



## NSDAR Educational Resources Committee

# “We The Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States” Lesson Plan

**Contributor:** David Catrow **Grade Level:**

**1. Identify the standards to be addressed:**

Twenty-First Century Skills 21.2-5 ES. 1

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Communicate and work productively with others emphasizing collaboration and cultural awareness to produce quality work. Use appropriate principles of communication effectively.*

- Are active listeners.
- Use information to make decisions.
- Ask appropriate questions.
- Read, understand and create information in a variety of forms.
- Follow directions.
- Use technology to communicate.
- Use various channels of communication.

2. Express ideas.

**3. Statement of the objective and lesson outcomes:**

The students will make connections between the need for the American Constitution (rules and rights for the people of the country, rules for the kids who are going camping, and rules/procedures to protect the rights of the students in the classroom.

**4. Materials, resources, and technology to be used by teacher/students:**

“We The Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States” by David Catrow, Copyright 2002  
A document camera may be used for sharing the book to the entire class.

**5. Introduction of the topic:**

Tell the students that the book that is about to be read will introduce them to the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States on a kid level as children are getting ready to go tent camping. Will we be able to connect the big ideas of the Constitution to the big ideas of going camping, the big idea of needing rules to keep everyone safe and happy in the classroom?

Use “say something” strategy, which means each student will say something at each pause in reading (for each page). This could be to answer the question posed by the teacher or just the student making connection (i.e. I have a black dog with a white nose.) Explain that this can be used for each page in addition to or in place of the questions. This is a way of scaffolding this activity to reach students at a variety of educational levels. Even if the child cannot answer the teacher’s question, they are able to make some comment on some interesting part of the illustration to make connections to the text.

**6. Procedure for instruction:**

- Use concentric circles (the inside circle of students remains seated in the same place while the outside circle of students moves one student at each turn, ensuring that one student is not able to dominate the conversation) to position students for sharing opportunities. Once the text is read, the teacher poses the question, then gives 15 to 20 seconds for all the students to study the illustration.
- At the signal, the outside circle of students will shift to a new partner. The partners will have roughly 30 seconds to a minute to “say something” that either makes a connection to the text at the “I have a dog” level or connects to the questions posed by the teacher, to their classmate.

- Teacher floats between groups to check for conversation and understanding. Then asks for random students to share out before going on to the next page.
- Then the process is repeated for every page.
  
- Read the first two pages of the book out loud.
  - Vocabulary/Comprehension (page 3) The Words in the Preamble and What they Mean...
  - Teacher read the bold blue words: students choral read the meaning
- Begin the story: We the people
  - Study the illustration: What are the children doing?
    - What are the animals doing?
  
  - After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  
  - “In order to form a more perfect union,”
  - Study the illustration: What is the dog doing? What are the children doing?
  
  - After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  
  - “Establish justice,”
  - Study the illustration: Let’s read the sign together....
  - What are the animals doing?
  - Why would rules be the first thing they talk about?
  
  - After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  
  - “Insure domestic tranquility,”
  - Study the illustration: What does insure domestic tranquility mean?
  - What is the dog doing? What are the children doing?
  
  - After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  
  - “Provide for the common defense,”
  - Study the illustration: Who is the dog defending the children from?
  - What are the children doing?
  
- After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  - “Promote the general welfare”
  - Study the illustration: What makes this a safe place?
  - What is the dog doing?
  
- After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)

- “And secure the Blessings of Liberty”
  - Study the illustration: What makes this scene secure? (Safe?)
- After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  - “To ourselves and our Posterity,”
  - Study the illustration: Where are the children camping?
  - Who is watching over them?
- After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
- “Do ordain and establish this Constitution”
  - Study the illustration: Where are the children camping?
- After taking a few student comments, Rotate/Switch (outside circle rotates)
  - “For the United States of America”
  - Study the illustration: Why did the author include this illustration?

7. **Lesson closure:**

The Preamble of the Constitution sets up why there are rights and rules for people who live in our country. Why were there rules needed for the children’s camping trip? Why should we have rules for our classroom?

8. **Assessment of student understanding:**

Conversations between students during the reading, responses to the questions at the conclusion of the lesson. This would serve as a launch point for establishing classroom procedures and can also set up for a Constitution unit.