

Kid Civics: Constitutional Amendments

General Lesson Structure

- 1. Introduction: Start with a discussion to engage students in the topic. Possible questions include:**
 - a. Review what was learned in first Kid Civics video about the Constitution: What is a Constitution and what principles is the U.S. Constitution based on.
 - b. The Constitution was written in 1787. How was life different back then, compared to today? What was normal in the 18th century that we would consider strange or even wrong today?
 - c. What was important to the people who wrote our Constitution? What was at the forefront of their minds when they wrote it? Are those the things that are important to us today?
 - d. Do you have ideas for changing the Constitution to reflect what's important to Americans today?
- 2. Watch Kid Civics Video: Constitutional Amendments**
- 3. Discuss:**
 - a. What were some of the major flaws in the original Constitution?
 - b. What is the process for changing the Constitution?
- 4. Activity:**
 - a. Divide students into groups and assign each group one of the 10 Amendments in the Bill of Rights. (Recommended: skip Seventh Amendment; also, consider pairing down the Fifth Amendment)
 - b. Have each group read the Amendment, then answer the following questions (use vocabulary aid as a resource):
 - i. Why do think the first Congress thought it necessary to add this to the Constitution in 1791?
 - ii. Is this amendment still relevant for today?
 - c. Have each group present their assigned amendment to the class.
- 5. Activity:** If class had created a Constitution in the previous Kid Civics lesson, then create amendments in this lesson.
 - a. Decide, as a class, the process for adding amendments to the classroom constitution.
 - b. Divide students into groups, with each group coming up with a different amendment. Have each group present their amendment to the class.
 - c. Allow the class to discuss and debate proposed amendments.
 - d. Follow the process for adding the Amendments to your classroom Constitution. If the amendments pass, add them to your classroom Constitution and post them in a prominent place.
- 6. Closing and reflection:**
 - a. Summarize the key points:
 - i. Constitution creates a process for people to come together and fix its flaws.
 - ii. The original Constitution excluded women and people of color from full participation in society.

- iii. Amendments after the Civil War sought to address this; women fought for the right to vote and were granted that right in 1920.

7. Lesson Learning Goals:

- a. Understand how the U.S. Constitution has adapted over time as values have changed in society.
- b. Understand how the Constitution is amended.
- c. Understand that the Constitution allows citizens to come together and create change.

Vocabulary Aid: Bill of Rights

FIRST AMENDMENT

Abridging: Limit or take away.

Establishment of religion: Picking a favorite religion and make everyone follow it.

Free exercise of religion: Believing and practicing your religion in your own way.

Petition: Asking the government to fix a problem.

Prohibiting: Stopping someone from doing something.

Redress: To make something that was unfair right again.

Thereof: Refers to something just mentioned.

SECOND AMENDMENT

Bear arms: Owning and carrying a gun

Infringed: Taken away

Militia: A group of everyday, ordinary people who are ready to fight for their state or country.

Regulated: Rules that help something work properly.

THIRD AMENDMENT

Quartered: To give someone a place to stay.

Consent: Giving your permission to something.

Prescribed: Decided by rule or law.

Regulated: Rules that help something work properly.\

FOURTH AMENDMENT

Seizure: When police take something to use as evidence in a crime.

Probable cause: When police have a good reason (in the form of evidence) to believe that someone has committed a crime.

Warrant: An order from a judge that gives the police permission to search an area.

Particularly: Specifically or exactly.

Violated: When a rule is not followed.

Shall Issue: Can be given

Oath or affirmation: A serious commitment to be honest.

FIFTH AMENDMENT

Incrimination: Proof or evidence that someone broke the law.

Capital crime: A serious crime punishable by death.

Indictment: When police or the courts officially charge someone with a crime.

Grand jury: A group of people who decide whether there's enough evidence to put a person on trial for a crime.

Offense: When someone breaks a rule or law.

Jeopardy: When you could get in trouble or punished for something.

Compelled: Required

Due process of law: Following proper procedures

SIXTH AMENDMENT

Accused: The person people think did something wrong.

Prosecutions: When the government tries to prove someone did a crime.

Trial: When people go to court to figure out if someone did something wrong.

Impartial jury: A group of people who listen fairly and don't take sides.

Ascertained: When you make sure something is correct.

Compulsory: Required.

Counsel: A lawyer who helps people in court.

Witnesses: People who tell what they saw or heard about what happened.

EIGHTH AMENDMENT

Excessive: More than necessary

Fines: Having to pay money because you did something wrong.

Bail: Money you give the court so you can get out of jail while waiting a trial.

Imposed: Made a rule or punishment happen.

Inflicted: Someone causes hurt or damage to someone else.

NINTH AMENDMENT

Enumeration: Listed

Construed: Interpreted

Deny: Hold something back.

Disparage: To make something seem less important

TENTH AMENDMENT

Delegated: Given a job or a power

Prohibited: Not allowed

Reserved: Saved or kept for someone or something