

Curriculum Library

Browse by type and content

This is the library — everything compiled below, across grade levels and lesson categories, ready to pull from one place. Use it two ways: browse by format if you know how you want to run your visit (a mock trial, a discussion, a read-aloud), or skim for a single video, activity, or discussion question to drop into a lesson you're already building. Nothing here requires you to start from scratch — grab what fits your grade band and visit, and go.

The Washington Courts lesson library is built and maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts for legal professional volunteers — a strong choice for turnkey, ready-to-run material. A few Washington-specific picks (like the Teach with TVW videos) are woven in to connect that foundation to how it plays out locally. For the Constitution itself — the core ideas, the history, the text — the national resources listed below anchor your lesson.

Washington-specific and court-procedure lessons

BROWSE BY GRADE BAND AND TOPICS.

- **Washington Courts (all grade levels):** <https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lawyers>
 - **Teach with TVW – Judicial Branch EXPLAINED + Rule of Law and State Courts (6-12):** multi-period Rule of Law lesson plan with teacher guide and student notebook included. <https://teachwithtvw.org/unit/the-rule-of-law-and-state-courts/>
-

To teach what the Constitution is

BEST FOR THE FRAMING AND THE CORE IDEAS THEMSELVES.

- **PBS LearningMedia — Our Rights & Responsibilities (K-5):** stand-alone lesson connects the Bill of Rights to real-life examples — students identify a right (e.g., freedom of expression) alongside its corresponding responsibility. Part of a 10-lesson civics collection. <https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/our-rights-responsibilities-lesson-plan/civics-for-kids-building-tomorrow-together/>
- **We the People: Rewrite the Preamble — Elementary Edition (3-5):** <https://docsteach.org/lesson/we-the-people-elementary-edition/>
- **National Constitution Center – To Sign or Not to Sign (all grades):** quick 5-10 minute activity opener (p. 4) as students walk in. Invite them to sign or skip a fake decree posted in the room (“schools close every year for Constitution Day”), then ask why they did or didn’t. Ties straight to Article VII. It’s a hook for your presentation, skip it if you’re short on time. (See video clip, [here](#) – link in PDF inactive) https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/To_Sign_or_Not_To_Sign.pdf
- **Annenberg Constitution guide — “What It Says, What It Means” (6-12):** <https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/constitution/>

- **iCivics – Constitution Day Lesson Plan (6-8):** <https://ed.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/constitution-day-lesson-plan>
- **PBS LearningMedia – Explore the U.S. Constitution, interactive lesson (6-12)** — a guided close reading of the Constitution that begins with the Constitutional Convention; interactive and screen-based, free with guest access. Its companion “Constitution EXPLAINED” short videos also make great drop-in clips. <https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/civ23-soc-exploreconstitution/explore-the-us-constitution-interactive-lesson/>

Books for read-aloud and discussion (K-3)

THE LOWEST-PREP WAY TO SHOW UP; BRING A SHORT CIVICS-THEMED PICTURE BOOK.

Build your agenda around the read and discussion, keeping your intro and wrap-up short so there’s enough time for both. You will need to source the book yourself from a library or bookstore.

(Source: Modeled on the Rendell Center’s [Constitution Day Read-Aloud program](#))

RECOMMENDED TITLES:

- We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States — *David Catrow*
- We the People: The Story of Our Constitution — *Lynne Cheney*
- A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution — *Betsy and Giulio Maestro*
- Saving the Liberty Bell — *Megan McDonald*
- Carl the Complainer — *Michelle Knudsen*
- NoodlePhant — *Jacob Kramer and K-Fai Steele*
- What Can a Citizen Do? — *Dave Egger*

Talking to a large group or assembly

The format changes if you’re invited to speak to more than one class at a time. Skip the interactive format and lead with a structured talk:

- **WA Courts – Outline for Talks to Large Groups or Assemblies (all grades):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=OutlineforTalkstoLargeGroupsAssemblies

Talk through a big idea

STORY DRIVEN DISCUSSION OR PICK A SIDE AND MAKE THE CASE.

- **WSBA Sample Lesson Plan: The Constitution Belongs to You! (3-5):** [https://www.wsba.org/docs/default-source/about-wsba/constitution-day/choose/constitution-day---grades-3-5_final-\(1\).pptx?sfvrsn=c45ce1f1_5](https://www.wsba.org/docs/default-source/about-wsba/constitution-day/choose/constitution-day---grades-3-5_final-(1).pptx?sfvrsn=c45ce1f1_5)
- **PBS LearningMedia – Our School Rules (K-2):** <https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/our-school-rules-lesson-plan/civics-for-kids-building-tomorrow-together/>
- **PBS LearningMedia – Our Rights & Responsibilities (K-3):** <https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/our-rights-responsibilities-lesson-plan/civics-for-kids-building-tomorrow-together/>
- **WA Courts – Exploring *U.S. v. Hirabayashi* (4-8):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=USvHirabayashi

- **WA Courts – Rights and Responsibilities (4-6):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=RightsAndResponsibilities
- **WA Courts – An Introduction to the Bill of Rights (4-8):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=IntroToBillOfRights
- **WA Courts – Understanding Procedural Justice (4-7):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=ProceduralJustice
- **American Constitution Society – First Amendment — Freedom of Speech (*Tinker v. Des Moines*) (6-8):** <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CITC-middle-school-lesson-plan-1A.pdf>
- **WA Courts – Search and Seizure in Washington, Including in the Schools (9-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=SearchAndSeizure
- **WA Courts – *Brown v. Board of Education* (9-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=BrownVBoard
- **WA Courts – Her Day in Court – Women Judges and Justices in Washington State (9-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=HerDayInCourt-WomenJudgesAndJusticesInWashingtonState
- **WA Courts – Freedom of Expression in Special Places (9-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=FreedomOfExpressionInSpecialPlaces
- **American Constitution Society – First Amendment, Freedom of Speech Lesson (9-12):** <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/High-School-Lesson-Plan-on-Freedom-of-Speech.pdf>
- **American Constitution Society – Fourteenth Amendment, *Brown v. Board of Education* Lesson (7-12).** Reference the [Elementary School version](#) for basics and additional discussion questions: <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CITC-Middle-High-School-LessonPlan-14thAmend.pdf>

Solve a problem or build something

HANDS-ON REASONING AND INVENTION.

- **WA Courts – Conflict Resolution (4-8):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=ConflictResolution
- **WA Courts – No Vehicles in the Park (5-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=NoVehicles
- **WA Courts – Creating a Bill of Rights in Space (4-8):** Not intended for first-time visit; designed as the capstone of a multi-lesson unit. Work with the teacher well in advance to lay groundwork. https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=CreatingRightsInSpace
- **WA Courts – The Courts: Interpreting the Law on Weapons (5-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=WeaponsLaw
- **WA Courts – Drunk Driving Legislative Session (9-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=DrunkDrivingLegislation

Ready-to-run mock trials

FULLY SCRIPTED, LOW-PREP, FUN TO RUN.

Expect students to do most of the talking — plan on facilitating and observing more than lecturing. Limit your intro and wrap-up so the activity itself isn't cut short.

- **WA Courts – *State v. Mary Witch* scripted mock trial (3-5):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=HanselAndGretelMockTrial
 - **WA Courts – *State v. Shenzi, Banzai and Ed* scripted mock trial (3-5):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=LionKingMockTrial
 - **WA Courts – No Vehicles in the Park — statutory interpretation (5-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=NoVehicles
 - **WA Courts – Theft Scripted Mock Trial (6-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=TheftScriptedMockTrial
 - **American Bar Association – Battle for Truth: It's Your Witness (6-10):** https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/resources/lesson-plans/middle-school/ue-process/battle-for-truth/
 - **American Constitution Society – The Fourth Amendment Goes to the Mall (6-8):** <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ACS-CITC-lesson-plan-4th-Amendment-Middle-School-1.pdf>
 - **WA Courts – Tort Liability: Mock Trial (10-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=TortLiabilityMockTrial
-

Short videos to drop in

TWO- TO FIVE-MINUTE CLIPS TO OPEN, BREAK UP, OR CLOSE A LESSON.

- **PBS KIDS – Together We Can: What is the U.S. Constitution? (K-2):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdggncqQIKY>
- **Quizlet – U.S. Constitution Explained for Students | Quick & Easy Summary (3-5):** https://youtu.be/9C3xhHN_LQ4?si=h86f7PRkfMiXnaPZ
- **TED-Ed – 3-Minute Guide to the Bill of Rights (3-5):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYEFm5dLMQ>
- **National Constitution Center – Creating the Constitution (all ages):** <https://www.teachertube.com/videos/creating-the-constitution-5604>
- **Facts of Congress – The Bill of Rights (4-6):** <https://youtu.be/R86AqllMmrU>
- **WA TVW – Civics 101: What is the Law? (6-12):** <https://teachwithtwv.org/video/2-what-is-the-law/>
- **TED-Ed – Why wasn't the Bill of Rights originally in the US Constitution? (6-12):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMCDikASE4o>
- **C-SPAN – Constitution Clips (6-12):** <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/constitutionClips/>
- **iCivics/Center for Civic Education – Constitution EXPLAINED, 35 short videos (6-12):** <https://ed.icivics.org/constitution-explained-video-series>
- **PBS – Peter Sagal on the Constitution's origins: "The Big Bang Theory" (6-12):** <https://www.pbs.org/video/constitution-usa-peter-sagal-big-bang-theory/>

- **PBS – Philadelphia and the Constitutional Convention (6-12):** <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/clip/constitution-usa-peter-sagal-philadelphia-and-constitutional-convention>
- **U.S. Courts Shorts: An Impartial Federal Judiciary (9-12):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlOllm4-wnE>
- **PBS – Civics Made Easy: Are Constitutional Amendments No Longer Possible? (9-12):** consider showing an excerpt rather than full ~15 min clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR1ZvKqbNLU>

KEEP IT LOCAL WITH TVW VIDEOS

Teach with TVW — Washington Courts EXPLAINED (6-12). Washington-specific court-system videos, each with its own reason to show it: career conversation, checks-and-balances-in-action, or direct relevance to students themselves.

- **Civil vs. Criminal Cases:** <https://youtu.be/gy5xfjWWKzU>
- **Prosecutor vs. Public Defender:** <https://youtu.be/CzBE2PJYZak>
- **Juvenile Court:** <https://youtu.be/qjA4EZ3BcD0>
- **Superior Court:** <https://youtu.be/CJku-z6RRgs>

Go deeper: full collections and self-prep

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM SETS: PULL ONE TO USE OR TO BRUSH UP.

- **Bill of Rights Institute — Development of the Constitution (3-5):** Multi-stage elementary unit on the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the civic virtue of justice, with a full lesson plan, slide deck, and seven student handouts. Comprehensive rather than single-visit — best for pulling one activity or the “Fair or Unfair” warm-up game as a quick opener. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/lessons/development-of-the-constitution/>
- **WA TVW — Judicial Branch Explained: Unconstitutional? (6-12):** Provides full teacher guide, slide deck, and discussion questions on judicial review — what happens when a law is struck down — built around a single short video as the launch point. The fastest way to brush up before a visit if you want a ready-to-run package. <https://teachwithtvw.org/video/what-happens-if-a-law-is-declared-unconstitutional-questions-to-the-court/>
- **Annenberg Classroom — Teaching the Constitution (6-12):** A guide organized by article and amendment, with videos, lessons, games, and timelines. Best for grabbing one targeted clip or lesson on a topic — Article III set on judicial independence is especially strong. <https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/teaching-the-constitution/>
- **National Constitution Center — Constitution 101:** Developed with The Khan Academy, a free, self-paced course built to help you think like a constitutional lawyer. Best used to brush up your own footing before a visit, or as an extension for advanced high schoolers. <https://constitutioncenter.org/education/constitution-101-curriculum/constitution-101-with-khan-academy>

Interactive games

Some of these games (*) won't fit inside a single visit, but they're worth handing off. Share the links with the teacher so students can play later at home or during class free time.

- **American Bar Association – Pass the Eraser (K-8):** https://www.americanbar.org/content/aba-cms-dotorg/en/groups/public_education/resources/lesson-plans/middle-school/constitution/rules--rules--rules/
 - **WA Courts – Claim Your Jurisdiction (8-12):** https://www.courts.wa.gov/education/lessons/?fa=education_lessons.dspPlan&plan=ClaimYourJurisdiction-1Day
 - (*) **iCivics – Argument Wars (6-12):** <https://ed.icivics.org/games/argument-wars>
 - (*) **iCivics – Do I Have a Right? (6-12):** <https://www.icivics.org/games/do-i-have-right>
 - (*) **iCivics – Race to Ratify (6-12):** <https://www.icivics.org/games/race-to-ratify>
 - (*) **Annenberg Classroom – That's Your Right, Bill of Rights card game (6-12):** <https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/resource/annenberg-classrooms-thats-right/>
 - (*) **Mount Vernon – Be Washington (6-12):** <https://www.mountvernon.org/site/bewashington/>
-

[BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT](#)