

## **Kid Civics: The Constitution**

### General Lesson Structure

- 1. Introduction: Start with a discussion to engage students in the topic. Possible questions include:**
  - a. What comes to mind when you think of the government?
  - b. What comes to mind when you think of politics?
  - c. Why are rules important when you are playing a game?
  - d. Why is it important for our government both make rules and also to have rules to follow?
- 2. Read preamble to the Constitution**
  - a. Discuss: The preamble is the first paragraph of the U.S. Constitution, which as Kamryn in the video will discuss as the ultimate rulebook for the United States government. Who does the preamble say is creating this government? And, what does the preamble say about the purpose of creating the government?
  - b. Optional: Encourage the students to memorize the preamble to the Constitution.
- 3. Watch Kid Civics Video: The Constitution**
- 4. Activity:** Create a Constitution for your school or classroom. Teachers may consider dividing students into groups to each address the following parts of the class or school constitution.
  - a. What will the goals of the Constitution be? What kind of learning environment will it create for the students? What kind of school/classroom do the students want to come to every day? Allow the students to create the kind of “society” (i.e. classroom/school) in which they want to “live” (attend each day). Let them get creative and even choose a name for their “society”!
  - b. How will the students create the kind of classroom identified in question A? Will their Constitution create positions of leadership to achieve their dream classroom? How will those leaders be chosen? How long will they hold the position? What responsibilities will they have?
  - c. What rights or freedoms should students enjoy in their school or classroom? How will they ensure those rights or freedoms are protected?
  - d. When complete, post the Constitution in a prominent place in the classroom and use it as a governing text for the class.
- 5. Closing and reflection:**
  - a. Summarize the key points:
    - i. The U.S. Constitution creates the government and states important functions for the government. It ensures that the government protects our natural rights and respects the liberty of the people.
    - ii. Some key features of the U.S. Constitution include the fact that it is the shortest single text governing a country in the world, and it is also the oldest national Constitution in the world. It is based on ideas developed about 100 years before it was written called social contract theory.

- iii. The government is the people's idea! We get to choose our leaders who make decisions on our behalf, making the U.S. a democratic republican form of government.
- b. Reflect on Create-A-Constitution activity
  - i. What challenges did you face in creating your own Constitution for the classroom? When your friends had different ideas about the kind of classroom they wanted to create, how did you resolve those differences? Why is compromise important in a government based on the consent of the governed?

**6. Lesson Learning Goals:**

- a. Understand the importance of the government and its Constitution for living in a peaceful and orderly society.
- b. Understand the principles on which the U.S. Constitution is based.
- c. Understand that in a government based on the consent of the governed, the people can create the kind of society in which they want to live.