

**Unit Name:** Basics of Constitutional Law

**Time Frame:**

**Author:** Egg Harbor Township High School Social Studies Department

## UNIT

Subject: Constitutional Law

Country: **USA**

Course/Grade: 12th

State/Group: **NJ**

School: **Egg Harbor Township High School**

**UNIT SUMMARY:** The student will learn what a constitution is, what it does and whether it is law. The student will then identify the basic structure of the United States Constitution, the basic philosophical ideas and principles underlying the document, and the development of the Bill of Rights.

## UNIT RESOURCES

The United States Constitution

The Bill of Rights

The Magna Carta

## Internet Resource Links:

constitutionus.com/

<http://www.ushistory.org/gov/2.asp>

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/government/billofrights.htm>

[http://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_bill\\_of\\_rights.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/us_bill_of_rights.php)

[http://www.congressforkids.net/games/billofrights/2\\_billofrights.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/games/billofrights/2_billofrights.htm)

<http://www.archives.gov/legislative/resources/education/constitution/>

## STAGE ONE

### GOALS AND STANDARDS

6.1.4.A.4

Explain how the United States government is organized and how the United States Constitution defines and limits the power of government.

6.1.4.A.5

Distinguish the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of the national government.

6.1.4.A.2

Explain how fundamental rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights (i.e., freedom of expression, freedom of religion, the right to vote, and the right to due process) contribute to the continuation and improvement of American democracy.

### 6.1.8.A.3.b

Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.

## **ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

The Constitution was inspired by a variety of philosophical ideas, basic governmental principles and English notions of law and basic rights.

A constitution is a plan for government, and in the United States, the Constitution is also law that is supreme to all other law.

The Bill of Rights guarantees individual liberties and also serves the purpose of placing limitations on governmental power.

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

What is a constitution? What function(s) does it perform?

What purposes does the Bill of Rights serve?

What basic rights are guaranteed in the Bill of Rights?

## **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Students will know:

-The Constitution is a plan for government and it is also the supreme law of the land.

-The Constitution was derived from many philosophical sources, including Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and others. Many English laws, traditions and rights formed the basis for our Constitution.

-The Bill of Rights protects individual liberties and limits the power of the government.

-The rights guaranteed under each amendment in the Bill of Rights.

## **STAGE TWO**

## **PERFORMANCE TASKS**

-Oral presentations

-Multimedia presentations

-student debates

-web quests

-power point presentations

-essays

-case analysis/summaries

## **OTHER EVIDENCE**

Teacher-created formative assessments  
Teacher-created summative assessments  
Self-assessments  
Peer review  
Lesson tests  
Section quizzes  
Vocabulary quizzes

## **STAGE THREE**

### **LEARNING PLAN**

Daily format:

Begin with a warm-up question (essential question) and an overview of the day's objectives.

Introduce basic vocabulary for the lesson.

Deliver content-specific material related to the unit in the form of notes, power points, video clips, guided reading or interactive websites.

Students work independently or in groups on the day's activity.

Suggested activities:

Create a constitution for the classroom

Rank the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights in order of importance.

Have students create their own Bill of Rights.

Have students suggest amendments; i.e. how to improve the Constitution.