

John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum

Constitution Week

A Lesson for Pre-Kindergarten: “The *Constitution*, The United States’ Rules”

Introduction

In this lesson pre-kindergarten students will understand that September 17th is *Constitution Day*, celebrating the signing of the United States Constitution, the rules for how the United States would be organized. The Constitution was signed 231 years ago by representatives from 11 out of 13 states. We all know rules are important. The rules of the United States are just like the rules of our homes, our classrooms, and our communities. Rules help us all to remember that fairness, friendship, kindness, responsibility, and respect for one another are key to working together.

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education History and Social Science Content Standards:

Prekindergarten:

Topic 1. Civics: fairness, friendship, responsibility, and respect

- 1-1. With prompting and support, give reasons for rules in the classroom and at home
- 1-2. With prompting and support, follow agreed upon rules, limits, and expectations
- 1-3. Show willingness to take on responsibilities
- 1-4. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about literature and informational social studies texts read aloud, and act out or give examples of characters who show fairness, friendship, kindness, responsibility, and respect for one another

Guiding Questions

1. What is the *Constitution*?
2. What is the United States? What did the United States look like 231 years (a long time) ago when the *Constitution* was signed?
3. What are rules? Do we have rules at home? Do we have rules in our classrooms? Do we have rules in our community?
4. Why is it important to follow the rules at home, in our classroom, in our community, and in our country?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to share information about the Constitution including that it was written a long time ago
2. Students will be able to share why rules are important in our homes, classrooms, and communities
3. Students will make a connection between rules in our homes, classrooms, and communities with rules in our country
4. Students will understand that “good citizens” show fairness, friendship, kindness, responsibility and respect for each other

Lesson Activities

1. Explain to students that September 17th is an important day and today we will learn why
2. Show students a map of the United States. Show them Massachusetts where we live. Explain that we are in the community of Hyannis, in the state of Massachusetts, in the country of the United States
3. Lead a discussion about rules. Why are rules important? Do we have rules at home, in our classroom, and in our community? Is it important to follow the rules? How does it feel at home and in your classroom when everyone follows the rules?
4. How do we know the rules? (They are written down). Share a list or other visual prompts with rules on them (ex: class rules, stop sign, etc.)
5. We know the rules of our homes, our classroom, and our community, but how will we learn the rules of our country?
6. The *Constitution*, written in 1787, is the rules of our country. The *Constitution* is important. It has the rules of our country, so that we can all live together, follow the rules, and be good citizens that show fairness, friendship, kindness, responsibility, and respect for everyone.
7. Today, we celebrate the *Constitution*, the rules of our country. Good citizens follow the rules of the *Constitution*.
8. Read *I Am America*, by Charles R. Smith, highlighting that we are all the same, we all live in America, but we are also different. Finish up with a final reminder about how we all want to be good citizens.