

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

Arranged for Readers Theater by Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 50 seconds

Readability = grade 7.2

Cast (2-10+):

Reader 1	Reader 6
Reader 2	Reader 7
Reader 3	Reader 8
Reader 4	Reader 9
Reader 5	Reader 10

Options:

Two font sizes included (one-page and two-page versions)

For 2 readers: one reader reads odd numbers and one read even numbers

For 3-10 readers: assign parts

Vocabulary:

(NOTE: The Preamble uses different spellings than we do today for two words, but I chose to use our common spellings. **The Preamble says “defence” and “insure.” I switched them to “defense” and “ensure”** so students would not be confused.)

preamble
union
establish
justice
ensure
domestic
tranquility
provide
common
defense
promote
general

welfare
secure
blessings
liberty
posterity
ordain
constitution
America



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Reader 1: We the people of the United States.

All: We the people of the United States.

Reader 2: In order to form a more perfect union,

Men: In order to form,

Women: A more perfect,

All: Union.

Reader 3: Establish justice.

All: Establish justice.

Reader 4: Ensure domestic tranquility.

Men: Ensure domestic tranquility.

Reader 5: Provide for the common defense.

Women: Provide for the common defense.

Reader 6: Promote the general welfare.

All: Promote the general welfare.

Reader 7: And secure the blessings of Liberty.

Men: The blessings of Liberty...

Reader 8: To ourselves and our posterity.

Women: To ourselves and our posterity.

All: The blessings of liberty, to ourselves and our posterity.

Reader 9: Do ordain and establish this Constitution,

Reader 10: For the United States of America.

All: We the people of the United States.

All: *(bow)*



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Reader 1: We the people of the United States,

All: We the people of the United States,

Reader 2: In order to form a more perfect union,

Men: In order to form,

Women: A more perfect,

All: Union...

Reader 3: Establish justice,

All: Establish justice...

Reader 4: Insure domestic tranquility,

Men: Insure domestic tranquility...

Reader 5: Provide for the common defense,

Women: Provide for the common defense...

Reader 6: Promote the general welfare,

All: Promote the general welfare...

Reader 7: And secure the blessings of Liberty,

Men: The blessings of Liberty...

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Reader 8: To ourselves and our posterity,

Women: To ourselves and our posterity...

All: The blessings of liberty, to ourselves and our posterity...

Reader 9: Do ordain and establish this Constitution,

Reader 10: For the United States of America...

All: We the people of the United States.



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Curriculum Links (Valid in 2015):

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/preamble-constitution-close-reading-lesson#sect-introduction>

National Endowment for the Humanities lesson plan for grades 6-8 (adaptable) on “The Preamble to the Constitution: A Close Reading Lesson.” Includes learning objectives, two lessons (each with a worksheet or graphic organizer) with thinking questions, and an assessment. The second lesson takes excerpts from the Preamble, the Articles of Confederation, and the Declaration of Independence.

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/preamble-constitution-how-do-you-make-more-perfect-union>

National Endowment for the Humanities lesson plan for grades 3-5 (adaptable) on “The Preamble to the Constitution: How Do You Make a More Perfect Union?” Includes learning objectives, five lesson activities with thinking questions, and links for more.

<http://constitutioncenter.org/constitution-day/constitution-day-resources>

The National Constitution Center’s Constitution Day’s page of resources includes links to **videos and a “Preamble Kit” for grades 4-12**. The Preamble Kit includes a printable poster of the United States Constitution, lesson plans, and more (e.g., printable word scramble). Part of the lesson plans includes a **one-page Readers Theater script, “To Sign or Not to Sign,”** with a discussion between a Federalist and an Anti-Federalist. Texts of original documents also included. **Constitution Day is September 17, 1787.**

NOTE: The left column of this page has a link to more high school or middle school resources.

<http://www.wethepeoplemovie.com/education/lessonplans/preamble-elementary/>

“We the People—Three Words That Changed the World” is documentary on America’s founding documents and the people who chose for form a republic. This page has a **two-minute video excerpt on the Preamble**—with reenactment actors portraying actual historical characters in the background. The film is for elementary students through adults. This page includes a lesson plan with thinking questions and uses the film, but the short video could be used alone as a hook.

<http://www.utb.edu/vpaa/cce/Documents/Celebrate%20Freedom%20Week/newdocs/Preamble%20Elem.pdf>

University of Virginia Center for Politics Youth Leadership Initiative’s “Mini-Module #2: The Preamble” PDF. This looks VERY helpful for a variety of levels, but it uses the book *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* which I never read.

There’s enough here you don’t have to have the book, though. This module includes:

- Questions—including some related to the reason for school rules
- A page on printable or projectable page on “James Madison, Writer of the Constitution”
- Words of the Preamble, phrase by phrase with their meanings (These could be incorporated into the script or have students write a new script using their own paraphrases.)
- Classroom Preamble printable worksheet (Looks good!)

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http://community.weber.edu/WeberReads/lesson_title%20We%20the%20Kids%20decoding.htm

Here's another one-page lesson using the book *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* by David Catrow. This one does not include worksheets, but there are some extension activities and resource links you may like.

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/what-good-government-anyway>

Scholastic's 2-day lesson plan on the Preamble, "What Is Good Government Anyway?" for grades 3-5. The lessons are based on small group interactions. They suggest using the Pledge of Allegiance or September 11 studies as extension activities.

<http://www.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/constitution-day-and-citizenship-day>

Center for Civic Education's page on Constitution Day (September 17th) with lesson plan PDFs for grades K-12. Two of the lesson plans are focused on the Preamble—grades 3-4 and grades 5-6. But, there are a LOT of resources here to expand to studies of the Constitution, authority, and more. I only skimmed the grade 3-4 PDF, but it's high quality with colorful illustrations, photos, and information. You may be able to project some of your favorite pages. I didn't notice any worksheets.

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OyU4O80i4>

Schoolhouse Rock's animated cartoon musical video with a country flavor, "Constitution Preamble—Schoolhouse Rock." Cute! Clever! Filled with info if you can handle banjo and a country flavor. ;) The Preamble is sung twice. Popular video! 2:45

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx5d3haRG7M>

"Barney Fife The Preamble to the Constitution" is a clip from the black and white television show, "The Andy Griffith Show." Barney memorized the Preamble in the 8th grade and he tries to repeat it with humorous results—especially the non-verbals. Although this is humorous, students of most grades would enjoy it—if you think it's worth 4 minutes. This video could work well as a lesson hook. 4:03

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NVVjlriFeE>

Freedom Project Education's video on the Preamble (Principles of the Constitution Series). I'm not familiar with the organization, but the video is basically an explanation of the Preamble phrase by phrase. Animated with a narrator host and a guest interview (professor who explains the importance of a limited government). For mature students, with lots of options for further discussion. **Five interactive quiz questions** show up before 7 minutes. This could be used as an introduction or review of the Preamble. 9:40

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Plf7uFAKkJc>

"We the People (Constitution Song)" orchestral music video (with slides) sung by children—**includes a little rap. The Preamble section ends at 3:32**, but it's followed by credits and music with video. 6:00

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf71LerhBMU>

INSPIRATIONAL 3-year-old recites the "Preamble to the Constitution" with music background and gestures. Cute! 1:04

