

“It is my conviction that, through work with our youth, we shall secure the greatest assurance of maintaining our democracy.” Franklin Roosevelt, February 7, 1938

Dear Educators,

Thank you for your interest in the Constitution and Our Community program for grades 3 – 5! During this interactive civics program with the National Archives, students will explore the idea of community, hone their primary source analysis skills by examining government records, and connect the Constitution to their own lives.

This program is part of We Rule: Civics for All of US, an education initiative from the National Archives that approaches civic education through the lens of five core questions:

1. What does an individual gain from being civically aware and engaged?
2. What tools are available for individuals, and groups, to share and shape our democracy?
3. How have these tools been used by others in the past?
4. How can an ordinary individual use the tools in their own lives?
5. How does the United States benefit from civic engagement?

We Rule: Civics for All of US programs draw upon the vast holdings of the National Archives housed in our nation’s capital and the Presidential Libraries and research facilities across the country to promote and develop the basic civic knowledge and skills students need to prepare for participating and leading our democracy through the challenges of the 21st century.

This teacher guide includes a set of optional pre- and post- program activities to support the Constitution and Our Community program. However, they can also be used throughout the year as you see fit. This guide also includes an optional graphic organizer on page 23 that you can share with students for notetaking during the program. Throughout the guide you will find links to documents and activities on DocsTeach.org, the online tool for teaching with documents from the National Archives.

If you have any questions, please contact us at civics@nara.gov. We look forward to seeing you soon!

We want to hear from you! Let us know how your students are using the We Rule: Civics for All of US materials.

Twitter: [@USNatArchives](https://twitter.com/USNatArchives)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalArchivesEducation>

Email: civics@nara.gov

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Program Objectives, EAD Roadmap and C3 Framework Alignment

Program Objectives

After completing the Constitution and Our Community program with the National Archives, students will be better able to:

- Understand what the Constitution is and why the United States has one
- Connect the Constitution to their own lives and communities
- Identify the three branches of government and some of the key functions they perform
- Analyze primary sources

Educating for American Democracy Roadmap Alignment

Theme 1: Civic Participation

- K-5 Key Concept: Define components of a healthy community and the rights and responsibilities of community members.
- CDQ1.2: A. Why might we want to make changes at local, state, or national levels? How can we promote change in an effective way?

Theme 3: We The People

- K-5 Key Concept: Discuss why we have government, and explore the relationship between people and their government.
- CDQ3.2: A. What does it mean to be “a people”?
- CDQ3.2: B. Why do societies have governments?

Theme 4: A New Government & Constitution

- K-5 Key Concept: Examine the principles/purpose of constitutional democracy and the extent to which U.S. constitutional democracy has lived up to those principles.
- CDQ4.2: C. How do people governed by a constitution make decisions?

Theme 5: Institutional & Social Transformation—A Series of Refoundings?

- K-5 Key Concept: Examine people’s role in social & institutional transformation.
- HDQ5.2: B. How have people improved U.S. society over time?
- CDQ5.2: A. What are the institutional and non-institutional ways that people have made changes to society?

College, Career, and Civic Life Framework Alignment

- D2.Civ.1.3-5. Distinguish the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government and in different times and places.
- D2.Civ.3.3-5. Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.
- D2.Civ.4.3-5. Explain how groups of people make rules to create responsibilities and protect freedoms.
- D2.Civ.5.3-5. Explain the origins, functions, and structure of different systems of government, including those created by the U.S. and state constitutions.
- D2.His.10.3-5. Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past.
- D2.His.13.3-5. Use information about a historical source, including the maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose to judge the extent to which the source is useful for studying a particular topic
- D3.3.3-5. Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources in response to compelling questions

Pre-Program Activities

The following pre-program activities are designed to support student learning about the Constitution. These activities are not required. Feel free to facilitate only the activities that you think would be most helpful for your students.

A vocabulary bank can be found on page 29, and handouts are located at the back of this Teacher Guide.

The Constitution and Our Community

Use the following script to introduce the idea of the classroom as a community. The graphic organizer on page 12 can be created on a whiteboard or projected to the class and completed during the discussion.

Estimated time: 30 minutes

What makes a community?

In this classroom, we are a community. Together, we make up a group of people who come together to learn and help each other. A community can also include our family, friends, neighbors, animals and plants.

Use the Our Communities Graphic Organizer on page 12 to review various communities, labeling each community arch as you go. This graphic organizer can also be printed and distributed to students to complete in small groups. You may want to fill in the first arch as the “classroom” together.



Our classroom community is part of another community, which is a part of an even bigger community.

Ask students to think about the different communities their classroom belongs to and add their responses to the different arches of the graphic organizer. Some arches may include multiple answers. Feel free to annotate or add to the graphic organizer as your students see fit. Sample answers could include the school, town, state/territory/federal district, tribal nation, and so on. For the purposes of this discussion, the final arch should be the United States of America.

Can you think of any other communities that you are a part of? (Families, neighborhoods, teams, etc.)

Any time people come together in a community, there are different ideas about what, how, and when things should be done. Consider a gathering of friends: Jimmy, Hazel, and Sondra want to go out and ride bikes, but Freddie and Leon want to play video games and eat snacks. What are some ways this group of friends might work out the differences in what each member of the group wants to do? (Answers could include voting, coming up with a compromise like deciding to ride bikes today and play video games tomorrow, etc.)

One way to establish and maintain order, and limit conflict in a community, is to create laws and rules.

- What rules do we have in this classroom?
- Why do we have these rules?

Rules help ensure order and safety for our community. If we look at each of the communities we are a part of, we can find additional examples of rules.

Let's think about the largest community we identified today—the United States. Our country also has rules, known as laws.

- Does anyone have any examples of laws we have in the United States? What is the purpose of this law?
- Why is it important to follow the laws?
- Who made these laws? (The government.) And who decides who is in the government? (The people, by voting in elections to choose our lawmakers. In this way, the laws come from the people. The laws impact everyone in the United States.)

In addition to providing order and keeping people safe, laws also help to protect people's rights—things we get to do.

- What are some examples of the rights we have in the classroom?
- What are other rights that we have in the United States?

We all have a responsibility to participate in our communities in a way that respects the rights of others. Responsibilities are things we have to do. Sometimes we have different responsibilities based on our roles in our community. Let's think about our classroom as an example:

- What are your responsibilities as students in our classroom?
- Ask: What are my responsibilities as your teacher in our classroom?

Our government also has specific responsibilities.

- Can you think of any government jobs?
- What types of responsibilities does our government have?

As members of a community, we agree to respect each other's rights, follow the rules, and fulfill our responsibilities. A written document can serve as a symbol of our agreement to do these things. The Constitution of the United States is a document that describes the way the government is structured and its responsibilities, that protects the rights of the people, and serves as the highest law of the land. Our United States Constitution is nearly 250 years old!

Show a picture of the [United States Constitution](#). During our visit with the National Archives, we are going to learn more about this important document and discover how it connects to our community.

We the People: Elementary Edition DocsTeach Activity

In this activity, students will 1) examine the Preamble as seen in the original draft and final version of the Constitution, evaluate the significance of the changes in the text, and 2) rewrite the Preamble in their own words. New to DocsTeach? Check out the [Getting Started](#) page for more information.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions.

Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the activity with the whole class.

The Three Branches of Government DocsTeach Activity

In this activity, students will use a Venn diagram to match documents and photos to the corresponding branch (or branches) of government. It can be shared with students as an introduction to or review of the three branches of government.

Estimated time: 30–45 minutes

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions.

Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the page with the whole class.

Recommended Document Analysis Activity - Recommended

During the program with the National Archives, students will analyze primary sources to explore how the Constitution connects to their lives. Each document corresponds to a different article of the Constitution. It may be helpful to have students review the primary sources in small groups before the program.

Time: 30 minutes

Divide students into five groups, and assign a different primary source and corresponding analysis sheet to guide their small group work. Or, as a modification, you can form as many groups as you think would be best and focus on the documents most suitable for your students. If students complete this activity before meeting with the National Archives, they should use their worksheets as reference and will have an opportunity to share their findings during the program.

Students should complete the worksheets to the best of their abilities. It is okay if they cannot answer all of the questions with their document.

If you do not have time to facilitate the activity before the program, that is completely fine! The National Archives facilitator will lead students through document analysis questions of each document before visiting the program's larger questions.

Documents

- **Document 1:** Postal Worker Photo, 2002–2007 (NAID: [8123704](#)) and Photograph Analysis Worksheet, pages 13–14
- **Document 2:** Map of the Louisiana Purchase, 1903 (NAID: [594889](#)) and Map Analysis Worksheet, pages 15–16
- **Document 3:** Judgment in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, 5/31/1955 (NAID: [596300](#)) and Document Analysis Worksheet, pages 17–18
- **Document 4:** Sheryl Byland Letter, 10/1958 (NAID: [594335](#)) and Document Analysis Worksheet, pages 19–20
- **Document 5:** 19th Amendment, 6/4/1919 (NAID: [596314](#)) and Document Analysis Worksheet, pages 21–22

Optional Program Materials

During the live program with the National Archives, it may be helpful to share the Constitution and Us graphic organizer on page 23.

Students can use this table to take notes during the program. The National Archives educator will lead students in a discussion to discover how different primary sources connect to the Constitution and connect to their lives today.

The Constitution and Us	Student Name:
Article I Section 1: All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.	Document 1: Postal Worker Photo
Article II Section 1: The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States.	Document 2: Map of the Louisiana Purchase
Article III Section 1: The judicial Power shall be vested in one or more Supreme Courts, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.	Document 3: Judgment in <i>Brown v. the Board of Education</i>
Article IV Section 1: Full Faith and Credit shall be given in every State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State.	Document 4: Sheryl Byland Letter
Article V: The Congress shall propose Amendments, which, when ratified by three fourths of all the States, shall be valid, to all States, as part of the Constitution.	Document 5: 19th Amendment

A sample completed graphic organizer is included on page 24 for reference. The graphic organizer also includes links to each document from the program.

Post-Program Activities

The following post-program activities provide opportunities to review key ideas from the program and build on students' knowledge of the Constitution.

The Constitution and US Graphic Organizer

Use the completed graphic organizer on page 24 to review how each document reveals how different ideas from the Constitution connect to students and their communities. If you only focused on the first three or five articles during your program with the National Archives, you can use the graphic organizer and links to the different documents to introduce the remaining articles.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Are We the People Making the Grade?

In this activity, students will consider the Preamble of the United States Constitution and assess how well “We the People” are meeting the goals outlined in the opening words of the Constitution.

Introduce your students to the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States and the main ideas and concepts it contains. The preamble sets forth six key goals or ideals for creating the Constitution. These are:

1. Form a more perfect union
2. Establish justice
3. Insure domestic tranquility
4. Provide for the common defense
5. Promote the general welfare
6. Secure the blessings on liberty to ourselves and our posterity

You can share the Preamble overview on page 25 with students for reference during their small group discussions. The provided transcription of the Preamble includes the original spelling and capitalization.

Break the class up into six small groups, and ask each group to discuss one of the goals of the Constitution. Give students a few minutes to think about their assigned goal, then share the word bank on page 26 with the students to use during their discussion. Each group should try to answer the following questions.

- What does their goal mean?
- How does this idea connect to their lives?

Ask each group to report on how they answered these questions. Allow time for class discussion after each presentation.

Provide each student or group with the Preamble Report Card on page 27. Or, project or share the report card and use it to lead a class discussion.

Preamble Report Card				
Goal	Excellence	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Comments
Form a more perfect union				
Establish justice				
Insure domestic tranquility				
Provide for the common defense				
Promote the general welfare				
Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity				

Ask students to “grade” each section by placing a check in the appropriate box to the right (Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement) by considering if “We the People” have reached each goal.

Ask them to provide “suggestions for improvement” for each section of the Preamble graded satisfactory or needs improvement. If students graded the section as Excellent, ask them to provide a reason why they graded at this level in the comments section of the worksheet. (Don’t worry if your students do not have a deep understanding of each section of the Preamble, their impressions are as important as hard facts in this case).

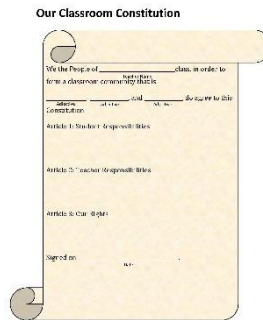
Share the worksheet with the class, tally how the class as a whole graded each of the six key goals or concepts in the Preamble, and lead a discussion analyzing the results.

Call to action: Invite students to brainstorm for actions they can take in their communities to better achieve the goals of the Preamble. Responses could include things they can do today to help their communities or ways they can use their voices and share their ideas with their elected officials at the local, state, or national level. See the Service Learning activity on page 10 for additional examples.

Write a Classroom Constitution

Using the Classroom Constitution template on page 28 or a big piece of paper, your students can work together to write a classroom Constitution.

Estimated time: 30 minutes



The Preamble: Add three adjectives that describe what students want your classroom to be like or feel like.

Article 1: List the jobs and responsibilities of the students

Article 2: List the jobs and responsibilities of the teacher

Article 3: List the rights students and teachers agree to respect and protect

Signatures: Invite everyone to sign the Constitution

Display your Classroom Constitution in your room or add it to your learning management system. If multiple classes complete an activity, hang the class constitutions in the hall and invite students to compare them.

Amending the Constitution: Constitutions can change! If students have ideas for additional responsibilities or rights for their classroom Constitution, add them throughout the year.

Service Learning Project

Service learning is where the idea of civic engagement crosses over to real-world experience. A service learning project can promote valuable skills like communication, organization, teamwork, and empathy as students work to help others in their community. Service learning projects can take many different forms; the following suggestions are provided to help you get started. While much of the Constitution and the Community program focuses on government actions, students can also consider how people can take action every day to make a difference in their communities.

1. Identify a problem facing your school or your community

You can select a couple of problems in advance for your students to vote on, or ask students to brainstorm issues they have observed in their communities or at school.

2. Research

Ask students to think about how they can learn more about the problem. This might include researching different organizations in the community that focus on this issue or working in teams to draft emails or letters to experts on the issue your class has chosen to address.

3. Brainstorm

As a class, brainstorm solutions to the problem. Remind students that community service can take many different forms, including; collecting donations, donating time or skills to a project, using your voice to raise awareness about an issue, or creating something to educate or inspire others.

4. Plan

After students decide on a solution to pursue, it's time to make a plan. Ask students to think about what steps they need to take to solve the problem. Guide students in creating next steps to make their solution happen.

5. Take Action

Working within the rules and requirements of your school and any partner organization, have your students put their service learning project into place.

6. Reflect

Ask your students to journal about their experiences with the project. What did they learn about the issue facing their community? What new skills did they develop in trying to solve the problem? How does helping their community make them feel?

Here are some sample service learning projects your class might take on:

- **Pen Pals with Seniors** - Students develop an appreciation for and discover the value of human connection as they write and send cards to residents of local assisted living centers.
- **Beautify Your School** - Students learn about important social issues as they create murals in their school or classroom.
- **History in Your Own Back Yard** - Students learn about the contributions of important people in their community by researching them and creating "tabletop museums" for display in their school, local library, village or town hall or community center.
- **Plastic Round-up** - Students raise awareness of the problems associated with plastic pollution and make their community cleaner by organizing a plastic collection and recycling program.
- **Shelter Supply Drive** - Students learn of the needs of others as they collect supplies needed for community residents living in shelters.

The Constitution at Work: Elementary Edition DocsTeach Activity

In this activity, students will continue to practice connecting primary sources with specific sections of the Constitution.

Estimated time: 50 minutes

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions.

Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the page with the whole class.

How Can People Make a Difference? DocsTeach Activity

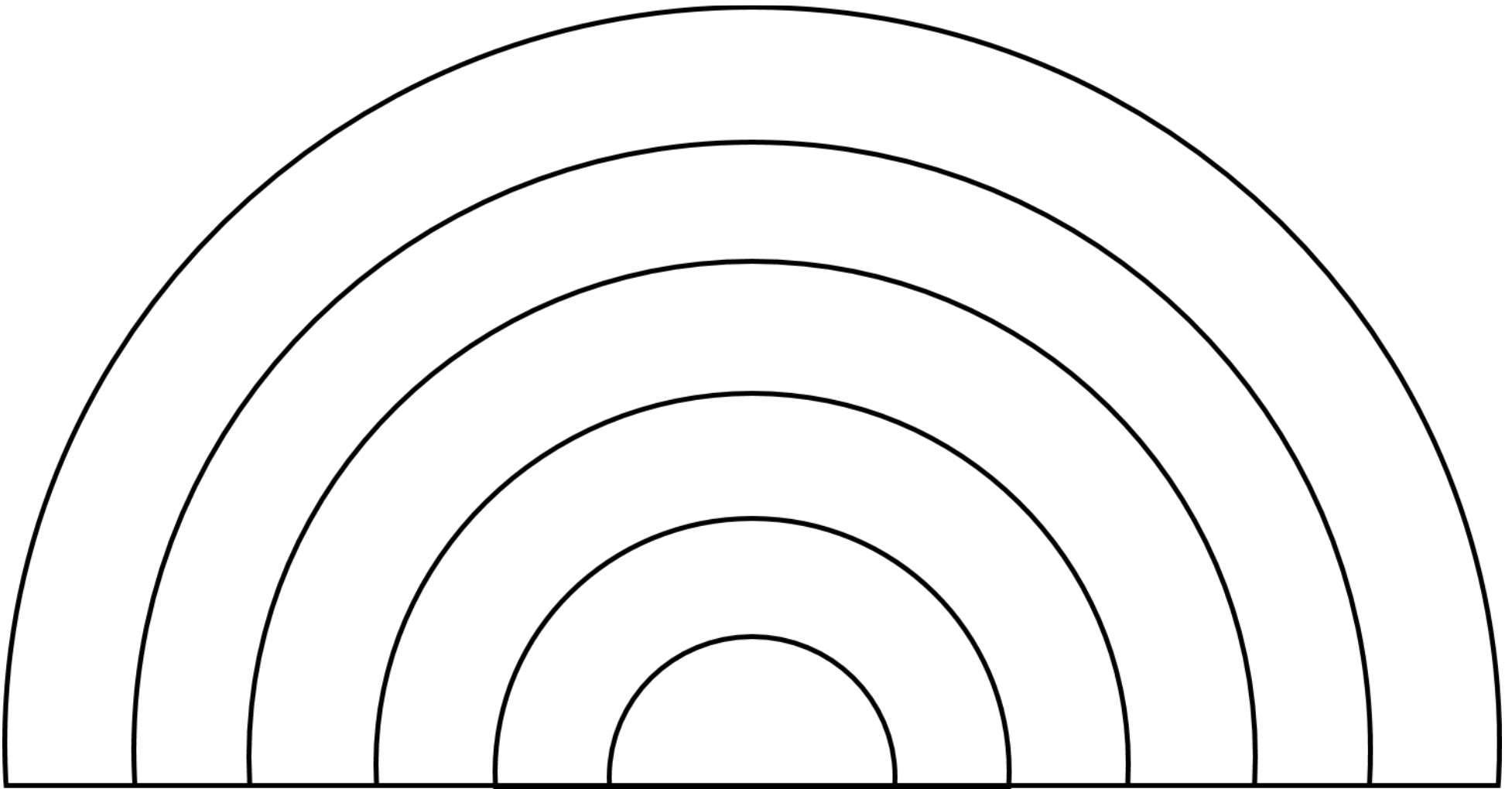
To complete this activity, students will match examples of civic engagement to records from the National Archives to answer the question: how can people make a difference?

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions.

Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the page with the whole class.

Our Communities



Document 1



Analyze a Photograph



Meet the photo.

What do you see?

Is the photo?

BLACK AND WHITE COLOR

Is there a caption?

YES NO

If so, what does the caption tell you?



Observe its parts.

Circle what you see in the photo.



PEOPLE OBJECTS BOTH

What are the people doing in the photo?

What are the objects used for in the photo?

Write two words that describe the photo.

Try to make sense of it.

Who do you think took this photo?

Where do you think this photo was taken?

List something that helps you prove where it was taken.

Why do you think the photo was taken?

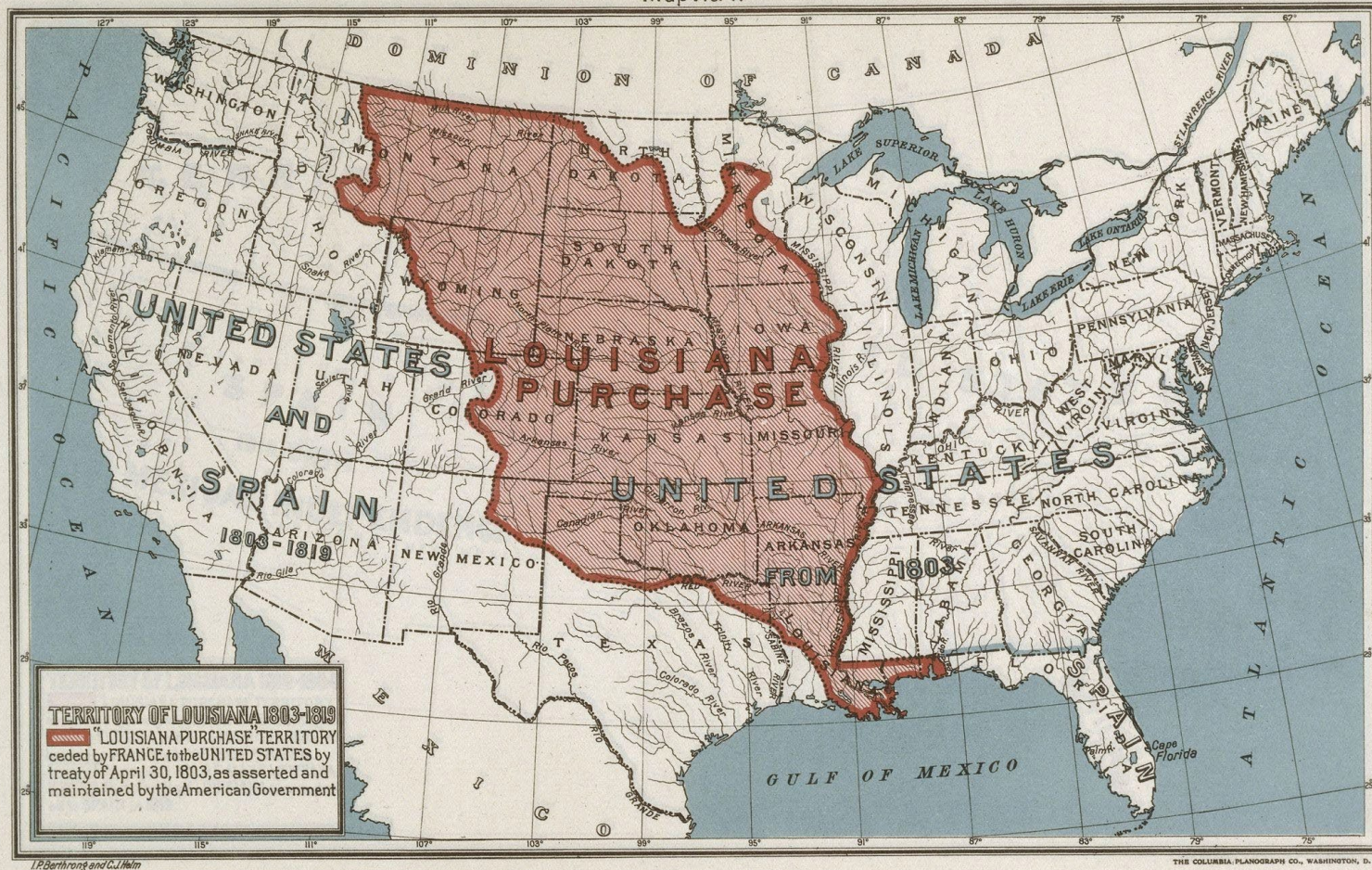
How does this photo compare to modern times?

Use it as historical evidence.

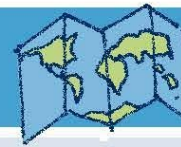
Where do you think we could find out more information about the people or objects in the photo?



Map No. 4.



Analyze a Map



Meet the map.

What do you see?

Does the map have a title?

Try to make sense of it.

When was the map drawn?

Observe its parts.

Does the map include? Circle all that apply.

Are symbols or colors used in the legend?
If so, what do they stand for?



COMPASS
ROSE



LEGEND



SCALE

What place or places are on the map?

What does the map show? Circle all that apply.



MOUNTAINS



RIVERS



LAKES



OCEANS



CITIES



STATES



COUNTRIES



ROADS



OTHER

Why do you think this map was made?

List two parts of the map that tell you this.

How does it compare to a current map of the same place?



Supreme Court of the United States

No. 1 ---- , October Term, 19 54

Oliver Brown, Mrs. Richard Lawton, Mrs. Sadie Emmanuel et al.,
Appellants,

vs.

Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, et al.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the _____
District of Kansas.

This cause came on to be heard on the transcript of the record from the United States
District Court for the _____ District of Kansas, _____
and was argued by counsel.

On consideration whereof, It is ordered and adjudged by this Court that the judgment
of the said District _____ Court in this cause be, and the same is
hereby, reversed with costs; and that this cause be, and the same
is hereby, remanded to the said District Court to take such
proceedings and enter such orders and decrees consistent with
the opinions of this Court as are necessary and proper to admit
to public schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis with all
deliberate speed the parties to this case.

Per Mr. Chief Justice Warren,

May 31, 1955.



1469

Analyze a Written Document



Meet the document.

Are there any special markings on the document? Circle all that apply.



STAMP



POSTMARK



HANDWRITTEN
NOTE



OFFICIAL
SEAL



SPECIAL
LETTERHEAD



OTHER

Is it handwritten or typed?



BOTH

Write down any words that you don't know.
Then look up the definitions.



Try to make sense of it.

What is the main idea of the document?

List two quotes (words from the document)
that help support the main idea.

Why do you think this document was written?

Observe its parts.

Who wrote this document?

What is the date of the document?

Who read or received this document?



Use it as historical evidence.

Where do you think you could find out more information about
the persons who wrote or received this document?

Where do you think you could find out more information about this event?



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5
The
Child

Re: new flag design

11/77

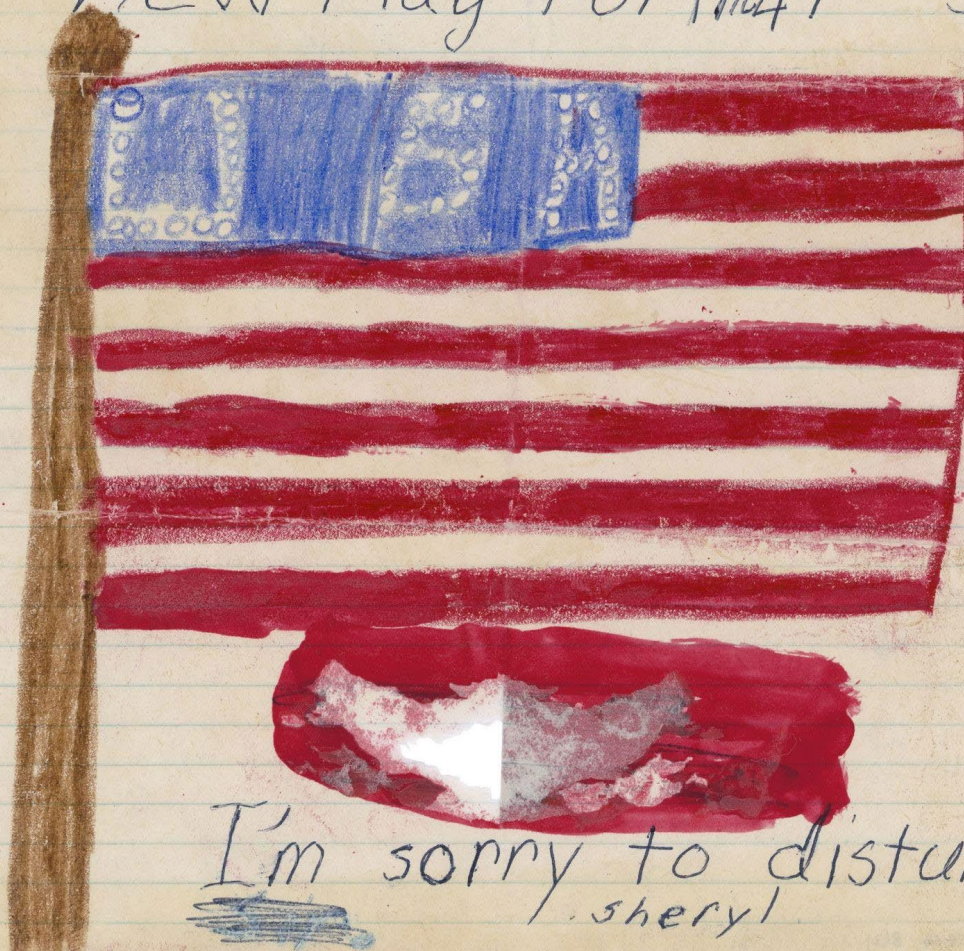
8

ack
10/30/58
smc

Dear president
Eisenhower,

My name is Sheryl Byland.
I am 8 years old.

My suggestion for the
new flag for the 9th state is,



A T B
m h e
e i e u
r a
i t
c a f
a u
l

I'm sorry to disturb you
sheryl

Analyze a Written Document



Meet the document.

Are there any special markings on the document? Circle all that apply.



STAMP



POSTMARK



HANDWRITTEN
NOTE



OFFICIAL
SEAL



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the persons who wrote or received this document?

Where do you think you could find out more information about this event?



H. J. Res. 1.

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of May,
 one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage
 to women.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States
 of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),
 That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution,
 which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when
 ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.*

“ARTICLE ———.

“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.

“Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate
 legislation.”

F. H. Lilett

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Thos. R. Marshall

Vice President of the United States and

President of the Senate.

Analyze a Written Document



Meet the document.

Are there any special markings on the document? Circle all that apply.



STAMP



POSTMARK



HANDWRITTEN
NOTE



OFFICIAL
SEAL



SPECIAL
LETTERHEAD



OTHER

Is it handwritten or typed?



BOTH

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Try to make sense of it.

What is the main idea of the document?

List two quotes (words from the document)
that help support the main idea.

Why do you think this document was written?

Observe its parts.

Who wrote this document?

What is the date of the document?

Who read or received this document?



Use it as historical evidence.

Where do you think you could find out more information about
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Where do you think you could find out more information about this event?



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The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration



The Constitution and US

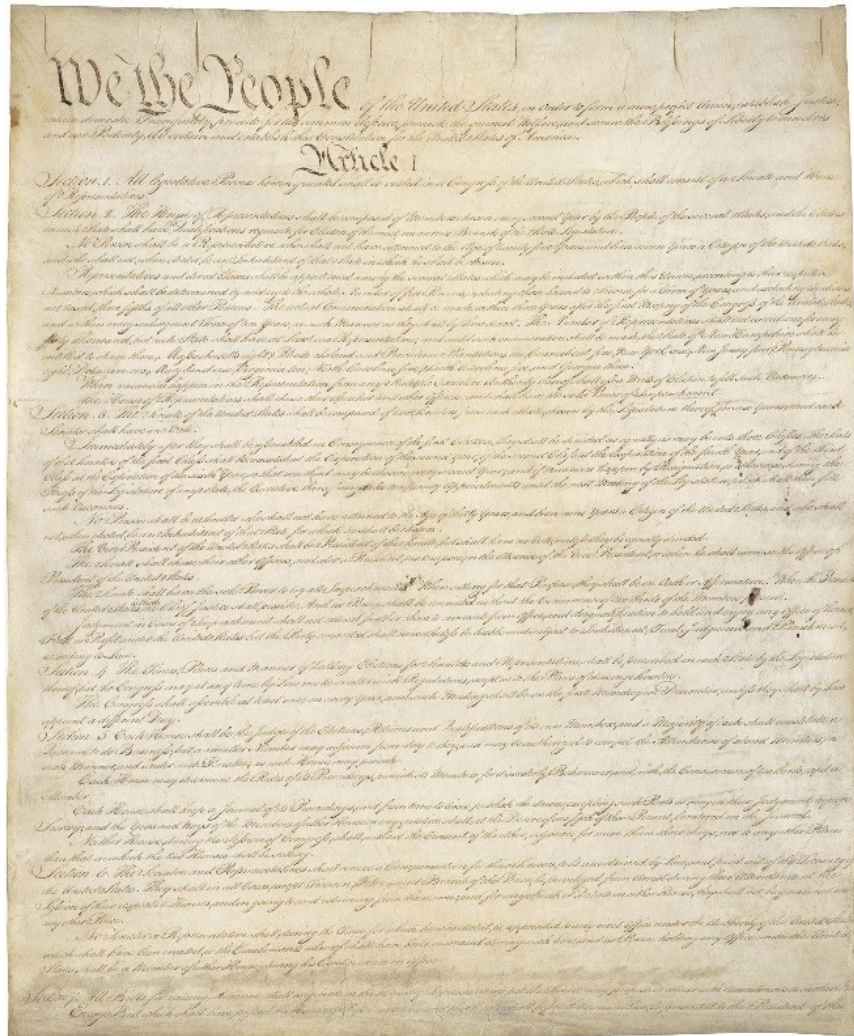
Student Name:

Article and Section of the Constitution	Document	How does this idea from the Constitution connect to us?
Article 1 Section 8: [Congress shall have power] To establish Post Offices and post Roads;	Postal Worker Photo	
Article 2 Section 2: [The President] shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties,	Map of the Louisiana Purchase	
Article 3 Section 2: The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution,	Judgment in <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	
Article 4 Section 3: New States may be admitted by Congress into this Union;	Sheryl Byland Letter	
Article 5: The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution,	19th Amendment	
Article 6: The Senators and Representatives before mentioned... shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution;	Daniel K. Inouye's Oath of Office	
Article 7: The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.	Delaware's Ratification of the Constitution	

The Constitution and US Answer Key

Article and Section of the Constitution	Document	How does this idea from the Constitution connect to us?
Article 1 Section 8: [Congress shall have power] To establish Post Offices and post Roads;	Postal Worker Photo	Our government helps connect communities across the country by mail.
Article 2 Section 2: [The President] shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties,	Map of the Louisiana Purchase	Treaties are agreements between nations that can impact our communities.
Article 3 Section 2: The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution,	Judgment in Brown v. Board of Education	The Supreme Court has the power to make sure our laws created under the Constitution treat everyone fairly. Supreme Court decisions can even impact kids, like in the case of <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .
Article 4 Section 3: New States may be admitted by Congress into this Union;	Sheryl Byland Letter	The letter shows us our community has changed over time, growing from 13 states to 50 states. It also reminds us that we can make our ideas heard by sending letters to the President!
Article 5: The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution,	19th Amendment	This amendment reminds us that we can make changes to the Constitution to make sure more people are included in the decisions our government makes.
Article 6: The Senators and Representatives before mentioned... shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution;	Daniel K. Inouye's Oath of Office	The oath of office is a promise to us by our elected officials to do their job by working together for the communities they represent. This includes us!
Article 7: The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.	Delaware's Ratification of the Constitution	Just like we work together with our classmates or friends to come to an agreement, the majority of states had to agree to the Constitution for it to become the supreme law of the land.

The Preamble



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Preamble Vocabulary

Union - a group formed by people with a common interest or purpose, usually for the benefit of those who are coming together

Justice - being treated fairly and reasonably

Domestic - relating to things that happen “at home,” as in where you live, your school or community, or the country

Tranquility - peace, calm, and order

Welfare - well-being, general health, happiness, and good fortune

Liberty - freedom, the ability to make your own choices

Blessings - beneficial or good things for which people are grateful and happy

Posterity - future generations, the people who come after us

Preamble Report Card

Goal	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Suggestions for Improvement	Additional Comments
Form a more Perfect Union					
establish Justice					
insure domestic Tranquility					
Provide for the Common Defence					
promote the general Welfare					
Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity					

Our Classroom Constitution

We the People of _____ class, in order
to form a classroom community that is
_____, _____, and _____, do agree to
this Constitution.

Article 1: Student Responsibilities

Article 2: Teacher Responsibilities

Article 3: Our Rights

Signed on _____ .

The Constitution and Our Community Program Vocabulary

Constitution and Government, Archives, The Preamble

Constitution and Government

Amendment - a change to the Constitution. The Constitution has been amended only 27 times in the history of the United States.

Article - the Constitution is divided into seven main parts called “articles.” Each of the articles describes important powers and responsibilities of the government.

Checks and balances - a system of overlapping powers of the separate branches of government that permits each branch to limit, restrain, or inform the actions of the other branches.

Community - a group of people that share certain social norms or commonalities such as location, language, religion, rules and codes of conduct, and/or government, to name a few. A classroom is a community, as is a school, city, or country.

Congress - one of the three branches (or parts) of our federal government. It is made up of two parts: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congress’s responsibilities are primarily outlined in Article I of the Constitution and include passing laws, approving Presidential appointments, and declaring war.

Constitution - a written document that describes the way government is structured as well as its powers and responsibilities. The Constitution of the United States structures our government around three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. It protects the rights of the people and is the highest law in the land.

Democracy – a system of government by the people. In a representative democracy, citizens vote in elections for government officials who will make decisions in the government for them.

Executive Power - the responsibility and authority to carry out or enforce the laws of the United States. Our Constitution gives this power to the President in Article II.

Federal Government - the government for the entire country as opposed to state or local governments.

Government - the leadership and organization that establishes and carries out the rules of a community, state, or nation.

House of Representatives - the “lower house” of Congress. It is made up of 435 representatives from the 50 states. Population determines the number of representatives from each state. States with larger populations have more representatives in Congress than those that have smaller populations. Members serve for two-year terms.

Judicial Power - the responsibility and authority of the courts to interpret what the laws mean and how they are applied. Our Constitution makes the Supreme Court the nation’s highest court.

Legislative Power - the responsibility and authority to make laws. Our Constitution gives this power to the Congress in Article I.

Laws - rules that maintain order and safety that members of a community agree to follow. In our country they are created by legislators (or lawmakers) elected by the people.

Oath - a promise or official affirmation that you will do a particular thing such as carry out the duties of your job.

Preamble - the opening paragraph of the Constitution that describes the goals of the Constitution: to create a good and fair government that is peaceful, safe, and free for the people of the United States.

President - head of the executive branch of our federal government and the leader of our country. The duties and responsibilities of the President are primarily outlined in Article II of the Constitution and include making sure the laws are faithfully carried out, being the commander-in-chief of our military forces, and conducting foreign policy with other countries.

Ratification - approval or consent. The Constitution required the ratification of 9 of the 13 original states.

Responsibilities - obligations or duties that one needs to fulfill (things you have to do).

Rights - freedoms or claims that one has (things you get to do)

Rules - created to direct and control activities and behaviors in certain circumstances and situations. For example, rules in a game let players know what is and is not allowed and acceptable. Rules help to bring order, safety, and predictability where there is none.

Senate - the “upper house” of Congress. It is made up of 100 senators, two from each of the 50 states. Members serve for six-year terms.

State Government - a unit of government for individual states, as opposed to the federal or local governments. Our state governments are composed of three distinct branches (legislative, executive, and judicial) and fall under the federal government. The governor is the head of the state government.

Supreme Court - one of the three branches (or parts) of our federal government, the highest court in the land. Article III outlines the jobs of the Supreme Court, which include interpreting the meaning of the laws and deciding if they are in line with the Constitution.

Treaty - a formal written agreement between two or more countries. Our Constitution says that the President can negotiate and make treaties, but these then need the approval (ratification) of two-thirds of the United States Senate.

We the People - These are the first three words of the Constitution of the United States. These words remind us that in our government, the people have the power.

Archives Vocabulary

Archive - a collection of records and information. Archives can be found in many places, homes, schools, libraries, government buildings, religious institutions, museums, historical associations to name just a few. Sometimes archives are highly organized and cataloged, sometimes they are kept less formalized and organized.

Archivist - a person who is trained to preserve and care for a collection of records and information (an archive). Archivists work closely with people conducting research in the collections to help them find the information they need.

National Archives - a federal government agency whose mission is to preserve and provide access to the important documents and other primary sources created or collected by our government in the course of business.

Parchment - a sturdy type of writing materials (like paper) that is no longer used these days. It was generally made of animal skins. Many of our country's early documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, were written on parchment.

Primary Source - an account of, or information about, a person or event that was created by someone with firsthand data, facts, evidence, or knowledge of the person or event. Examples might include: letters, reports, notes, memos, photographs, maps, interviews, and government records. A student's report card is a primary source because it contains information about the student created by their teacher.

Researcher - a person who looks for information in an archive. The researcher might be looking for general information about a topic, or they might have a particular question or mystery they are looking for information to solve.

Rotunda - a large room with a high rounded ceiling at the National Archives in our nation's capital, Washington DC, where the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and Bill of Rights are displayed.

Secondary Source - an account or story that is put together by someone who was not present to see things firsthand, but uses information from primary sources. A textbook is an example of a secondary source.

Preamble Vocabulary

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Posterity - future generations, the people who come after us

Additional Resources

America’s Founding Documents: [The Constitution](#)

Sign the [Constitution](#)

Primary Sources and Teaching Activities for Teaching the Constitution on [DocsTeach](#), the online tool for teaching with documents from the National Archives

Program Documents

Constitution of the United States; 9/17/1787; The Constitution of the United States, 9/17/1787– 9/17/1787; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/constitution>, August 2, 2021]

Delaware’s Ratification of the U.S. Constitution; 1787; Official Records of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, 1785–87; Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/delawares-ratification-us-constitution>, July 26, 2021]

Judgment in the Supreme Court Decision for *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*; 5/31/1955; Case File for *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*; Appellate Jurisdiction Case Files, 1792– 2010; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Record Group 267; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/judgement-in-the-supreme-court-decision-for-brown-et-al-v-board-of-education-of-topeka-et-al>, July 26, 2021]

Letter from Sheryl Byland to President Dwight D. Eisenhower Regarding American Flag Design Suggestion; 10/1958; Collection DDE-WHCF: White House Central Files (Eisenhower Administration). [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/sheryl-byland>, July 26, 2021]

Map RG49-OMF-US40-4; Map of the Louisiana Purchase Territory; 1903; United States; Old Map File Manuscript and Annotated Maps of the United States and Its Territories, 1812–1946; Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Record Group 49; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/map-louisiana-purchase>, July 26, 2021]

Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; 6/4/1919; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789–2011; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/nineteenth-amendment>, July 26, 2021]

Oath of Office for Daniel K. Inouye; 1/9/1963; Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/oath-of-office-for-daniel-k-inouye>, July 26, 2021]

Postal Worker; 2002–2007; Postal Worker; Stock Photos Depicting Various Occupations, 2002–2007; General Records of the Department of Labor, Record Group 174; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/postal-worker-stock-photo>, July 26, 2021]