

# We the Second Graders

**Grade Level:** Second Grade  
**Written by:** Ashley Powley, Mountain View Core Knowledge School, Canon City, CO  
**Length of Unit:** Ten lessons, approximately one hour each

## I. ABSTRACT

Students will be learning about the history, development and general meaning of the Constitution as it relates to their lives. Along with this study, they will participate in a classroom simulation of the Constitutional Convention, by writing a Preamble, developing a government, and writing a Bill of Rights for the second grade classroom.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
  - 1. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - 2. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - 3. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
  - 1. History and Geography: American Government: The Constitution (page 49)
    - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
    - b. James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution”
    - c. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
- C. Skill Objectives
  - 1. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government. (Colorado History Standard (CHS) 5C)
  - 2. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism. (CHS 5C2)
  - 3. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups. (CHS 7A)
  - 4. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution). (CHS 7A1)
  - 5. Students will use skills for working cooperatively. (CHS 7B)

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
  - 1. Colman, Warren. *The Constitution (A New True Book)*
  - 2. Maestro, Betsy and Giulio. *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*
  - 3. Hirsch, E.D. *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know (Revised Edition)*
- B. For Students
  - 1. Major causes, events, leaders and the outcome of the Revolutionary War (First Grade)
  - 2. Early colonial history of the United States (First Grade)


#### IV. RESOURCES

- A. *Collections for Young Scholars (Volume 2, Book 2)* – Open Court Publishing, “The First Fourth of July,” by Charles P. Graves (book for Lesson One)
- B. *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know (Revised Edition)*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (varied lessons)
- C. *The Constitution – A New True Book*, by Warren Colman (book for Lessons Five and Six)
- D. *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro (book for Lesson Four)
- E. *We the Kids*, by David Catrow (book for Lesson Seven)
- F. *American History for Children – United States Constitution*, produced by Schlessinger Video Productions (optional video for Lessons Four)

#### V. LESSONS

##### **Lesson One: Winning Our Independence**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  - 1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - 2. Lesson Content
    - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - 3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
    - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. *Collections for Young Scholars – Volume 2, Book 2* (Open Court) (for every student) or *Fourth of July*, by Charles P. Graves
  - 2. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments
  - 3. Appendix B – How Did We Win the Revolutionary War? (for every student)
  - 4. Construction paper (12 in. by 18 in.) – black (for every student)
  - 5. Student school supplies: scissors and a white crayon
  - 6. Stapler
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. Government – the way a group of people are ruled
  - 2. Revolution – when an old government is rejected and replaced with a new one
  - 3. Independence – being ruled by oneself and not by someone else
  - 4. Taxes – money that people have to pay to those who rule over them
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Review early American Colonial history and the Revolutionary War from first grade by reading *Collections for Young Scholars – Volume 2, Book 2*, “*The First Fourth of July*,” by Charles P. Graves, either in small groups using their readers, or by reading the story aloud to the entire class.
  - 2. On the chalkboard make a list of all of the things that England was doing that made the colonists angry. Discuss which British rules the Americans thought were unfair. (It might be helpful to read to the students a portion of the section on the Revolutionary War in *What Your First Grader Needs to Know*.) Label this list as “Causes of the Revolutionary War.”

3. Hand out Appendix B – How Did We Win the Revolutionary War?, to each student. On this handout list three advantages that the Colonies had (they knew their land, they were fighting for their freedom, they had help from France) and three advantages that the British had (they had better trained soldiers, they had the world’s best navy, they had more money). At the bottom, write the result of the war: America Won!
4. Hand out one piece of 12 in. by 18 in. black construction paper, folded into thirds (each third is 12 in. by 6 in.) and cut along the folds. A wavy line should be traced across the top that forms a U-shape (2-3 in. deep) on the left, upside down U in the middle that touches the top, and joined to another U-shape (2-3 in. deep) on the right like this:
 
5. Students should cut along the top wavy line of each black third. Then with the flat sides on the bottom and the wavy sides on top, staple the sides of the three black pieces together to form a triangle-shaped hat (tricorn hat= three corners). Students may use a white crayon to draw a white stripe along the upper edge of the hat.
6. With a white crayon, write on one-third of the hat a reason why we fought the Revolutionary War (we wanted to rule ourselves), on another third write an advantage we had (we fought for our freedom), and on the front third write the result (America Won!).

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The teacher will go around and evaluate the information that students record on the tricorn hats. The hats can be displayed as part of a Constitution hallway wall display and will be used later in lesson seven.
2. The teacher will evaluate Appendix B – Advantages in the Revolutionary War, for completion and record this in Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments. (Note: The purpose of this checklist is to make sure that all students have participated in all of the assignments of this unit and have correctly completed them. Any incomplete or incorrect assignments should be returned to the students for correct completion.)

**Lesson Two: Thirteen Colonies: Free, But Not Yet United**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
  - c. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups.
  - d. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution).
  - e. Students will use skills for working cooperatively.

- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix C – Planner For My Second Grade Colony (for every student)
  2. Copier paper, white, 8-1/2 in. by 11 in. (for every student)
  3. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Assignments
  4. Student school supplies: crayons
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Democracy – a kind of government where people rule themselves by choosing their own leaders
  2. United – joined together and working together
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Review and discuss the kind of government that the colonies had before the Revolutionary War. Have the students take out their textbooks, *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., and read together the section on “Our Constitution – Democracy: A Big Challenge,” pages 127-129 (middle). Discuss the term “democracy” as meaning “rule by the people,” and “united” as meaning “joined together, working together.”
  2. Explain that we are going to act out the challenges that the thirteen original colonies faced in trying to come together as a united country. Explain that we will be dividing our class into thirteen colonies and instead of calling our country “America,” we will call it “Second Grade Land.” Divide up the class into the thirteen “colonies,” according to the number of students in the class and have students from the same colony sit together.
  3. Hand out Appendix C – Planner For My Second Grade Colony, to each student. Go over each section with the students, pausing to give students time to brainstorm with their partners and decide together how to fill in their planner. Partners from the same colony should have identical information on their papers. Students should also complete the bottom of the paper by designing their own money and they should be given a white piece of copier paper (8-1/2 in. by 11 in.) to be used in designing their own flags.
  4. When the planner is completed, the new colonies should tape their flags to their chosen locations in the classroom. (Note: Student and teacher desks should be off-limits. If two colonies choose the same location, students can play “Paper, Scissors, Rock” to decide who gets that location.)
  5. Students should hand in their planners to be evaluated by the teacher. These planners can also be displayed in the hallway.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teachers will evaluate students’ Appendix C – Planner For My Second Grade Colony, for correct completion of the assignment. This can be marked on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

### **Lesson Three: James Madison, Father of the Constitution**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution”
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.

- b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. White copier paper – 8-1/2 in. by 11 in. (for every student)
  - 2. Student school supplies: crayons, ruler (12 in.)
  - 3. Book: *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know (Revised Edition)*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (for every student, if possible)
  - 4. Appendix A – Checklist For Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. Constitution – a written document that explains the rules or laws for a country or other group of people
  - 2. “Father of the Constitution” – a person whose ideas were used more than anyone else’s in writing the Constitution
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Teachers should have the students sit with their colonial partners. Then they should have each group choose one person to stand and tell the name of their colony, point out their flag, and share their four rules. When all thirteen colonies have shared, discuss the differences and similarities in some of their rules or laws.
  - 2. Review the fact that after the Revolutionary War, the thirteen colonies were not united into one country because they used different money, had different leaders, and sometimes had different laws. Discuss the fact that the leaders of these colonies understood that they would need to come together to help our country make a set of laws that the whole country would follow, called the Constitution. Explain that one of the most famous of these leaders was from Virginia and his name was James Madison.
  - 3. Have the students take out their textbooks, *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know (Revised Edition)*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., and turn to page 129 (middle). Begin reading together the story of the life of James Madison to the bottom of page 130. Have the students think of at least three things about James Madison’s life that would help him be a great leader for our government. Discuss why he was called the “Father of the Constitution.” (His ideas for our government were accepted and used in the Constitution, more than anyone else’s.)
  - 4. Hand each student a piece of white copier paper, 8-1/2 in. by 11 in., and fold the paper into fourths to form a booklet (keep the fold on top). On the front cover, have the students write the title, “James Madison,” and draw and color a picture of him, based on the picture at the bottom of page 131 in their books.
  - 5. On each of the next three pages, have the students use their rulers to draw two or three lines at the bottom of each page. On each of these pages have them write something about James Madison’s life that made him such a great leader. Students should also draw and color an illustration to go with their statements for each page. (Ideas for these three pages would be: James grew up in a large family, so he knew how to get along well with others; James started reading big books when he was only nine years old; James could read in many other languages; James was a good student and he finished college early; James asked his friend Thomas Jefferson for more books to read about government.)
  - 6. Students may use these books to read to a partner in the class during a partner reading time.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. Students will hand in these booklets for the teacher to evaluate for completion and mark on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit

Assignments. Students should save these booklets in their history folders to study prior to the final assessment.

#### **Lesson Four: The Constitutional Convention**

##### **A. Daily Objectives**

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution”
  - c. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.

##### **B. Materials**

1. Book: *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro
2. Parchment paper (off-white) – 8-1/2 in. by 11 in. (for every student)
3. Feathers, 6 in. size (for every student)
4. Tape, clear
5. Student school supplies: crayons, ruler (12 in.)
6. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments
7. Video: *American History for Children – United States Constitution*, by Schlessinger Video Productions (Optional activity)

##### **C. Key Vocabulary**

1. Constitutional Convention – a meeting of leaders from all of the colonies, to decide on what the laws will be for our country
2. Preamble – an introduction or beginning to something

##### **D. Procedures/Activities**

1. Review with the students the need for the colonies to become united (different laws, different money, no central army, no leader to meet with other leaders). Discuss how the leaders from the colonies were concerned about these problems, so they agreed to meet in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at Independence Hall, the very place where the Declaration of Independence had been signed. Explain that leaders from every colony came and this meeting was called the Constitutional Convention.
2. Begin reading *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro. Have the students raise their hands if they hear the name of a person they know mentioned in the story. Then have them explain why that person was famous. (Review from first grade: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson; and James Madison from Lesson Three.)

(Note: Teachers may read pages 130 through 132 of *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know (Revised Edition)*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. if the previous book is unavailable.)

3. Explain to the students that the Preamble to the Constitution is the first very long sentence in the Constitution. It explains why the leaders of the colonies felt it was important to write the Constitution. Read the Preamble to the Constitution to the students, found on page 44 of *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro. Have the students note the first three words of the Preamble: “We the People.” Discuss what that means. (It means that the Constitution was written by us, the people of the United States.) Also, discuss in simpler terms the rest of the Preamble. Have the students note the ending of the sentence: “... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”
  4. Hand out a piece of parchment paper to the students. Explain that this is the kind of old-fashioned paper that was used when the Constitution was written. Also hand out a long feather to the students and tape the lower part of the feather along their pencils to imitate a quill pen. Explain that the lower part of a large feather was dipped in ink and used for writing during this time.
  5. Holding their papers vertically, have the students use a ruler to draw a line across the tops of their papers, three inches from the top. On this line in tall letters, using their quill pencils, have them write, “We the People ...” Then at the bottom of their papers, have them draw two lines, two inches apart, and write the end of the Preamble, “...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” (All of these words should be written on the chalkboard for the students to copy.)
  6. In the middle section of the paper, students should draw and color two or three scenes that come to mind when they hear the phrases, “establish justice,” “insure domestic tranquility,” “provide for the common defense,” “promote the general welfare,” and “secure the blessings of liberty.” These ideas can be discussed before the students draw and color the pictures. Students may roll the top edge in, toward the front of the page, and the bottom edge out, toward the back of the page, to give it an aged look.
  7. Have the class practice reading their Preambles together aloud. Teachers should check these for completion and record on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments. Students may take these home to read to their parents for reading homework.
  8. (Optional Activity) Students may watch the video, *American History for Children – United States Constitution*, by Schlessinger Video Production, especially Part 1 (approximately 10 minutes long). This is an overview of the U.S. Constitution and would be a good introduction to its content.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Students’ correct completion of their Preambles should be evaluated and recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments. This may be displayed in the hallway with other Constitution Unit projects.

### **Lesson Five: The Three Branches of Our Government**

#### **A. *Daily Objectives***

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.

- b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
    - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
  - 2. Lesson Content
    - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
    - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
  - 3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
    - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Book: *The Constitution – A New True Book*, by Warren Colman
  - 2. Brown and green construction paper, 12 in. by 18 in. (for every student)
  - 3. Student school supplies: scissors and glue
  - 4. Labels – self-sticking, white, (address label size), three thin (1/2 in.), and three thick (1 in.) (for every student)
  - 5. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. Branches of Government – the three important groups that make up our government
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Have the students take out their “Preambles” from Lesson Five and once again, read aloud the beginning and ending phrases. Review the reasons why the Constitution was written. (We wanted the whole country to agree on the laws for our government.)
  - 2. Explain that the main part of the Constitution describes the jobs of our government leaders. Discuss why the leaders might not have wanted a king to rule them again. (England’s king was unfair and yet he got to remain a king for his whole life.) Explain that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention decided to divide the leadership of our country into three groups or branches: the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court.
  - 3. Begin reading *The Constitution – A New True Book*, by Warren Colman, from page 22 through page 36. As each branch of our government is mentioned (Congress, President, Supreme Court), write the name of that branch on the chalkboard. After that branch is described, ask the students to tell in their own words what that group’s job is. Write a summary of their ideas underneath the name of that branch.
  - 4. Next, hand out one piece of brown construction paper (12 in. by 18 in.), and one piece of green construction paper (12 in. by 18 in.) to each student. On the chalkboard, draw a large tree trunk with three large branches coming off it. Around each branch, draw a large, cloud-like shape for “leaves.” Have the students use their construction paper to cut out a large trunk, three large branches, and three large cloud-like shapes for “leaves.” They should glue these together to form their trees.
  - 5. Hand out three thin white labels and three thick white labels to each student. On the leafy part of each branch, students should stick a thin label in the center and a thick label underneath it. The teacher should write the words, “U.S.

Government” on the chalkboard and have the students copy these words across the middle of their tree trunks.

6. The teacher should tell the students to write the names of the three branches of our government on the thin labels, writing “Congress” on the left branch, “President” on the middle branch, and “Supreme Court” on the right branch. Students should write the words that describe their jobs underneath the titles, on the thick labels. (These words can be copied off of the chalkboard.)

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students’ Government Trees will be evaluated for correctly labeling the three branches of the government and the corresponding jobs of each branch. Correct completion of this assignment will be recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

**Lesson Six: The Bill of Rights**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.

B. *Materials*

1. Book: *The Constitution – A New True Book*, by Warren Colman
2. Appendix D – American Flag for the Bill of Rights (for every student)
3. Student school supplies: crayons
4. Overhead projector
5. Appendix E – Bill of Rights (copy onto a clear transparency sheet)
6. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Assignments

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Amendments – changes that are made to an original document or paper
2. Rights – things that we are allowed to do or ways we are protected

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Review with the students the previous two lessons about the Constitution, discussing the Preamble (the reason why the Constitution was written) and the information in the Constitution (the three branches of our government). Explain that even though the Constitution now explained the people and groups of people who would rule our government, it still did not explain ways that the American people would be protected from this new government mistreating them.
2. Explain that three years after the Constitution was accepted, ten new things were added to the Constitution. When something is added to a document to change it,

it is called an amendment. These ten new amendments were called the Bill of Rights.

3. Begin reading page 37-45 of *The Constitution – A New True Book*, by Warren Colman. After each amendment is read, discuss with the students what this would mean for them as American children. Show the Bill of Rights on the wall or screen, using an overhead projector and point these out as they are read.
4. Hand out Appendix D – American Flag for the Bill of Rights. Have the students color the background around the stars dark blue. Then on the top stripe of the flag, write the words, “Bill of Rights.” Students should skip a line between stripes and on alternating stripes in their own words, they should write one of their rights or protections that are mentioned in the Bill of Rights. (Example: First Amendment – We can worship the way we want to; we can write what we want to write; we can say what we want to say; we can come together in groups if we are peaceful.) They can refer to the overhead screen to see the rights that should be written in their own words. There should be six rights written down.
5. Starting with the top stripe being red, students should color every other stripe red, coloring around the words and not on top of them.
6. Students should hand in their flags so that the teacher can evaluate them for correct understanding of the Bill of Rights. Students may take these home later to read their rights to their parents for reading homework. Student flags should be brought back to school to be used later in Lesson Nine. They also may be displayed with other Constitution unit projects.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Appendix D – American Flags for the Bill of Rights should be evaluated for correct completion and recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for the Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

**Lesson Seven: Second Grade Constitution Convention - Preamble**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
  - c. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups.
  - d. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution).
  - e. Students will use skills for working cooperatively.

- B. *Materials*
1. Book: *We the Kids*, by David Catrow
  2. Tricorn hats from Lesson One
  3. Appendix F – Preamble to the Constitution of Second Grade Land
  4. Copier Paper, white (six sheets for every student)
  5. Student school supplies: rulers, crayons
  6. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Assignments
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Delegate – a person chosen by a group to represent them or “stick up” for them
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Have the students sit in their “colony” locations (by their flags) with the other members of their colonies. Explain that the colonies of “Second Grade Land” have many differences in their laws and their money, just like the American colonies did. For “Second Grade Land” to become united, we also need to come together to develop a Constitution that all of our colonies can agree on.
  2. Explain to the students that their first step will be to choose one delegate from each colony, a person to represent or “stick up for” them and attend our Constitutional Convention. Give the groups time to choose their delegates. Then clear a large space in the center of the room and make a circle of thirteen desks and chairs for the delegates. The delegates should wear their tricorn hats from Lesson One to help them look more authentic. The other students in the class may sit around the outside of the circle to observe the convention and take notes. (They may also wear their tricorn hats, if desired.)
  3. Read aloud to the students, *We the Kids*, by David Catrow, to review the content of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. Have the students look carefully at the illustrations on each page and discuss how the picture describes the words from the Preamble that are on each page.
  4. Explain to the students that they are going to write a Preamble to their own Constitution for “Second Grade Land.” They can use the U.S. Constitution as a guide, but they should put the Preamble into their own words and it should apply to the needs of the Second Grade classroom. Hand out Appendix F – Preamble to the Constitution of “Second Grade Land.” Explain that the teacher will play the role of George Washington and will call on students to share their ideas. They will all play the role of James Madison and will record the best ideas onto their handout (Appendix F).
  5. The teacher should again read each section of the Preamble from *We the Kids*, by David Catrow, pausing for the students to discuss and choose what they might like to say instead of what is written in the book. When they agree on an idea, this should be written on the chalkboard for them to copy onto the handout.
  6. When the students have finished their Preambles, have them follow the directions at the bottom of Appendix F to make their own illustrated booklets. Students may want to share these booklets with their fourth grade history buddies at the next partner reading time.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Students’ illustrated booklets for “We the Second Graders” will be evaluated for correct completion and recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

## **Lesson Eight: Second Grade Constitution Convention – Our Government**

### **A. *Daily Objectives***

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
  - c. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups.
  - d. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution).
  - e. Students will use skills for working cooperatively.

### **B. *Materials***

1. Tricorn hats (made by students in Lesson One)
2. Three Branches of Government “tree” made by a student (from Lesson Five)
3. Manila construction paper, 9 in. by 12 in. (for every student)
4. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Assignments

### **C. *Key Vocabulary***

1. (Review previous vocabulary, as needed)

### **D. *Procedures/Activities***

1. Set up the classroom in the same way as Lesson Seven, with the center of the classroom cleared away and a circle of thirteen desks and chairs in the middle. Instruct each colony to choose a different delegate for today’s activity, in order to allow more students to participate in the role of “delegate.” The new delegates should put on their tricorn hats and sit in the desks, while the rest of the students sit outside of the circle.
2. Review the U.S. Constitution form of government by showing the students one of the student-made “trees” from Lesson Five. Discuss how the government was planned so that there were three groups leading our government and discuss the jobs of each of the three groups.
3. Using the same format as in Lesson Seven, have the students discuss the kind of government that would work best for Second Grade Land. (Do they want to copy the U.S. form of government or do they want to be led by a King or Queen?) Write their ideas on the chalkboard and have them vote for which form of government they would like. Guide them in considering issues such as: Who will make laws? Who will meet with leaders from other countries? Who will make sure the laws are being followed?
4. Have the students come up with an object to describe their new government, such as the U.S. model of the tree with three branches. Hand out a piece of manila

construction paper to each student and have the students draw a line at top of the paper (held horizontally) and write: The Government of Second Grade Land. They should label the government positions and describe the jobs (such as, President – meets with leaders from other countries). They may also color this, if desired.

5. Students should hand in their papers on “The Government of Second Grade Land” and teachers should evaluate them for correct completion. These papers should be saved for use in Lesson Ten and may also be displayed with the other Constitution Unit activities.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students’ papers, “The Government of Second Grade Land,” will be evaluated for correct completion of the activity and recorded in Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

**Lesson Nine: Second Grade Constitution Convention - Bill of Rights**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
  - c. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups.
  - d. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution).
  - e. Students will use skills for working cooperatively.

B. *Materials*

1. Appendix D - American Flag for the Bill of Rights (from Lesson Six)
2. Appendix G – The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights
3. Copier Paper, white, ¼ sheet (for every student)
4. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments

C. *Key Vocabulary*

Review previous vocabulary, as needed

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Have the students take out their copies of Appendix D - American Flags for the Bill of Rights from Lesson Six. Call on the students to take turns sharing some of the rights that were included in the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

2. Explain to the students that just as the U.S. Constitution needed to add some changes that would tell the rights that the American people would be given, so the Constitution for Second Grade Land would need to add a Bill of Rights.
  3. Hand out Appendix G – The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights. Have the students brainstorm for ideas of which rights would be important in a second grade classroom. Encourage students to list rights that would include many situations, instead of rights that only cover one situation. (Example: “Students have the right to be treated kindly” covers more situations than, “Students have the right to not be cut in line.”) Record these ideas on the chalkboard. Have the students discuss and debate which rights would be the most important and which would be less important.
  4. Number the rights that are listed on the chalkboard. Hand out a ¼ sheet of white copy paper to all students and have them list the numbers for the five rights that they would most like included in the Bill of Rights. Tally the votes and leave on the chalkboard only the five rights that received the greatest number of votes.
  5. Have the students copy these rights onto Appendix G – The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Students will hand in Appendix G – The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights and it will be evaluated for correct completion and recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

### **Lesson Ten: Elections for the New Government of Second Grade Land**

#### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand the concept of government as the way that groups of people are ruled.
  - b. Students will recognize that the Constitution contains the rules for our country and it is the highest law of the land.
  - c. Students will develop a sense that in the American government, we give our permission to be governed by leaders that we choose.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. American government is based on the Constitution, the highest law of the land.
  - b. Government by the consent of the governed: “We the people”
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students understand the basic constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the United States government.
  - b. Students understand the importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection, respect for law, education, work, and volunteerism.
  - c. Students know and use an appropriate decision making process, individually, or in groups.
  - d. Students will identify various strategies for decision making (random selection, process of elimination, rule by majority, decision by authority, compromise, conflict resolution).
  - e. Students will use skills for working cooperatively.

#### B. *Materials*

1. Appendix H - Ballots for the Elections of Second Grade Land – to be filled out by the teacher, before making student copies (depending on the government offices the students choose and depending on who runs for those offices)

2. Index cards, white, 3 in. by 5 in., one set = the number of government positions for Second Grade Land (one set for every student)
  3. Yarn, any color, cut into 2 in. pieces, one set=the number of government positions for Second Grade Land (one set for every student)
  4. Yarn, any color, cut into 6 in. pieces (one for every student)
  5. Craft sticks, wooden – (a few for every student)
  6. Student school supplies: white glue
  7. Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Ballot – a card or paper that is used for writing down who you are voting for
  2. Run for office – to try to be chosen for a position by persuading others to vote for you
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Have the students take out their papers from Lesson Eight – The Government of Second Grade Land. Based on their government, have them decide how many people it would take to lead their country. List the government positions across the top of the chalkboard.
  2. Have the students decide whether any of them would like to run for any of the offices. Explain that “to run for office” means to try to get others to vote for you for one of the government jobs. Have the students raise their hands and tell which office they would like to run for and record their names on the chalkboard under the job title.
  3. Allow those students who are running for office to come to the front of the classroom and in a few words, tell why they think they would do a great job working in that position. While students are doing this, copy the government job names and the names of the candidates on Appendix H – Ballots for the Elections of Second Grade Land. Have these ballots copied off, one for each student. (This may require a time delay between steps 3 and 4 in order to copy off the ballots.)
  4. Hand out the ballots to the students. Explain to the students that these are ballots, or voting sheets, for marking which student they choose for each position. Remind the students of the importance of privacy; no one should watch how other students are voting. Read the ballot to the students, one position or office at a time and allow them to make their choice. Instruct them to place an X next to the student they wish to choose for each position.
  5. When the voting is completed, collect the ballots and compile the results by tallying the votes onto a blank ballot. Announce the results when this is finished and record the names on the chalkboard under the job titles.
  6. Hand out sets of index cards to each student, one for each government position. On each index card, have the students write a job name and the name of the winner underneath it, for every government position. If any positions are on the same level of government, students should join these cards side by side with a craft stick glued between them. (Example – for a government like the U.S. government: The first Congress person, the President, and the first judge of the Supreme Court would have their cards glued together, side-by-side, with a craft stick in between. The other members of Congress would be glued underneath the first Congress card and joined together by short yarn pieces. The Vice-President would be glued under the President and joined by a short yarn piece. And the other judges of the Supreme Court would be glued under the first judge and would be joined by short pieces of yarn.) These “flow charts” could be displayed in the hallway along with the other U.S. Constitution projects.

7. (Optional Project) For homework or for extra credit, students may design and color a flag for “Second Grade Land.” Students may vote on their favorite during the All-American Constitution Celebration.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. The students’ “flow charts” of the government of “Second Grade Land” should be checked by the teacher for accuracy. These will be recorded on Appendix A – Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments.

## **VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

- A. All-American Constitution Celebration - Students will invite their fourth grade history buddies (fourth grade also studies the U.S. Constitution) for a hotdogs and apple pie lunch. They will showcase and explain their hallway display of their U.S. Constitution projects and make patriotic streamer wavers (Appendix I). This sharing activity will help students review this unit in preparation for the quiz.
- B. The students will take a cumulative quiz over the U.S. Constitution (Appendix J – U.S. Constitution Test). Teachers may use Appendix K – Answer Key for the U.S. Constitution Test to correct the tests.

## **VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS**

- A. Appendix A: Checklist for Completion of Constitution Unit Assignments (Lessons One through Ten)
- B. Appendix B: How Did We Win the Revolutionary War? (Lesson One)
- C. Appendix C: Planner For My Second Grade Colony (Lesson Two)
- D. Appendix D: American Flag Bill of Rights (Lessons Six and Nine)
- E. Appendix E: The Bill of Rights (Lesson Six)
- F. Appendix F: Preamble to the Constitution of Second Grade Land (Lesson Seven)
- G. Appendix G: The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights (Lesson Nine)
- H. Appendix H: Ballot For the Election of Second Grade Land (Lesson Ten)
- I. Appendix I: Patriotic Streamer Wavers (Culminating Activity)
- J. Appendix J: U.S. Constitution Test (Culminating Activity)
- K. Appendix K: Answer Key for the U.S. Constitution Test (Culminating Activity)

## **VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- A. *American History for Children – United States Constitution* (Video). Pennsylvania: Schlessinger Video Productions, 1996. ISBN 1-57225-061-5
- B. Catrow, David. *We the Kids*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2002. ISBN 0-439-45807-2
- C. *Collections for Young Scholars – Volume 2 Book 2*. Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1995. ISBN 0-8126-2248-0
- D. Colman, Warren. *The New True Book – The Constitution*. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1987. ISBN 0-516-01231-2
- E. Fritz, Jean. *The Great Little Madison*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1989. ISBN 0-590-43749-6
- F. Fritz, Jean. *Shh! We’re Writing the Constitution*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1987. ISBN 0-399-21404-6
- G. Hirsch, E.D., Jr. *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Doubleday, 1998. ISBN 0-385-48120-9
- H. Maestro, Betsy and Giulio. *A More Perfect Union – The Story of Our Constitution*. New York: Mulberry Books, 1987. ISBN 0-688-10192-5
- I. Schultz, Charles M. *Here’s to You, America!* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002. ISBN 0-689-85163-4

- J. Sobel, Syl. *How the U.S. Government Works*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1999. ISBN 0-7641-1111-6



# Appendix B

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## How Did We Win the Revolutionary War?

### American Advantages



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### British Advantages



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Result of the Revolutionary War:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Planner For My Second Grade Colony

Name of our Colony: \_\_\_\_\_

Members of our Colony:

(my name) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location in "Second Grade Land": \_\_\_\_\_

(Where in the classroom will you place your flag?)

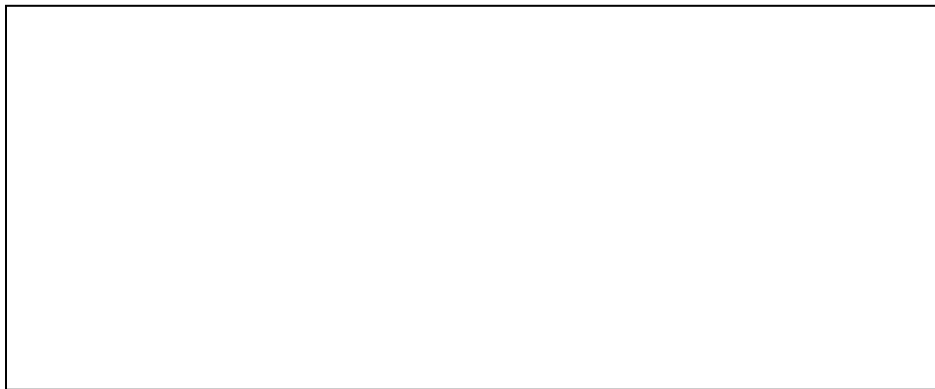
What are some of the rules (laws) of your colony? Do you pay any taxes? Do you have an army? Who fights in it? Can people own guns?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of white paper, draw and color a flag for your colony.

Below, draw and color paper money that your colony would use.

How much is it worth? Would you use dollars or shillings (English money) or a different kind of money?

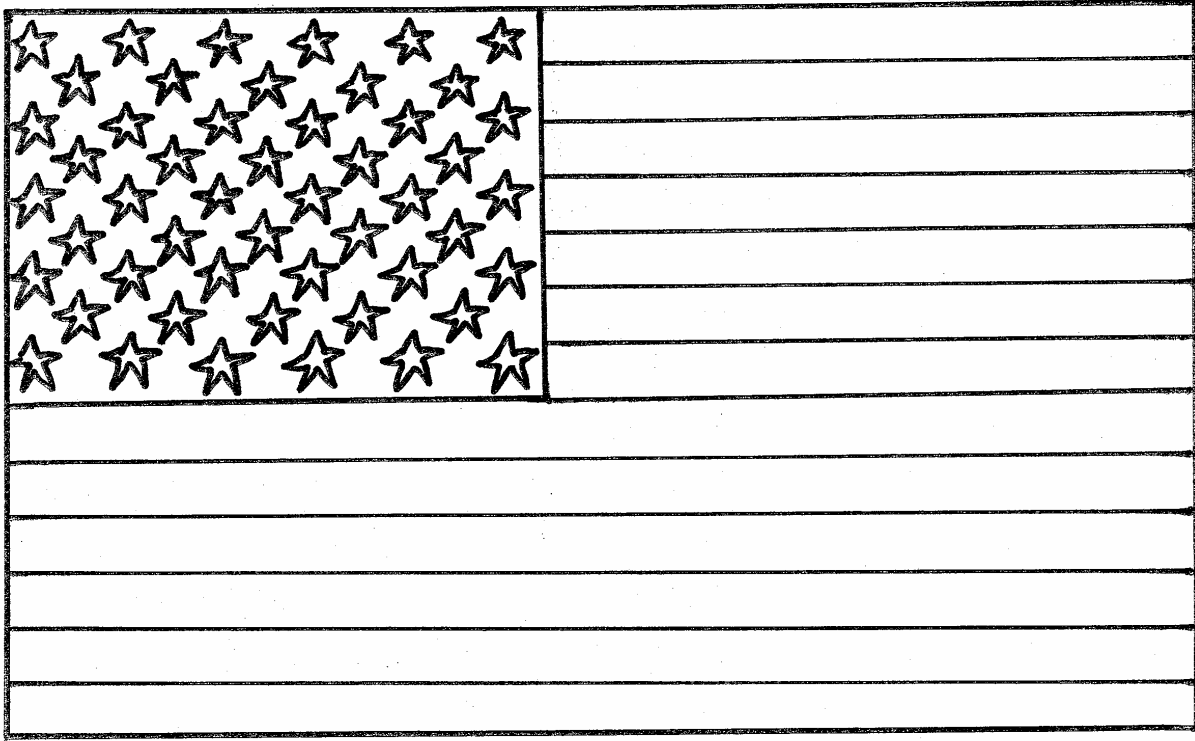


# Appendix D

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## American Flag for the Bill of Rights (These are the amendments or changes to the Constitution.)

Directions: On the top stripe of the flag, write: The Bill of Rights. Then skip a line between stripes and write a right given to us by the Bill of Rights on each of the six alternating stripes.



## **Appendix E**

### **The Bill of Rights**

(The First Ten Amendments to the Constitution)

#### **Amendment 1**

Congress cannot establish an official religion.

It cannot pass laws that limit religious worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to gather peacefully, and the right to contact the government for help from unfair practices.

#### **Amendment 2**

The federal government cannot limit the rights of states and individuals to own weapons.

#### **Amendment 3**

People cannot be forced to house soldiers in their home.

#### **Amendment 4**

People cannot be arrested nor can their house or belongings be searched without probable cause or a proper warrant (permission from a judge).

#### **Amendment 5**

No one has to stand trial for a federal crime unless formally charged by a grand jury. A person cannot be tried for the same crime twice nor can he be forced to testify against himself. No one can be deprived of life, freedom or property without due process of law. The government cannot take a person's property for public use without paying him fairly.

#### **Amendment 6**

A person accused of a crime has the right to a quick, fair and public trial by an impartial (fair) jury.

#### **Amendment 7**

A person involved in a federal court civil suit where the value of the item being argued is more than \$20 has the right to a trial by jury.

#### **Amendment 8**

The amount set for bails and fines must be fair. Cruel and unusual punishment is prohibited.

#### **Amendment 9**

The listing of specific rights in the Constitution does not mean that the people forfeit rights not listed.

#### **Amendment 10**

Powers not given to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved for the states or for individuals.

## Appendix F

### Preamble to the Constitution of Second Grade Land

**Question:** Why are you writing this Constitution? Use the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution to help you form a new Constitution for Second Grade Land.

1. We the students of Second Grade Land,

2. In order to

➤ \_\_\_\_\_

➤ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ 7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. to \_\_\_\_\_

9. do \_\_\_\_\_

10. for the United States of Second Grade Land.

**Project:** Now take six white sheets of paper, fold them in half, and ask your teacher to staple them together to form a book. On the cover, write the title: We the Second Graders. Draw two lines at the bottom of each of the next ten pages (both sides, but do not use the back of the cover). Copy the Preamble that was written above onto the bottom of each page. (Line 1 will be written on the first page after the cover – without the number. Line 2 will be written on the second page, and so on.) When this is finished, draw and color an illustration to go with the words you have written.

## Appendix G

### The Second Grade Land Bill of Rights

Amendment 1 - \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment 2 - \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment 3 - \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment 4 - \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment 5 - \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix H**  
**Ballot for the Election of Second Grade Land**

First Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates: (Mark an X next to your choice. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ how many)

—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____

Second Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates: (Mark an X next to your choice. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ how many)

—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____

Third Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates: (Mark an X next to your choice. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ how many)

—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____

Fourth Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates: (Mark an X next to your choice. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ how many)

—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____
—	_____

## Appendix I

### Patriotic Streamer Wavers

#### Materials:

Wooden dowel, 12 in. long, 1/3 in. diameter (for each student)

Crepe paper (streamers) - 1 roll each of red, white and blue

Glue, white (one bottle for every set of partners)

Scissors (one pair for every set of partners)

#### Directions:

1. Hand out to each set of partners: two wooden dowels, 2 twelve-inch pieces of each color- red, white and blue crepe paper (streamers), and a bottle of white glue.
2. Have one partner cut down the middle of each streamer to make two thinner pieces and give one to each partner. When all are cut, each partner should have two strips of each color.
3. Students should put a dot of glue on the end of one of the red strips and place the glued end on top of their wooden dowel.
4. Then they should rotate the top of the dowel slightly and glue the tip of a white strip to the top. Next, they should rotate the tip slightly again and glue the tip of a blue strip to the top.
5. Students should continue gluing the last three strips - red, white, and blue - until all are glued to the top.
6. When dry, students can wave their streamers in celebration of our amazing U.S. Constitution!

## Appendix J

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# U.S. Constitution Test

**Directions:** Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Who was called the Father of the Constitution?
  - a. George Washington
  - b. Thomas Jefferson
  - c. James Madison
  
2. What is the Preamble to the Constitution?
  - a. It is the ending part of the Constitution.
  - b. It is the first part, the introduction to the Constitution.
  - c. It is the part that has our rights listed.
  
3. What is the main part of the Constitution about?
  - a. It tells why we wanted to be free from England.
  - b. It tells us about our rights.
  - c. It tells about the three branches of our government and what their jobs are.
  
4. What is another name for the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
  - a. The Bill of Rights
  - b. Our Rights and Responsibilities
  - c. Additions to the Constitution
  
5. Circle the three branches of the United States Government.  
King   Supreme Court   Parliament   President   Secretary   Congress
  
6. Why do you think the person in question one was called the Father of the Constitution?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. List one reason why our country needed to write the Constitution.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
8. What are the first three words of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution? \_\_\_\_\_  
What do those words mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Fill in these blanks. (Hint: Words for the answers are in question #5.)  
Who in our government meets with the leaders of other countries? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who are judges who make sure we follow the Constitution? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who in our government makes laws? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K

### Answer Key for the U.S. Constitution Test

1. c. James Madison
2. b. It is the first part, the introduction to the Constitution.
3. c. It tells about the three branches of our government and what their jobs are.
4. a. The Bill of Rights
5. Supreme Court, President, Congress
6. James Madison was called the Father of the Constitution because so many of his ideas were used in the Constitution.
7. We needed to write the Constitution so that we could agree on one government for the whole country; or so that we would have the same laws; or that we would have one army to protect the whole country; or other reasonable answers.
8. We the people  
It means that the Constitution was written by and for the people of the United States.
9. President  
Supreme Court  
Congress