

# Unit 02: The Constitution

Content Area: **Social Studies**  
Course(s): **Social Studies 8**  
Time Period: **Quarter 1**  
Length: **20-25 Days**  
Status: **Published**

## Standards

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### 6.1 U.S. History: America in the World by the End of 8th Grade

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b: Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.

### 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century by the End of 8th Grade

6.3.8.CivicsPI.1: Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why government is necessary, and the purposes government should serve.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues

6.3.8.CivicsPD.1: Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.2: Propose and defend a position regarding a public policy issue at the appropriate local, state, or national level.

6.3.8.CivicsDP.2: Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and the limitations of First Amendment rights (e.g., U.S. Supreme Court decisions).

6.3.8.CivicsDP.3: Use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential for the protection of individual rights and maintenance of limited government.

6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.

6.3.8.CivicsPR.7: Compare how ideas become laws at the local, state, and national level

## Unit Summary

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This unit takes a detailed look at the structure of the U.S. Constitution, the three branches of government, and how they interact with each other. The goalls set forth in the Preamble are unpacked and interpreted. Students also study the Bill of Rights, how they were developed, and the modern-day applications of these essential rights. Historic and contemporary Supreme Court cases are analyzed and discussed. Finally, students learn about the amendment process and responsibilities of citizenship.

## **Student Learning Objectives**

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- Student will learn the six goals of the preamble.
- Student will learn the roles and qualifications of the three branches of Government.
- Student will learn how a bill becomes a law.
- Student will learn the electoral college process.
- Student will learn the significance of the first ten amendments.
- Student will learn how a two hundred year old document still guides people's lives today.
- Student will learn the legacies of important Supreme Court decisions.

## **Essential Questions**

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- How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of American democracy?
- Why has the Constitution been able to withstand the test of time?
- How does the Constitution ensure personal liberties?
- What are the roles, powers, and functions of each branch of government?

## **Enduring Understandings**

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- Students will understand that governments are formed to establish and maintain order within a society.
- Students will understand that the Constitution is a living document that helps in defining the roles and responsibilities of government and of the citizens.
- Students will understand that an effective form of government is one with divided powers.
- Students will understand that an enduring government must adapt to change.

## **Application**

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Students will be able to independently use their learning to ...

- Apply the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to modern day issues.
- Apply the process of how a bill becomes a law to their own original piece of legislation.
- Present information related to the powers of the president and cite specific examples of presidential authority.
- Analyze and determine the legacy of important Supreme Court Cases.

## **Skills**

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Students will be skilled at:

- Explaining the roles, powers, and functions of each branch of government.
- Understanding the process of how a bill becomes a law.
- Reading text and completing graphic organizers on the three branches of government.
- Reading presidential biographies and extrapolating important information for the President Project.
- Reading text and completing a graphic organizer on the Bill of Rights.
- Comparing and contrasting candidates on election years.
- Researching and analyzing Supreme Court cases.
- Researching and presenting a bill on a modern-day issue.