

Topic:

Why We Have a
Constitution

Time:

Three
30-minute
sessions

Grade:

1

Core:**Objectives:**

1. Students will learn what life is like without laws.
2. Students will learn that rules are important and why we need them.

Procedure:Day 1

1. Tell the children they will see a video in which the animals have a problem. Have them listen carefully for how the animals solve the problem.
2. Watch the excerpt, "Shiver, Gobble, and Snore." (This is in the center of the video, "Why We Have Laws," available for check-out from the Utah Law-Related Education Project.)
3. Discuss what problems the characters had and how they solved them. Then discuss the laws they made and if they were good or bad laws.

Day 2

1. Briefly discuss the history of the Revolutionary War and how our country had very unsatisfactory laws. Tell them that a group of men from each of the colonies met together and decided to make rules for our country.
2. The Constitution is the name of our country's rules. The Preamble of the Constitution tells why our country needed a Constitution. These reasons included:
 - a. Provide a good government.
 - b. Give fair treatment to all.
 - c. Keep peace in the country.
 - d. Defend the country from enemies.
 - e. Improve people's lives.
 - f. Keep the people free.

Additional Resources:**Author:**

Gloria Skanchy

3. Tell the children to pretend the classroom is a new country. Decide with the children what the name of the new country will be. (When voting, tell the children that this procedure is how our government makes laws.)
4. With the name of the country decided, pass out the map, HANDOUT 1. As a class, name the cities, lake, and mountain range. The children may then color the map.

Day 3

1. Tell the children that now the class will make laws for the new country.
2. In a group, or by dividing the class into groups, make simple laws for each of the six reasons discussed on Day 2 (a through f). If done in a group, vote on each law as the Congress would. If done in small groups, have the children come back together and present their laws on which they will vote. Try to discuss each law--the good and bad points. Ask the children why they want the law or why they do not.
3. Have each child design a flag for the new country. Students could vote on which flag they like best to represent the new country.

HANDOUT 1

Name: _____

_____ Country of _____



