

# Bill of Rights

## Summary

Students will investigate one of the amendments to the Constitution to find out how it was important for the time, how it protects citizens and how it applies to our current needs.

## **Enduring Understanding:**

The U.S. Constitution reflects our national beliefs about people, rights, and government.

## **Essential Question:**

How does the Bill of Rights relate to me today?

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 5th Grade

[Standard 3 Objective 2](#)

## Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Group Size

Small Groups

## Life Skills

Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

Words to the Bill of Rights

poster paper

markers

## Background for Teachers

The United States Constitution was ratified in 1787. It came under heavy criticism by Anti-Federalists who were upset that certain guarantees of individual rights were not included. Others in the Constitutional Convention only approved of the Constitution on the understanding that a guarantee of such rights would be added. The Bill of Rights, written by James Madison were the first additions, or amendments made to the Constitution. They guarantee certain individual rights like freedom of speech, religion, the right to petition the government for redress of grievances, the right to a jury, the right to bear arms, and other rights. The Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students should know why the Constitution was created, what it said, and what freedom the Bill of Rights gave to the people. The students need to know that the Founding Fathers worried about the basic rights of the citizens. These rights were not included in the Constitution. The Signers ( James Madison) created the Bill of Rights. These ten rights were added amendments to the Constitution.

## Instructional Procedures

Step 1. Have students look up in the Constitution where the framers included a list of guarantees for the people of this country. Does the Constitution mention the people anywhere in the 1st article? 2nd? 3rd? (Briefly review the content of the seven articles and lead the class to the

conclusion that there is no list of PEOPLE'S rights in the core of the Constitution.) Lead a discussion encouraging students to think about the importance of such a list included in this the "Supreme Law of the Land." How can we as people be sure we have the rights we desire if those rights are not written down somewhere, and what better place than the Supreme Law of the Land?

Step 2: Write "Bill of Rights" on the board and ask the class for definitions. Explain to the class that the Bill of Rights is the 1st 10 amendments made to the Constitution. Make sure students understand that an amendment is a change to the Constitution. (You may want to review Article 5 of the Constitution in which the process of constitutional amendments is discussed. It may also be interesting to note that in the 200-plus years since the writing of this sacred document, only 27 "changes" or amendments have been made.) Also, explain that these first 10 are our guarantees or certain rights as people. Some of these rights protect those accused of a crime; others rights protect the minority: each of the amendments included in the Bill of Rights help to ensure a more democratic society and lessens the possibility of an usurpation of power by those in authority.

Step 3: Divide the class into groups of three. Assign each group one of the ten amendments to the Constitution. Each group will research their amendment. They need to know why the amendment was important for the time, how it protects citizens and how it applies to our current needs.

Step 4: Each group is given the the task of creating a poster for their amendment. Their poster needs to advertise (explain) the amendment in "5th grade" vocabulary and relate the amendment to their life. A rubric is provided to guide this process. The posters will be shared in the class and then in the hall.

### Assessment Plan

Pre-assessment: Have students number a paper from one to ten. Have them list the ten amendments to the US Constitution.

Post-assessment: The poster serves as the final assessment.

### Rubrics

[Bill of Rights Advertisement Poster](#)

### Bibliography

We the People The Citizen and the Constitution

The Signers of the Constitution by Robert G. Ferris and James H. Charleton Shh....

We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz

UEN (emedia...type in Bill of Rights) for film clips

### Authors

[Lynda Davis](#)

[Sheri Sorensen](#)