

GED® Preparation Lesson Plan

Module: Social Studies

Lesson Title: The Bill of Rights Is in the News!

Standards: GED® Preparation (Adult General Education)

Prerequisite Skills	Florida GED® Social Studies Standards	Social Studies Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. (CCR.RE.ABE.2.4.a) • Read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science and technical texts of appropriate complexity for NRS Level 4 complexity. (CCR.RE.ABE.10.4.a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the principles that have contributed to the development of American constitutional democracy. (CG.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual rights (CG.2.h) • Describe individual rights and civic responsibilities. (CG.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Bill of Rights (CG.4.a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw Conclusions and Make Inferences (SSP.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine the details of what is explicitly stated in primary and secondary sources and make logical inferences or valid claims based on evidence. (SSP.1.a) • Determine the central ideas of information of a primary or secondary source document, corroborating or challenging conclusions with evidence. (SSP.2.a)

Objectives of the Lesson

Students will:

- Closely read and synthesize information from a primary source
- Apply their knowledge of historical documents and relate a current event to each of the Amendments in the Bill of Rights

Materials

- Handout A: The Bill of Rights Are in the News
- Handout B: The Bill of Rights In My Own Words
- Handout C: Making the Connection with Today’s World
- Handout D: The Bill of Rights – An Overview
- Chart paper/board and markers
- Newspapers and/or computer access to the internet

Instructional Plan

Overview

The application and transference of the major ideas of primary sources is an important skill for GED® preparation students to attain. Many students often struggle with the vocabulary of primary sources, such as the Constitution. They also may not understand how ideas written over two-hundred and thirty years ago are still applicable in today's world.

In this lesson, students will have to opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Bill of Rights and how they are viewed in today's media – print and online. This lesson will assist students in better understanding that key historical documents are timeless. The language used may have changed, but the concepts, the thoughts behind the words have not.

Process

Introduce the lesson by asking students what they know about the First Ten Amendments to the Constitution. Write their answers on the board or chart paper. Discuss that the First Ten Amendments, better known as the Bill of Rights, were written almost two-hundred and fifty years ago. Yet, they continue to be a powerful force in determining the freedoms that we often take for granted.

Prior to having students complete the activity, you may wish to access additional information and videos to share. The following websites provide information on the Bill of Rights, including historical perspective and biographical information regarding the crafters of the document. Videos can assist students in better understanding why and how these amendments were added to the Constitution.

- *Bill of Rights Institute* – This site provides a wealth of information on the Bill of Rights <https://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights/>
- *Bill of Rights – The History Channel* – From written information to videos, The History Channel provides great classroom resources. <http://www.history.com/topics/bill-of-rights>
- *The Bill of Rights – National Archive* - <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>
- *The Story of the Bill of Rights – The Annenberg Classroom* - The videos on this site have both English and Spanish subtitles. <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-story-of-the-bill-of-rights>
- *The Constitution Center* – Featured videos on the Bill of Rights, plus more. <https://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/video-resources>

Provide students with handout copies of the **Handout A: The Bill of Rights** or you can download a copy of the Bill of Rights at: <http://billofrightsinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/BillofRights.pdf>.

Have students read each of the Amendments and rewrite them in their own words using **Handout B: The Bill of Rights in My Own Words**. This activity provides students with an opportunity to synthesize complex text and prepares them for the next activity. Review each amendment, and have students share their rewrites.

Next, divide the class into teams of two to four students. Provide each team with copies of current newspapers, either a national or local newspaper. If a comprehensive newspaper, such as *USA Today*, is used, most amendments will be covered by some type of article.

Have each team locate an article, editorial, or editorial cartoon that supports or refutes each of the amendments. Have them write a brief synopsis of the article and how it relates to the specific amendment.

Provide the students with adequate time to review the newspaper and locate appropriate articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, or even advertisements. When the students have completed the assignment, have them share their findings with the class.

Optional: Instead of having students find examples through newspaper media, you may wish to have them search the Internet for articles.

Sample Debriefing Questions

Debrief the activity by asking the following questions:

- Were you surprised at how many articles you were able to locate on these amendments which were written so long ago?
- Which amendment was easiest to find a related news article? Which was the most difficult?
- Were there amendments that you could not find a related current topic? Why do you think this occurred? What type of current story would be an example of this amendment?
- Can you think of times where the freedoms provided in the Bill of Rights impacted you personally or in the workplace?

Discuss that these important amendments have not stayed static over the years. They have continued to change, depending on the needs of the American public. Discuss that many different court cases base their decisions on the specific freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights.

Modifications for Different Levels

To modify the activity, you may wish to have students select only one of the amendments to find articles that relate to the big idea. You may wish to have students start with the First Amendment.

For students at lower achievement levels, provide them with a synopsis of the basic rights or freedoms contained in each of the first ten amendments (**Handout D: The Bill of Rights – An Overview**). Next, have them work in small groups to discuss how each of the amendments impacts their own lives at work, at home, and in the community. Debrief the activity by writing the students' ideas on the board beside the appropriate amendment.

Assessments/Extensions

Have students identify a specific amendment from the Constitution. It does not have to be one of the first ten amendments. Using newspapers and an Internet search, have students research the different freedoms outlined in the amendment and how current events and court cases are using the specific rights outlined by the amendment. Have the students share their findings with the class.

The Bill of Rights

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

The Bill of Rights in My Own Words

Rewrite the Bill of Rights so that each amendment makes sense to you. Try to limit your description of each amendment to 1 or 2 sentences.

Amendment I	
Amendment II	
Amendment III	
Amendment IV	
Amendment V	
Amendment VI	
Amendment VII	
Amendment VIII	
Amendment IX	
Amendment X	

Making the Connection with Today's World

Complete the following with news stories, editorials, or editorial cartoons that describe current or past events related to the appropriate Amendment. You may wish to cut out or print the article.

Amendment	Article Synopsis
I	
II	
III	
IV	
V	
VI	
VII	
VIII	
IX	
X	

The Bill of Rights – An Overview

The First 10 Amendments to the Constitution as Ratified by the States are often referred to as The Bill of Rights.

Amendment 1

Freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right to assemble peaceably, right to petition the Government

Amendment 2

Right to bear arms

Amendment 3

No soldier shall during peace time be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner

Amendment 4

Right to be secure in one's home, against unreasonable searches and seizure without probable cause

Amendment 5

No citizen shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, no any property taken for public use without just compensation

Amendment 6

Right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury and assistance of counsel for defense

Amendment 7

In common law suits, a citizen has the right to a trial by a jury based on the rules of common law

Amendment 8

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted

Amendment 9

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people

Amendment 10

The powers not delegated to the U. S. by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people