Standard 1: Foundations of Government, Law, and the American Political System

**SS.3.C.1.3**

Explain how government was established through a written Constitution.

How does a written constitution establish government?
Common Core State Standards

Grade 3 English Language Arts, Reading: Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.3.1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.3.2. Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

RL.3.3. Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Craft and Structure

RL.3.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

RL.3.5. Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

RL.3.6. Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.3.7. Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

RL.3.8. (Not applicable to literature)

RL.3.9. Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).

Range of Reading and Complexity of Text

RL.3.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
Common Core State Standards

Grade 3 English Language Arts, Reading: Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

RI.3.1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RI.3.2. Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

RI.3.3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

Craft and Structure

RI.3.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

RI.3.5. Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

RI.3.6. Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.3.7. Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

RI.3.8. Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

RI.3.9. Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RI.3.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
Common Core State Standards

Grade 3 English Language Arts, Reading: Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.3.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/careless, heat/preheat).
- Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion).
- Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.3.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

- Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).
- Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).
- Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).

L.3.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).
Common Core State Standards

Grade 3 English Language Arts, Reading: Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.3.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
- Provide reasons that support the opinion.
- Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
- Provide a concluding statement or section.

W.3.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- Provide a concluding statement or section.

W.3.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- Provide a sense of closure.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.3.4. With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.3.5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
W.3.6. With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

W.3.7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

W.3.8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

W.3.9. (Begins in grade 4)

**Range of Writing**

W.3.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
## Civics Content Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Non-Example</th>
<th>Gesture/Visual/Symbol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>constitution</td>
<td>a plan (generally written) that defines the function and structure of government</td>
<td>Student code of conduct</td>
<td>Famous speeches</td>
<td>Florida Constitution</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Class rules and policies</td>
<td>Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>United States Constitution</td>
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<td>Florida Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United States Constitution</td>
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Instructions for conducting a Read Aloud

Preparing for a Read Aloud:
1. Select a read aloud text that will provide a springboard for teaching the civics benchmark (See suggested books within this module, but not limited to).

2. Along with the content civics vocabulary for this module, identify additional vocabulary terms within the selection necessary for text comprehension and understanding the civics benchmark.

3. Generate questions of varying complexity related to the text that support deeper understanding of the civics benchmark.

4. Plan opportunities for authentic student engagement with the text during the Read Aloud (text discussion, turn & talk, think-pair-share).

Conducting a Read Aloud:
1. Introduce the book.

2. Briefly introduce the predetermined vocabulary words.

3. During the Read Aloud, conduct think alouds so students are provided a model of thinking that is applied while reading. Use the generated questions to ask students about the text to allow opportunities for authentic student engagement (text discussion, turn & talk, think-pair-share) and to clarify understanding.

4. After the Read Aloud, provide opportunities for students to discuss and write about civics concepts learned.
**Suggested Books**

**A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution** by Betsy Maestro and Giulio Maestro
This easy-to-understand book tells why and how the Constitution of the United States was created. "Simple, attractive, informative....The most accessible history of the Constitution to date."--School Library Journal.

**The Constitution of the United States (True Books)** by Christine Taylor-Butler
Ideal for today's young investigative reader, each A True Book includes lively sidebars, a glossary and index, plus a comprehensive "To Find Out More" section listing books, organizations, and Internet sites. A staple of library collections since the 1950s, the new A True Book series is the definitive nonfiction series for elementary school readers. A True Book -- American History: How do you wrap a 450,000-pound gift? What is the world's oldest and shortest written constitution? Find out in this patriotic celebration of things uniquely American.

**The U.S. Constitution and You** by Syl Sobel
All elementary school students learn about the history of the U.S. Constitution when they first begin social studies. This book is different. It tells boys and girls about the great American document itself--explaining exactly what the Constitution does, as well as how it affects and protects people today. Kids discover how the Constitution provides for the federal government's three branches--legislative, executive, and judicial. Then they see how it gives all citizens many rights, including the right to vote, to enjoy freedom of speech and the press, to worship--or not worship--according to one's religious beliefs, to disagree openly with government policy, and to defend oneself in courts of law when accused of crimes or civil wrongs. Kids also see how, according to the Constitution, many rights are kept beyond control of the federal government, and are reserved for the separate states, communities, and individuals. This book's language is clear and simple. It cites many examples that relate directly to each student's own experiences. (For grades 3-5)

**We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States** by David Catrow
A long time ago some smart guys wrote the Preamble to the Constitution. You have probably read it before, but do you know what it means? And did it ever make you laugh? Now it will! Perfect for inspiring discussion in classrooms and around kitchen tables, this fun-filled and cheerfully illustrated look at the Preamble citizens of all ages. Includes a glossary of terms and a foreword by the artist.
Guided Practice Activity

Module Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the role and purpose of the Constitution.
2. To explain how the Constitution establishes the government and the laws of the land.

Activity:

1. Refer to the book used for the read aloud. Use the book as starting point for a discussion about the importance of rules in a successful country or in any public or private place.
2. Divide the students into groups of three or four students. Each group will reflect on various places in our society where we experience rules, such as: home, classroom, library, a sports field, restaurants, in the car, etc.
3. Assign each group one location to consider and have them answer the following questions:
   a. What are some rules you would follow here?
   b. Why were these rules made?
   c. What would it be like if we didn’t have these rules?
4. Allow each group to report the rules to the class, pointing out that rules are made for the safety, welfare, or organization of a place or group of people.
5. Share with students that in order to establish a safe, smooth classroom, the class will create their own Classroom Constitution.
6. Remind the class that the Founders/Framers of the Constitution spent many days deciding on the rules needed to govern our country and that not everyone agreed. Many compromises were made before the Constitution was passed and ratified.
7. Read the Preamble to the Constitution, explaining that each sentence helps explain why the Constitution was written. Briefly explain the sentences.

The Preamble of the United States Constitution- 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.
8. Ask the students to brainstorm what objectives or purpose classroom rules have: for example, ensuring fair treatment for everyone, respect for teachers and students, rights to teach (for the teacher) and to learn (for the students), an atmosphere in which learning can take place, orderliness, safety, etc.

9. As a class, complete the following preamble to the class constitution:

   We, the students in __________ class, in order to __________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   do order and create this Constitution for the ____ school year.
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.
Application Activity

Activity:

1. Divide the class into groups.
2. Have each group create 3-5 class rules that would ensure that the objectives stated in the preamble will be achieved.
   a. Groups should focus on questions like “What rule(s) can we write to make sure everyone is treated fairly and is safe?” and “What rule(s) can we write to make sure our classroom is a suitable place to learn?”
3. Each group should record their proposed 3-5 class rules on a piece of chart paper.
4. As closure for this activity, complete the following
   a. As a class, display the 3-5 class rules created by each group, lead a class discussion to narrow down a composite list of rules for the classroom, causing the groups to compromise, with some rules dismissed, others modified or combined.
   b. Make sure to remind students that as the teacher, you have final VETO power on rules!
   c. Also be sure to discuss the importance of the “Bill of Rights”—which will allow additional necessary rules to be added at a later date.
   d. The next day display the rules printed on a large poster or chart paper and allow each student to sign his/her name, in agreement of upholding the Classroom Constitution for the school year.
Independent Practice Activity

Writing Prompt: The United States Constitution contains our country’s rules and laws. It also explains how our government is organized. Write to explain why it is important to have these rules written down.

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## Supplemental Resources and Activities

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The Constitution of the United States is the cornerstone of our American government. In 4,543 words this document describes the structure or plan of the government and the rights of the American people. The Constitution is known as a "living document" because it can be amended. Since its ratification, it has only been amended (changed) 27 times. The Constitution is a strong document, more powerful than any branch of government or any state. At the same time, it is flexible enough to allow for freedom and changes in America.

The Constitution is organized into three parts:

- **Preamble:** Describes the purpose of the document and government.
- **Articles:** Establish how the government is structured and how the Constitution can be changed. There are seven articles.
- **Amendments:** Changes to the Constitution; the first ten are called the Bill of Rights.

Source: http://bensguide.gpo.gov

1. What does the United States Constitution describe?

2. What does the word amended mean?

3. Why is the United States Constitution considered a “living” document?

4. How many parts does the United States Constitution have?
**Answer Key**

**Reading Comprehension**

1. Describes the structure or plan of the government and the rights of the American people
2. changed
3. Because it can be amended
4. 3