

**Lesson: The Constitution: A More Perfect Union**  
**Title: Complete Lesson Guide**

**Standards Covered**

**Common Core ELA Standards**

Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language
<p><b>Key Ideas and Details</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Craft and Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Text Types and Purposes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Production and Distribution of Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Research to Build and</b></p>	<p><b>Comprehension and Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.SL.R.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.SL.R.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Knowledge of Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.L.R.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.L.R.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.L.R.6 Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in</li> </ul>

<p><b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</li> </ul> <p><b>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.R.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Present Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</li> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.</li> </ul> <p><b>Range of Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC.K-12.W.R.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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.</li> </ul>		<p>gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</p>
--	--	--	---

## Investigation Planning

### Preview

**Estimated Time:** 40 mins

**Overview:** Analyze a quotation from James Madison about why governments are necessary.

**Teacher Prep:** N/A

**Materials:** None

### Activity

**Estimated Time:** 75 mins

**Overview:** Become a law student who must pass a final exam, in order to graduate, demonstrating your understanding of the Constitution.

**Teacher Prep:** N/A

**Materials:** None

## Vocabulary

**Estimated Time:** 5 mins

**Overview:** Review vocabulary terms from this lesson.

**Teacher Prep:** N/A

**Materials:** None

## Processing

**Estimated Time:** 20 mins

**Overview:** Write a letter to James Madison describing how the Constitution has created “a more perfect Union.”

**Teacher Prep:** N/A

**Materials:** None

## Investigating Primary Sources

**Estimated Time:** N/A

**Overview:** Create an argument to answer the question: How did state constitutions influence the U.S. Constitution?

**Teacher Prep:** N/A

**Materials:** None

## Complete Materials List

*For more detailed information on materials needed for this lesson log in to your subscription(🚩)*

### Lesson

- Envelope 🚩 *Recycle and Reuse*
- Handout A: Constitutional Exam Cards
- Handout B: Constitutional Law Exam
- Handout C: Law School Diplomas
- Interactive Student Notebook
- Notebook Answer Key
- Spanish: Handouts
- Spanish: Interactive Student Notebook

### Preview

- None

### Activity

- None

## Vocabulary

- None

## Processing

- None

## Investigating Primary Sources

- None

### ▲ Safety Information

*Recycle and Reuse: Materials should be properly recycled and/or can be reused.*

## ACTIVITY

### SLIDE 1

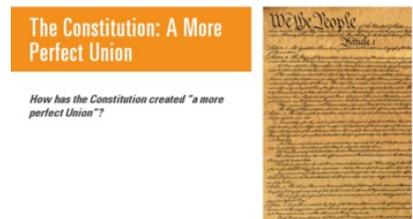
The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

*How has the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?*

#### Notes:

Use this Lesson Guide to plan and teach the lesson!

- The **Overview** slide summarizes the parts of the lesson and gives estimated times. In the Teacher Note, you’ll find Social Studies and Language Arts objectives.
- The **Materials** and **Preparation** slides tell you what to gather and prep before class.
- When you’re ready to teach the lesson, start with the **Preview** slides.
- The **Activity** slides walk students through every step of the interactive lesson. Students are instructed when to read each section in the Student Text and when to complete their print or online Interactive Student Notebooks.
- Use the **Vocabulary** slide to review key Social Studies terms.
- Finally, students complete the **Processing** assignment in their notebooks. Use it to assess what students have learned.



### SLIDE 2

#### Notes:

Watch this quick video to find out the highlights of the lesson.



### SLIDE 3

#### Essential Question

*How has the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?*

#### Preview

Students analyze a quotation from James Madison about why governments are necessary. [10 min + 30 min vocabulary]

OVERVIEW		The Constitution: A More Perfect Union
Essential Question	How has the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?	
Preview	Students analyze a quotation from James Madison about why governments are necessary. [10 min + 30 min vocabulary]	
Activity	In a Social Studies Skill Builder, students assume the role of law students taking their final constitutional law class. To pass the class and graduate from law school, they must pass a final exam in which they demonstrate their understanding of the Constitution. [75–100 min]	
Processing	Students write a letter to James Madison describing how the Constitution has created “a more perfect Union.” [30 min]	
Investigating Primary Sources	Students create an argument to answer the question: How did state constitutions influence the U.S. Constitution? [optional]	

## Activity

In a **Social Studies Skill Builder**, students assume the role of law students taking their final constitutional law class. To pass the class and graduate from law school, they must pass a final exam in which they demonstrate their understanding of the Constitution. [75–100 min]

## Processing

Students write a letter to James Madison describing how the Constitution has created “a more perfect Union.” [20 min]

## Investigating Primary Sources

Students create an argument to answer the question: *How did state constitutions influence the U.S. Constitution?* [optional]

## Notes:

### Objectives

In the course of reading this lesson and participating in the classroom activity, students will

### Social Studies

- identify the main features of the Constitution and describe the basic lawmaking process.
- analyze how the Constitution divides powers among various levels and branches and preserves individual rights.
- explain how the guiding principles of the Constitution have created “a more perfect Union” and resulted in a government that can adapt to changing times.

### Language Arts

- create a composition that has a coherent thesis, supports that thesis, and achieves an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

---

## SLIDE 4

### Materials to Print

Interactive Student Notebook  
(1 per student)

Handout A: Constitutional Exam Cards (5 per class, cut apart)

Handout B: Constitutional Law Exam  
(1 per student)

Handout C: Law School Diplomas  
(1 per student pair, cut apart)

### Teacher Supplied Materials

30 envelopes

## Notes:

N/A

MATERIALS	The Constitution: A More Perfect Union
<b>Materials to Print</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interactive Student Notebook (1 per student)</li><li>Handout A: Constitutional Exam Cards (5 per class, cut apart)</li><li>Handout B: Constitutional Law Exam (1 per student)</li><li>Handout C: Law School Diplomas (1 per student pair, cut apart)</li></ul>	<b>Teacher Supplied Materials</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>30 envelopes</li></ul>

---

## SLIDE 5

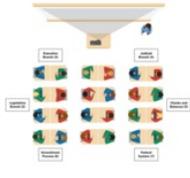
Before class:

1. Consider how you will teach the activity over the course of a day or two. The suggested time for the Social Studies Skill Builder is 75–100 minutes.
2. Cut apart the cards from *Handout A: Constitutional Exam Cards*, and place each set of cards in an envelope.
3. Consider laminating the cards from Handout A for future use.
4. Designate six areas of the room, either around the perimeter of the room or around a large table, as

**PREPARATION** The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

Before class:

1. Consider how you will teach the activity over the course of a day or two. The suggested time for the Social Studies Skill Builder is 75–100 minutes.
2. Cut apart the cards from Handout A: Constitutional Exam Cards, and place each set of cards in an envelope.
3. Consider laminating the cards from Handout A for future use.
4. Designate six areas of the room, either around the perimeter of the room or around a large table, as stations for the six topics. At each area, place the five envelopes and a sign with the name of that topic.
5. Students work in pairs during this activity.



stations for the six topics. At each area, place the five envelopes and a sign with the name of that topic.

5. Students work in pairs during this activity.

**Notes:**

N/A

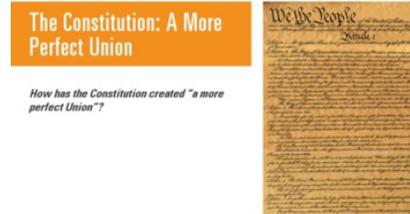
**SLIDE 6**

The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

*How has the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?*

**Notes:**

N/A



**PREVIEW**

**SLIDE 7**

Preview

Go the Preview assignment in your print or online Interactive Student Notebook.

Complete the activity by analyzing the following quotation by James Madison: *If men were angels, no government would be necessary.*

**Notes:**

If you are using the Interactive Student Notebook, you can access it three ways:

- **Online:** Go to the “Student View,” and navigate to the Notebook.
- **Online:** Go to the “Materials” tab, and print out the PDF notebook pages.
- **Print:** Use the print Interactive Student Notebooks in your classroom.

In the Student Subscription, you can find the Preview assignment in the Introduction section.



**SLIDE 8**

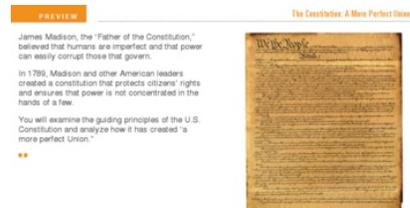
James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution,” believed that humans are imperfect and that power can easily corrupt those that govern.

In 1789, Madison and other American leaders created a constitution that protects citizens’ rights and ensures that power is not concentrated in the hands of a few.

You will examine the guiding principles of the U.S. Constitution and analyze how it has created “a more perfect Union.”

**Notes:**

N/A



**SLIDE 9**

Vocabulary Development

Locate the Social Studies Vocabulary for this lesson in your notebook.

**popular sovereignty**

**legislative branch**

**executive branch**



- judicial branch
- judicial review
- checks and balances
- interstate commerce
- federalism
- majority rule
- interest groups

These are important terms that will help you understand the main ideas of the lesson.

**Notes:**

N/A

**SLIDE 10**

Read the Introduction in the Student Text.  
 Use the text to propose some possible answers to the Essential Question:  
*How has the Constitution created "a more perfect Union"?*



**Notes:**

N/A

**SLIDE 11**

Read Section 1, The Preamble Tells the Goals of Government, and complete the Reading Notes for this section.  
 Let's share our answers.



**Notes:**

**Addressing Misconceptions:** Analyzing primary sources are an excellent way for students to act as historians themselves and draw their own conclusions. However, some students assume that simply because primary sources were made by people who lived during the time, they are therefore "better" than secondary sources. Make sure students take into account how authors' goals, beliefs, and perspectives affect the sources they create. Most primary sources, both written and visual, only tell part of the story and from a very specific viewpoint. Students should always inquire about other possible primary and secondary sources to get a broader picture of the event.

**SLIDE 12**

Social Studies Skill Builder  
 Social Studies Skill Builder  
 You are law students taking your final exam on Constitutional Law.  
 In order to pass and graduate from law school, you must pass this exam.



**Notes:**

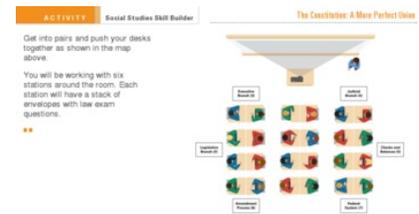
You might want to project an image of a local law school.

## SLIDE 13

### Social Studies Skill Builder

Get into pairs and push your desks together as shown in the map above.

You will be working with six stations around the room. Each station will have a stack of envelopes with law exam questions.



### Notes:

N/A

## SLIDE 14

### Social Studies Skill Builder

You and your partner will begin by reading Section 2, Section 3, or Section 4.

Then, you will follow Steps 1–5 (on the next slide) until you have completed these three sections of the Constitutional Law Exam.



### Notes:

Assign each student pair either Section 2, 3, or 4.

## SLIDE 15

### Social Studies Skill Builder

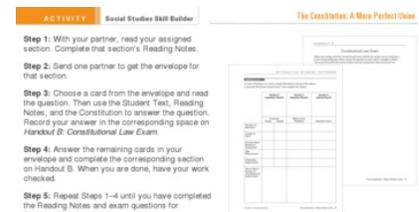
**Step 1:** With your partner, read your assigned section. Complete that section's Reading Notes.

**Step 2:** Send one partner to get the envelope for that section.

**Step 3:** Choose a card from the envelope and read the question. Then use the Student Text, Reading Notes, and the Constitution to answer the question. Record your answer in the corresponding space on *Handout B: Constitutional Law Exam*.

**Step 4:** Answer the remaining cards in your envelope and complete the corresponding section on Handout B. When you are done, have your work checked.

**Step 5:** Repeat Steps 1–4 until you have completed the Reading Notes and exam questions for Sections 2, 3, and 4.



### Notes:

N/A

## SLIDE 16

### Social Studies Skill Builder

How well did you do on the law exam?

For each answer, determine the question that was asked on the Constitutional Law exam.

Click on each card to reveal the question.

Legislative Branch

Executive Branch

Judicial Branch

### Notes:

The question for each answer pops up when the card is clicked.

**Possible ways to run the game:**



1. Have pairs try to figure out all the questions in the first column, and then debrief as a class. Repeat for remaining columns.
2. Combine pairs to form groups of four or six. Either your or a group choose one of the cards at random. If the group answers correctly, they get a point. If not, the next group gets a chance to steal.

## SLIDE 17

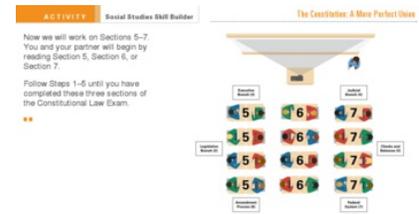
### Social Studies Skill Builder

Now we will work on Sections 5–7. You and your partner will begin by reading Section 5, Section 6, or Section 7.

Follow Steps 1–5 until you have completed these three sections of the Constitutional Law Exam.

#### Notes:

Assign each student pair either Section 5, 6, or 7.



## SLIDE 18

### Social Studies Skill Builder

**Step 1:** With your partner, read your assigned section. Complete that section's Reading Notes.

**Step 2:** Send one partner to get the envelope for that section.

**Step 3:** Choose a card from the envelope and read the question. Then use the Student Text, Reading Notes, and the Constitution to answer the question. Record your answer in the corresponding space on Handout B.

**Step 4:** Answer the remaining cards in your envelope and complete the corresponding section on Handout B. When you are done, have your work checked.

**Step 5:** Repeat Steps 1–4 until you have completed the Reading Notes and exam questions for Sections 5, 6, and 7.

#### Notes:

N/A



## SLIDE 19

### Social Studies Skill Builder

How well did you do on the law exam?

For each answer, determine the question that was asked on the Constitutional Law exam.

Click on each card to reveal the question.

Checks and Balances

Amendment Process

Federal System

#### Notes:

N/A



## SLIDE 20

### Social Studies Skill Builder

Have you finished all steps for all the sections? Have you had your answers checked?

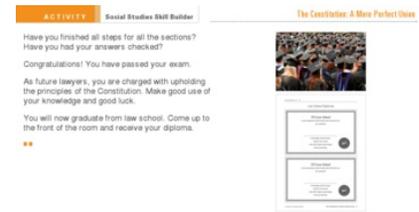
Congratulations! You have passed your exam.

As future lawyers, you are charged with upholding the principles of the Constitution. Make good use of your knowledge and good luck.

You will now graduate from law school. Come up to the front of the room and receive your diploma.

### Notes:

N/A



## SLIDE 21

### Social Studies Skill Builder

Now read Section 8, The Amendment Process, in your Student Text and complete the Reading Notes for this section.

Let's share our answers.

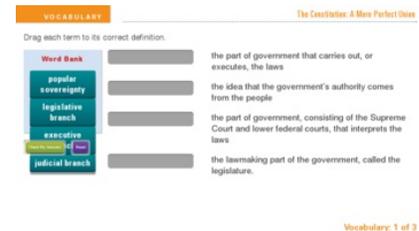
### Notes:

N/A



## VOCABULARY

## SLIDE 22



Vocabulary: 1 of 3

Drag each term to its correct definition.

popular sovereignty

legislative branch

executive branch

judicial branch

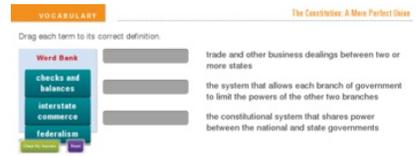
1. the part of government that carries out, or executes, the laws
2. the idea that the government's authority comes from the people
3. the part of government, consisting of the Supreme Court and lower federal courts, that interprets the laws
4. the lawmaking part of the government, called the legislature.

Vocabulary: 1 of 3

### Notes:

N/A

## SLIDE 23



VOCABULARY The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

Drag each term to its correct definition.

Word Bank	Definition
checks and balances	trade and other business dealings between two or more states
interstate commerce	the system that allows each branch of government to limit the powers of the other two branches
federalism	the constitutional system that shares power between the national and state governments

Vocabulary: 2 of 3

Drag each term to its correct definition.

checks and balances  
interstate commerce  
federalism

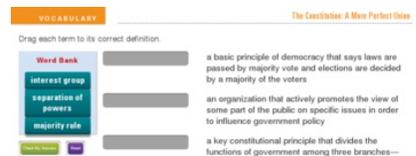
5. trade and other business dealings between two or more states
6. the system that allows each branch of government to limit the powers of the other two branches
7. the constitutional system that shares power between the national and state governments

Vocabulary: 2 of 3

### Notes:

N/A

## SLIDE 24



VOCABULARY The Constitution: A More Perfect Union

Drag each term to its correct definition.

Word Bank	Definition
interest group	a basic principle of democracy that says laws are passed by majority vote and elections are decided by a majority of the voters
separation of powers	an organization that actively promotes the view of some part of the public on specific issues in order to influence government policy
majority rule	a key constitutional principle that divides the functions of government among three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power

Vocabulary: 3 of 3

Drag each term to its correct definition.

interest group  
separation of powers  
majority rule

8. a basic principle of democracy that says laws are passed by majority vote and elections are decided by a majority of the voters
9. an organization that actively promotes the view of some part of the public on specific issues in order to influence government policy
10. a key constitutional principle that divides the functions of government among three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power

Vocabulary: 3 of 3

### Notes:

N/A

## PROCESSING

### SLIDE 25

Processing

Let's assess what you have learned.

Go to the Processing activity in your Interactive Student Notebook, and complete the activity.

What did you write in your letter to James Madison about how and why the Constitution created “a more perfect Union”?



**Notes:**

In the Student Subscription, you can find the Processing assignment in the Summary section.

## INVESTIGATING PRIMARY SOURCES

### SLIDE 26

Investigating Primary Sources

What do you know about the U.S. Constitution?

Let's use primary sources to further explore the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions.

Read Investigating Primary Sources, How Did State Constitutions Influence the U.S. Constitution?, in the Student Text.



**Notes:**

**Addressing Misconceptions:** Analyzing primary sources are an excellent way for students to act as historians themselves and draw their own conclusions. However, some students assume that simply because primary sources were made by people who lived during the time, they are therefore “better” than secondary sources. Make sure students take into account how authors’ goals, beliefs, and perspectives affect the sources they create. Most primary sources, both written and visual, only tell part of the story and from a very specific viewpoint. Students should always inquire about other possible primary and secondary sources to get a broader picture of the event.

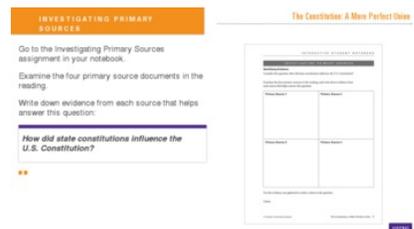
### SLIDE 27

Go to the Investigating Primary Sources assignment in your notebook.

Examine the four primary source documents in the reading.

Write down evidence from each source that helps answer this question:

***How did state constitutions influence the U.S. Constitution?***



**Notes:**

N/A

### SLIDE 28

***How did state constitutions influence the U.S. Constitution?***



Use evidence from the primary source documents to make a claim to this question.

Then create an argument that clearly states your claim, includes evidence, and provides explanations to support the claim.

**Notes:**

---

N/A

---