

John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum
Constitution Week
A Lesson for Grade 3: “The Bill of Rights”
Adapted from the National Constitution Center’s Lesson
“We the Civic Kids, The Bill of Rights, Know Your Rights”

Introduction

In this lesson, made up of 5 activities, students will learn that the Bill of Rights is made up of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights helped to get the Constitution ratified. James Madison wrote the amendments. The Constitution established a strong national government, but there was no mention of the rights of its citizens. Some of the delegates refused to sign the Constitution until a Bill of Rights was written to protect the freedom and rights of each individual citizen. Students will become familiar with the ten amendments, then learn how to write a petition.

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

Grade 3:

Topic 6. Massachusetts in the 18th Century through the American Revolution

- 6-19.** Explain how after the Revolution, the leaders of the new United States had to write a plan for how to govern the nation, and that this plan is called the Constitution. Explain that the rights of citizens are spelled out in the Constitution’s first ten Amendments, known as the Bill of Rights; explain that full citizenship rights were restricted to white male property owners over the age of 21 in the new Republic.

Guiding Questions

1. What is the United States Constitution and why is it important?
2. Why was the Bill of Rights added to the Constitution?
3. How do citizens make their voices heard?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain the history of the *Constitution* and why it is so important to our country.
2. Students will be able to share the history of the *Bill of Rights* and why it was added to the *Constitution*.
3. Students will be able to identify the ten amendments that make up the *Bill of Rights* and match them to situations.
4. Students will be able to apply the Principles of the *Bill of Rights* to present day events.

Lesson Materials

- Books: *Carl the Complainer* by Michelle Knudsen
More Than Anything Else by Marie Bradby
- Handout: *We the Civics Kids Magazine* for lesson 3.
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK130001_CivicsKids-2013-PAGES-FNL-Lesson3.pdf
- Handout: *Bill of Rights Match Game Activity Sheets* (scissors and glue sticks)
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson_3-Worksheet-Bill_of_Rights_Cards_page_1.pdf
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK- Lesson_3 - Worksheets - Bill of Rights Cards Page 2 Amendments.pdf
- Handout: *Writing a Petition*
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson_3- Worksheets - Writing a Petition Activity.pdf
- Handout: *We the Civic Kids bookmark: More Than Anything Else*
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/CK-Lesson_3 - Teacher Materials - Literacy Link Bookmark.pdf
- Handout: *Bill of Rights Cardstock Bingo Boards* (scissors, glue sticks, materials to decorate)
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/Bill_of_Rights_Bingo.pdf

Lesson Activities

Activity 1: Introduction: The *Bill of Rights*

1. Review with students what the governing document of the United States is called?
2. Explain that when the *Constitution* was signed on September 17th, 1787, it organized our national government but did not address the rights of individual citizens. James Madison wrote the first ten Amendments, known as the *Bill of Rights*.
3. Today we will learn more about the *Bill of Rights* and how it impacts our lives today.

4. Read aloud the book *Carl the Complainer* by Michelle Knudsen. Discuss with the class that Carl was able to petition his local government because of a right guaranteed to him by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution
5. Distribute the *We the Civics Kids* handout. Read and discuss each amendment. Share why each amendment was included based on the history of the time when it was written and how it applies to the present time.

Activity 2: Bill of Rights Matching Activity

1. Review the information from Activity 1, including the 10 amendments that make up the *Bill of Rights*
2. Distribute the *Bill of Rights Match Game Activity Sheets*, scissors, and glue
3. Students can work individually, in pairs, or small groups. Here are the directions for the activity:
 - Place the situation card face down on the desk
 - Fold the Card in half
 - Open the sheet and fold each side to the middle fold. This makes the present- day situation cards visible
 - Cut between the situation cards so that each card is on a flap
 - Cut out the amendment cards
 - Have students past the corresponding amendment card under each present-day situation card
 - Review students' answers of situations matched to the amendments

Activity 3: Learning How to Create a Petition

1. Review the story of *Carl the Complainer*. Share with the students that they are going to put the *Bill of Rights* into action by petitioning local authorities for a change
2. Distribute the *Writing a Petition* template sheet. Ask students to suggest “changes” they would like to see. After discussion, select four or five topics.
3. Arrange students in groups by topics. Working in groups, students will complete and sign their petition.
4. Each group will present their petition to the class, seeking additional signatures.
5. At the teacher’s discretion, the petitions may or may not be submitted

Activity 4: *Bill of Rights* Bingo

1. Distribute the *Bill of Rights* Bingo Board Template and vocabulary cards, scissors, and glue sticks
2. Have students cut out the constitutional terms. Have each student glue his/her terms to the Bingo Board. While they are putting their Bingo Boards together, review the Bingo terms.
3. Provide items (markers, glitter, feathers, pompoms) to decorate their Bingo Boards
4. Arrange students in small groups. Give them a set of vocabulary cards and bingo chips. Allow them to enjoy playing *Bill of Rights* Bingo

Activity 5 (Extension): *We the Civics Kids Literacy Link and Bookmark*

1. Pass the Literacy Link Bookmarks out to students.
2. Discuss the first question regarding "Reading Is our First Freedom."
3. Read aloud the story *More Than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby.
4. Allow interested students to further research biographical information on Booker T. Washington