

Constitution Day: Middle and High School Teaching Strategies

- Discuss the parts of the Constitution; create a class Constitution.
- Compare and contrast the State Constitution with the United States Constitution.
- Using a Venn diagram with two circles, identify the powers that belong to the state government and the powers that belong to the federal government.
- After studying the three branches of government, have students create a Venn diagram outlining the powers granted to each branch of government.
- Compare the rights of Americans with the rights of citizens in other countries.
- Re-enact a debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
- Write a research paper about one of the delegates, or one of the NC Delegates, to the Constitutional Convention.
- Identify a person who has lived in another country. Invite this person to serve as a guest speaker to your class, and have him/her describe the difference between “rights” in their native country and in the United States.
- Hold a class debate on one of the rights guaranteed in the Constitution. For specific cases, see <http://www.landmarkcases.org/>
- Have students write an essay titled, “What it means to be an American.”
- If freedom is not absolute, then what circumstances justify a limitation? Use the following resources from the Freedom Forum to have students address the question, “When may speech be limited?”
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=13588>
- Lead a discussion about Common Good: Ask students, “What is the common good, and who defines it.”
- Discuss why it is important to protect our rights and why we should honor those who fight to protect our rights.
- Ask students to keep a journal of good citizenship they observe in their family, neighborhood, school, community, etc.
- During the morning announcements, have a student read a Constitutional fact Monday-Friday, during Constitution Week.
- Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the United States Constitution; have students explain in their own words why a new constitution was needed.
- Read and discuss a book(s) about people throughout history who were denied basic freedoms.
- Conduct a poster contest (i.e., Create a theme or have students illustrate one of the amendments).
- Have students think of an amendment that would benefit kids their age.
- Have students play “Who Wants to Be a Million Dollar Citizen?” This interactive game is available online at <http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/MDC/index.htm>.
- Have students analyze Marbury v. Madison. The 200th anniversary educational materials are available at <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/marbury.pdf>.
- Ask students to answer questions from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Test.