

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION



LESSON SUMMARY

BENCHMARK
SS.5.CG.3.4 Describe the process for amending the U.S. Constitution.
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Students will explain why the U.S. Constitution includes the amendment process.■ Students will identify amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
CORRELATED FLORIDA STANDARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ ELA.5.F.1.3: <i>Use knowledge of grade-appropriate phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words.</i>■ ELA.5.R.2.2: <i>Explain how relevant details support the central idea(s), implied or explicit.</i>■ ELA.5.R.3.2: <i>Summarize a text to enhance comprehension.</i>■ ELA.5.C.1.4: <i>Write expository texts about a topic using multiple sources and including an organizational structure, relevant elaboration, and varied transitions.</i>■ ELA.5.C.3.1: <i>Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level.</i>■ ELA.5.C.5.1: <i>Arrange multimedia elements to create emphasis and/or clarity in oral or written tasks.</i>■ ELA.5.V.1.1: <i>Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.</i>■ ELA.5.V.1.3: <i>Use context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the meaning of multiple-meaning and unknown words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.</i>
ESSENTIAL QUESTION
What is the process for amending the U.S. Constitution?
VOCABULARY
amendment, proposal, ratification
MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Amending the Constitution slides■ Amending the Constitution exit slip

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

INTRODUCTION/HOOK

1. Make the following statement to the class: Stand up if you think we should be able to make changes to the U.S. Constitution.
2. Allow time for students to discuss their arguments/reasoning with a partner on the opposing side. In the end, reveal to students that it can be changed.
3. Pose the following question: Can you identify any changes that have been made to the Constitution throughout history? (answers will vary)

Teacher Note: *This question will help determine students' background knowledge and can be used to help you determine any prior clarifications that may be needed before beginning the lesson.*

4. Pose the following question: How do you think changes should be made to the Constitution if needed? Should the process be simple or complicated? Should every citizen vote on changes? Etc.

ACTIVITY

Teacher Note: *Lessons SS.5.CG.1.4 and SS.5.CG.2.3 outline specific amendments to the U.S. Constitution. These lessons may be used to cover the clarification on identifying amendments to the U.S. Constitution.*

5. Share with students that, since 1789, there have been 11,000 attempts to make changes to the United States Constitution. Over those 200+ years, only 27 changes, known as amendments, have officially been added to the document.
6. Display the "Amending the Constitution" slides. Use slide #2 to display the definition of an amendment. Explain that an amendment is the official change made to the document.
7. Project slide #3 to discuss some historical movements and moments that led to amending the Constitution.
8. The Framers understood that the U.S. Constitution may need amending over the course of history as a result of serious societal or governmental changes. However, they did not want the Constitution to be changed easily; they wanted to make sure that any amendments had overwhelming support from the American people. These changes become permanent parts of the 'supreme law of the land', and therefore must be seriously considered and decided upon before adding.
9. On slide #4, read the example explaining the reasoning behind the 14th Amendment. Pose the following questions for discussion:
 - a. Why was this amendment added? (to define citizenship, to ensure freed slaves were given protections/rights)
 - b. What change did this make to society/the United States government? (it held states accountable for protecting rights, it defined what it means to be a United

States citizen, it set the foundation for life after the Civil War, it increased some states population resulting in changes to representation)

10. Project slide #5 to discuss the process for amending the Constitution. Explain to students that this process is outlined in Article V of the Constitution.

Teacher Note: *When explaining the process, define the term ratification, as this is new vocabulary for students. Ratification is the process of signing an agreement to make that proposal official.*

11. You can also go through slide 6 which outlines some amendments that were proposed over the years but never got ratified.

CLOSURE/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

12. Pass out the “Amending the Constitution” exit slip.
13. Allow time for students to respond to the question of why the U.S. has an amendment process, and fill in the blanks to describe the amendment process.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[FJCC/LFI Website](#)

ANSWER KEYS

“Amending the Constitution” exit slip

SOURCES

U.S. Constitution: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>