



Civic Art Project Series

NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION

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Section 8 1: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States; Section 9 1: The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person. Section 10 1: No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility. Article II - Section 1 1: The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows: Section 2 1: The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to Grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment. Section 3 He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information on the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States. Section 4 The President, Vice President and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors. Article III - Section 1 The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. 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EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE
FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE

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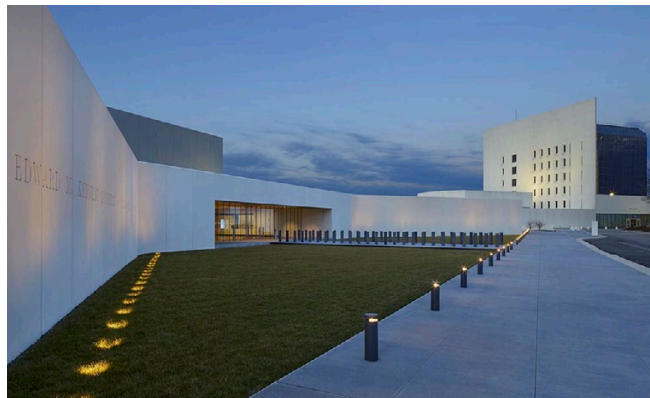
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ON THE COVER:
Original "Notes on the
Constitution" artwork
from a student at Boston
International Newcomers
Academy

ABOUT THE EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate aims to teach students about the role of the Senate in our representative democracy, introducing important elements of the legislative process to young audiences and encouraging participation in civic life. Our programs serve the general public, students of all ages, teachers, scholars, senators, senate staff, international visitors, and others in public service.

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate is dedicated to educating the public about the important role of the Senate in our government, encouraging participatory democracy, invigorating civil discourse, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.



CIVIC ART PROJECT SERIES

The Kennedy Institute is proud to partner with Boston International High School Newcomers Academy and art teacher James Hobin. Mr. Hobin is an innovative artist-educator, dedicated to helping students find expression through the arts. Mr. Hobin works collaboratively with young people who share their unique worldview in projects that have proven their singular civic and artistic contributions make up part of a greater whole. This Civic Art Project series adapts Mr. Hobin's unique projects for use in the social studies classroom, providing the resources, curriculum connections, and creative techniques to guide teachers and students through civic-themed art projects.

NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION: A CIVIC ART PROJECT

About the Lesson

Art teacher James Hobin created this lesson plan to engage his students at Boston International Newcomer's Academy (BINcA) in an artistic form of civic expression. BINcA, a public high school in Boston, Massachusetts, embraces immigrant English language learners and their families and fosters sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic diversity of all students.

A Note from the Educator

Mr. Hobin on the inspiration behind his collaborative civic projects:

Creative ideas are inspired by constant curiosity to reach out from what is known to see what is new. The most rewarding thing to be done with art skills is to reach out and connect with young people, who have eagerness to express their joy for the beauty of life, which is authentic and precious. Collaborative art projects are about expanding beyond the limits of our boundaries. By joining with others, we become stronger and capable of raising the level of achievement in art. Collaborative art projects evolve into civic engagement. Bringing student art works before the public is win-win: their contributions make the city more beautiful, and a powerful community response helps them gain confidence to take a place out front and keep things moving in a positive direction.

Lesson Description

Students create art works based on an examination of the language of the Constitution and the personal connections they make. These art works will incorporate words, illustrations, and mixed media images.

This lesson can be adapted for different grade levels. High school students can use an abridged version of the U.S. Constitution. Elementary and middle school students can use the Preamble, or introduction, to the Constitution.

LEARNING GOALS

After this project, students should be able to:

- examine and analyze the U.S. Constitution.
- understand the purpose, context, and framing of the U.S. Constitution at the time of its creation.
- analyze how the U.S. Constitution helps us define our values as a nation and how those values are represented in the document today.
- apply knowledge to create an artistic interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, the values it espouses, and personal connections to its ideals.



NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION: A CIVIC ART PROJECT *(Continued)*

Background

The Constitution of the United States of America, often called the U.S. Constitution, outlines the rules and laws of the United States. The U.S. Constitution frames our national government, establishes checks on government powers, and protects minority rights in a majority rule. The first three words, “We the People,” show that the government of the United States exists to serve its citizens.

Writing the U.S. Constitution required compromise. Although state delegates agreed that an effective central government was needed to replace the weak Articles of Confederation, there was disagreement about the issues of state representation in the federal legislature, presidential powers, the federal judiciary, and how to count enslaved peoples in population totals. The Connecticut Compromise, or “Great Compromise,” created proportional representation in the House of Representatives and equal representation in the Senate. Delegates reached agreements on other contentious issues, including the Three-Fifths Compromise, which determined that three of every five enslaved persons would be counted for population purposes.

These compromises disappointed many of the delegates who had bargained with their state’s interests in mind. Nevertheless, on September 17, 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met to sign the new document. By June 1788, the U.S. Constitution had been *ratified* (accepted) by the nine states needed to adopt it. Eventually, all thirteen states ratified the document.

The U.S. Constitution has been the fundamental guide for our country for more than 230 years. Yet, at the time it was written, the document did not represent all people. The authors and signers of the nation’s plan of government, all white men, did not consider African Americans, women, or indigenous people to have the same rights as they did. So how can the U.S. Constitution guide our country when the document left out so many people? This lesson explores how the values in the U.S. Constitution speak to students today. Students discuss how the Constitution has changed, what values the document suggests, and how the values are expressed in government and society today. Then, students create a visual interpretation of the Constitution as a way of understanding our democracy and expressing the values in its founding document.



Mr.TmDC/Flickr/CC BY-ND 2.0

NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION: LESSON PLAN

TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
10 minutes	Warm-up: "We the People"	On the board, write "We the People." Ask students what comes to mind when they hear the first three words of the Constitution. Ask: Why do you think the framers began with this phrase? Did the framers speak for all the people? Did they believe all groups should have the rights defined in the U.S. Constitution?
15 minutes	Constitution Introduction	Introduce students to the U.S. Constitution as the foundational document of the United States, a document that established our government. At the time the Constitution was written, other countries were run by monarchs and emperors with strong authority. The framers of the Constitution imagined a new way of government: one that gave power to the people. This was a radical idea and one that made sense to many colonists in America after they fought for independence from the British crown. Unfortunately, the new government they created did not give power to all the people. The creation story of America helps to define us and our values as a nation. That story champions values such as freedom and equality. Yet, the Constitution was a document created by white men. Most of them were wealthy landowners who owned enslaved people. The Constitution, instead of freeing people, actually protected slavery and ownership of black human beings by white people. The Constitution also left out women and indigenous people. Over time, the Constitution has been updated through amendments to include more people in its protections and rights. Engage students in discussing one or more of these topics: High School • Does the U.S. Constitution today protect all people who live here? Which amendments helped to secure equal rights for more people? Should additional changes be made to the document? • Are our national values of freedom and equality as defined in the Constitution practiced in our government and society today? • How do people express their values today? Consider protests, social media, traditional media, the classroom, consumer purchases, and more. • How might we create a visual statement of our own values as people and as Americans today?

NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION: LESSON PLAN (CONTINUED)

TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
		Elementary and Middle School - Does the U.S. Constitution as it is written today protect all people who live here? Should additional changes be made to the document? - What do you think our national values are? What words best express these values? - What symbols of our national values do you see in your classroom or community? What emotions do these symbols make you feel?
15 minutes	Visualize the Text & Project Examples MATERIALS - Sample Student Work (pp. 9–17) - Watercolors, markers, colored pencils, collaging materials, tracing paper	Students will create an artistic interpretation of the values in the Constitution, using words, images, and color to convey a message. Let students know that this project is a way of understanding the values in our democracy, how those values are upheld or undermined in our government and society, and how these values and the issues surrounding them impact students' lives. Show students examples of artwork by BINcA students. Discuss: - What values do you see highlighted in each piece of art? - What emotions do you feel as you look at each piece of art? - What message does each piece of art suggest? Explain how the students used specific images, colors, lines, words, and sizing to create certain moods or evoke certain emotions in their work.

NOTES ON THE CONSTITUTION: LESSON PLAN (CONTINUED)

TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
30 minutes	Creative Work	Distribute copies of the abridged Constitution (high school) or Preamble (elementary/middle school). Have students read and think about the words on the page. Encourage students to think of the words that suggest our national values or a message they would like to share. They also may consider how the words suggest themes such as harmony, conflict, compromise, justice, and human rights. Have students highlight, color, or circle words that help explain the values, their message, or their theme. Have students express their ideas further by connecting words through lines or colors and adding words and images over the Constitution (or Preamble) text. Help students consider how positioning, size, contrast, and use of space affect their interpretations of the Constitution (or Preamble). Distribute tracing paper to students, as needed, to help them create designs or pictures that enhance the content of the text. Then, have students work on their artistic interpretations for the rest of the class time. Display students' completed work in a Constitutional Values Art Gallery and invite members of the school community to tour the exhibit.

MATERIALS

- Abridged version of U.S. Constitution or Preamble (pp. 18–19). For additional templates please visit <https://www.emkinstitute.org/online-resources>
- Watercolors, markers, colored pencils, collaging materials, tracing paper

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union; establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence, 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.

Article I - Section 1 All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. **Section 2 1:** The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature. **Section 3 1:** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote. **Section 4 1:** The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators. **Section 5 1:** Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide. **Section 6 1:** The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. 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No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or Confession in open Court. **Article IV - Section 1** Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof. **Section 2 1:** The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States. **Section 3 1:** New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress. **Section 4** The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence. **Article V** The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate. **Article VI 1:** All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation. **Article VII** The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names—

Stacy M

(United States Constitution - abridged)

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defence, 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.

Article I - Section 1 All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. **Section 2 1:** The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature. **Section 3 1:** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote. **Section 4 1:** The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators. **Section 5 1:** Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in Person, or by their legal Representatives.

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done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth in witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names

(United States Constitution - abridged)

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done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names—

(United States Constitution - abridged)

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common Defence, 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.

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done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Sixteenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereto subscribed our Names.

(United States Constitution - shrugged)

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Good is not enough if it is better is possible

(United States Constitution - abridged)

Ashley T. Anas

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(United States Constitution - abridged)

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By the United States Constitution - abridged)

ABRIDGED CONSTITUTION

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STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

MA ARTS FRAMEWORK GRADES VISUAL ARTS: CREATING, CONNECTING

3rd–12th Grade Visual Arts Standards: Creating

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
3. Refine and complete artistic work.

3rd–12th Grade Visual Arts Standards: Connecting

1. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Describe and demonstrate influences of personal artistic style and preferences in visual arts.
2. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. Identify visual ideas from a variety of cultures connected to different historical populations.

MA History and Social Science Framework

Grade 3 Topic 6. Massachusetts in the 18th century through the American Revolution [3.T6]

Grade 5 Topic 3. Principles of United States Government [5.T3]

Grade 8 Topic 1. The philosophical foundations of the United States political system [8.T1]

Grade 8 Topic 2. The development of the United States government [8.T2]

Grade 8 Topic 3. The institutions of United States government [8.T3]

Grade 8 Topic 4. Rights and responsibilities of citizens [8.T4]

Grade 8 Topic 5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions [8.T5]

GRADES 6–8 READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS: HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE [RCA-H]

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally), including how written texts incorporate features such as headings.
6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

High School United States History I

Topic 1. Origins of the Revolution and the Constitution [USI.T1]

High School Elective United States Government and Politics

Topic 1. Foundations of government in the United States [T1]

Topic 2. Purposes, principles, and institutions of government in the United States [T2]

GRADES 9–10 READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS: HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE [RCA-H]

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.
5. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

GRADES 11–12 READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS: HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE [RCA-H]

Craft and Structure

5. Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Civic Literacy

1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.