

# John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum

## Constitution Week

### A Lesson for Grade One: “I Am America”

#### Introduction

This lesson, filled with great literature and wonderful activities, will help students be proud of their individuality, including their culture, traditions, and beliefs, while understanding how they are like others in that they are part of groups, their class, their school, and the United States of America. The lesson includes the history of the first immigrants that came to America, how the leaders of the original thirteen states allowed people and states to maintain their individuality while becoming one nation, organized by the *Constitution*, signed on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1787.

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

##### Grade One:

##### Topic 1. Civics: communities, elections, and leadership

- 1-1. Demonstrate understanding of the benefits of being part of a group and explain what it means to be a member of a group; follow the groups rules, limits, responsibilities, and expectations, and explain reasons for rules to others.
- 1.5. Give examples of why members of a group who hold different views need ways to make decisions and explain how members of a group can make fair decisions or choose leaders by voting.
- 1.8. Demonstrate understanding that members of a town, city, or nation in the United States are called citizens.
- 1.9. Explain that all people born in the United States are citizens, while some people become citizens after moving from another country. Understand that some residents of the United States are not citizens but are still members of the community with rights and responsibilities.

##### Topic 3. History: unity and diversity in the United States

- 3.16 Provide evidence to explain some of the ways in which the people of the United States are unified (e.g. share a common national history) and diverse (e.g. have different backgrounds, hold different beliefs, and have different celebrations, cultural traditions, and family structures).
- 3.17 Demonstrate understanding of the ways people show pride in belonging to the United states by recognizing and explaining the meaning of unifying symbols, phrases, and songs.

## **Guiding Questions**

1. Who are the people of the United States of America?
2. Why did people originally come to America?
3. When people came to America, what did they bring with them?
4. How can we be diverse and at the same time be part of many groups?
5. How did the leaders of the original 13 states ensure that we have one country made up of many individual states and people?

## **Learning Objectives**

1. Students will be able to explain how and why people from many different cultures came to the United States.
2. Students will demonstrate that it is possible to be an individual and at the same time be part of a group.
3. Students will be able to identify how people in the United States are the same and how they are different.
4. Students will be able to share what the Constitution is, when it was written, and how it became law.
5. Students will be able to identify national symbols that represent the United States and explain why they are important.

## **Lesson Materials**

### **Activity One**

- *I Am America* by Charles Smith
- School House Rock Video: *The Great American Melting Pot* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZQl6XBo64M>
- Direction Sheet for making a class quilt

### **Activity Two**

- Civic Kids: *American Flavors: A Cultural Salad of Diversity* [https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK130001\\_CivicsKids-2013-PAGES-FNL-Lesson1.pdf](https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK130001_CivicsKids-2013-PAGES-FNL-Lesson1.pdf)
- *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley
- School House Rock Video: *Constitution Preamble* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OyU4O80i4>
- *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudson

### **Activity Three**

- *I Am America* by Charles Smith
- Quilt pieces/decorating materials [https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson\\_1\\_-\\_Worksheet-Quilt\\_Square\\_Directions.pdf](https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson_1_-_Worksheet-Quilt_Square_Directions.pdf)

- *One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting

## **Lesson Activities**

### **Activity One: *I Am America***

- Explain to students that we are celebrating the United States *Constitution*. The Constitution was signed on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1787, and it still is the document that sets out the rules for our country.
- Explain that the first people in the part of North America that would become the United States were Native Americans. Next people began coming from England, the Netherlands, France, and other countries. They came for a variety of reasons, but mostly for a fresh start, and for religious and political freedom. People continued to come to America, so our population is very diverse, representing many cultures, yet we are all part of a larger group, the United States of America.
- Watch the Video: *The Great American Melting Pot* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZQl6XBo64M> Reinforce the discussion about how many different people came to what is now the United States of America.
- Read aloud and share “*I Am America*” by Charles Smith. Tell students as you are reading, to think about how they would represent themselves in this book.
- Share with students that together they are going to make an *I Am America* class quilt, representing all the students in the class. Explain to the students that today they will each plan their quilt square. Pass out the quilt squares to students. Allow students time to work on their individual designs. [https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson\\_1\\_-\\_Worksheet-Quilt\\_Square\\_Directions.pdf](https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson_1_-_Worksheet-Quilt_Square_Directions.pdf)

### **Activity Two: *American Flavor – A Cultural Salad for Diversity***

- Ask students what some of their favorite foods are. Make a class list. Ask students if they know where the foods originally came from?
- Distribute copies of *We the Civic Kids, Lesson 1*. Read and discuss *American Flavor- A Cultural Salad for Diversity* [https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK130001\\_CivicsKids-2013-PAGES-FNL-Lesson1.pdf](https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK130001_CivicsKids-2013-PAGES-FNL-Lesson1.pdf)
- Read and discuss *Sticky Situation*
- Read Aloud *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley
- Create a chart. Distribute a copy to students. Allow them to work in pairs to fill in some ideas on the chart. Then have the class share their ideas.

<b>We Are Different</b>	<b>We Are the Same</b>
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- Introduce how the leaders of the 13 original states helped everyone to maintain their individual heritage yet become one strong country by writing the *Constitution*.
- Watch School House Rock: *Constitution Preamble* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OyU4080i4>
- Read *Library Lion* by Michell Knudson

### **Activity Three: *I Am America* Class Quilt Construction**

- Review the Book *I Am America* by Charles Smith. Pass out the quilt square worksheets from Activity One. Allow students an opportunity to share some of their ideas to help students who might need an Activator to help them get started.
- Share with students the materials that are available to decorate their quilt squares, (construction paper, markers, feathers, glitter etc.). As they finish their 1<sup>st</sup> draft, give them a second copy for their final square.
- Put the quilt together according to the directions on the worksheet and either hang it or put it on a bulletin board. When it is finished share with students how it celebrates the class' diversity; how different we can be but at the same time all members of this class, just like our state and our country, bound together by the rules of the *Constitution*.
- Read *One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting. This story reinforces our unique identities, yet ways we are part of a group. (It might also be fun to share some apple cider 😊)