (Amending the Constitution)
- Review Activity

Part 3: Exploring the National Archives Museum *including three rotations: the Rotunda, the Public Vaults, and the Records of Rights.*

PROJECT & LESSON IDEAS

For a list of DC ELA and History Standards that these lessons will incorporate, please see this list:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NFeEeE-Z7U-u5IQjMLrI-errGrOd-Os1o2WJ4w1l_b0/edit?usp=sharing



INTRODUCTION

Lesson: Overview of the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights

(6th - 8th grade)

Students explore the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights and develop a basic understanding of each of these documents and the role each played in forming our new nation.

https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/Declaration_etc_Lesson_Plan.pdf

Lesson: Who was James Madison?

(6th - 8th grade)

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/lesson-1-james-madison-madison-was-there>

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Lesson: The Declaration of Independence

(6th - 8th grade)

Close reading lesson plan of the Declaration of Independence to explore the colonists reasons for separating from Great Britain.

https://www.consource.org/static/lesson-plans/6_Declaration_of_Independence.pdf

Lesson: Introduction to the Declaration of Independence:

(4th-5th Grade)

Students explore artwork through use of Artful Thinking Strategies and write about what it was like to be a part of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cFftlfuJ99WgO2Hah791p1lOo3TCD-eWm4yod79GzCY/edit#heading=h.dsbe7dpzfxkg>

Lesson: Introduction to the Declaration of Independence and Archives Mural:

(6th-8th Grade)

Students are introduced to artwork that they will see at the National Archives and take on perspectives of the people depicted in the artwork as they write about how colonists felt about declaring independence from Great Britain.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lpZ4w41n_FnLI1PJ5JosgwIz4igikJgowZfXRnUUwJU/edit

THE CONSTITUTION

Activity: What is a contract? Create and sign a classroom contract

Students explore the articles of the United States Constitution and create a classroom contract that they agree upon and sign together.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/17NaCt1nM10vV1TGpBkVKRt7c6B_KQkO4bvX6tD46eLI/edit#



Reading: Issues with the Articles of Confederation

(5th - 8th grade)

Students will read an article to understand why there was a need for a Constitution given the first government was not working and why.

<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/issues-with-the-articles-of-confederation>

Lesson: Introduction to the United States Constitution

(6th-8th Grade)

Students are introduced to artwork that they will see at the National Archives and take on perspectives of the people depicted in the artwork as they write about varying perspectives on the United States Constitution at the time of its ratification.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fBxafIpSkw6_J_ZBvOsg9IXWxcFpn33r0atWKX-Usl/edit?pli=1#heading=h.dsbe7dpzfxkg

Activity: We the People, Focusing on details: Compare and Contrast

In this activity, students will examine the original and final drafts of the Constitution and evaluate the significance of the selection of the words "We the People."

<https://www.docsteach.org/activities/teacher/we-the-people>

Lesson: Constitutional Convention

(6th-8th Grade)

Students explore the debates and compromises of the Constitutional Convention in this three part lesson.

https://www.consource.org/static/lesson-plans/6-8_Constitutional_Convention_Give_and_Take.pdf

BILL OF RIGHTS

Lesson: The Bill of Rights & Me

(6th-8th Grade)

Students understand how and why the first ten amendments of the Constitution were decided.

https://www.consource.org/static/lesson-plans/8_Bill_of_Rights.pdf

Lesson: The Bill of Rights

(4th-5th Grade)

Students will role play specific amendments in action and create a Bill of Rights for their classroom community.

https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/Bill_of_Rights_%283-5%29.pdf

Lesson: The Bill of Rights

(6th-8th Grade)

Students will translate the Bill of Rights into student-friendly language and make connections between the amendments and real life scenarios.

https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/Bill_of_Rights_%286-8%29.pdf



ONLINE RESOURCES

Constitution:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution>

Bill of Rights:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>

Archives Murals:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/faulkner-murals>

ConSource:

<https://www.consource.org/lessons/>

James Madison:

<https://www.montpelier.org/learn/tag/james-madison>

VIDEOS

For Schools with Brainpop Subscriptions:

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/jamesmadison/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/constitutionalconvention/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/articlesofconfederation/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/declarationofindependence/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/usconstitution/>