

We the Kids: Establishing Classroom Rules

By: Denise Thayne and Annie Robertson, Teacher Consultant, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Burning Question: Can students discover the importance of having rules in a classroom and link that discovery to the importance of having rules in our society?

Objectives:

- Students will identify the important rules for regulating a community or society.
- Students will identify three categories that rules fall under: respect, responsibility, and safety.
- Students will apply the rules for regulating a community to their own classroom.
- Students will connect classroom rules to the nation's Constitution.

Context:

This is a K-6 lesson that can be done near the beginning of the school year to establish classroom rules. This would work well as an introduction to the Constitution and would be a lesson to use on Constitution Day (September 16, 2011).

Materials:

- *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* by David Catrow
- White board or chart paper with markers
- Constitution poster board or plain poster board

Time Span: 1 or 2 days, 30 min to 1 hour each (depending on discussion allowed)

Procedures:

- Have a class discussion/brainstorm about why we have classroom rules and what our classroom rules should be. List those rules on the white board or chart paper.
- Have students categorize their list. They should discover three types of rules. There are rules for respect, responsibility, and safety.
- Have a class discussion about how our nation needs rules to keep everyone healthy and happy. These rules also help us all get along. Read *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* and look for things that are similar to the classroom and school rules. Discuss briefly how people everywhere need rules to help them stay safe and happy.
- Create a class constitution on constitution poster board. Begin with "We the students of the *Kindergarten* class of *name or initials of school*, in order to form a more perfect union", etc. List the main categories identified in procedure #2 as well as an example for each one. Discuss how the class rules go along with the classroom constitution. Discuss what it means to sign your name to something

and what it meant for the founders to sign their names to the U.S. Constitution. Have students agree to sign the classroom constitution and then hang up in the classroom for the entire year.

Adaptations/Extensions:

- Type the class constitution up into a smaller document that the students can sign and keep in a folder for reference throughout the year.
- Have students identify some different rules that are in the school or in the community and then have the students classify those rules under the different categories discussed.

Rationale:

Students need to be able to relate historical concepts to something they are familiar with. Picture books are enjoyed by students of all ages. Teachers have the flexibility to discuss the concepts with their students in a way their students can understand. By using a variety of learning strategies, students will become familiar with the Preamble and its importance. Creating a document that applies to the classroom community will help students understand the importance and the need for national laws.

Resources:

- Catrow, David. *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States*. New York: Puffin Books, 2002.
- The Constitution Rights Foundation offers lesson plans for Constitution Day: <http://www.crf-usa.org/constitution-day/constitution-day.html>
- *ConstitutionFacts.com* also offers lesson plans and activities for Constitution Day: <http://www.constitutionday.cc/>
- The National Constitutions Center offers activities for Constitution Day: http://constitutioncenter.org/ncc_progs_Constitution_Day.aspx
- "Teaching with Documents" from the National Archives: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/>
- A Celebrate the Constitution Game from Scholastic: http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/constitution_day/

We the Kids: Decoding the Preamble

By: Annie Robertson Teacher Consultant, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Burning Question: Can students make personal connections to the Preamble to the Constitution by reading a picture book and does drawing and writing help to solidify those connections?

Objectives:

- Students will use prior knowledge to make connections to text (text to text, text to self and text to world).
- Students will recognize and define the concepts in the Preamble.
- Students will generate an illustrated Preamble.

Context: This lesson can be used and adapted for any elementary level class.

Materials:

- *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* by David Catrow
- Paper, crayons, markers

Time Span: 45 min - 1 hour

Procedures:

- Read the book *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* to the students. Stop on each page to define and discuss the meaning of each phrase. An explanation of the definitions is included at the beginning of the book to help aid the discussion.
- Have students in 4th-6th grade respond to the prompts: Write about one idea from the book that stands out to you. How does it relate to you?
- Let students share their writing responses.
- Divide students into 10 groups. Give each group a phrase from the Preamble and have them design a page to describe the meaning of the phrase. The phrases are:
 1. *We the People of the United States*
 2. *in order to form a more perfect Union*
 3. *establish Justice*
 4. *insure domestic Tranquility*
 5. *provide for the common defense*
 6. *promote the general welfare*
 7. *and secure the Blessings of Liberty*
 8. *to ourselves and our Posterity,*
 9. *do ordain and establish this Constitution*
 10. *for the United States of America*

- Tape or staple the class pages together and display them on a bulletin board or somewhere in the room.
- Have the students discuss what they have learned about the Preamble.

Adaptations/Extensions:

- You could display pictures of a handshake, a balance scale, a dove, a tank or soldiers, a school or hospital, and the Statue of Liberty for some examples related to the phrases.
- For older students, give them a copy of the Preamble to work from. They could write about their drawing using a genre of their choice (i.e. poem, letter, memoir, song, etc)
- Because this is a summary of the Constitution, students could read the Constitution to identify where the concepts are addressed in the Constitution.
- Students could decide as a class if they want to model the book and include a character that would be present in each group's drawing.
- Students could write a class Preamble to precede a class Constitution.

Rationale:

Students need to be able to relate historical concepts to something with which they are familiar. Picture books are enjoyed by students of all ages. Teachers have the flexibility to discuss the concepts with their students in a way their students can understand. By using a variety of learning strategies, students will become familiar with the Preamble and what it says about the aspects of governance the founders hoped the Constitution would establish.

Resources:

- Catrow, David. *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States*. New York: Puffin Books, 2002.
- Preamble to the Constitution; available from The National Archives: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html
- School House Rock music and lyrics to song about the preamble is available on UTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_TXJRZ4CFc and in text <http://www.schoolhouserock.tv/Preamble.html>
- "We the People" lesson plan on The New York Times Learning Network: <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2005/09/12/we-the-people/>
- The Preamble Scramble Online Interactive: http://www.texasre.org/lfei_preamble.html

The American Revolution

By: Annie Robertson, Teacher Consultant, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Unit At-a-Glance

Day	Utah Social Studies Curriculum Objective (5 th grade)	Lesson Title and Assessment	Associated Book or Primary Document
one	<p>Write in different forms and genres.</p> <p>Profile citizens who rose to greatness as leaders.</p> <p>Explain the role of events that led to declaring independence (e.g., French and Indian War, Stamp Act, Boston Tea Party).</p> <p>Reciprocal Teaching:</p> <p>Relate prior knowledge to make connections to text (e.g., text to text, text to self, text to world).</p> <p>Make and confirm or revise predictions while reading using title, picture clues, text, and/or prior knowledge.</p> <p>Summarize important ideas/events; summarize supporting details in sequence.</p> <p>Generate questions about text (e.g., factual, inferential, evaluative).</p> <p>Monitor and clarify understanding applying fix-up strategies while interacting with text.</p>	<p>Structured Multigenre Research Project</p> <p>Learning Log</p> <p>Reciprocal Teaching http://condor.admin.cny.cuny.edu/~yq6048/</p> <p>Monitoring Sheet</p> <p>Group Discussion to follow reciprocal teaching.</p>	<p><i>Independent Dames</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson</p>

	<p>Analyze arguments both for and against declaring independence using primary sources from Loyalist and patriot perspectives.</p> <p>Locate information from a variety of informational text.</p> <p>Use a variety of formats in presenting with various forms of media.</p>	<p>In 3 groups, students will research resources and make a list of reasons why:</p> <p>Group 1: why we should declare independence</p> <p>Group 2: why we should not declare independence</p> <p>Group 3: How declaring independence will affect women, Native Americans, and African Americans</p> <p>Groups will create a media project to persuade others to join the fight for/against independence.</p>	
	<p>Plot a time line of the key events of the Revolutionary War.</p>	<p>The Revolutionary War: An Eight Year Fight for Freedom</p>	<p><i>The Revolutionary War: An Interactive History Adventure</i> by Elizabeth Raum</p>

Multigenre Research Project Rubric

A multigenre paper arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's.

Criteria	No	No, But	Yes, But	Yes	Points Earned
Historical Accuracy	(10 points) Account of historical events is not provided or is inaccurate.	(20 points) Account of historical events is brief or provides/reflects misconceptions.	(30 points) Historical events are presented correctly, but with two or three errors.	(40 points) Historical events are accurate with zero to one errors.	
Bridges Included	(4 points) There isn't anything linking genres together.	(6 points) Bridges are present; however, they inadequately relate the genres.	(8 points) Bridges are present and they mostly connect the genres.	(10 points) Bridges are present and the genres are connected in a way that makes sense.	
Endnotes, explaining what you've learned	(4 points) Endnotes are not included.	(6 points) Endnotes are included, however they do not explain what was learned.	(8 points) Endnotes are included; however, the explanation of what was learned was too brief.	(10 points) Endnotes are included and a full explanation of what was learned was described.	
Reference Page	(4 points) References not included.	(6 points) Reference page included, but references not cited properly.	(8 points) Reference page included, but more than 4 mistakes are made in the citations.	(10 points) Reference page included and there are 4 or less mistakes in the citations.	

5-7 Genres Included	(8 points) Project contains less than 5 genres.			(15 points) Project contains 5-7 genres.	
Style	(2 points) The focus of each genre was not clear. The genres did not follow the genre conventions.	(3 points) The focus of each genre was off topic. OR The genres did not follow the genre conventions.	(4 points) The focus of each genre was clear and most of the genres included the correct genre conventions.	(5 points) The focus of each genre was clear and each genre followed the correct genre conventions.	
Presentation	(2 points) Presentation was handwritten and unorganized.	(3 points) Presentation was handwritten, yet organized.	(4 points) Presentation was typed, yet unorganized.	(5 points) Presentation was typed and organized.	
Conventions	(2 points) Spelling and grammar errors present throughout the entire project.	(3 points) Project contains more than 6 spelling or grammar errors.	(4 points) Project contains 4-6 spelling or grammar errors.	(5 points) Project contains 3 or less spelling or grammar errors.	
Total Project Points Received				Out of 100	

Learning Log

A Learning Log is a sustained reflection on a learning experience and can be used to assess student gain through the process. It should be applied before, during and after a course of study. The teacher sets the structure and purpose for this.

Date:		
Activity:		
Thoughts	Questions	Next Time

Date:		
Activity:		
Thoughts	Questions	Next Time

Date:		
Activity:		
Thoughts	Questions	Next Time