



Celebrate Freedom Week Resources

Revised August 2025



**West Virginia Board of Education
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West Virginia State Code

W. Va. Code §18-2-9 requires county boards of education to establish a full week recognized as “Celebrate Freedom Week” during the regular school year:

A full week of classes during the week selected by the county board of education shall be recognized as “Celebrate Freedom Week”. The purpose of Celebrate Freedom Week is to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded.

Celebrate Freedom Week must include appropriate instruction in each social studies class which:

- (1) Includes an in-depth study of the intent, meaning and importance of the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Constitution of the United States with an emphasis on the Bill of Rights;*
- (2) Uses the historical, political and social environments surrounding each document at the time of its initial passage or ratification; and*
- (3) Includes the study of historical documents to firmly establish the historical background leading to the establishment of the provisions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights by the founding fathers for the purposes of safeguarding our Constitutional republic.*

The requirements of this subsection are applicable to all public, private, parochial and denominational schools located within this state. Nothing in this subsection creates a standard or requirement subject to state accountability measures.

To help educators select resources that address both the requirements of the code and the West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards in social studies, the West Virginia Department of Education has prepared the following document that includes both the related CCRS by grade and a brief list of useful resources. Please note that these resources are 1) only some of the resources available and 2) provided for educators’ convenience. They are not to be construed as curriculum, nor should they be considered as required in any sense.

West Virginia’s College- and Career-Readiness Standards have been developed with the goal of preparing students for a wide range of high-quality, post-secondary opportunities. Specifically, college- and career-readiness refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in higher education and/or training that lead to gainful employment. The West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards establish a set of knowledge and skills that all individuals need to transition into higher education or the workplace, as both realms share many expectations. All students throughout their educational experience should develop a full understanding of the career opportunities available, the education necessary to be successful in their chosen pathway, and a plan to attain their goals.

West Virginia's College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Social Studies promote proficiency in civics, economics, geography, and history. Students will develop problem solving and critical thinking skills independently and collaboratively as they engage in informed inquiry in social studies. College- and career-readiness is supported in social studies as students acquire and further develop their abilities to be critical consumers of what they read or hear and informed sources when they write or speak.

While the CCRS have been listed by grade, the resources are listed by programmatic level since most were developed either for use in grade bands or for scaffolding according to students' needs. Educators will determine which resources are most suitable for their individual students.

Constitution Day

Do you know the Preamble to the Constitution, or how many amendments there are in the Constitution? These are just a few subjects that will be discussed and reviewed as West Virginia students join with the rest of the nation's students in observing Constitution Day, a day set aside to recognize the signing of the document that is the foundation of our democracy.

Passed into federal law in 2005, Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) authored legislation requiring all schools receiving federal funds, as well as all federal agencies, to provide materials about the Constitution on Sept. 17*, commemorating the date in 1787 when the delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the nation's charter.

For lesson plans and other teacher/student resources, please see the end of each programmatic section in this booklet or visit the West Virginia Culture Center.

**In years when Sept. 17 occurs on a weekend, the event will be celebrated on the Friday before the 17th.*

Elementary School CCRS

In the early elementary grades, students first are introduced to civics concepts in terms of their own world: home, school and community. They learn democratic principles such as equality, fairness and respect, begin to understand how people can work together to make decisions, and discover the importance of using primary sources. As they progress through the higher elementary grades students become familiar with basic concepts of government on the local, state, and national levels. They identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities, they explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws, and they examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.

Kindergarten

SS.K.1	Develop an understanding of citizenship and patriotism through a variety of experiences (e.g., appropriate behavior, sharing, taking turns, volunteering, being honest and demonstrating responsibility for materials and personal belongings).
SS.K.16	Investigate the past and explore the differences in other people, times and cultures through stories of people, heroes, pictures, songs, holidays, customs, traditions or legends.

First Grade

SS.1.3	Investigate the symbols, icons and traditions of the United States that provide a sense of community across time (e.g., Labor Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Pledge of Allegiance, patriotic songs, landmarks, art and literature that demonstrate community traditions, etc.).
SS.1.16	Investigate ways communities change throughout history using primary source documents and oral accounts.

Second Grade

SS.2.4	Give examples of symbols, icons and traditions of the United States, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and participate in national patriotic celebrations (e.g., Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day and Flag Day) and community service projects.
SS.2.16	Explore the impact historic figures have had upon our society.

Third Grade

SS.3.1	Identify and explain the following commonly-held American democratic values, principles, and beliefs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity.• Rule of law.• Family values.• Community service.• Justice.• Liberty.
SS.3.5	Examine how rights and responsibilities of citizens are reflected in patriotic symbols, songs and holidays of the United States (e.g., the meaning of our flag's colors, the Pledge of Allegiance and the meaning of the words, the National Anthem, Veterans Day and Memorial Day).

Fourth Grade

SS.4.1	Identify, explain, and critique commonly held American democratic values, principles, and beliefs (e.g., diversity, family values, community service, justice, liberty, etc.) through established documents (e.g., <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , <i>U.S. Constitution</i> , <i>Bill of Rights</i> , etc.).
SS.4.2	Compare and contrast the powers of each branch of government and identify the responsibilities and rights of United States citizens.
SS.4.14	Trace the beginnings of America as a nation and the establishment of the new government. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare and contrast the various forms of government in effect from 1774-1854 (e.g., Continental Congress, Articles of Confederation (1777), U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc.).• Analyze the accomplishments and challenges faced by the founders during the Constitutional Convention. Research the contributions of early American historic figures (e.g., George Washington, John Adams, Abigail Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Dolly Madison, etc.).• Explain the political, social, and economic challenges faced by the new nation (e.g., development of political parties, expansion of slavery, taxation, etc.).

Fifth Grade

SS.5.4	Outline the process in which amendments are made, interpret their meanings and how they apply to the student's daily life, lives of others, and lives of people throughout history.
SS.5.6	Summarize the provisions of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, including how the amendments protected the rights of African Americans and sought to enhance their political, social and economic opportunities.

Resources for Elementary Grades

The National Archives and Records Administration's DocsTeach and more...

- [*A special DocsTeach page for teaching about the Constitution*](#)

icivics.org

Learn about the Constitution with fun, engaging, and easy-to-use games and lesson plans from iCivics.

- Run your own firm of lawyers that focus on the Bill of Rights in the special edition of iCivics' most popular game, [*Do I Have a Right?*](#)
- Explore the [*Constitution article by article*](#); discovering the duties and powers of the three branches, the amendment process, and the role of this document as the supreme law of the land.

The Constitution Center

- Read the full text of the United States Constitution [*here*](#). The full text and extra information about different sections and amendments is available on this webpage.
- [*Constitution FAQs*](#) — Find information about the Constitution and Constitution Day.
- [*Amendment Cootie Catchers*](#) — Test your knowledge about the first 10 amendments using these foldables.

Smithsonian Learning Lab

- Smithsonian Learning Lab provides free high quality, authentic, digital images, recordings, and texts that can be downloaded, printed, and collected to enhance or create lessons for any grade level. See their website, [*Smithsonian Learning Lab*](#).

Center for Civic Education

- Resources to teach about the [*Constitution*](#) and Constitution Day are available. You can find lesson plans and activities for students in kindergarten through high school to learn about [*Constitution Day*](#).
- [*"We the People"*](#) lesson plan to help elementary students understand the meaning behind the Preamble of the United States Constitution. This website includes a lesson plan, video, and printable materials for use.

Middle School CCRS

In middle school, students investigate civics in more depth than they did before. They move from general concepts of government and their roles in various communities or groups, to more specific and complex notions such as the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements. They learn to explain the origins, functions, and structure of government with reference to the U.S. Constitution, state constitutions, and selected other systems of government, and begin to compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies and promoting the common good.

Sixth Grade

SS.6.3	Identify the structure of the United States Congress and the constitutional requirements of congressional membership.
SS.6.5	Examine and analyze the effectiveness of various acts of patriotism and civil discourse (e.g., support of American military during wartime, Vietnam War protests, Civil Rights, respect for the flag, and response of Americans to 9/11).

Seventh Grade

SS.7.2	Recognize and examine patriotism and nationalism.
SS.7.3	Compare and contrast the roles, rights and responsibilities of free men, women, children, slaves and foreigners across time in various civilizations. (e.g., ancient civilizations, medieval times, and nation states).

Eighth Grade

SS.8.1	Demonstrate patriotism through the planning, participation and observance of important anniversaries and remembrances (e.g., Pearl Harbor, Veterans' Day, Constitution Day and Patriots Day).
SS.8.3	Identify, analyze, and evaluate the responsibilities, privileges, and rights of citizens of the State of West Virginia found in the state and national constitutions.

Eighth Grade

SS.8.21	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the American Revolution, including western Virginia's part in the development of the nation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare and contrast the perspectives and roles of various western Virginians during the American Revolution including those of political leaders, soldiers, patriots, Tories/Loyalists, women, and Native Americans.• Identify the key conflicts, battles, and participants of the American Revolution in western Virginia and their effects on the area.• Summarize events related to the adoption of Virginia's constitutional conventions, the role of western Virginia and its leaders in the Continental Congress, and the ratification of the <i>U.S. Constitution</i>.• Explain the economic and political tensions between the people of western and eastern Virginia including the economic struggles of both groups following the American Revolution and their disagreement over representation.
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Resources for Middle School Grades

Bill of Rights Institute

Test your knowledge of the Constitution with the online Constitution Duel developed by the Bill of Rights Institute. You will be asked to answer 15 multiple choice questions to defend your constitutional honor. All questions will come from four categories; the Constitution, primary source documents, landmark Supreme Court cases, and historic people. Take the quiz as an individual or as a team — get your class involved and challenge another classroom to a Constitution knowledge duel.

American Center for Educators Online at the National Constitution Center

Online Professional Development for Educators that improves student learning in classrooms and schools across the nation.

icivics.org

<https://www.icivics.org/curriculum/road-constitution>

Learn about the Constitution with fun, engaging, and easy-to-use games and lesson plans from iCivics.

- Explore the **Constitution article by article**; discovering the duties and powers of the three branches, the amendment process, and the role of this document as the supreme law of the land.
- Take a closer look at the debates over power in the young American system of government with **this mini-lesson**. Students discover the compromise between the Federalists and Anti-federalists that led to the creation of the Constitution.
- Road to the Constitution
 - » OVERVIEW
 - How did we go from thirteen British colonies to the United States of America? Explore the major hardships of life under British rule, how the colonists decided to break away, and how they set a path for a new and independent government.

Lesson Plans: Teaching Six Big Ideas in the Constitution

The United States Constitution

Summary: This lesson engages students in a study of the Constitution to learn the significance of “Six Big Ideas” contained in it. Students analyze the text of the Constitution in a variety of ways, examine primary sources to identify their relationship to its central ideas and debate the core constitutional principles as they relate to today’s political issues.

<https://www.archives.gov/legislative/resources/education/constitution>

Interactive Constitution

Explore the Constitution with this easy to use, clause-by-clause guide to constitutional principles and facts.

The National Constitution Center Activities

The National Constitution Center has created a multitude of resources to assist teachers with American history instruction including government and civic engagement.

Meet the Founders

Complete biographies of the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Centuries of Citizenship – A Constitutional Timeline

Discover how 200 years of constitutional history has been shaped through a collection of stories and headlines spotlighting some of the people, events and issues in American history.

Center for Civic Education

The **9/11 and the Constitution**, and **Constitution Day** lesson plans can be adapted for most grade levels. <https://civiced.org/9-11-and-the-constitution>

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

High School CCRS

Students in high school advance through a selection of courses to prepare them for the challenges of college and career and — of critical importance — civic life. Students will use their prior knowledge of civics and government to address the complex ideas and concepts in our founding documents to expand that knowledge to encompass the workings of foreign governments, societies, and global economic markets.

They will explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested; they will analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights; and they will evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and their related consequences.

World Studies

SS.W.1	Describe the roles of citizens and their responsibilities (e.g., classical civilizations, feudal systems, developing nation states and neo-feudal systems, democratic and communist regimes, and 21st century society).
SS.W.2	Analyze and connect the status, roles, and responsibilities of free men, women, children, slaves, and migrants across time in various civilizations.
SS.W.3	Analyze and evaluate various ways of organizing systems of government to illustrate the continuity and change in the role of government over time (e.g., Hammurabi's Code, the Twelve Tables of Rome, Justinian Code, <i>Magna Carta</i> , <i>English Bill of Rights</i> , <i>Articles of Confederation</i> (1777), <i>U.S. Constitution</i> , Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and Treaty of Versailles).

United States Studies

SS.US.1	Evaluate the extent to which the U.S. Constitution impacts conflicts between individuals, communities and nations, liberty, equality, individual rights, and the rule of law vs. ethics (e.g., civil disobedience).
SS.US.2	Demonstrate an understanding of the duties of citizens that are necessary to preserve United States democracy (e.g., become informed and active in a democracy, through jury duty, paying taxes, public forums (local, state, and/or federal), voting, and conscription.)
SS.US.3	Analyze the changing perceptions of United States citizenship and evaluate responsibilities and rights of United States citizens (e.g., landownership, race, gender, and age).

United States Studies

SS.US.19	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the establishment of the United States as an independent nation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the impact of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution on the British North American colonies and the world. • Explain the strengths and weaknesses of government under the Articles of Confederation (1777). • Summarize events leading to the creation of the U.S. Constitution (e.g., country's economic crisis, Shay's Rebellion and purpose outlined in the Preamble). • Explain the fundamental principles and purposes of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights (e.g., through the influences of the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, colonial charters, and the political philosophies of the Enlightenment). • Trace the evolution of the American two-party political system. • Compare and contrast the position of the political parties and leaders on a variety of issues (e.g., territorial expansion, political participation, individual rights, states' rights, slavery, and social reforms). • Analyze the impact of United States Supreme Court decisions (e.g., <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>, <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i>, <i>Worcester v. Georgia</i>, <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> and <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>).
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United States Studies – Comprehensive

SS.USC.2	<p>Evaluate, then defend the importance of the fundamental democratic values and principles of United States constitutional democracy within a global context including conflicts between individuals, communities and nations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty and equality. • Individual rights and the common good. • Majority rule and minority rights. • The rule of law (e.g., civil disobedience). • Ethics. • Patriotism.
SS.USC.21	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the establishment of the new Republic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the major events leading to the American Revolution including the writing of the <i>Declaration of Independence</i>. • Examine the contributions of key individuals in the development of the Republic. • Determine the strengths and weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation (1777) and how their failure led to the development of the U.S. Constitution. • Compare and contrast political ideologies and sectional differences in the development of the <i>U.S. Constitution</i> (e.g., economic development, slavery, and social reforms).

Contemporary Studies

SS.CS.1	<p>Analyze the extent to which the fundamental United States democratic values and principles of republicanism and constitutionalism impact global conflicts among individuals, communities, and nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty and equality. • Individual rights and the common good. • Majority rule and minority rights. • Rule of Law and ethics (e.g., civil disobedience). • Patriotism.
SS.CS.25	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of United States foreign policy and global economic issues since 1990.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate American foreign policy concerning abuses of human rights (e.g., Serbian and Rwandan genocides, apartheid in South Africa, etc.). • Debate the motivation for adopting NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and assess their impact on the American and world economies. • Evaluate the causes of 9/11 and the ensuing Global War on Terrorism.

Civics

SS.C.3	<p>Demonstrate that the purpose of American government is the protection of personal, political and economic rights of citizens as evidenced by the Declaration of Independence, the U. S. Constitution, Constitutional Amendments and the ideas of those involved in the establishment of American government.</p>
SS.C.5	<p>Examine and analyze the contributing factors to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and philosophers (e.g., John Locke, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson John Adams, and Natural Rights philosophy). • Events (e.g., Glorious Revolution, Reformation, and Enlightenment) • Documents (e.g., English Bill of Rights, Petition of Right, and Magna Carta) • Classical periods (e.g., eras of Greece, Rome, and Classical Republicanism). • Principles (e.g., popular sovereignty, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, civil liberties, rule of law, republicanism, and Constitutional principles). • Judeo-Christian influence.
SS.C.7	<p>Evaluate the elements in the U.S. Constitution that make it a living document with democratic principles that are modified and expanded to meet the changing needs of society.</p>
SS.C.8	<p>Investigate the system of government created by the Preamble, Seven Articles, the Bill of Rights and other Amendments of the <i>U.S. Constitution</i> to evaluate how the framework for American society is provided.</p>

Civics

SS.C.10	Analyze the protection of liberties in the Bill of Rights and their expansion through judicial review and the gradual incorporation of those rights by the Fourteenth Amendment.
SS.C.12	Determine how conflicts between the rights of citizens and society's need for order can be resolved while preserving both liberty and safety.

Resources for High School Grades

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

- **Larry Kramer: "Madison and the Constitution"**
- **Peter Onuf: "Jefferson and the Constitution"**
- **Jack Rakove: "Freedom of Religion: A Radical Innovation"**
- **Relevant Primary Source Documents**

Teaching History

Bill of Rights – Example of Historical thinking

<http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/24424>

Declaration of Independence – Example of Historical thinking

<http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/25049>

Constitution USA: Teaching the Constitution

The Constitution is all around us; it affects each of us, every day. *Constitution USA* is hosted by Peter Sagal. Over the course of the four-hour series, Sagal hits the road to find out where the Constitution lives, how it works, and how it unites us as a nation. And for each contemporary story, Sagal dives into the history behind it and talks to prominent legal scholars, historians and public figures. Each one-hour episode of *Constitution USA* vividly illuminates a central theme essential to the Constitution.

<https://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal>

The Constitution

Teachers can use the documents and sound files in this primary sources toolkit to help students experience the four-month process of secret argument, debate and compromise that produced the Constitution of the United States. Students can view the documents, recorded notes, and personal reflections of the delegates. They can read news reviews of the time. They can study a map and image of the places where these historic events occurred and can view paintings of the people involved in these events. They can view a chart, a broadside, the song lyrics, and a graphical cover for a musical score. They can even listen to the words of later statesmen whose speeches record their beliefs about the duties of government and about being a U.S. citizen.

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/constitution/>

Founding Documents and Resources

[*https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/*](https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/)

[*https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs*](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs)

[*https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-constitution/*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-constitution/)

American Founding Toolkit

[*https://teachingamericanhistory.org/resource/american-founding-toolkit/*](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/resource/american-founding-toolkit/) [*http://www.wethepeoplemovie.com/education/lessonplans/preamble-highschool/*](http://www.wethepeoplemovie.com/education/lessonplans/preamble-highschool/)

Constitution 101 Curriculum: High School Level

[*https://constitutioncenter.org/education/constitution-101-curriculum*](https://constitutioncenter.org/education/constitution-101-curriculum)

[*https://civiced.org/9-11-and-the-constitution*](https://civiced.org/9-11-and-the-constitution)

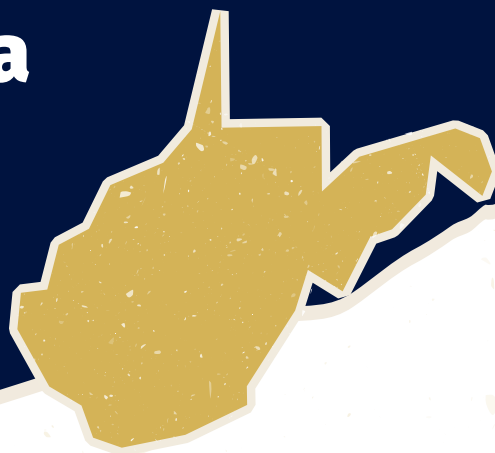
The 9/11 and the Constitution and Constitution Day lesson plans can be adapted for most grade levels.

West Virginia Department of Education Resources

[*https://wvde.us/middle-secondary-learning/social-studies/*](https://wvde.us/middle-secondary-learning/social-studies/)

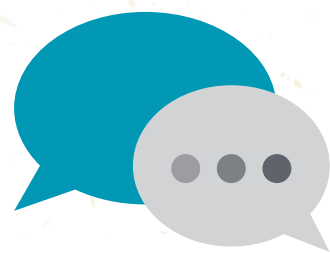
Celebrate West Virginia

The West Virginia Department of Education is launching the #ForgedInFreedomWV campaign during Celebrate Freedom Week.



START THE CONVERSATION

Use Celebrate Freedom Week to begin classroom discussions about trailblazing West Virginians. Explore the stories that define our state's character, resilience, independence, innovation, and encourage students to reflect on what it means to be forged in freedom.



SHARE YOUR STORY

Highlight classroom moments on social media. Post photos, student reflections, quotes, or creative projects that connect to West Virginia's legacy. Encourage students to share their own #ForgedInFreedomWV stories — who they are, where they come from, and what makes them proud to call this state home.



MAKE THE CONNECTION

Use the #ForgedInFreedomWV hashtag to explore West Virginia's unique path to statehood and its lasting contributions to our nation's story — from strong military service to leadership in science, energy, and community. Show how West Virginians continue to shape the American story with grit and purpose.



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



Michele L. Blatt
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools