



Federal Constitution Making

American Heritage Discussion Series for Learners with Littles



Our Learning Journey

The Constitutional Convention
led by George Washington and
James Madison

We the People

Iroquois Confederacy

Music Time: We the People

George Washington is coming to Philadelphia? Then we'll come, too!

- George Washington led the Americans to victory in the Revolutionary War. Then he made a speech before Congress saying he will not take anymore leadership jobs. He wanted to rest and support the new government from home.
- With lots of convincing, James Madison persuaded George Washington to come to a convention in Philadelphia to solve problems of government under the Articles of Confederation.
- When word got around that George Washington was coming, then the states began to send delegates. The Constitutional Convention would not have happened if Washington didn't agree to go.



Independence Hall in Philadelphia

- The Constitutional Convention met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. This was the same place where Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.
- The delegates in the Constitutional Convention only had permission to change the government designed during the war, called the Articles of Confederation. Under this government, Congress did not have power to tax the states, so it never had enough money. There were other problems, too.



James Madison

- When the Constitutional Convention started, James Madison asked to lay aside the Articles of Confederation. It had problems.
- He had done lots of homework before the convention. He had ideas for new rules of government. The delegates agreed to design a new plan.
- Together, the delegates agreed to new rules for government. They called it a constitution.



Getting the New Constitution Adopted Back Home

- Because the delegates did not have permission to make new rules of government, or create a constitution, the delegates had to take the new constitution back home and ask the people of their home states to approve it.
- The Constitution only became the new government when people back home agreed to adopt it and follow the law.

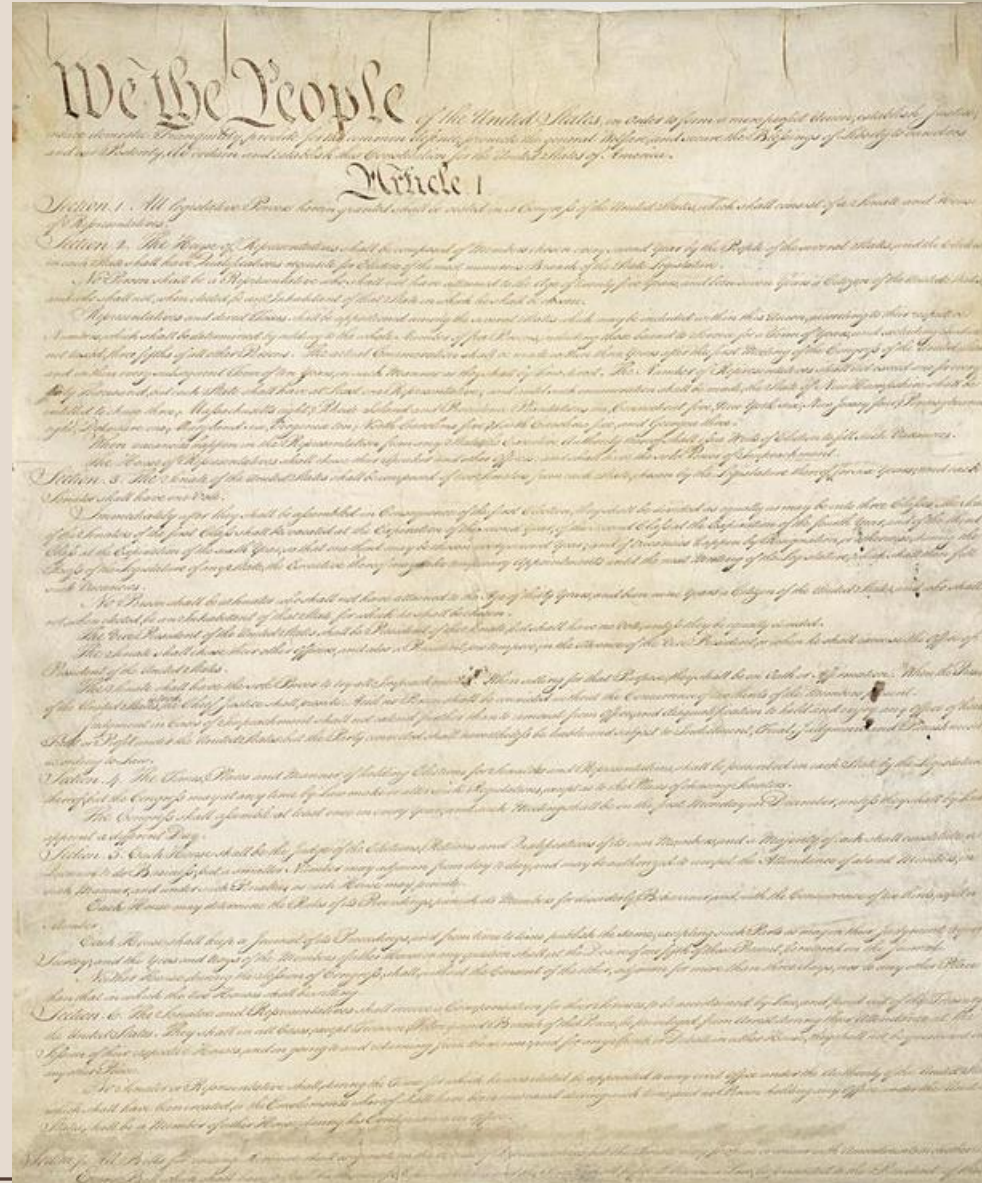
Activity Preview: One of the activities you can choose is making your own constitution for your home. You come up with rules. Then when you are back home, you need to see if those living in your home will agree to follow them. You are allowed to change them based on what they are willing to follow.



Constitution Starts With...

- The Constitution starts with an introduction called the preamble. It reads like:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, 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.



We the People: Pre-ambble or Intro to the Constitution

- Let's learn the words of the preamble to the Constitution.





If you are 1 years old, 2 years old, 3 years old, or 4 years old
go to these activity tables now:

1. Color the words of the preamble
2. Make puppets of George Washington and James Madison

We the People: What Americans Look Like Has Changed Over Time

- Over time, who gets to participate in American government has expanded.
- It started with only land holding men and now includes all people of color, women, and immigrants who take a citizenship test.
- This means, now, Americans all look different, but they all have the same rights and they all have the responsibility to be good citizens.

Activity Preview: One of the activities you can choose is to make a We the People Paper Chain. Make sure you draw the many ways Americans look different from one another.



Iroquois Confederacy (AKA Haudenosaunee)

- Hundreds of years before the Constitution was created, some Native American tribes who lived in what is now known as New York state warred with one another.
- One man, named Dekanawida, helped to stop the tribes from warring and unite. He came to be known as The Great Peace Giver.
- This is a picture of The Great Peace Giver approaching the leader of one of the tribes. The tribe leader is shown as having snakes all over him. He didn't really have snakes. This just meant he was very mean and wanted war. The Great Peace Giver was able to convince him to stop warring and unite with the other tribes.
- Then the Iroquois Confederacy was created.



The Great Peace Giver and the Great Law of Peace

- Learn more about the Great Law of Peace from the perspective of Native people.



Iroquois Confederacy (AKA Haudenosaunee)

- When the five tribes united, they formed the Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the Haudenosaunee.
- The members of the tribes placed their weapons of war under a large tree. This peace tree became a symbol of their confederacy.
- The Iroquois Confederacy is an example of federalism. This means that each tribe kept its own identity and chose to unite with a central government.



Wampum Belt

- When the framers of the Constitution were looking for examples of successful government, the Iroquois Confederacy was one of the successful examples they knew about.
- Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and John Adams each knew about the Iroquois Confederacy as an example of federalism when they were working on designing a new government for the United States.
- In 1988 the United States Senate officially recognized the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the Constitution.
- The Wampum Belt represents the Iroquois Confederacy. **Here the Wampum Belt is in the form of a flag.**



Activity Preview: You can choose to create your own version of the Wampum Belt by making a construction paper mosaic of it.

The background features a light grey base with several organic, rounded shapes in muted colors: a large brown shape on the left, a green shape in the top right, and a light grey shape in the bottom right. A white, stylized pine branch silhouette is visible in the top left corner. A white, wavy line graphic curves across the bottom right area.

Choose Stations



Music Time

Let's Learn the Preamble to the Constitution



Words to 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 defense, 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.