Teacher’s Guide

You’ve Got Rights!

Time Needed: One class period

Materials Needed:
- Student worksheets
- Scissors, glue (optional)

Copy Instructions:
- Anticipation Activity (half-sheet; class set)
- Reading (1 page; class set)
- Rights Activity (2 pages; class set)
- Cut & Paste Activity (1 page; class set)
- Review (1 page; class set)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:
- Describe the circumstances and debate that led to the Bill of Rights.
- Compare and contrast the positions of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists as to the Bill of Rights.
- Identify the rights granted by the Bill of Rights and key later amendments.
- Categorize rights in the Bill of Rights as individual freedoms, protection from government power, or rights of the accused.
- Predict what might happen if key rights were missing from the Constitution.

Step by Step

☐ ANTICIPATE the lesson by having students complete the “We Defeated the Aliens... Now What?” half page activity. Poll students to find out which rights got the most votes on the “Pamphlet of Protections.”

☐ DISTRIBUTE the reading page and the Rights Activity pages to students.

☐ READ the reading page with students, pausing to discuss as appropriate.

☐ EXPLAIN that you will be reading the actual text of the Bill of Rights together. You will be looking to see whether any of the rights students chose for the Pamphlet of Protections appear in the Bill of rights.

☐ PREVIEW the Rights Activity together. Point out that these are “amendments” (additions/changes) to the Constitution of the United States. Point out the column where students will write which “pamphlet protection” corresponds with each amendment (some amendments will have no corresponding “protection” and some will have more than one).

☐ READ the Rights Activity as a class, pausing to explain as necessary. As you read, provide students with a synonym for each bold word. (See callouts on the Teacher’s Guide.) Have students record the synonyms on their activity pages. As you read, ask students to identify which (if any) “pamphlet protections” correspond with each amendment. Have them write the number of the protection on the line next to the amendment.

☐ PAIR students together and give them two minutes to identify which “pamphlet protections” were not in the Constitution. Ask pairs to choose one missing right and think of a reason why it’s missing. Call on pairs to share what they thought of.

☐ DISTRIBUTE the Cut & Paste activity and Review to students. (Optionally, students can cut & paste without completing the review, or you can have students match the cut & paste cards by writing the numbers on the correct cards without cutting & pasting.)

☐ ALLOW students to complete the activities. Review if you wish.

☐ CLOSE by having students list as many constitutional rights as they can remember on a scrap of paper. Call on students to share what they remembered.

This lesson plan is part of the Constitution series by iCivics, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing civic education. For more resources, please visit www.icivics.org/teachers, where you can access the state standards aligned to this lesson plan. Provide feedback to feedback@icivics.org.

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You’ve Got Rights!

We Defeated the Aliens… Now What? The year is 2056. After a huge battle with alien invaders that nearly destroyed the world, people are afraid about what rights they’ll have under a new government. Leaders have decided to create the Pamphlet of Protections to define what rights people will have. Look at the proposed rights. Mark the ten you think should be included:

Pamphlet of Protections

1. The people shall have the right to own weapons.
2. Everyone must be friends with everyone else.
3. People are free to express their opinions on any subject.
4. A person accused of a crime has the right to a fair trial.
5. Criminals shall not be punished in a way that is mean or weird.
6. The people shall have the right to clean streets and parks.
7. Laws can’t stop adult citizens from voting.
8. The people shall have the right to a free education.
9. All people shall be protected equally by the laws.
10. The people shall never be enslaved.
11. No person shall be searched without a good reason
12. The people shall be free to drive as soon as they can operate a car.
13. No person shall be required to fight in a war.
14. No person will be put on trial twice for the same crime.
15. A person may follow any religion or no religion.
You’ve Got Rights!

We Defeated the British... Now What?

The year is 1791. After a bloody war against the British, the American colonists have won their independence. The new Americans are excited, but some people are afraid about what rights they’ll have under a new government. They’ve already suffered under the heavy hand of the British king. Now, some American leaders want to create a list of rights to define what rights American citizens will have.

Leaders of the new United States of America have already written a Constitution that explains exactly how the new government will work. The only problem? It can’t take effect until it’s approved by the new states. And there are some state leaders who don’t like it. Known as the Anti-Federalists, these people don’t even like the Constitution. They fear a strong central government, and they are demanding that the Constitution include a list of citizens’ rights. Without such a list, they warn the national government will violate people’s rights. They’re threatening to stop the Constitution from being approved unless a list is added.

But another group, known as the Federalists, insists the Constitution alone is enough to protect citizens’ rights. They warn that it’s impossible to list every single right that citizens should have. But once rights are written, the government could take advantage by violating rights that aren’t on the list.

Both sides are convinced they’re right. To move forward, they hammer out a compromise: The Bill of Rights. Instead of including a list of rights in the main part of the Constitution, they add it as the first ten amendments, or changes, to the Constitution. One of these amendments assures that the rights listed are not the only rights citizens have.

There are three main categories of rights: individual freedoms, protections against government abuse and power, and rights of people accused of crimes. In a few minutes, you’ll read the actual text of the Bill of Rights and compare it to the Pamphlet of Protections you created.

More and More Rights

As time went on, later amendments added more rights to the Constitution. Amending the Constitution is not an easy process—and it’s not supposed to be. But the difficult process has meant that important rights were slow to evolve. After the bloody Civil War was fought between the northern and southern states, African Americans who had been enslaved in the United States gained their freedom. In the 1860s and 70s, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments added rights for former slaves and people of color. In the 20th century, the 19th and 26th Amendments added voting rights for women and citizens as young as 18. Even today, people are campaigning to amend the constitution to add rights for groups that are still disadvantaged.
The Bill of Rights

Amendment 1
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment 2
A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment 3
No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner . . . .

Amendment 4
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment 5
No person shall . . . be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment 6
In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury . . . and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment 7
In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.
**Amendment 8**
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

**Amendment 9**
The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Amendment 10**
The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

**Other Important Amendments**

**Amendment 13**
Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

**Amendment 14**
All persons born or naturalized in the United States... are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

**Amendment 15**
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

**Amendment 19**
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

**Amendment 26**
The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age.
You’ve Got Rights!

Matching Activity. Use this page to organize the ten amendments in the Bill of Rights.

1. No unreasonable searches and seizures.

2. The right to have a jury hear your case in a criminal trial.

3. The government cannot deprive you of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

4. Bail, fines and punishments must not be excessive.

5. Did you find a right not listed in the Constitution? It still belongs to the people!

6. You don’t have to house soldiers in your home during peacetime.

7. The right to have a jury hear your case in most civil trials.

8. Citizens can keep and bear arms.

9. You have the freedoms of religion, speech, press; and the right to assemble peacefully and petition the government.

10. If a power isn’t given to the federal government, it goes to the states or the people.
**A. Categorize.** Below is a list of rights found in the Constitutional amendments. Complete the graphic organizer writing the number of each right beneath the category it best belongs to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BILL OF RIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1a. The freedom to practice any religion or no religion.
1b. Right to assemble peacefully.
2. Right to keep and bear arms.
4. No unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.
5a. The government can’t take a person’s life, liberty, or property without due process of law.
5b. No person can be tried twice for the same crime.
5c. The government can’t take private property without compensation.
6a. The right to a speedy trial.
6b. People accused of a crime have the right to a lawyer.
8. No cruel and unusual punishments.
9. Rights listed in the Constitution are not the only rights people have.
13. Slavery shall not exist in the United States.
15. People have the right to vote regardless of race.
19. Women cannot be denied the right to vote.

**B. Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist.** Decide whether each statement describes Federalists, Anti-Federalists, or both. Write the letter in the correct area of the Venn diagram below.

A. Feared a strong central government.
B. Thought the Constitution was enough to protect citizens’ rights.
C. Agreed to the Bill of Rights as a compromise.
D. Worried a list of rights might be seen as the ONLY rights people had.
E. Thought the Constitution needed a list of protected rights.
F. Opposed the Constitution as-is.
G. Believed citizens had rights that should be protected.
H. Wanted the Constitution to be approved as-is.
I. Believed in American independence and freedom.

**C. No Rights for You!** Use your imagination to describe the *worst possible thing* that might happen if each of these amendments were missing from the Constitution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without this...</th>
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**Alien Invasion!** The year is 2056. After a huge battle with alien invaders that nearly destroyed the world, people are afraid about what rights they'll have under a new government. The leaders of the group have decided to create the Pamphlet of Protections to define what rights people will have. Look at the proposed rights. Mark the ten you think should be included:

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**Teachers:** "Protections” found in the Bill of Rights are marked with BR.

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**You’ve Got Rights!**

**Activity.** Cut each box out and read the statement. Paste it on the amendment that is the best match.

4. No unreasonable searches and seizures.
6. The right to have a jury hear your case in a **criminal** trial.
5. The government cannot deprive you of life, liberty or property without due process of law.
8. Bail, fines and punishments must not be excessive.
9. Did you find a **right** not listed in the Constitution? It still belongs to the people!
3. You don’t have to house soldiers in your home during peacetime.
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