



A Common Core State Standards-Aligned Educator Guide for Grades 5 to 9

We the People: The United States Constitution Explored and Explained

Publisher: Wide Eyed Editions

ISBN: 9780711254046



About the book:

See the U.S. Constitution in a new light with this bold, modern and accessible illustrated guide to the document that helped define democracy. As well as a detailed history covering the original Constitution, the Bill of Rights and all Amendments, discover how this milestone in American democracy shapes and is shaped by the world at large. *We The People* shows that, far from a fusty old piece of paper, the U.S. Constitution is a living, evolving rulebook that is as relevant today as it has ever been.

About the author and illustrator – Aura Lewis:

Aura Lewis is an author-illustrator whose distinctive, contemporary artwork aims at awakening the political potential of audiences young and old. Her debut picture book, *Gloria's Voice*, was published in March 2018 by Sterling Books. Her adult book, *The Illustrated Feminist*, will be published in Spring 2020 with Abrams.



About the author – Evan Sargent:

Evan Sargent is an intuitive creative director, strategist and designer with a knack for seeing the big picture. Her background includes over a decade as an art director and creative director in advertising – more recently, she has become a political activist and community organizer. *We The People* is her first children's book.



Discussion Topics:

The first seven articles of the Constitution include a detailed plan of the democracy that we still have today.

- A *democracy* means a representative form of government. Discuss how the three branches of the government establish a form of government in which the people of the United States are represented.
- Consider the significance of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Determine the importance of having a balanced form of government.

The Preamble comes at the very beginning of the U.S. Constitution.

- The Preamble serves as an introduction to the Constitution. Explore reasons why topics such as union, justice, welfare, and common defense are included as part of the introduction for the Constitution of the United States of America.
- Examine the phrase “blessing of liberty.” The word *liberty* means freedom, choice, and privilege. Discuss how the expression of liberty, as introduced in the Preamble, is considered to be a blessing.

Discussion continued:

The U.S. Bill of Rights is a respected document in the world. Other countries have modelled their own versions inspired by ours.

- An *amendment* is a change or addition designed to improve a text or a piece of legislation. The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten amendments of the Constitution established to guarantee such rights as the freedoms of speech, assembly, and worship. Review each of the ten amendments. Discuss the importance of each of them.
- Why do you think other countries have used the U.S. Bill of Rights as a guide to establish versions of their own?

One of the most important things it teaches us is that every single person has power—not only queens, kings, presidents, and congresspeople.

- The word *power* means influence, ability, and authority. Consider how the Constitution grants you power as an individual.
- The word *responsibility* means duty, loyalty, and importance. Explain how becoming aware and/or involved in governmental issues is being responsible to care for our communities.
- How about you? Are you inspired to make a difference in the leadership of our nation? If so, what are your plans to do so?

Extension activities:

Describe the sequence of creating laws by numbering the following statements in chronological order:

- ___ The President either signs or vetoes the bill
- ___ The Senate or House makes changes to the bill until they get it worded how they want
- ___ If there is a majority in the House or Senate, it goes back to the original branch that introduced it for a round of debating and amending until both houses agree
- ___ The bill leaves Congress and is passed to the President
- ___ A member of Congress introduces the bill to the House or Senate
- ___ A committee within the House or Senate debates the bill's merit
- ___ A passed bill moves to the other branch of Congress where it is debated and amended

Which of the following is a power that the President has? Check all that apply:

- ___ He or she is the acting head of the military
- ___ He or she can choose how many years they want to serve as president
- ___ He or she can make new laws without Congressional approval
- ___ He or she is allowed to appoint a justice to the Senate without approval
- ___ He or she can outlaw brussels sprouts
- ___ He or she is the leader of agencies like the Department of Health and the Treasury
- ___ He or she can pardon any person who has committed a federal crime
- ___ He or she can make treaties with foreign countries and appoint officials like ambassadors and judges



Common Core State Standards Alignment

ELA » Reading: Informational Text – RI.6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.10, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 9-10.2, 9-10.3

ELA » Speaking & Listening – SL.6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2, 9-10.1

ELA » History/Social Studies – RH.6-8.2, 6-8.4, 9-10.2, 9-10.4