

Tennessee Secretary of State

Civics Lesson Plans

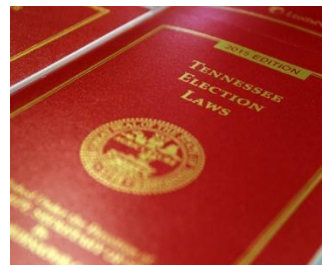
Laws

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Grade Level: K-2nd grade

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For additional lesson plans, visit sos.tn.gov/civics/lessonplans.



Introduction:

This is the second lesson in a civics unit for students grades K-2. This lesson introduces the purpose of laws and explains that the Constitution is the foundation for our country's laws.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the purpose of laws?
- What is the basis of our laws?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Know the purpose of laws.
- Know the difference between a law and a rule.
- Name some examples of laws.
- Know that the U.S. Constitution is the basis for our laws.
- Understand obeying laws is a responsibility of a citizen.

Curriculum Standards:

K.21 (Social Studies) Explain the purpose of rules and laws.

1.27 (Social Studies) Explain that our state's and country's laws are based upon the Constitution.

1.28 (Social Studies) Give examples of a rule and a law through the use of drawings, discussions, or writings.

2.29 (Social Studies) Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.

Materials Needed:

- Text: “Hooray! Law of the Land” (text from ReadWorks, PDF also attached)
 - ReadWorks provides research-based units, lessons, and authentic, leveled non-fiction and literary passages directly to educators online, for free, to be shared broadly. You can sign up for a free account at <http://www.readworks.org/>
- Projector/Smart board
- Optional: See attached photos to show students.
- Poster board (plus markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)

Background:

Rules are standards of behavior that must be followed in certain environments or situations. Generally, rules pertain to families and organizations such as schools or clubs. Laws are created by governments and publicly enforced by police and court systems. Laws are voted on and have legal implications when broken. The Constitution is the highest law in the United States. All other laws come from the Constitution. It says how the government works. Each state also has a constitution.

See attached photos of the constitutions to show students.

[Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government – U.S. Constitution](#)

Lesson Activities:

1. Ask students...
 - What are rules and laws?
 - What is the difference between the two?
 - Why are they important?
 - What happens if you break a rule or a law?

(Rules are things we follow to keep us safe. Laws are rules that all people in a community must follow.)

2. Together create a graphic organizer or list of examples of classroom/school rules and community laws. Explain that class rules are often posted in the classroom and that school rules may be in a handbook or on school website. (If applicable, show students the school handbook.)
3. Explain that citizens must follow laws/rules. Our Constitution is a written plan of government and laws for our country. Tennessee also has its own constitution that sets up government and laws for the state. Optional: See attached photos of Tennessee's constitutions and laws to show the students.
4. Read aloud "Hooray! Law of the Land." You may wish to project this text for students to follow along. Older students may read individually.
(This ReadWorks text has a Lexile level of 400, which is below the recommended stretch level for 2nd/3rd grade and should, therefore, be accessible to older students.)
5. Discuss the following questions:
 - What is the Constitution?
 - Why did people want one set of rules?
 - What problems could be caused if there were different rules in different places?
 - Why is the Constitution important?
6. Choose several laws that citizens must follow (such as following speed limit, not littering, wearing a seat belt or bike helmet, etc.). Have students discuss why these laws are important.
7. Students (individually or in a small group) will create a poster showing the law and explaining why it is important.

Assessment:

Use posters or writings as assessments.

Extension Options & Resources:

Book: *What if Everybody Did That?* by Ellen Javernick

This book is appropriate for kindergarten to second grade students as a read aloud. A young boy must consider the consequences of his actions in this cautionary tale about making responsible choices. *Also available as a read aloud on YouTube. (ISBN: 978-0761456865)

Activity: Classroom Constitution - Together, create a "classroom constitution" outlining how the classroom will be run. Have each student sign at the bottom of the document.

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Hooray!

Law of the Land

Our country has rules.

Read the story to learn about our **Constitution**. That is a written plan that tells the **laws** of our country. A law is a rule. The plan was written more than 200 years ago.

1 Long ago, our country had many different rules. People wanted to have one set of rules. At the time, the United States was a new country. It was made up of only 13 states.



Ariel Skelley/Photolibrary

2 A group of leaders talked about the rules. They planned to write one set of rules. They wanted to make the country better. George Washington was one of those leaders.



Bettman/Corbis

3 The leaders met in Independence Hall. That is a building in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They wrote the rules by hand. The rules start with the words "We the People."



Shutterstock

4 The leaders signed the new set of rules for people to follow. The rules became known as the United States Constitution.



Masterfile

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage.

1. What is the Constitution?

2. Describe what happened after people decided that they wanted one set of rules.

3. According to the article, what was the last step before the list of rules became the U.S. Constitution?

4. What is this passage mostly about?

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

In 1787, leaders from the 13 colonies came together and wrote the United States Constitution in Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

Who? leaders from the 13 colonies

5. (did) What?

6. When?

7. Where?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

A group of leaders planned to write one set of rules, _____ the country would be better.

- A but
- B because
- C so

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **constitution** (con · sti · tu · tion): a written plan of laws or rules; your health.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **constitution**.
- a. On the first day of second grade, the teacher and students created a class constitution made up of a set of classroom rules.
 - b. In order to be fair and equal, everyone is expected to follow the constitution created by our country.
 - c. When someone doesn't follow the U.S. Constitution, they can get into trouble.
 - d. The Constitution contains rules that are meant to protect people and give them freedoms.
 - e. Even when everyone else is sick, Susan always stays healthy so we would say she has a strong constitution!
10. Which picture is of the U.S. Constitution?



Teacher Guide and Answer Key

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 400

Featured Text Structure: Sequence - the writer provides an order of events or steps in a process

Passage Summary: The passage describes what the United States' Constitution is and the process to create it.

To the Teacher: Read the passage aloud to the class [TIP: while reading aloud, show the passage on a whiteboard or give each student a copy of the passage so they can follow along].

Then, use the text-dependent questions 1-8 to facilitate a whole class discussion to ensure students comprehend the key details from the passage.

Finally, use questions 9-10 to deep teach one important vocabulary word [TIP: you can use the model provided for teaching additional vocabulary].

1. What is the Constitution? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: The Constitution of the United States is a written plan that tells the laws of our country. [paragraph 1]

2. Describe what happened after people decided that they wanted one set of rules. [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: A group of leaders talked about the rules and how they wanted to make the country better by creating one set of rules. The leaders all met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA and started writing the rules by hand. [paragraphs 3, 4]

3. According to the article, what was the last step before the list of rules became the U.S. Constitution? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: In order for the rules to become the U.S. Constitution, the leaders signed the new set of rules for the people to follow. Once all the leaders signed the rules, they became known as the Constitution. [paragraph 5]

4. What is this passage mostly about? [Main Idea]

Suggested answer: The article is about the Constitution of the United States. The article describes the steps that led to the creation of the Constitution. The Constitution is a set of laws for our country that was created by our country's leaders in 1787 in Independence Hall.

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

In 1787, leaders from the 13 colonies came together and wrote the United States Constitution in Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

Who? leaders from the 13 colonies

5. (did) What? **came together and wrote the United States Constitution**

6. When? **in 1787**

7. Where? **in Independence Hall in Philadelphia**

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

A group of leaders planned to write one set of rules, _____ the country would be better.

A but

B because

C so

To the Teacher: ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: **constitution** (con · sti · tu · tion): a written plan of laws or rules; your health.

Step 1: Introduce the word

- Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (con · sti · tu · tion)
- Teacher says: "This word is constitution. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Constitution."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- Teacher says: "A constitution is a written plan of laws or rules. It can also mean your health."
- Teacher says: "In the passage, the word constitution is used when talking about a written plan of rules or laws. The author discusses how the Constitution of the

United States was written. You can also say someone has a strong constitution or they are really healthy."

- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Constitution."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **constitution** (con · sti · tu · tion): a written plan of laws or rules; your health.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **constitution**.
- a. On the first day of second grade, the teacher and students created a class constitution made up of a set of classroom rules.
 - b. In order to be fair and equal, everyone is expected to follow the constitution created by our country.
 - c. When someone doesn't follow the U.S. Constitution, they can get into trouble.
 - d. The Constitution contains rules that are meant to protect people and give them freedoms.
 - e. Even when everyone else is sick, Susan always stays healthy so we would say she has a strong constitution!

Step 4: Check for student understanding

To the Teacher: This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

10. Which picture is of the U.S. Constitution?



Suggested Additional Vocabulary: law, independence, rules

Tennessee State Constitutions

We the People of the Territory
of the United States South of the River
Ohio having the right of admission into the
General Government as a number States thereof,
consistent with the Constitution of the United
States and the act of Congress of the State of
North Carolina, recognizing the Ordinance
for the Government of the Territory of the United
States South of the River Ohio do hereby
and establish the following Constitution of
Government and do mutually agree with
each other to form ourselves into a free and
Independent State, by the name of the State
of Tennessee.

Article 1th
Section 1st The Legislative Authority of
this State shall be vested in a General Assembly
which shall consist of a Senate and House
of Representatives both dependent on the People.

[illegible][illegible]