



Grade 5 Social Studies - Unit 3 - The United States Constitution & Civic Participation

Unit Focus

In this unit, students embark on a journey to explore the foundations of the United States government and the principles that guide civic participation. They begin by examining why the colonists fought for independence and how the Declaration of Independence set forth powerful ideas about freedom, equality, and fundamental rights. Students then trace the evolution of governance, moving from the Articles of Confederation to the creation of the U.S. Constitution, discovering how it organizes government, separates powers, and defines the roles of federal, state, and local authorities.

Learners investigate key democratic principles—including popular sovereignty, republicanism, checks and balances, and federalism—by analyzing historical documents and connecting them to real-world examples. They also explore how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect individual freedoms and limit government power. Through inquiry-based lessons, students examine how citizens in both the Revolutionary Era and today can influence change in their communities.

Throughout the unit, students develop critical skills in reading and interpreting historical texts, analyzing primary sources, comparing perspectives, and constructing evidence-based arguments. By the end of the unit, learners not only understand the structure and purpose of the U.S. government but also recognize their role as informed, engaged participants in a democracy.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer	
<p>Common Core English Language Arts: 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1) Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.5.2) Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.5.3) Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4) Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s). (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.5.8) Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9) Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8) 	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <p>T1 Apply historical knowledge to develop connections to other eras/situations or provide insight into a contemporary issue.</p> <p>T2 Develop and communicate an informed argument/explanation using illustrative details and examples based on audience and purpose.</p>	
	Meaning	
	Understanding(s)	Essential Question(s)
<p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <p>U1 The U.S. Constitution was created after the American Revolution to protect people’s rights and set up a government based on democratic ideals.</p> <p>U2 The Constitution shows democratic principles by describing the powers of government, the rights of citizens, and how leaders are chosen.</p> <p>U3 Individuals and groups, both in the past and today, can make a difference by using different strategies in their communities.</p>	<p><i>Students will keep considering...</i></p> <p>Q1 How did the American Revolution help shape our government and people’s rights?</p> <p>Q2 How do people today take part in our government and help make decisions?</p> <p>Q3 How does the Constitution show the idea of democracy?</p>	

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.5.4)
- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.6)
- Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A)
- Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.B)
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.D)
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.5.1.A)
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.5.1.B)
- Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.C)
- Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.D)
- Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.L.5.4.A)
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4.B)

Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards (2023)

Grade 5 - United States History I

- Identify concepts, ideas, and interpretations associated with compelling and supporting questions about early United States History. (5.Inq.1.a)
- Apply disciplinary knowledge and practices to demonstrate an understanding of United States history content. (5.Inq.2.a)

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...

- K1** The United States Constitution was created to replace the weaker Articles of Confederation and the three branches of government, checks and balances, and federalism—were designed to limit power and protect citizens’ rights.
- K2** How the rules (Articles of Confederation, Constitution, Bill of Rights) were established at the end of the American Revolution.
- K3** The role of the Constitution in creating the U.S. government system.
- K4** That the Preamble is the first part of the Constitution and it tells why the Constitution was written and what the government should do for the people.
- K5** That people in the Revolutionary Era and today can make a difference by speaking up, working together, and taking action to improve their communities or change unfair laws.
- K6** That people think differently about problems in school or the community because everyone has different ideas, experiences, and needs.

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...

- S1** Using close reading and notes to understand why key parts of the U.S. Constitution were created and what they do.
- S2** Explaining how rules were made after the American Revolution by looking at laws that protected or limited people’s freedoms.
- S3** Explaining how the Constitution set up the U.S. government.
- S4** Reading and understanding the Preamble to learn why the Constitution was written and what the government should do for the people.
- S5** Showing how people in the Revolutionary Era and today can make change by asking questions, investigating, and sharing what they learn.
- S6** Understanding why people have different opinions about school, community, and civic issues by working together and exploring different ideas.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Gather relevant evidence from multiple sources about a person, event, or issue in United States History while using the origin, structure, and context to guide selection. (5.Inq.3.a)
- Critique arguments and explanations. (5.Inq.4.c)
- Present a summary of arguments and explanations about early United States History using print, oral, and digital technologies in classrooms, schools, and out-of-school contexts. (5.Inq.4.d)
- Explain the challenges and opportunities, both present and past, in addressing local, regional, and global problems in United States history. (5.Inq.4.e)
- Use a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to evaluate and implement strategies to address problems in classrooms and schools. (5.Inq.4.f)
- Examine the origins and purpose of key provisions of the United States Constitution (e.g., checks and balances, limited government, popular sovereignty, republicanism, separations of powers, federalism). (5.Civ.3.a)
- Explain how rules were established at the end of the American Revolution by identifying laws that promoted and limited personal liberties (e.g., citizenship, property, suffrage). (5.Civ.4.b)
- Explain the role of the Constitution in establishing a system of government in the United States (e.g., federalism, separation of power, states' rights). (5.Civ.5.a)
- Identify how the political beliefs are represented in the Preamble of the United States Constitution. (5.Civ.10.a)
- Illustrate how individuals and groups in the Revolutionary Era and today have and can effect change (e.g., school, community, and state issues). (5.Civ.14.a)
- Identify the contributing factors that underlie multiple and varied points of view about school, community, and civic issues. (5.Civ.10.b)

Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate

- Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2)
- Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. (POG.3.2)