



## THE U.S. CONSTITUTION PT.2: HOW SHOULD WE TREAT EACH OTHER? (4-8)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to create a social contract to help create a consistent and fair environment for the SPB process.

### STANDARDS:

- **4.C2.1** Use primary and secondary sources to generate questions about the concepts and ideas such as liberty, justice, equality, and individual rights.
- **5.C4.2** Use a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions about and act on issues and civic problems in their classrooms and schools.
- **6.C4.2** Describe and apply civic virtues including deliberative processes that contribute to the common good and democratic principles in school, community, and government.
- **7.C4.4** Explain challenges people face and opportunities they create in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action in local, regional, and global communities.
- **8.C1.2** Demonstrate civic virtues that contribute to the common good and democratic principles within a variety of deliberative processes and settings.

### CIVICS EXAM QUESTION:

- What is the supreme law of the land? A: The U.S. Constitution

**TIMELINE:** This lesson could take place near the beginning of the SPB process, during the Design the Process phase, to continue building a sense of community and teamwork with your Steering Committee with the creation of a social contract.

**APPROXIMATE LESSON LENGTH:** 30 minutes

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- [Social Contract Questions](#)
- [Bill of Rights One Pager](#)
- Large Easel Pad Paper
- Timer

**VOCABULARY:** Constitution, Amendment, and Social Contract

## INSTRUCTIONS:

### 1. Engage

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- Write “The Constitution” on the board, and have students discuss what the purpose is.
- Remind students, from Part 1, of the communities we find ourselves in and that the biggest is “The United States.”
- Students’ answers may vary, but a consensus should be that the Constitution is the rules of the “community” we all fall into.

### 2. Explore

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- Discuss with the students that just like every community, there needs to be rules, and discuss some of the rules of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights.
  - Have the *Bill of Rights* handout up on the board, and either define yourself, or have students try to define what an Amendment is. (A change to the Constitution)
  - The main point of this discussion is to have students understand that the Constitution helps our “community” understand how to treat each other.
- Then remind the students that, as a Steering Committee, we are a community as well. And as a community, we should develop our own rules so we can work effectively.
  - Depending on the group size, have the students break up into groups of 3-4 students.
  - If working with a small group, the whole group may work together.
  - Once the groups are set, have the students answer the questions from the *Social Contract Questions* document in separate rounds of 5 minutes each.
    - It is important to have the students understand that the answers to the questions should be adjectives.
    - After each round, reset the 5-minute timer and have the groups move onto the next question.

### 3. Explain

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- Prepare a piece of large easel paper to hang up on a board for students to see. At the top of the paper, write “Social Contract”.
- Now that each group has completed a list of answers for each question, have them circle their top 3 for each answer.
  - Go through each group and ask for their top 3 for each question.
  - When each group gives their answers, have them answer the following, “What does that look like to you?”
  - This will help the students to contextualize how these answers will help to

- create a consistent way they all want to be treated.
- If repeat answers occur, honor the need for emphasis on that adjective, and add a checkmark to it on the poster.
- Explain to the students that the Constitution is a living document, and thus can be added onto at times. The Social Contract that they created can be added onto, if need be, like an Amendment.
- If all groups and responses were added, ask the students if there is anything they would like to add that isn't present.
  - Once the students feel comfortable and done, have them sign the Social Contract to signify that they will follow it throughout the SPB process.

## 4. Elaborate

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- Finish the lesson off by letting the students know that as a Steering Committee, they will help lead their school through the SPB process.
- By completing the social contract, your community now has a set of rules that will help them to be effective and efficient by respecting all members of the team.

### FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OR ARTIFACT:

- **Artifact:** The main artifact of this lesson is the Social Contract that can be continued to be added onto throughout the SPB process.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:** Students can extend the lesson by creating a group symbol or flag to represent and reinforce the values they cultivated in their Social Contract.

# The Social Contract

The Social Contract is created by the students, assisted by the teacher, in effort to answer four questions regarding the environment of the classroom. The four questions include:

- How do you want to be treated by the teacher?
- How do you want to be treated by each other?
- How do you think the teacher wants to be treated by you?
- How do we want to treat each other when there is conflict?

The resulting answers make up a list of adjectives which serve as the basis for student expectations of behavior in the classroom.

The Social Contract is signed by all classroom members, including the teacher.

The document is a living document and is referred to on a regular basis to highlight success and serves as a guide for when problems arise.

# The Bill of Rights—Simplified

## **First Amendment**

*Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Assembly, Right to Petition*

The government cannot support any religion or prevent citizens from worshipping as they please; the government cannot censor people or the media; people have a right to gather peaceably; and people can complain to the government. There are exceptions to these rights.

## **Second Amendment**

*Right to Bear Arms*

People have the right to own weapons.

## **Third Amendment**

*Quartering Troops*

Citizens cannot be forced to house soldiers in their homes during peacetime and only during wartime as the law requires.

## **Fourth Amendment**

*Right to Privacy, Search Warrants*

Officers of the law must get a warrant from a judge to search and take property or persons. A judge must have a "reasonable cause" to issue a warrant to officers and the warrant must describe the place to be searched and the items or persons to be taken. There are exceptions to this amendment.

## **Fifth Amendment**

*Rights of the Accused, Due Process, Right to Remain Silent*

A grand jury must determine if there is enough evidence to send to trial a person accused of a serious crime. A person cannot be put on trial more than once for the same crime (double jeopardy). A person has the right not to answer questions asked by officials. The government must follow certain fair procedures (due process) before it can take away life, liberty, or property.

## **Sixth Amendment**

*Right to a Speedy and Fair Trial, Right to Face Accusers, Right to a Lawyer*

An accused person will not be held in jail for a long period of time before their trial begins. An accused person will also get a public trial before a fair jury. An accused person has a right to face their accusers. If an accused person cannot afford a lawyer, one will be provided to defend them.

## **Seventh Amendment**

*Civil Suits*

A jury may be provided if one person sues another person and the case involves more than \$20 (these cases are generally no longer heard in federal court).

## **Eighth Amendment**

*Reasonable Bail and Punishment*

Bail will not be set unusually high as to make it impossible for someone to pay. No cruel or unusual punishment will be used against an accused or a convicted person.

## **Ninth Amendment**

*People's Rights*

Citizens have rights beyond those written in the Constitution and they cannot be taken away.

## **Tenth Amendment**

*States' Rights*

Those powers not given to the federal government are given to the states.

## Bill of Rights

After the founders wrote the Constitution in 1787, they needed nine states to approve it before it became law. The Antifederalists, people who opposed the Constitution, feared a powerful national government. To get support from states like New York and Virginia, the Federalists, supporters of the Constitution, agreed to pass a bill or rights to limit government power.

The Congress wrote twelve amendments but the states only passed ten. On December 15, 1791, Virginia became the last state to ratify the Bill of Rights making them a part of the Constitution. Originally, the Bill of Rights applied only to limiting the power of the government of the United States and not state governments. However, by the mid-twentieth century, the courts began applying the Bill of Rights to state governments as well.

The Bill of Rights contains the very core of American liberty: limited government and individual freedom.