



# CONSTITUTION DAY SEPTEMBER 17

**This document serves as a support for teacher lessons and student learning experiences as they learn about the history and components of the Constitution of the United States and how it impacts its citizenry.**

President George W. Bush signed public law 108-447 in December 2004 requiring all educational institutions that receive federal funds to teach the United States Constitution on September 17 (or the closest school day if it falls on a weekend). This year schools will observe Constitution Day on Wednesday, September 17, 2008.

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, 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.”

These famous words established our government and the core principles on which this nation was founded. Three branches—The Legislative, consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives; the Executive, with a president; and the Judiciary, headed by the Supreme Court, were created, each having its own role in how laws are made and used.

The Constitution of the United States was signed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 17, 1787. On this date the core principles on which this nation was founded were laid out in the Constitution. This important document was ratified months later in 1788 by the necessary nine states (out of thirteen) to officially establish our nation’s new system of government.

There are many excellent resources available to facilitate the teaching of the U. S. Constitution and to help educators to guide their students to gain a greater understanding of the importance of this historical document. Included below are websites, books, and ideas for lesson plans.



ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR RESOURCES TO TEACH  
ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION?



**Shh! We're Writing the Constitution** by Jean Fritz is an informative and interesting readable account of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 for students in grades 2-5. Fritz has an ability to introduce to young readers the complexities of the constitution. This book encourages young readers to learn more about our nation's history.

Publisher: Putnam Publishing Group

Copyright: December 29, 1997

ISBN-13: 978-0698116245

**Shh! We're Writing the Constitution: Supporting Websites:**

<http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit42/lesson1.html> (Grades 2-5)

<http://www.portfolio.jensenweb.com/projects/weblesson.pdf> (Grade 5)

Sam Fink, has authored **The Constitution of the United States of America**. He has long admired the language and meanings of America's cherished historical documents, and he is drawn to the people who wrote them. This is one of his books about the constitution that he has inscribed and illustrated for young readers.

Publisher: Welcome Enterpriser, Inc.

Copyright: 2006

ISBN: 094 1807991

**Constitution Weblibliography for Students**

Ben's Guide to Government (grades 6 to 8) <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/6-8/documents/index.html>

Centuries of Citizenship: A Constitutional Timeline <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/timeline/> (K-12)

An online experience highlighting some of the key dates and events that mark more than 200 years of our constitutional history.

Coloring Pages of Presidents <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidentsday/color/index.html> (K-8)

Congress for Kids <http://congressforkids.net/cartoonintro.htm> (K-12)

Constitution Day <http://www.constitutionday.com>

This site provides a great deal of background information, as well as education materials for study.

Constitution Facts <http://www.constitutionfacts.com/quiz.htm>

Find information on the U.S. Constitution and the Amendments, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Founding Fathers, the Supreme Court, and a Constitution Quiz on this website.

The Constitution for Kids <http://www.usconstitution.net/constkids4.html> (K-12) The Constitution for Kids site is an excellent source for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. It contains the “basics” for each of these three levels.

Constitutional Word Search/Crossword Puzzles

<http://www.constitutioncenter.org/explore/ForKids/ConstitutionalPuzzles/index.shtml> (4-12)

First Amendment 101 <http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/firstamendment101/> (5-12)

Justice Learning- Constitution Guide [http://justicelearning.org/justice\\_timeline/Articles.aspx](http://justicelearning.org/justice_timeline/Articles.aspx)

Includes “What It Says” and “What It Means” explanation for each section. (Grades 8-12)

Library of Congress- America’s Story—Meet Amazing Americans- U.S. Presidents

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/presidents> (Grades 5-8)

Library of Congress-America’s Story—The New United States of America Adopted the Bill of Rights

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/nation/bofright\\_1](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/nation/bofright_1) (Grades 5-8)

National Archives: Constitution Day workshop and ideas. [www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-workshop/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-workshop/index.html) (Grades 4-12) Lessons by Era and worksheets---On-line exhibits of documents.

“Save the Bill of Rights” Game <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/explore/ForKids/index.shtml> (Grades 5-8)

Signers of the Constitution <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/signers.html> (Grades 5-12)

### **Constitution Weblibliography for Teachers**

Back to School for Constitution Day <http://www.llrx.com/columns/govdomain8.htm> (K-12) Teachers resource

EDSITEment (search for lessons by topic and grade level) [http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson\\_index.asp](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson_index.asp) (K-12)

First Amendment Schools <http://www.firstamendmentschools.org> (K-12)

### Junior Achievement Constitutions Day Lesson Plans (K-12)

[http://www.ja.org/programs/programs\\_supplements\\_constitution.shtml](http://www.ja.org/programs/programs_supplements_constitution.shtml)

This site contains lesson plans for K-2, 3-4, 5-8, and 9-12, each designed to take only a class period.

- “That’s My Property” is designed for elementary grades K-2. Students will learn how the Constitution of the United States and its amendments provide certain rights pertaining to personal property. Using a scenario about classroom rules, students demonstrate the importance of having individual rights.
- “No Time for Tea” has been created for elementary grades 3-5. Students will learn how the U.S. Constitution provided the framework for our country’s democratic form of government and the representation within our government.
- “It’s My Right” is directed to the middle grades 6-8. Students work in representative groups and analyze the Bill of Rights, ranking each amendment based on its significance to the group.
- “Business and the Bill of Rights” is for high school grades 9-13. Students will better understand the U.S. Constitution by exploring the Bill of Rights. Through the eyes of business owners, student groups review and discuss the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

### Library of Congress Learning Page, Lesson Plans (Grades 4-12)

<http://www.memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/theme.html>

National Archives Lesson Plans <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/index.html> (Grades 4-12) This site contains links to numerous sources of information, activities, simulations, and lessons concerning the Constitution.

National Constitution Center <http://www.constitutioncenter.org> (K-12) The National Constitution Center includes an Interactive Constitution, a Constitutional Timeline, Fast Facts, Basic Governing Principles, Founding Fathers, Founding Documents, Constitutional Links, Three Perspectives on the Constitution, and a For Kids! Section.

The Bill of Rights Institute’s <http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/ConstitutionDay/default.htm> offers a wide range of resources and lessons for classroom use. Middle and high school Constitution Day lesson plans. (Grades 6-12)

Constitution Day Resources and Lesson Plans aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study by the N.C. Civic Ed Consortium [http://www.civics.unc.edu/teacherresources/constitutionday\\_index.htm](http://www.civics.unc.edu/teacherresources/constitutionday_index.htm)

TechLearning focuses on technology in the classroom but they compiled a list of web resources to support Constitution Day. This site offers a wide range of resources and examples for incorporating digital software and hardware into your instruction. <http://www.techlearning.com/story/showArticle.php?articleID=190301916>

### To Sign or Not to Sign: The Ultimate Constitution Day Lesson Plan

<http://hancock.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday/download/attachments/2769/ConstitutionDayPosterLesson.pdf?version=2>

“From the moment students enter the room, they will begin to examine and understand the role of the people of the Constitution.” This lesson plan is for grades 7-12