

Writing our 2nd Grade Constitution

Independence Hall

Educators Guide and Lesson Plan created by Darcy Stockman, Early ISD



Grade Level

2nd Grade

Time Required

60 – 90 minutes

Supplies/Materials Needed

- Post-It Notes
- Table sized sheet of paper
- 24 Giant blank puzzle pieces
- Feather pen

Standards

TEKS – 2nd Grade
Language Arts
1(A), 1(D), 6(A), 6(G)

TEKS – Social Studies
13(A), 13(B), 14(A)

Key Vocabulary

Constitution,
Preamble, vote,
citizenship

Essential Question(s)

- Why do groups of people need rules and agreements?
- How does a constitution help people work and live together fairly?
- What rules should be included in a classroom constitution to help everyone feel safe, respected and successful?

Lesson Objectives

- Students will form groups of 3-4 to discuss and create 1 promise/rule that they feel is important to follow at school for 2nd grade.
- Students will present their ideas and contributions to the constitution.
- Students will design a puzzle piece for a large wall display of the “2nd Grade Constitution.”

Pre-Visit

Before coming to the museum, teach Blue Bonnet Unit 9 - LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, Lesson 10: We the People Speaking and Listening.

Museum Visit

Independence Hall: This is a near exact replica of the room where the *Declaration of Independence* and *U.S. Constitution* were debated and signed. Museum staff will give a tour of the room as well as details on what the room is composed of. Tables, chairs, cloths, quill pens, Rising Sun Chair, etc.

Say: “Today, we're going to create our own 2nd Grade Constitution!”

Ask and Lead Discussion: What is the Constitution? Why are rules important? What would it be like at school if we had no rules? How can we all agree on what's most important?

Show: [Schoolhouse Rock - America Rock - The Preamble](#)

Teacher/museum guide will talk about the key features of the preamble:

- Establish justice
- Ensure domestic tranquility
- Provide for the common defense
- Promote the general welfare
- Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity

Say: For our own constitution, we have written a different preamble. It says, “We, the Second Grade Students, promise to work together to create a safe, respectful, kind, and fun place where everyone can learn and grow.”

Divide students into six different groups with one of the following titles:

- 1: Respect (who and what)
- 2: Responsibility (of students at school)
- 3: Teamwork (how and why)
- 4: Safety (where and who)
- 5: Team Work (why is it important)
- 6: Consequences (what happens if rules are not followed)

Say: “The Constitution is something that is put together like a puzzle. It has a lot of pieces. Because of that, we are going to make a giant puzzle designed by you based on what is most important to YOU in 2nd grade. Each group is going to come up with a piece of the puzzle and when we are done, we will put it together!”

Say: “Before we design our puzzle piece, we need to brainstorm a list of rules, ideas and strategies to make our school community ‘more perfect.’ Each group will be given a set of Post-it notes to write down some ideas. Your group will then nominate a spokesperson that will present your ideas to the class where we will vote on whether we add them to the class Constitution or not.”

Teacher passes out 1 large sheet of paper and post its to each group. Read and explain what the BIG IDEA is for their group. Each student in each group writes one rule, idea, or strategy to make their school community that meets the topic idea for their group. This creates unity and a sense of ownership in acceptable behavior at school.

After writing ideas on Post-it notes, stick them on tablet paper placed at the front of the room. Ask for 1-2 students to speak for their group and read off their post notes comments.

Using thumbs up thumbs down, students will vote on if the rule or promise is worthy of keeping and adding to their Class Constitution. The post its can be easily removed and placed on the final draft sheet labeled “Our 2nd Grade Constitution.”

Ideally there should be 10-12 big ideas for the groups to create and design a puzzle piece on for a total of 24. Once a final set of post it notes with rules for each BIG idea is placed on the puzzle pieces. Each group gets a blank puzzle piece to write their rule that was voted on by the congregation then decorated with markers.

Example wording for the puzzle pieces: Teacher can write on group tablet sheet to help with spelling as needed.

1. *We will treat everyone with kindness.*
2. *We will listen to teachers and classmates.*
3. *We will work together as a team.*
4. *We will solve problems peacefully.*
5. *We will take care of our school.*
6. *We will always try our best.*

If some groups finish their puzzle piece early, teacher or museum docent can read selections from *What Does the Constitution Say: A Kids' Guide to How Our Democracy Works* by Ben Sheehan or *We the People: The Constitution of the United States* by Peter Spier.

Post-Visit

Display the signed Constitution Puzzle in a hallway or common area for all second-grade classes to see. Give a brief presentation to the Principal, Counselor or any other



school personnel on what the Constitution says and why it is important.