

Nikki Shrader TAH Scholar Module 1

Lesson 3: Application of Constitutional Principles and Provisions

Essential Questions:

1. How did the new US Constitution “solve” the problems, especially in foreign relations, that occurred under the Articles of Confederation?
2. Why was the US Constitution written?

Objectives:

1. Students will review basic stipulations of the US Constitution. (Lesson 3)
2. Students will inspect photographs for reflections of government power in reality. (Lesson 3)
3. Students will read short descriptions of competing theories on the creation of the Constitution. (Lesson 3)
4. Students will analyze theories on the creation of the Constitution. (Lesson 3)
5. Students will participate in a Socratic Seminar. (Lesson 3)
6. Students will incorporate information about the Articles of Confederation and from primary and secondary sources into a 5-paragraph essay. (Lesson 3)
7. Students will generate a hypothesis as to the reasons for the creation of the Constitution, and defend that hypothesis, in a 5-paragraph essay. (Lesson 3)
8. Students will compile various assignments into a portfolio. (Lessons 1-3)

Standards:

- GOVT.1 The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to
- a) analyze primary and secondary source documents;
 - c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
 - g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.
- GOVT.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Constitution of the United States by
- c) examining the fundamental principles upon which the Constitution of the United States is based, including the rule of law, consent of the governed, limited government, separation of powers, and federalism;
 - d) illustrating the structure of the national government outlined in Article I, Article II, and Article III;

Rationale: This lesson serves several purposes. First, students will see, through photographs, what the different powers and rights of the government and individuals are. Secondly, through the Socratic Seminar, students will read about popular theories on the creation of the US Constitution, and then participate in a college-level discussion on that topic. By generating their own discussion, students will have more ownership over what they learn, rather than when they simply glean information from the teacher. Finally, the 5-paragraph essay assignment forces students to take all of the information they have covered in several lessons, create an argument about the motives of the Framers, and support that argument in an academic manner. Additionally, it has been my experience that students need help and practice writing longer essays as much as possible in order to improve those skills. Ultimately, this final lesson in the unit will help answer the original investigative question of “Why the Constitution?”.

Materials: Excerpt from Eric Black’s *The Constitution: The Myth that Binds Us* (**Attachment 3B**); Pre-Seminar questions (**Attachment 3C**); Seminar Discussion questions (**Attachment 3C**); Post-Seminar Assignment (**Attachment 3C**); Packet of Photographs for analysis (**Attachment 3A**)

Procedures:

1. Do-Now—Student turn in Political Cartoons from previous lesson. Invite students to share; discuss cartoons as a review of previous lessons
2. Class analysis of photographs. Teacher will show photographs on projector, students will analyze, first on their own paper, then share with the class. Teacher should focus on the following questions:
 - a. What do you see?
 - b. In what time period do you think this photo was taken?
 - c. What role does the US government have in this photo?
 - d. What specific parts of the Constitution does this photo illustrate?
Students should use textbook copies of *Constitution* for reference, with scaffolding from instructor. Almost all photos reflect aspects of the first three Articles of the Constitution.
 - e. Could this have happened under the Articles of Confederation? Why or why not?
 - f. **If you cannot display these electronically, the photos can be printed and passed out to students in small groups**
3. Reading of the Black excerpt. Students should read the pages individually, while answering the Pre-Seminar questions. It’s good for the students to read the article in class, so the teacher can be there to help struggling readers. However, if you are pressed for time, by all means assign the Pre-Seminar questions for preparatory homework.
4. Socratic Seminar: Students will have the Seminar Discussion questions in front of them (attached). The desks should be arranged in a circle, with the teacher either in or out of the circle, depending on the independence of that particular group of students. It is recommended that for the first seminar of the year, the teacher sit with students to help facilitate the right atmosphere.
 - a. The teacher can pose the first question

- b. Students should raise their hands, and call on each other to answer questions
 - c. Teacher will participate as little as possible, but interject to remind students about time
 - d. Students will decide when to move on to the next question.
 - e. Teacher will grade students' participation.
 - i. Graded on a 5-point scale.
 - f. After the allotted time (20-30 minutes recommended) teacher stops discussion, and debriefs activity with class. Ask students about questions they still have, the seminar format, etc.
5. Post-Seminar Assignment—5-paragraph essay
- a. Teacher will review the structure and methods for writing a 5-paragraph essay. The format will vary depending on the needs of individual classrooms. Struggling readers and writers will need more scaffolding in order to complete the task.
 - b. Students will decide the motive *they* believe to have been most important in drafting the US Constitution, write a thesis paragraph, 3 supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Assessment:

1. The photograph analysis helps students understand the basic functions of government under the Constitution, which they can read and identify in their textbooks as they analyze the photos.
2. This lesson will be assessed primarily through the Socratic Seminar. As students are reading, the teacher should informally assess students' knowledge by checking on their pre-seminar questions (which are based on summaries of major theories on the creation of the Constitution) , and focusing them correctly before the actual seminar begins.
2. During the actual seminar, the teacher will informally assess students' understanding of the content by listening to their conversation, while formally assessing their participation for a grade.
3. The post-seminar assignment, the 5-paragraph essay, will serve not only as a formal, summative assessment of this lesson, but of the entire unit of study. The essay allows students to answer the original investigative question, "Why was the Constitution written", through the integration of information and theories from all 3 lessons. The essay and all questions associated with the seminar will go into students' portfolios as part of their significant summative assessment.