

Unit IV: Rights and Responsibilities

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTORY LESSON

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify several shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.
- Identify significant elements of the new Constitution of 1787.
- Describe reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.
- Explain key phrases in the Preamble to the Constitution.

PREPARATION

Handout A: A New Government—1 per student

Handout B: Some Problems—Cut the handout on the cut lines and give the sections to eight students to read aloud when called on.

Handout C: The Preamble—1 per student

This lesson introduces the rights and responsibilities unit of Volume II of *Adventures in Law and History*. In this unit students meet James Madison as he is working on the Bill of Rights and assist him in deciding the most important rights to include. Next, students explore First Amendment rights as they visit an imaginary town without any of these rights. The final lesson sequence has students working with “Superheroes of Freedom” and creating their own commercials to help others understand that with rights come responsibilities.

This introductory lesson provides students with a context for the Bill of Rights. First, students take a look at the Preamble to the Constitution and share their ideas about its meaning. Next, they participate in a class reading and discussion about the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation and the key ideas contained in the Constitution. Students then work in pairs to interpret the Preamble.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National U.S. History Standard 8: Understands the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how these elements were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. (1) Understands the factors involved in calling the Constitutional Convention . . . (2) Understands the issues and ideas supported and opposed by delegates at the Constitutional Convention . . . (3) Understands the significance of the Bill of Rights and its specific guarantees (e.g., the relevance of the Bill of Rights in today’s society).

California History-Social Science Standard 5.7: Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution’s significance as the foundation of the American republic. (1) List the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation as set forth by their critics. (2) Explain the significance of the new Constitution of 1787, including the struggles over its ratification and the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.

Procedure

A. History Review—The Rest of the Story

1. Read aloud and show students the preamble of the Constitution:

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.

Tell students that these words were written over 200 years ago. Ask:

- Where do you suppose this paragraph came from? (Constitution)
- What are your ideas about what these words mean or why they were written? (Accept any responses.)

Explain that later today they are going to come back to this paragraph to see whether they have other ideas about why it was written and what it means.

2. Remind students that in the last unit, they learned about the colonists declaring independence from England. Ask:

- What did it mean when the colonists declared independence? (They broke away from England and started their own country.)
- Why did they want to be independent from England? (They felt the British government was treating them unfairly. Taxation without representation, quartering troops, etc.)

3. Explain that the colonists had to fight for their independence and that once Americans won their independence from England, there was still a lot of work to do to create their own country and form a new government.

B. Reading and Discussion—A New Government

1. Distribute **Handout A: A New Government** to each student and the sections from **Handout B: Some Problems** to students who will read parts 1–4 aloud when cued.

Read the section **The Articles of Confederation** from Handout A with the class.

2. Ask “Reader 1” to read his or her narrative aloud. Engage students in a brief discussion to ensure their understanding of the problems using questions like:

- What were the problems?
- How do you think the problems affected the people?
- What might happen to the new country if these problems continue?

3. Ask Readers 2–4 to read their narratives, ensuring students understand the problems by engaging them in discussions after each.

4. Read the section **The Constitution** from Handout A with the class, again cuing Readers 5–8 to read their narratives. After each narrative, ensure students’ understanding of its content by asking questions such as:

- How did the new Constitution help solve the problems of the Articles of Confederation?
- How did the new Constitution form a strong but fair government?

5. Read **Approval of the Constitution** on Handout A with students and then ask:
 - Why were some people still unhappy with the Constitution?
 - What did some of the states want the leaders to promise before they would approve it?
 - Why did Congress promise to add a Bill of Rights?
 - Who would be responsible for making sure it was added?

C. Activity—The Preamble

1. Tell students that they are going to use their skills as historians to take another look at the beginning of the Constitution.
2. Distribute **Handout C: The Preamble** to each student. (You may want to allow students to work in pairs.) Explain that one of the most important jobs of historians is to try to understand important historical documents. Since the Constitution is the most important American document, students are going to use their knowledge about American history to explain the key ideas in the first part, or Preamble, of the Constitution.
Review the instructions and the sample response with students to ensure their understanding of the assignment. Tell them that they will need to think about all the information they learned today as they interpret each phrase.
3. When students complete the assignment, use one or more of the following assessment strategies:

Strategy 1: Read a phrase to the class, ask students to share and defend their interpretations. Engage in a class discussion using questions such as:

- Who agrees with that response? Why or why not?
- Does anyone have something to add to that response?
- Did anyone have a different idea about that?

Strategy 2: Collect completed assignments to assess students' ability to use examples from the reading to demonstrate their understanding of the problems with the Articles of Confederation and the significance of the Constitution.

Strategy 3: Through discussion, help students compare the answers they gave in the focus activity to their responses on Handout C. Ask:

- What new knowledge do you have about how our government was formed?
- What new ideas do you have about the Constitution and why it was so important?
- Do you think the Constitution is still important today? Why or why not?

D. Closure

Tell students that on June 21, 1788, the Constitution was ratified, or approved, by the ninth state, New Hampshire. Tell students that in the next lesson they are going to travel to Philadelphia where James Madison is preparing to work on the promised Bill of Rights.

A New Government

The Articles of Confederation

After declaring independence, American leaders had to form a new government. Since they no longer viewed Britain as their ruler, they had to create a new government quickly. The leaders wanted to make sure that the new government would not step on people's rights. They did not want the new government to have the same power that the British government had over the colonies. They wrote a document called the Articles of Confederation. It set up a new American government. The Articles of Confederation gave the states a lot of power and kept the federal government weak.



After the war was over, the new country began to see some problems with the way their new government was working.

Listen to some of the problems the new Americans were having . . .

(People in your class will tell you about the problems.)

The Constitution

There were many things the new government needed to deal with, and it was hard to get things done. Some of the leaders, like James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington were worried that the Articles of Confederation did not set up a government that would last very long.

In 1787 a special meeting was called in Philadelphia to improve the Articles of Confederation. The meeting is called the "Constitutional Convention." The meeting lasted from May to September during a very hot summer.

The U.S. Constitution was created at this meeting. This was not easy. Arguments broke out over how much power the new government should have. Some leaders wanted the states to keep the power. Other leaders wanted a much stronger federal government. The men at the meeting had to give things a lot of thought.

They worked hard to come up with a good plan for a new and improved government. Listen to some of the things they put in the Constitution...

(People in your class will tell you about these things.)

After five long, hot months, the Constitution was ready for the people of the United States to approve. But many people were afraid that this new stronger government might take away individual freedoms, like what happened during British rule. They wanted a list of rights added to the Constitution. The government could never take away these rights. Some of the states refused to approve the Constitution unless a Bill of Rights was added, so Congress promised to do this. James Madison would be responsible for making sure a Bill of Rights was added.

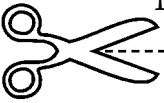


Some Problems

Reader 1

When the British ruled, they controlled trade. They decided whom we could and could not trade with. During the war, many of the port cities and towns that were important for trade were ruined. Our economy is still a mess. Our new American government lets each state set its own laws about trade. Each state can print its own money, too. It is hard to trade because of the different laws and figuring out how much each state's money is worth.

The Articles of Confederation might not work. It is hard to build a strong economy with so many different rules and kinds of money. We have to be able to trade.



Reader 2

We protested against the British government taxing us without representation. We made sure the Articles of Confederation would allow only our states to tax us. Since the people vote for the leaders of their state governments, taxation without representation cannot happen again.

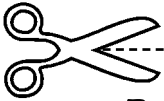
Now we need to raise money to pay for the war we won. Our federal government has to ask the states for money. The states cannot be forced to give money to the federal government.

How can the federal government work if it can't raise any money? We can't pay our country's bills. The Articles of Confederation has made the federal government too weak to work.

Reader 3

Americans fought for independence from Britain. Our soldiers who fought in the war have not been paid yet. Many families are having trouble paying their bills and keeping food on the table. People are losing their farms and property because they are broke. A man named Daniel Shays who fought in the war took action. He and a group of men in Massachusetts tried to close the courtrooms down so that the state couldn't take any more property away from the people. Shays and his men had guns and were ready to fight. The state's governor sent the state militia (army) to go take care of the problem. Four of the rebels were killed. Congress could not do anything to help solve the problems. If people in other states start rebelling, we could be in big trouble.

The federal government is weak. The states have courts. But the federal government has no courts. If states disagree, they can't go to a federal court to settle a dispute. They might start fighting each other.



Reader 4

After living under British rule, most people do not want to be ruled by a king. The Articles of Confederation set up a Congress. Each state has one vote in Congress. Nine of the 13 states must vote "yes" for a law to pass. It's difficult for Congress to pass laws.

It is sort of like 13 different countries trying to agree. Each state had its own leadership, economy, army, and laws. If we cannot pull together to make good decisions quickly, what could happen if we are attacked by the British or another country? What happens if one state's army starts fighting with another state's?

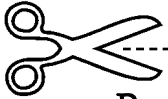
Our economy is weak. It is hard for the government to make decisions and get things done. We have no strong military. How long can our country last like this?

Reader 5

We want to create a government that will last forever. This new Constitution will form a strong but fair government. The federal government will have some of the power, and the rest of the power will stay with the state governments.

The federal government will now be able to collect taxes to pay for national things, and the states can still collect their own taxes.

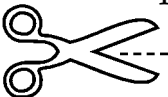
Only the federal government will control trade and print money. The states will not be allowed to do these things. We will have one kind of money for the whole country, and it will be worth the same in every state



Reader 6

The Constitution will divide the government into three branches. The legislative branch—Congress—will make the laws. But the laws must not go against the Constitution.

We will now have federal courts as well as state courts. The Supreme Court will be the highest court in the land. Its main job will be to protect the Constitution. The judges on the Supreme Court will be appointed for life terms.



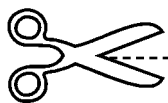
Reader 7

The third branch of this new government is the executive branch. This branch will be in charge of enforcing the laws. The president of the United States will head the executive branch. The executive branch will have departments, like the Department of the Treasury, which handles taxes and money, and the Department of State, which handles our relations with other countries. The president will appoint each department head and they will sit in the president's cabinet. The new government will now have a national army, and the president will be in charge of it. The president serves for four years and may be elected to serve more terms.

Reader 8

Having some powers go to the federal government and some powers go to the states helps divide the power. The federal government is strong, but not too strong. Having three branches of government is a good way to share the powers. One branch will "check" the other. If one branch does something out of line, the other branches can fix it.

The Constitution can be amended, or changed. That will make sure the government can meet the country's needs in the future.



The Preamble

Remember when you studied the Declaration of Independence. The words that Thomas Jefferson wrote told about things that happened to the colonists and how they felt about England and the king. The words of the Constitution also told what the new Americans experienced and believed in.

Now that you are a historian, use your knowledge about American history to help others understand what the Constitution really says.

Below is the first paragraph of the Constitution. This famous paragraph is called the Preamble. After each phrase, write a sentence or two to explain why the founders might have written those words and what they might have meant. Think carefully about the words in bold. The first phrase has been done for you as an example.

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

We the **People** of the United States,

Instead of saying "the states" it says "the people." This is important because they were trying to form a government that represented the *people* in the states, not just the state governments.

in Order to form a more **perfect Union**,

establish Justice,

insure domestic Tranquility, (make sure our country is peaceful)

Name _____

Date _____

provide for the **common defense**, (defend all the states)

promote the **general Welfare**, (promote the general well-being)

and secure the Blessings of Liberty **to ourselves and our Posterity**,
(make sure the blessing of liberty last through our lifetimes, and beyond)

do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. ("ordain and establish" means put into effect)

Unit IV: Rights and Responsibilities

LESSON 2: MR. MADISON NEEDS SOME HELP

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explain why the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.
- Identify rights they have learned about in previous units.
- Recall rights and freedoms they have learned about through their study of U.S. history.
- Use critical-thinking skills to decide what rights should be included in the Bill of Rights.
- Justify their decisions.

PREPARATION

Preparation

Day One

- **Handout A: Mr. Madison Needs Some Help**—1 per student

Day Two

- **Handout B: Instructions**—1 per group of 2–3 students
- **Handout C: Dear Mr. Madison (Letter Writing)**—1 per group of 2–3 students
- **Handout D: The Bill of Rights**—1 per student

Overview

In this two-day lesson, students prepare to help James Madison decide what rights and freedoms should be included in the Bill of Rights.

On Day One, through reading and discussion, students meet Madison as he is struggling to write the Bill of Rights.

On Day Two, students work in small groups to create their own lists of rights to be included in the Bill of Rights. Students then compare their lists with the Bill of Rights.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National U.S. History Standard 8: Understands the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how these elements were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. (3) Understands the significance of the Bill of Rights and its specific guarantees (e.g., the relevance of the Bill of Rights in today's society).

California History-Social Science Content Standard 5.7: Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution's significance as the foundation of the American republic. (2) Explain the significance of the new Constitution of 1787, including the struggles over its ratification and the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.

California History-Social Science Framework: Goal of Democratic Understanding and Civic Values:

Constitutional Heritage. To understand the nation's constitutional heritage, students must: Understand the basic principles of democracy. . . . They need to develop an appreciation for the guarantees provided in the Bill of Rights

Day One

Procedure

A. History Review—The Rest of the Story . . .

1. Remind the class that in the last unit, they learned about the colonists declaring their independence from England. Ask:
 - What did it mean when the colonists declared independence? (They broke away from England and started their own country.)
 - Why did they want to be independent from England? (They felt the British government was treating them unfairly. Examples might include taxation without representation, quartering troops.)
2. Explain that the colonists had to fight for their independence. Review highlights of the American Revolution students have studied.
3. Explain that once the Americans won their independence from England, there was still a lot of work to be done in creating their own country. Many of the leaders during the struggle for independence continued to lead the nation in planning how the new American government would work.
4. Tell the class that after experimenting with a government that loosely bound the states together, they found that this new government (under the Articles of Confederation) did not work. The leaders then created a stronger national government by writing and adopting the U.S. Constitution. Explain that today they are going to meet a man known as “The Father of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.” Tell the class that this man later went on to become the fourth president of the United States (1809–1815).

B. Reading and Discussion—Mr. Madison Needs Some Help

1. Distribute to each student **Handout A: Mr. Madison Needs Some Help**. After reading the story with the class, lead a discussion using the following questions:
 - What job did James Madison have to do? (Write the Bill of Rights.)
 - Why did people want a Bill of Rights added to the Constitution? (To protect individual rights; to make sure the government could not take away freedoms the colonists had fought for.)
 - Why was Madison thinking about the things the colonists had been through under British rule? (To help him decide what rights were important to the people.)
 - What is one right or freedom you think Madison should include?
2. Tell students to remember their good ideas, because in the next lesson, they are going to help Madison decide what rights and freedoms to include in the Bill of Rights.

Day Two

Procedure

A. Focus Activity

1. Remind students that in the last lesson, James Madison was struggling to write the Bill of Rights. Ask:
 - What is Mr. Madison trying to decide? (What rights and freedoms need to be in the Bill of Rights.)
 - Why are these decisions so important? (The Bill of Rights will become a part of the Constitution. Freedoms and rights of citizens will be protected by this document.)
2. Tell students that today they are going to see what they can do to help Mr. Madison decide what rights and freedoms he should include in the Bill of Rights.

B. Small-Group Activity—Dear Mr. Madison

1. Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students and distribute **Handout B: Instructions** and **Handout C: Dear Mr. Madison** to each group.
2. Explain that to help James Madison, they are going to have to think back to what they have learned about U.S. history this year. Remind them of what they have learned about equal protection and due process rights in previous units.
3. Tell groups their tasks are to:
 - Make a list of at least 10 rights and freedoms.
 - Decide which five of these they should give to Mr. Madison to include in the Bill of Rights.
 - Complete and sign the letter to James Madison explaining why the group chose these five rights or freedoms.

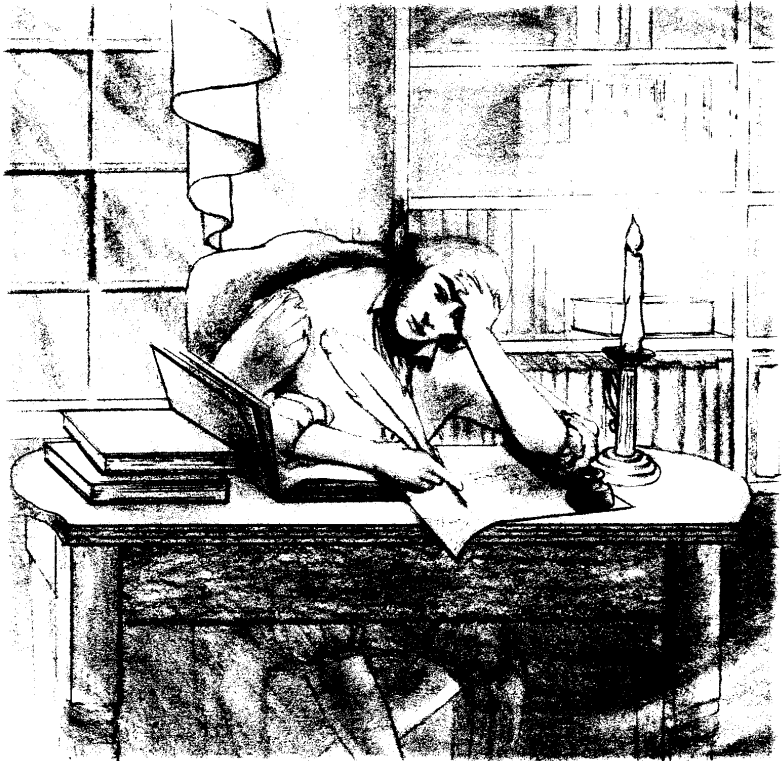
C. Discussion and Debriefing

1. When the groups have completed their letters, have the reporters from each group share one of the rights they chose. If possible, reporters should not duplicate responses. Make a list on the board of the rights and freedoms chosen. After each group has reported, give the groups an opportunity to add from their lists other rights and freedoms not already on the board.
2. Distribute **Handout C: The Bill of Rights** to each student and explain that the first 10 amendments make up the Bill of Rights. As a class, compare the rights and freedoms listed on the board to those in the Bill of Rights. Ask:
 - What freedoms and rights did we think of that are included in the Bill of Rights?
 - Were there any rights or freedoms we thought of that are not included?

Explain that when Madison and the other founders created the Constitution, they were smart to include a plan for how to change, or amend, it. Since the first 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights, there have been 17 more amendments added. Point out the 13th and 19th amendments as examples of rights and freedoms we have gained over time.

Mr. Madison Needs Some Help

Mr. James Madison was sitting at his desk thinking. He had been there for hours, and night was beginning to fall. He lit the brass candlestick next to his inkwell, and a soft yellow glow filled the room. Madison was tired. But he knew he could not give up until he finished the job. He had to think hard, for America was depending on him.



His job was to make a list of the freedoms and rights Americans valued the most. This list was going to become a part of the U.S. Constitution and would be called the Bill of Rights.

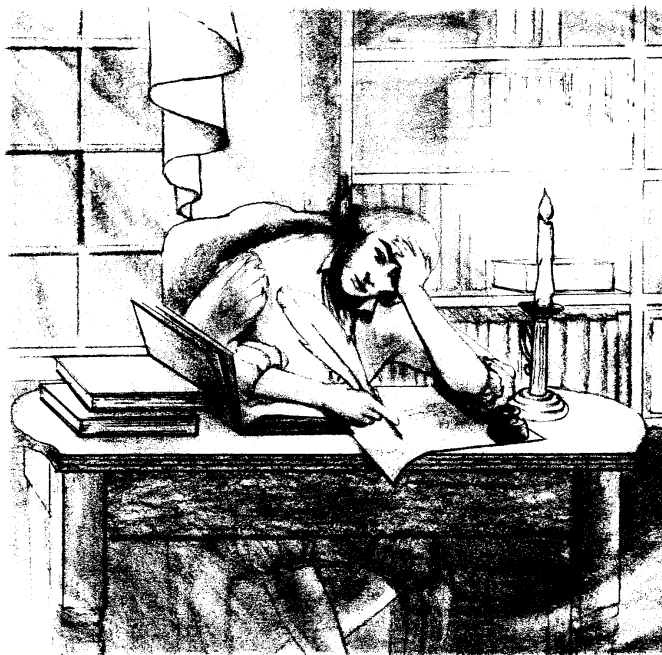
Madison remembered when he had worked on the Constitution. It had been two years since George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and 52 other men from the states gathered in Philadelphia. They had come to plan how the new nation's government should work. They had argued and struggled. Everyone wanted to make sure that the new government would be strong, but no one wanted to be ruled by an unfair authority again. Finally, almost everyone agreed on the plan. The plan was called the Constitution.

But many people were worried that something was missing from the Constitution. They wanted to make sure that the freedoms and rights Americans had fought for would never be taken away by any government, including our own. Several states decided they would only approve the Constitution if these rights and freedoms were added in a Bill of Rights.

The night grew darker as Madison thought about all the Americans had been through under British rule. They had been taxed unfairly,

told what they could and could not say about the king, and arrested for even meeting with other patriots. They had been forced to give food and shelter to British soldiers.

He remembered how British soldiers and officers of the king had searched people's homes and taken their belongings without good reasons. Some had been arrested and jailed without trials. Others had been put on trial, but not allowed to have a jury decide their case. He knew that Americans had not forgotten what they had fought for, and many wanted to make sure that the new government would never be able to take away their freedoms again.



But what freedoms were the most important? The states had given him hundreds of ideas about what to include in the Bill of Rights. His good friend, Thomas Jefferson, had sent him many letters and books. But now it was all on his shoulders. He had to decide what was important.

Mr. Madison could use your help.

Instructions

Your job is to help James Madison decide what rights and freedoms should be included in the Bill of Rights. To help you get started, you might want to read the story "Mr. Madison Needs Some Help" again.



Step 1: Assign jobs. Decide who will do the following jobs in your group:

Recorder. This person will be in charge of writing the group's ideas and answers.

Reporter. This person will be in charge of sharing your ideas and reasons with the rest of the class.

Step 2: Brainstorm rights and freedoms. Work together to think of at least 10 rights or freedoms you think Americans should have. Make your list here:

Step 3: Narrow your list down to five. You will give your five best ideas, or most important rights, to Mr. Madison. Work together to decide which five you think **really** need to be included in the Bill of Rights. For each right or freedom you choose, write a short reason to James Madison to convince him it is important.

Step 4: Fill in the Dear Mr. Madison letter. Write your five rights and the reasons you chose them on this letter. When you finish, everyone in the group should sign the letter.

Name _____

Date _____

Dear Mr. Madison

Dear Mr. Madison:

We have made a list of the rights and freedoms we believe are most important to Americans. We hope this will help you decide what to include in the Bill of Rights.

I. _____

Reason:

II. _____

Reason:

III. _____

Reason:

IV. _____

Reason:

V. _____

Reason:

We the undersigned agree that these rights and freedoms should be protected in the Bill of Rights. (Sign your names!)

The Bill of Rights

The **First Amendment** protects everyone's right to:

- freedom of speech.
- freedom of the press.
- assemble peaceably.
- petition and complain to the government.
- practice any religion.

It also keeps the government from setting up a religion or favoring one religion over another one.

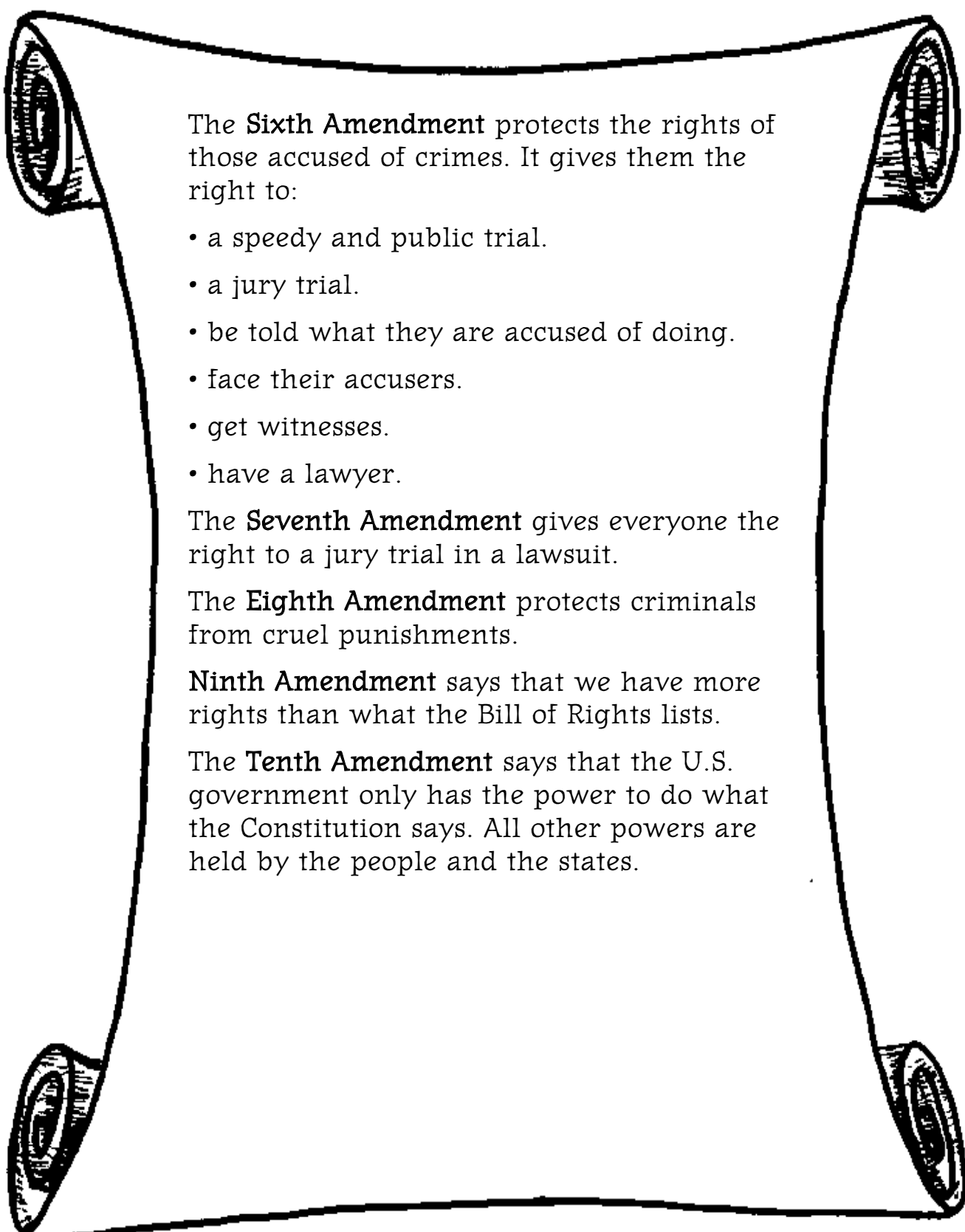
The **Second Amendment** says a citizen army is important and gives people the right to have guns.

The **Third Amendment** keeps the government from making people feed and house soldiers in their homes.

The **Fourth Amendment** stops police from searching people and their houses without a good reason.

The **Fifth Amendment** protects everyone's right to:

- due process of law.
- not be tried twice for the same crime.
- not be forced to be a witness against yourself in a criminal trial.
- be paid if the government takes your property for public use.



The **Sixth Amendment** protects the rights of those accused of crimes. It gives them the right to:

- a speedy and public trial.
- a jury trial.
- be told what they are accused of doing.
- face their accusers.
- get witnesses.
- have a lawyer.

The **Seventh Amendment** gives everyone the right to a jury trial in a lawsuit.

The **Eighth Amendment** protects criminals from cruel punishments.

Ninth Amendment says that we have more rights than what the Bill of Rights lists.

The **Tenth Amendment** says that the U.S. government only has the power to do what the Constitution says. All other powers are held by the people and the states.

Unit IV: Rights and Responsibilities

LESSON 3: THE LAND OF CANTDO . . . WHERE THE FIRST AMENDMENT IS MISSING

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify and describe six freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.
- Give examples of how our society would be different without First Amendment freedoms.
- Give examples of ways we use First Amendment freedoms in everyday life.

PREPARATION

- **Handout A: The Land of Cantdo**—1 per student
- **Handout B: First Amendment Freedoms**—1 per student

Overview

In this lesson, the concept that rights carry responsibilities is introduced and students become more familiar with the First Amendment. First, students read a story illustrating life in a place where First Amendment freedoms do not exist. Next, through a guided discussion, students identify and describe First Amendment freedoms. As either an in-class or take-home activity, students then create drawings or descriptions illustrating how our First Amendment freedoms are used in daily life.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standard 4: Understands the concept of a constitution, the various purposes that constitutions serve, and the conditions that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government.
(6) Knows how constitutions have been used to protect individual rights and promote the common good (e.g., First Amendment . . .).

California History-Social Science Framework: Goal of Democratic Understanding and Civic Values:

Constitutional Heritage. To understand the nation's constitutional heritage, students must: Understand the basic principles of democracy. . . . They need to develop an appreciation for the guarantees provided in the Bill of Rights

Procedure

A. Focus Activity—The First Amendment

1. Remind students that in the last lesson, they looked at the Bill of Rights. Refer them to the First Amendment. Tell students that today they are going to see what life might be like without the First Amendment. Ask the students how they would like it if:
 - There was a rule at lunch time that you could not talk to anyone about anything that happens in school.
 - You were not allowed to read any story that was about a person from another country.
 - Only teachers were ever allowed to talk to the principal.
2. Allow the class to discuss how they might react to these situations, then explain that the First Amendment protects these freedoms and others also.

B. Reading and Discussion—The Land of Cantdo

1. Distribute **Handout A: The Land of Cantdo** to the class. Explain that this story is about a place where there is no Bill of Rights, no First Amendment. Ask students to read the story silently, in pairs, or as a class.
2. After students have completed the reading, lead a discussion asking the following questions:
 - How would you like to live in Cantdo?
 - What were some of the problems the family had?
 - What freedoms did the family miss having? (As a hint, tell them to look at the bottom of the last page.)
3. Write “First Amendment Freedoms” on the board and help students list the six First Amendment freedoms:
 - Speech—say what we want
 - Assembly—gather in groups
 - Press—write, televise, report, perform what we want
 - Petition—complain to and about the government
 - Religion—practice any religion we want
 - Religion—government cannot start one
4. Ask students:
 - How do you use these freedoms in your life?

C. First Amendment Freedoms—Writing Assignment

1. Distribute **Handout B: First Amendment Freedoms** to each student. Assign this activity to be completed in class or assign it as homework with students being encouraged to get their parents’ input.
2. Explain that their assignment is to:
 - Make a drawing or write a description of how we use each First Amendment freedom in everyday life.
 - Use the story of Cantdo to get ideas.

The Land of Cantdo

I will never forget when my family moved to Cantdo. We thought it was going to be exciting to live in a new place. But we didn't stay long in Cantdo, and I think you'll see why.

The first clue we didn't belong here came when my brother, sister, and I went down to the recreation center to play baseball. We walked up to a group of kids sitting on a bench, and one of them asked me my name. I started to say, "My name is Tony and I just moved here from . . ."

"Wait!" one girl yelled. "You can't say that! You'll get in trouble!"

"Say what?" I asked in shock.

"The place where you came from! No one in Cantdo is allowed to say the name of another place," she explained.

"Oh. I didn't know," I apologized. I must admit, I thought this was an odd rule. Where I came from, we could say just about anything as long as it didn't put anyone in danger. At least the rules of baseball were the same as back home. We had a pretty good time during the game.

But after the game was over, we got in more trouble. My mom had said she would pick us up by the backstop after the game. We were standing by the backstop waiting for my mother when along came a police officer. He said we were breaking the law.

"What did we do?" I asked politely.

"Gathered," the officer replied. "You can't do that here. We do not stand in groups of more than two people at a time unless we are in a line. The government of Cantdo does not allow it."

"Oh. We didn't know," I said. "Where we came from we are allowed to hang out together as long as we don't disturb or harm anyone else. We have never heard of a rule like that."



We were lucky that day. The officer gave us a warning just as our mom drove up. We walked to the car staying far apart from each other so no one would suspect us of gathering.

Next, my mother found out we could not go to the church we have always belonged to. They only have one religion in Cantdo. It's run by the government. It's not our religion, but no one is allowed to practice any other religion. We weren't used to the government running a religion. We were used to being able to practice our own religion. As long as your religion didn't cause you to break any laws or harm others, you could belong to any religion.



My father couldn't find a newspaper that reported any news about anywhere except Cantdo. He wanted to know what was happening back home. My little sister wanted to know who was winning the World Series. When my father asked about getting a newspaper sent from home, he found out that in Cantdo you can't read newspapers from other places. Only news about Cantdo can be printed, and it has to be good news. This was beginning to get weird.

We tried to take our minds off of all of Cantdo's strange ways by watching a little television. Well, in Cantdo, there is only one T.V. show, and it plays over and over again. The show is about all of the things you can't do in Cantdo. We just weren't used to this at all. We missed having freedom of the press. As long as it didn't cause harm or injury, the television, radio, and newspapers could say what they wanted. Even if the news wasn't good, at least we knew the real story. Not in Cantdo.

The last straw came when we decided to try to get to know the neighbors. We planned a barbecue at the park down the street. We made invitations and passed them out to all the neighbors and put up some signs in our front yard. The police told us we had to take the signs down and we could not pass out any more invitations. "You can't do

this. It is against the law to pass out or display anything you wrote yourself," the officer said.

So, only a few people came to the barbecue. We all tried to remember to either sit down or stand in a line so we would not get in trouble for gathering. But we ended up in trouble anyway. We talked to the neighbors about how strange the laws of Cantdo were. Some people agreed with us. My father had an idea to make a list and let the people who agreed sign their names. We thought maybe some of these laws might change if the government knew how people felt. Bad idea.

That day my parents got three tickets. One was for "Agreeing." That was for making the list of people who agreed that the government should change. We call it a petition back home. Another was for "Government Gossip." We also got a ticket for "Gathering" because this time, even though everyone was sitting down, people were complaining about the government. We were confused. Everyone was peaceful. There was no danger.

The next day my family moved back home. We were all very happy to leave Cantdo. We just weren't used to not having the freedom to . . .

practice our own religion . . .

say what we felt, even if it was about the government . . .

write what we wanted, and let others read it . . .

know the real news, even if it's not good news . . .

be able to choose what we watch on T.V. . . .

and gather with others to stand up for what we believe in.



Date _____

Show one way people use First Amendment Freedoms in each box.

Speech	No Religion Run by Government
Practice a Religion	Press
Petition/Complain to the Government	Assembly