

BILL OF RIGHTS

LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITY

Grade Level: 9-12

Subjects:

- Social Studies: U.S. Government

Duration: 20 minutes

Description: Students are introduced to the first ten amendments of the Constitution. Students will explore and understand the words and practical implications of the Bill of Rights and their effect in today's society.

Goals:

USHC Standards:

- * USHC-1.2 Analyze the early development of representative government and political rights in the American colonies, including the influence of the British political system and the **rule of law** as written in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights, and the conflict between the colonial legislatures and the British **Parliament** over the right to tax that resulted in the American Revolutionary War.
- * USHC-1.5 Explain how the fundamental principle of **limited government** is protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, including **democracy**, **republicanism**, federalism, the **separation of powers**, the system of **checks and balances**, and individual rights.

USG Standard:

- * USG-2.3 Analyze the British heritage that fostered development of the core political principles of American government, including the Magna Carta, the Petition of Right (1628), the Glorious Revolution, the English Bill of Rights, and the Mayflower Compact.
- * USG-2.4 Evaluate significant American founding documents in relation to core political principles, including the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, state **constitutions**, the United States Constitution, *The Federalist* papers, and the Bill of Rights.

Objectives:

1. Explore and understand the basic definitions of each of the First Ten Amendments to the US Constitution.
2. Understand the importance of these basic rights.
3. Discover how the Bill of Rights affects our daily lives.

Materials:

“Which Rights Do You Choose?” Handout
Reworded Bill of Rights Handout

Instruction and Activity:

- I. Have your students review the attached list of rights.
 - A. Which rights should everyone have?
 - B. Which rights should some people have? Who are those “some people?”
 - C. Which rights should no one have?

Option: Have each student take this list to 10 people (other students, friends, family members), and ask the same questions to see what the “average American” thinks.

II. Come back together as a class. Reveal that these rights are guaranteed to every American through the Bill of Rights – the first ten Amendments to the United States Constitution.

III. Why do you think that our founding fathers thought that these rights were important?

IV. Given today’s climate, do you think that all of these rights should still be guaranteed?

V. Why do we need these rights? Why are they important?

The freedoms listed in the Bill of Rights serve several purposes. Not only do they protect the individual from other individuals who are doing bad things, but they protect individuals and groups from abuses of power in government. Can you think of any times in history where there has been an abuse of power in government?

Watergate
Iraq War
Patriot Act issues (detainees)
Berkeley County Terrorist?

Assessment:

Bill of Rights quiz

WHICH RIGHTS DO YOU CHOOSE?

Read through the rights listed below. Which rights do you think that everyone should have? Which rights do you think that only some people should have, and who should have them? Which rights do you think that no one should have?

1. The right to say your opinion on any topic.
2. The right to learn about what is happening in your world without government interference – read the newspaper, watch television.
3. The right of reporters to report news without government interference.
4. The right to get together with your friends or other people with whom you have common interests.
5. The right to ask the government to fix something that is wrong.
6. The right to own a gun.
7. The right to live in your house without having the government place a soldier to live there with you.
8. The right to privacy.
9. The freedom from having the police stop you, search you, and take your belongings without a search warrant.
10. The right to have a jury of people like you who will determine if you should be charged with a crime.
11. The right to not be charged and tried for the same crime more than once.
12. The right not to say things to police that will get you in trouble.
13. The right to have the government go through certain procedures any time it wants to before it can jail you, search you, or take your property.
14. The right to have a speedy, public criminal trial.
15. The right to have an impartial jury in a criminal trial.
16. The right to know the identity of all of the witnesses against you if you are a defendant in a criminal trial.
17. The right to know what the witnesses in a criminal trial are saying against you if you are the defendant.
18. The right to watch witnesses give testimony against you at a criminal trial.

Bill of Rights

(First 10 Amendments to the US Constitution)

1. Freedom of Religion
Freedom of Speech
Freedom of Press
Right of people to gather together
Right to Petition the government
2. Right to own a gun.
3. Right not to have soldiers live in your house.
4. Right to not have the police search you or your belongings unreasonably or without cause.
5. Right not to incriminate yourself.
Right not to be charged with the same offense twice.
Right to have due process.
6. Right to have a speedy criminal trial
Right to have a jury in a criminal trial
Right to have a lawyer in a criminal trial
7. Right to have a jury in a civil trial.
8. Freedom from cruel and unusual punishment.
9. Rights specifically listed in the Constitution (federal) shall not limit the rights not listed in the Constitution (state).
10. Powers not specifically listed in the Constitution for the federal government are given to the states.

BILL OF RIGHTS QUIZ

Question 1:

Which of the following rights and freedoms is specifically guaranteed by the first ten amendments?

- right to an education
- freedom of the press
- right to privacy
- freedom to own property

Question 2:

The Fifth Amendment states that a person cannot be

- tried twice for the same crime.
- forced to give evidence against himself or herself.
- deprived of life, liberty, and property without due process of law.
- all of the above

Question 3:

According to the Fourth Amendment, the police can search and seize a person's property only if

- the owner consents.
- the neighbors sign a petition.
- the chief of police gives permission.
- a judge issues a warrant.

Question 4:

A man is arrested. (1) The police hold him for several days before telling him the charge against him. (2) He calls an attorney who makes plans for the trial. (3) At the trial, various witnesses are called to testify against the man. (4) However, his attorney is not allowed to ask questions of the witnesses. (5) A judge finds him guilty of the crime. Which stages in the above situation seem to be violations of the man's Sixth Amendment rights?

- 2, 3, 4
- 1, 3, 5
- 1, 4, 5
- 3, 4, 5

Question 5:

Which of these is not allowed, according to the Eighth Amendment?

- reasonable bail
- reasonable fines
- jail terms
- cruel punishments

Question 6:

Why was the Ninth Amendment added to the Constitution?

- because the framers worried they might have forgotten an important right
- because the framers wanted to make clear that basic rights were guaranteed even if they were not stated specifically
- because the Bill of Rights had to have ten parts
- because the English Bill of Rights listed nine rights

Question 7:

One provision of the First Amendment is

- freedom of speech.
- the right to an impartial jury.
- the right to bear arms.
- freedom from unusual punishments.

Question 8:

The Tenth Amendment states that

- most powers belong to the national government.
- powers not given to the national government or prohibited from the states belong to the states or the people.
- the people are the source of all government powers.
- the states are the most important part of our government system.