

A Look at the Pennsylvania and U.S. Constitutions

Preamble Scramble

Grade Levels: 1-6

Academic Standards:

This lesson meets Proposed Standard 5.1.6.F.

Using the preamble from either the Pennsylvania Constitution or the United States Constitution, create an individual or group scramble activity by cutting out the separate words of the preamble and having the students put the preamble back together again in the proper order. A nice variation on this activity with older students would be to have them do both preambles and see how they are the same and how they are different.

(The preambles are provided on the [PBA Web site](#).)

U.S. Constitution Preamble

Ask students to find the six reasons given in the preamble for establishing the Constitution. Then ask them to explain them in their own words.

We the People of the United States,
(1) in Order to form a more perfect Union,
(2) establish Justice,
(3) insure domestic Tranquility,
(4) provide for the common defense,
(5) promote the general Welfare, and
(6) secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,
do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.

Constitution Comparison

Grade Levels: 7-12

Academic Standards: This activity involves proposed standard 5.1.E, which focuses on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as key documents of United States government. Proposed standard 5.1 covers principles and documents of government.

Materials:

- You will need either to provide pocket United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions for this activity or access and download a copy of the Bill of Rights from the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Rights from the Pennsylvania Constitution. Both are available as handouts on the Pennsylvania Bar Association Web site: www.pabar.org/lre.asp.

Lesson:

- Begin by telling the students that they are to look through the two sections that document our rights as United States and Pennsylvania citizens and identify where the documents are the same and where they are different.
- If you wish to spice up the activity, you could have one group focus on the similarities and another on the differences.
- Use the "Rights and Freedoms: Where Are They Found" worksheet on the PBA Web site and have students identify where each right or freedom is found in the United States and Pennsylvania constitutions.
- If you have the entire constitutions available, you can have the students generate their list of differences between the two constitutions and see how many they uncover by comparing it to a list generated by former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Sandra Schultz Newman when she spoke to a group of teachers studying the two documents. She listed 46 differences and still left a few for the students to uncover. Her list is available on the PBA Web site: www.pabar.org/lre.asp and on page 18 of this guide.



Other Constitution Day Lessons for All Grade Levels

The Center for Civic Education has a special set of lesson plans for Constitution Day on their Web site. There are lessons for every grade from K-12. Lesson topics include talking about authority, examining the preamble to the Constitution, understanding the federal system of government, learning how our government was organized using the Constitution as a framework, and critical thinking exercises about the ideas and principles that have shaped our constitutional heritage. Copies of these lessons are available on the PBA Web site as well as a link to the Center for Civic Education.