

## ★ OUR HERITAGE OF LIBERTY ★ THE BILL OF RIGHTS

A Lesson by Linda Weber

### SUMMARY

In 1787, delegates from twelve of the thirteen states gathered for a second time to come up with a different structure for the federal government. The first plan under the Articles of Confederation had failed to give the federal government enough power to do its job.

After three months of debate, arguing and compromise, the Constitution was ready for a vote. Those opposing adoption voiced their concerns loudly and with great passion. The power of the government had been well defined, but what about the rights of the people? They were not protected in the Constitution. Had the framers miscalculated? It didn't take long to realize the survival of the Constitution was at risk.

After the Constitution was adopted, it had to be ratified by the states. Would the people ratify if the Constitution didn't protect individual rights? Opposition was growing quickly.

James Madison and other Federalists didn't believe a bill of rights was needed, but to get the Constitution ratified he made the states a campaign promise – he would add a bill of rights after ratification. They believed him and the Constitution was ratified in 1788. On December 15, 1791, the first ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights were added. Madison had kept his promise.

This lesson is based on a two-part video about one of the toughest political fights in American history and the outcome that became a symbol of liberty and freedom in America – the Bill of Rights.

### Notes and Considerations

- This lesson presupposes that students are familiar with the Bill of Rights and much of the vocabulary contained in the lesson.
- Technology is relied on to facilitate learning.
- This is a self-contained lesson with resources and activities that can be adapted to different teaching styles, length of classes, and levels of students.

### Snapshot of Lesson

**Grades:** Middle School; High School (Focus)

**Subject Focus:** Civics/Government

**Estimated Time:** 2, 50-minute classes

**Alignment:** National Standards for Civics and Government Grades 5-8, Grades 9-12;  
Common Core Standards: Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, Grades 6-8, 9-10, 11-12

#### Materials/Equipment Needed:

- Annenberg Video: *Bill of Rights: The Story of the Bill of Rights; The Ten Amendments*
- Computer lab—Internet access and projector

#### Materials Included:

##### Readings and Resources

- Video Transcript
- The Bill of Rights: A Transcription—The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration
- Readings on Rights
- Chapter 1: Our Rights in American History, *Our Rights*—David J. Bodenhamer
- Chapter 3: What Rights Does the Constitution Protect?, *Our Constitution* by Donald A. Ritchie and JusticeLearning.org

##### Student Materials

- Class-Prep Assignment
- Student's Video Guide
- Graphic Organizer: Diagram It: Problem-Compromise-Solution
- Activity: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?
- Handout: A Collection of Rights

##### Teacher Materials

- Teacher's Video Guide
- Historical Background and Context
- Teacher Reference: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?
- Keys and resources for student work

##### Standards-Level Detail

- National Standards for Civics and Government
- Common Core State Standards

## TOPICS

- Bill of Rights
- constitutional conflicts
- constitutional rights
- democracy
- enumerated rights
- federalism
- first ten amendments
- individual rights
- limited government
- natural rights
- political compromise
- power and limits of government
- states rights
- U.S. Constitution

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

Document: *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994) Center for Civic Education  
<http://new.civiced.org/national-standards-download>

### Grades 5-8 Organizing Questions

The following outline lists the high-level organizing questions supported by this lesson.

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
  - A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
  - B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?
  - C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
  - A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
  - B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
  - C. What is American political culture?
  - D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
  - A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
  - E. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?
  - F. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?
- V. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?
  - C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
  - D. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
  - E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

### Grades 9-12 Organizing Questions

The following outline lists the high-level organizing questions supported by this lesson.

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
  - A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
  - B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?
  - C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?
  
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
  - A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
  - D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?
  
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
  - A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
  - C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?
  - D. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?
  
- V. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?
  - C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
  - D. What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
  - E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

Note: A more detailed standards-level alignment related to these questions can be found in the “Standards” section at end of this lesson plan.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Document: *English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects*  
Standards: Grades 6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects  
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

Note: The activities in this lesson support learning related to the following standards. For more specifics, please refer to the Standards section of this lesson.

### Reading in History/Social Studies 6-8

#### Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.3

#### Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10

### Writing 6-8

#### Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.6

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.9

#### Range of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.10

### Reading in History/Social Studies 9-10

#### Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3

#### Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10

### Writing 9-10

#### Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.6

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.9

#### Range of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.10

### Reading in History/Social Studies 11-12

#### Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2

#### Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.5

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10

### Writing 11-12

#### Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.9

#### Range of Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.10

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

### Knowledge, skills, and dispositions

Students will . . .

- Learn about rights from the colonist's perspective.
- Consider the role historical context played in determining the rights in the Bill of Rights.
- Identify and discuss the arguments for and against the addition of a bill of rights to the Constitution.
- Identify enumerated rights in the Bill of Rights and explain the meaning of each.
- Analyze the process of compromise that led to the Bill of Rights.
- Gain understanding and appreciation for the political struggle that resulted in the Bill of Rights.

### Integrated Skills

#### 1. Information literacy skills

Students will . . .

- Extract, organize and analyze information from different sources.
- Use skimming and research skills.
- Organize information into usable forms.
- Build background knowledge to support new learning.
- Use technology to facilitate learning.

#### 2. Media literacy skills

Students will . . .

- Gather and interpret information from different media.
- Use online sources to support learning.

#### 3. Communication skills

Students will . . .

- Write and speak clearly to contribute ideas, information, and express own point of view.
- Write in response to questions.
- Understand diverse opinions and points of view.
- Interpret visual models.
- Develop interpretive skills.

#### 4. Study skills

- Manage time and materials.
- Complete a graphic organizer

#### 5. Thinking skills

Students will . . .

- Describe and recall information.
- Make personal connections.
- Explain ideas or concepts.
- Draw conclusions.
- Analyze and evaluate issues.
- Use sound reasoning and logic.
- Evaluate information and decisions.
- Critique arguments.

#### 6. Problem-solving skills

Students will . . .

- Discuss issues and facts.
- Analyze cause and effect relationships.
- Examine reasoning used in making decisions.
- Evaluate proposed solutions.

#### 7. Participation skills

Students will . . .

- Contribute to small and large group discussion.
- Work responsibly both individually and with diverse people.
- Express own beliefs, feelings, and convictions.
- Show initiative and self-direction.
- Interact with others to deepen understanding.

## ASSESSMENT

Evidence of understanding may be gathered from student performance related to the following:

- Class-Prep Assignment
- Responses to each section in the video guide
- Class discussion and daily assignments

## VOCABULARY

Alexander Hamilton	federal government	promise
amend/amendment	Federalists	ratify/ratification
American citizens	Fifth Amendment	Revolutionary War
American Revolution	Fourth Amendment	right/rights
Anti-Federalists	Framers	Second Amendment
Articles of Confederation	George Mason	Seventh Amendment
bill (as in a bill of rights)	George Washington	Sixth Amendment
Bill of Rights	honor	small-mindedness
British	individual liberties	state government
campaign promise	James Madison	states rights
compromise	local government	Tenth Amendment
concessions	localism	Third Amendment
Congress	nationalist	Thomas Jefferson
Constitution	natural rights	tyrant
debate	Ninth Amendment	U.S. Constitution
Declaration of Independence	Patrick Henry	unalienable rights
Eighth Amendment	political fight	unenumerated rights
enumerated rights	politics/political	yoke of tyranny
European powers	preordained	
Father of the Constitution	principled document	

### Resources for Definitions

- **Findlaw—Law Dictionary**  
<http://dictionary.lp.findlaw.com/>
- **National Standards for Civics and Government: Glossary**  
[http://new.civiced.org/standards?page=stds\\_glossary](http://new.civiced.org/standards?page=stds_glossary)
- **Merriam-Webster Online**  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- **Annenberg Classroom – Glossary**  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/terms>

## LESSON OVERVIEW

### Goals:

Students will . . .

- Recognize the role historical context played in determining the rights in the Bill of Rights.
- Learn about rights from the perspective of the colonists.
- Identify and discuss the arguments for and against the addition of a bill of rights to the Constitution.
- Identify enumerated rights in the Bill of Rights and explain the meaning of each.
- Analyze the problem-solving process of compromise that led to the Bill of Rights.
- Develop an appreciation for the risks, costs, and benefits involved in the political struggle for adding a bill of rights to the Constitution.

### Class-Prep Assignment:

Students complete an independent assignment to build background knowledge for the video they will watch and study during the first in-class session.

### DAY 1: The Fight for Rights

Students watch the video segment on *The Story of the Bill of Rights* and learn about the hard-fought political fight to protect individual liberties that put ratification of the Constitution at risk.

### DAY 2: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?

Students watch the video segment *The Ten Amendments*, then analyze the amendments to identify the enumerated rights, highlight supporting text, explain the meaning, and make comparisons to another list of rights.

*“The Bill of Rights is at the very heart of the American experience, because it provides a protection to each and every citizen in each and every aspect of their lives, and it confines government to its proper role, with a protection against unreasonable government action that might otherwise ensue. If there’s any one characteristic of the American system of government that can be identified as absolutely essential to our national character, it is the Bill of Rights.”*

—Richard Thornburgh, FMR United States Attorney General  
*The Story of the Bill of Rights* Video Documentary, Annenberg Classroom

## TEACHING ACTIVITIES: Day by Day

### Class-Prep Assignment

This assignment provides important background knowledge and context for the video on the Bill of Rights. Students should complete it as an independent activity before the first in-class session.

#### Materials/Technology Needed:

- Handout: Class-Prep Assignment Sheet
- Computer with Internet access
- Access to these resources:
  - Readings on Rights (included with the lesson)
  - Chapter 1: Our Rights in American History, *Our Rights* (pdf included) The full book may be accessed from Annenberg Classroom at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-constitution>
  - Chapter 3: What Rights Does Our Constitution Protect?, *Our Constitution* (pdf included)  
The full book may be accessed from Annenberg Classroom at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-rights>
  - Understanding Democracy (available online)  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/understanding-democracy-a-hip-pocket-guide>

#### Student Assignment:

After reading, students respond to these tasks and questions.

1. Define “rights” as understood and used by the colonists.
2. Discuss the heritage of rights colonists brought with them to the new world.
3. List examples of rights brought to this country by the colonists.
4. Identify sources for rights held by the colonists.
5. Explain the restraining power of individual rights.
6. Give several reasons independence from Britain was declared.
7. Explain the significance of writing rights into the law.
8. Define *tyranny* from the perspective of the colonists. Give examples of how they experienced tyranny in the new world.  
Definition:  
Examples of tyranny:
9. Explain the purpose of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and the big problem it had to overcome.
10. When the draft of the Constitution was completed. . .  
What limits did it place on government power?  
What rights did it contain?

**Remind students to bring their Class-Prep Assignment Sheet to class.**



## DAY 1: The Fight for Rights

**Overview:** Students watch the video segment on *The Story of the Bill of Rights* and learn about the hard fought political fight to protect individual liberties that put ratification of the Constitution at risk.

**Goal:** Students gain information, understanding, and appreciation for the struggle to add a bill of rights to the Constitution that would guarantee individual liberties.

### Materials/Equipment:

- Technology
  - Computer lab with internet connection
  - Annenberg Classroom: Online Video Documentaries  
Video: *Bill of Rights*  
Part 1: *The Story of the Bill of Rights* (16:20)  
Available at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-story-of-the-bill-of-rights>
- Resources (Included)
  - Video Transcript: *Bill of Rights*
  - Readings on Rights
- Student Materials (Included)
  - Class-Prep Assignment (completed before class)
  - Student's Video Guide
  - Graphic Organizer: Diagram It: Problem-Compromise-Solution
- Teacher Materials (Included)
  - Teacher's Video Guide
  - Teacher Resource: Class-Prep Assignment
  - Teacher Resource: Historical Background and Context

### Procedure:

1. Write "rights" on the board. Lead a class discussion on the different meanings for "rights." Point out how the meaning was different for the founding generation than it is today. Settle on a definition that reflects the beliefs of the founders. (Refer to the Readings on Rights in the resource section.)
2. Review the Class-Prep Assignment as background and context for the video.
3. Show the first video segment on *The Story of the Bill of Rights* (16:20 minutes).
4. Distribute and review the Student's Video Guide.

### Homework:

1. Complete Part 1 in the Video Guide.
2. Watch the second video segment, *The Ten Amendments* (16 minutes).

## DAY 2: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?

**Overview:** Students watch the video segment *The Ten Amendments* then analyze the amendments to identify the enumerated rights, highlight supporting text, explain the meanings, and make comparisons to another list of rights.

**Goal:** Students extract information from the video and other sources to name all enumerated rights in the Bill of Rights, identify supporting text, and explain the meaning of each right.

### Materials Needed:

- Technology
  - Computer with internet connection
  - Video Segment: *The Ten Amendments* (16:02)  
Available from Annenberg Classroom  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-story-of-the-bill-of-rights>
- Resources (Included)
  - The Bill of Rights – A Transcription (pdf)
- Student Materials (Included)
  - Student’s Video Guide (Part 2)
  - Student Activity: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?
  - Handout: A Collection of Rights
- Teacher Materials (Included)
  - Teacher’s Video Guide (Part 2)
  - Teacher Reference: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?

### Procedure:

1. Provide each student with copy of The Bill of Rights – A Transcription and the Student Activity page. Review the instructions.
2. Near the end of the activity students will request copies of A Collection of Rights. They will compare their list of rights to the unique rights identified on the handout. Students also fill in missing information on the handout and may use it to re-adjust their charts. Students then analyze how their responses compare to the collection of rights. Did they miss any rights? Did they group some rights for a particular reason?
3. Make observations, ask questions, and have a discussion about all ten amendments. For example:
  - Identify related amendments and explain why they go together.
  - Determine how many rights dealt with legal matters? Civil trials? Criminal trials?
  - Which amendments have no enumerated rights?
  - Which two rights do students consider most important? Explain.
  - Why did the founders put Amendments IX and X in a Bill of Rights?
  - Draw conclusions about the concerns of the framers from the nature and distribution of rights contained in the Bill of Rights. Do we share the same concerns today?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### Have more time to teach?

1. **Read and respond to a Speak Out! issue on Annenberg Classroom that relates to the Bill of Rights.** <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/>

Examples:

Is requiring students to wear a school's logo unconstitutional?

Do students in charter schools have First Amendment rights?

How should the U.S. balance privacy with national security in NSA spy programs?

Should prisoners be allowed to have beards based on religious grounds?

2. **Why do we have such resistance to compromise in Washington today? Could it be that the mindset for compromise has changed? Read and respond to this article:**

"The Mindsets of Political Compromise" by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson

<http://www.upenn.edu/president/meet-president/Mindsets-Political-Compromise>

"The uncompromising mindset--marked by principled tenacity and mutual mistrust--is well-suited for campaigning. The compromising mindset--characterized by principled prudence and mutual respect--is more appropriate for governing."—Gutmann and Thompson

3. **Read and respond to a news article related the Bill of Rights.**

- New York Times

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/b/bill\\_of\\_rights\\_us/](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/b/bill_of_rights_us/)

- Bill of Rights Institute – Teaching with Current Events

<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/educator-resources/headlines/>

4. **Consider the different approaches used to interpret the Constitution.**

- Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia is an originalist in the way he interprets the Constitution. He uses an approach that seeks to give the text the original meaning it had when it was adopted. Thinking about the Bill of Rights from the perspective of a colonist requires the same kind of thinking.

Read and reflect on what Justice Scalia has to say about his originalist approach in this article: Constitutional Interpretation the Old Fashioned Way

[http://www.cfif.org/htdocs/freedomline/current/guest\\_commentary/scalia-constitutional-speech.htm](http://www.cfif.org/htdocs/freedomline/current/guest_commentary/scalia-constitutional-speech.htm)

- Learn more about decision-making and judicial interpretation at the Supreme Court. View the video: *Conversation: Judicial Interpretation* (37 min.) Justices Stephen G. Breyer and Antonin Scalia and a group of students discuss the different theories of how to interpret and apply the Constitution to cases <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/a-conversation-on-the-constitution-judicial-interpretation>
- Theories of Constitutional Interpretation <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/interp.html>

**5. Research to trace changes to the meaning and use of “rights” over time.**

**6. Discuss/debate timely topics:**

- Is the word “rights” overused today? Explain.
  - Do juveniles have the same constitutional rights as adults?
  - Are there limits to whom the protections of the Constitution apply?
  - Should terrorists who are arrested abroad be afforded the protection of our Bill of Rights?
  - How should the U.S. balance privacy with national security in NSA spy programs?
  - Where is “compromise” in Washington politics today?
  - Disagreement and debate are part of our national DNA, but when does it become too much?
  - Is it important to keep campaign promises?
  - When a government threatens the rights of the people, how can the problem be fixed?
  - Gridlock in Washington: What does the public feel about compromise?
- Analyze the questions and results of recent polls to make observations and draw conclusions.

**7. Play an educational game.**

- iCivics Game (for students)  
<http://www.icivics.org/games>  
Select *Do I Have a Right? Bill of Rights Edition*  
iCivics Resources for Teachers  
<https://www.icivics.org/curriculum/constitution>
- Bill of Rights Match Game  
<http://www.texaslre.org/BOR/billofrights.html>
- The Bill of Rights Game  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-bill-of-rights-game>
- Exploring Constitutional Law: Bill of Rights Golf!  
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/golf.htm>

**8. Explore how rights relate to juveniles.**

- Constitutional Rights in Juvenile Cases  
<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/constitutional-rights-juvenile-proceedings-32224.html>
- Rights and Protections Afforded to Juveniles  
[http://www.ncids.org/other%20manuals/JuvDefenderManual/JuvenileDefBook\\_02.pdf](http://www.ncids.org/other%20manuals/JuvDefenderManual/JuvenileDefBook_02.pdf)
- Rights of Juvenile Defendants  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/issue/rights-of-juvenile-defendants>
- National Juvenile Defense Center: Know Your Rights  
<http://www.njdc.info/gaultat40/knowyourrights.php>

## RELATED RESOURCES

### Online Books from Annenberg

- *Understanding Democracy, A Hip Pocket Guide*—John J. Patrick <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/understanding-democracy-a-hip-pocket-guide>
- *Our Constitution*—Donald Ritchie and Justicelearning.org <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-constitution>
- *Our Rights*—David J. Bodenhamer <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-rights>
- *The Pursuit of Justice*—Kermit L. Hall and John J. Patrick <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-pursuit-of-justice>

### Bill of Rights Resources

- National Archives: Bill of Rights [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights.html)
- Cornell University Law School: U.S. Constitution Bill of Rights <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/billofrights>
- Bill of Rights Institute <http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/>
- 10 amendments  
Findlaw: U.S. Constitution <http://constitution.findlaw.com/amendment1/amendment.html>
- Library of Congress Web Guide: Bill of Rights <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/billofrights.html>
- Madison's Copy of the Proposed "Bill of Rights" <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trt013.html>
- Congress for Kids: Bill of Rights [http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution\\_billofrights.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution_billofrights.htm)
- Bill of Rights Institute: Documents of Freedom - Equal and Inalienable rights <https://www.docsoffreedom.org/readings/equal-and-inalienable-rights>
- Exploring Constitutional Conflicts: The Bill of Rights: Its History and Significance <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/billofrightsintro.html>
- Constitution Facts <http://www.constitutionfacts.com/us-constitution-amendments/bill-of-rights>

*"[The Constitution] is an enabling (and a constraining) document. It sets forth a mechanism for making and applying law, and it creates a framework for representative government. It protects our basic freedoms, such as our rights to speak and to worship freely. It protects the basic fairness of our system, so that majorities cannot unfairly and systematically oppress minorities. It gives us the freedom to choose community, to choose democratically how we will solve our Nation's problems."*

—Justice Stephen Breyer, commencement address,  
New School University, New York City, May 20, 2005  
As quoted in *Our Rights*, pg. 23

## Student Materials

- Class Prep Assignment Sheet
- Student's Video Guide: *The Constitution Project: Bill of Rights*
  - *The Story of the Bill of Rights*
  - *The Ten Amendments*
- Graphic Organizer: Diagram It: Problem-Compromise-Solution
- Activity: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?
- Handout: A Collection of Rights

## Class-Prep Assignment Sheet

The following assignment provides important background knowledge and context for the two-part video documentary on the Bill of Rights.

### Readings

- Readings on Rights (Word document included)
- Chapter 1: Our Rights in American History, *Our Rights* (pdf included)  
The full book may be accessed from Annenberg Classroom at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-constitution>
- Chapter 3: What Rights Does Our Constitution Protect? *Our Constitution* (pdf included)  
The full book may be accessed from Annenberg Classroom at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/our-rights>
- Understanding Democracy (available online)  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/understanding-democracy-a-hip-pocket-guide>

### Respond to Reading

Consult the above resources to respond to each of the following questions and tasks. Provide at least one supporting quote and cite the source.

1. Define “rights” as understood by the colonists.
2. Discuss the heritage of rights colonists brought with them to the new world.
3. List examples of rights brought to this country by the colonists.
4. Identify sources for rights held by the colonists.
5. Explain the restraining power of individual rights.
6. Give several reasons independence from Britain was declared.
7. Explain the significance of writing rights into the law.
8. Define *tyranny* from the perspective of the colonists. Give examples of how they experienced tyranny in the new world.  
Definition:  
Examples of tyranny:
9. Explain the purpose of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and the big problem it had to overcome.
10. When the draft of the Constitution was completed. . .  
What limits did it place on government power?  
What rights did it contain?

**\*\* REMEMBER: Bring your responses to class. \*\***



## Student's Video Guide

### Bill of Rights

The *Bill of Rights* (33 min) video documentary from Annenberg Classroom contains 2 video segments.

- The Story of the Bill of Rights
- The Ten Amendments

The video is available from Annenberg Classroom:

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-story-of-the-bill-of-rights>

#### First Video: The Story of the Bill of Rights

Time: 16:20 minutes

#### Introduction:

On July 4, 1776, the colonies declared independence from British rule. In the next year, a plan for organizing the new federal government of the United States of America was put together and adopted – the Articles of Confederation. By 1786, it was obvious the plan wasn't working and had to be modified. Concerns about giving the federal government too much power had resulted in the Articles not giving it enough power to be effective. A constitutional convention was called, and fifty-five delegates from 12 states (Rhode Island didn't attend) gathered in Philadelphia to come up with a new structure for the government. Their challenge: How to give the federal government enough power to do its job without giving it the power to threaten individual liberties.

Several delegates came with competing plans and all delegates had something to say. It took three months and multiple compromises before a version was ready for a vote. Those opposing adoption voiced their concerns loudly and with great passion. The power of the government had been well defined, but what about the rights of the people? In the end, thirty-nine of the fifty-five delegates supported adoption of the new Constitution. Now it had to be ratified by the states. Would the people ratify if the Constitution didn't address specific individual rights? The survival of the Constitution was now at risk.

#### Background Knowledge

Briefly review the questions in the Class-Prep Assignment (listed below):

1. Define "rights" as understood and used by the colonists.
2. Discuss the heritage of rights colonists brought with them to the new world.
3. List examples of rights brought to this country by the colonists.
4. Identify sources for rights held by the colonists.
5. Explain the restraining power of individual rights.
6. Give several reasons independence from Britain was declared.
7. Explain the significance of writing rights into the law.
8. Define *tyranny* from the perspective of the colonists. Give examples of how they experienced tyranny in the new world.

Definition:

Examples of tyranny:

9. Explain the purpose of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and the big problem it had to overcome.
10. When the draft of the Constitution was completed. . .

## Student's Video Guide

### Bill of Rights

What limits did it place on government power?  
What rights did it contain?

#### **Words and Phrases**

amend/amendment	Declaration of Independence	principled document
American Revolution	enumerated rights	promise
Anti-Federalists	federal government	ratify/ratification
Articles of Confederation	Federalists	right/rights
bill (as in a bill of rights)	Framers	small-mindedness
Bill of Rights	honor	state government
campaign promise	individual liberties	states rights
compromise	local government	tyrant
concessions	localism	unalienable rights
Congress	nationalist	yoke of tyranny
Constitution	politics/political	
debate	preordained	

#### **Preparation for Viewing and Study**

1. Complete the Class-Prep Assignment before watching the video.
2. Review the words and phrases listed above.

#### **During the Video**

For the first viewing, stay focused and attentive to the whole story. You will have a chance to revisit it and use a transcript to answer questions.

#### **After Viewing:**

##### ➤ **Describe and Discuss**

1. Your teacher will give you 3 minutes to generate as many words or phrases as possible that describe the “political fight” and those involved. At the end of three minutes, there will be an opportunity to share and discuss the descriptors as a class. Be prepared to provide examples to justify your word choices.

2. There is significance in the use of capital letters. Explain the meaning conveyed to the reader when they encounter these terms:

bill of rights

Bill of Rights

What considerations must a writer make when using the terms?

##### ➤ **Diagram It**

After the Constitution was drafted, the founders were faced with another problem:  
Should a bill of rights be added to the Constitution?

## Student's Video Guide

### Bill of Rights

Obtain a copy of the graphic organizer Diagram It: Problem-Compromise-Solution from your teacher to complete.

#### ➤ Respond to Questions

Refer to the video transcript and other resources as needed to answer assigned questions.

1. What did the Founders want to accomplish by writing a constitution when they already had the Articles of Confederation?
2. Explain the point of view presented in the following quote. Which side held this view?  
“The federal government is going to be able to protect us against the British and against other European powers. But they’ll also protect us against the small-mindedness of state governments and make sure that the states don’t do unfair things to individuals.”
3. Discuss the relationship between federal power and state power before the Constitution.
4. Why didn’t the original Constitution contain rights for the people? What did it contain?
5. When people use hyperbole they do so to make a point. What they say can have a powerful effect on those listening. Quote two hyperboles in the video. Identify the speakers and explain the impact of their words.
6. Compare and contrast James Madison and George Mason.
7. At the time of the Constitution, eight of the thirteen states had bills of rights of their own. Explain the significance of this fact.
8. In your opinion, which was the best argument offered by each side in the debate about adding a bill of rights to the Constitution? Explain.
9. Without the Bill of Rights, the Constitution was incomplete. Which side (Federalist or Anti-Federalist) held this view and why?
10. The Bill of Rights was a campaign promise that Madison made and kept. If he didn’t believe a bill of rights was needed, why did he keep his promise?
11. Explain the connection between the Bill of Rights and the American Revolution.
12. James Madison is often referred to as the Father of the Constitution. Explain the meaning and significance of the title.
13. If rights were so important to the people, why wasn’t there any sentiment for adding a bill of rights to the Constitution?
14. Lack of a bill of rights “imperiled the ratification of the Constitution.” Explain.

## **Student's Video Guide**

### **Bill of Rights**

15. What is the significance of having a Bill of Rights written in plain language?
16. What does it take to amend the Constitution?
17. The Federalists and Anti-Federalists were opposing sides. Without the leadership and influence of James Madison, they could have remained gridlocked. How did Madison intervene and manage the situation?
18. Discuss the importance of leadership in arriving at a compromise between two opposing sides. What beliefs and qualities are important for a leader to possess? What qualities are important for all participants to possess?
19. In a democratic government of the people, by the people, and for the people, how are decisions made and problems solved?
20. What did the colonists gain by adding a bill of rights to the Constitution? What did you gain?

#### **Video: Ten Amendments**

Time: 16 minutes

#### **Introduction:**

A very brief overview of each amendment is presented in this part of the video. The amendment is quoted first, then followed up by a short explanation.

The amount of time spent on each amendment is indicated below.


- The First Amendment (1:41)
- The Second Amendment (1:03)
- The Third Amendment (0:51)
- The Fourth Amendment (1:38)
- The Fifth Amendment (3:07)
- The Sixth Amendment (1:26)
- The Seventh Amendment (1:16)
- The Eighth Amendment (1:45)
- The Ninth Amendment (1:17)
- The Tenth Amendment (1:50)

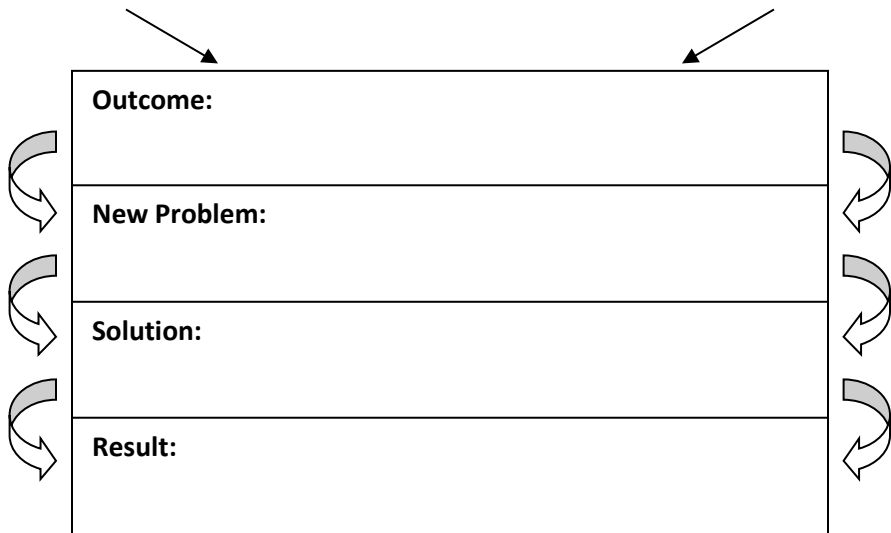
#### **Follow-up Activity: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?**

1. After watching the video, you will need copies of the following from your teacher.
  - Student Activity: Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?
  - Resource: The Bill of Rights – A Transcription
2. Complete the Student Activity.  
Near the end of the activity you will need this handout from your teacher – A Collection of Rights.

**Diagram It: Problem-Compromise-Solution**  
**Video Segment: The Story of the Bill of Rights**

**Setting:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Participants:</b>		<b>Objective:</b>	
<b>Shared Commitments/Beliefs:</b>			
<b>Side:</b>  <b>Political Beliefs:</b>   <b>People:</b>		<b>Side:</b>  <b>Political Beliefs:</b>   <b>People:</b>	
<b>State the Problem:</b>			
<b>Federalist Position:</b>  <b>Arguments:</b>	<b>Shared Concerns</b>	<b>Anti-Federalist Position:</b>  <b>Arguments:</b>	



## Ten Amendments. How Many Rights?

### Students will . . .

1. Analyze the first ten amendments to identify how many unique rights each amendment contains.
2. Name each right and tell what it means.
3. Identify the specific language in the amendment associated with the right.
4. Count up the number of rights per amendment.
5. Compare and contract their list of rights to another collection of rights.

### Materials & Technology Needed:

- The Bill of Rights: A Transcription (pdf included)  
The National Archives and Records Administration
- Computer and Internet access
- Handout: A Collection of Rights (Request this handout after completing the activity.)

### Instructions:

1. To ensure you are reviewing all language contained in the original document, copy and paste text for each amendment from the transcription of the Bill of Rights from the National Archives.
2. Reproduce a chart similar to the one below for each amendment.
3. Follow the italicized instructions for completing each row in the chart.
4. After completing all amendments, add up all the rights. How many did you identify?
5. After examining each amendment, request the handout A Collection of Rights. Compare your list to the collection of rights on the handout. Fill in the information needed on the handout and readjust your charts as needed.  
Note: Some rights may be identified by different names.
6. Analyze how your responses compared to the collection of rights. Did you miss any, did you group some rights?

<b>First Amendment</b> <i>(Name the amendment in this row.)</i>
<b>Text of the Amendment:</b> <i>(Copy/paste the full text of the amendment. No highlighting in this row.)</i>
1. <i>(Name and number the right)</i> <i>(Copy/paste the full text of the amendment again. Highlight all relevant words in the text for this right only.)</i>
<b>Meaning of the Right:</b> <i>(Explain what the right means in your own words. Consult dictionaries and glossaries as needed.)</i>
2. <i>(Name and number the right)</i> <i>(Copy/paste the full text of the amendment again. Highlight all relevant words in the text for this right only.)</i>
<b>Meaning of the Right:</b> <i>(Explain what the right means in your own words.)</i>

### Resources to Consult:

- The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution  
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/a-guide-to-the-united-states-constitution>
- Cornell University Law School – Bill of Rights  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/billofrights>
- Bill of Rights Institute  
<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/educator-resources/headlines/>

### A Collection of Rights

<b>Freedom of assembly</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Freedom of religion</b> (establishment clause) ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Freedom of religion</b> (free exercise clause) ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Freedom of speech</b> ( _____ Amendment )	<b>Freedom of the press</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Protection against cruel and unusual punishment</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Protection against double jeopardy</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Protection against excessive bail and fines</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Protection against general search warrants</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Protection against self-incrimination in a criminal case</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Protection against unreasonable searches and seizures</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Limits to quartering of troops in time of peace</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Limits to quartering of troops in time of war</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Reexamination protection</b> reexamination clause ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right of the people to bear arms</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Right to a fair trial</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to a grand jury in criminal trials</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to a private life without government interference</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Right to a public trial</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to a speedy trial</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to confront witnesses</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Right to just compensation by the government</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to legal counsel in federal prosecutions</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to obtain favorable witnesses</b> ( _____ Amendment)
<b>Right to petition the government</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to trial by an impartial jury</b> ( _____ Amendment)	<b>Right to trial by jury in civil cases</b>

Note: Some rights may be identified by different names.