

Constitution Day Talking Points

These are conversation starters, not a script — and they're not the only way in. Pick two or three that fit your lesson and your room, then make them your own. Swap in a case you've worked, an example from your practice area, or an honest answer to a question you get asked all the time. The points below are a springboard. Your experience is the real material.

ELEMENTARY (K-5)

“What is the Constitution, and who is it for?”

FOCUS: THE PREAMBLE, COLLECTIVE RULES, AND FOUNDATIONAL FAIRNESS.

- **The Rules of the Game:** Think about what would happen at recess if there were no rules at all. Who would get hurt? Who would get left out? The Constitution is that same idea — but for our whole country. A set of rules we all agreed to so everyone gets treated fairly.
- **The Ultimate Group Contract:** The Constitution is a set of promises our country made to everyone who lives here — about fairness, rights, and being treated equally. Think of it as the ultimate group agreement: we all agreed to play by these rules together. (*Pairs with We the People: rewrite the Preamble — Elementary Edition, 3-5.*)
- **“We the People” Means Them:** The very first words of the Constitution are “We the People.” Not “We the Leaders.” Not “We the Lawyers.” That means this document belongs to you, your family, your classmates — everyone in this room.
- **What a Lawyer Actually Does:** My job in the legal field is to make sure those promises of fairness stay real for everyday people — not just on paper, but in real life. That's what I do. And that's why I'm standing here today.
- **The Next 250 Years:** Our country is still being built. It's 250 years old this year, and there's still work to do. The next 250 years? That's yours.

Think about something in your school, your neighborhood, your world that doesn't feel fair. Now imagine you had the tools to fix it — you get to decide. The Constitution is those tools. Learning how it works is how you pick them up.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

“What does the text say, and what does it mean to me?”

FOCUS: CLOSE READING, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND IMMEDIATE PERSONAL RIGHTS.

- **Rights on the Front Lines:** You already have constitutional rights — at school, with police, and online. Not someday when you're 18. Right now. Let's look at what the text actually says about your daily life. (*Pairs with the Annenberg Guide: “What It Says, What It Means.”*)

- **Words Matter in Law:** In law, a single word can change everything. How we interpret a sentence written in 1787 affects what you can post online, who can search your phone, and what you can say at school right now. *(Pairs with PBS “Constitution EXPLAINED” short video clips.)*
- **The Room Where It Happened:** The Constitution wasn’t delivered fully formed — it was argued over, crossed out, and rewritten by flawed, disagreeing people in a hot room in Philadelphia who couldn’t agree on much. Sound familiar? *(Pairs with PBS LearningMedia “Explore the U.S. Constitution.”)*
- **Accountability as a Shield:** What happens when someone breaks a rule and nobody does anything about it? The Constitution was designed specifically so that can’t happen — so no single person, no single leader, ever gets to run the whole show alone.
- **The Living Experiment:** The Constitution is an ongoing argument — and your job as future citizens is to jump in. Read it, question it, apply it to the world you see today.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

“Democracy and why the rule of law belongs to everyone.”

FOCUS: DEEP STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS, LEGAL INTERPRETATION, & THE JUDICIAL BRANCH.

- **Constitutional Evolution:** This document was written for 4 million people in 13 colonies. It now governs 330 million people across 50 states, the internet, and things the founders couldn’t have imagined. How does that even work? That’s what we’re here to figure out. *(Pairs with the National Constitution Center’s Constitution 101.)*
- **The Mechanics of Interpretation:** Two judges can read the exact same sentence in the Constitution and come to completely opposite conclusions — and both can make a compelling argument. That’s not a bug in the system. That’s the whole point. *(Pairs with WA TVW’s Judicial Branch Explained: Unconstitutional?)*
- **The Independent Judiciary:** What actually stops someone in power from just doing whatever they want? Courts. An independent judiciary is the mechanism that keeps raw political power in check — and history shows that when it’s weakened, democracies don’t stay healthy for long. *(Pairs with the Annenberg Guide’s articles on Article III.)*
- **The Adversarial System’s Purpose:** In a courtroom, we put two opposing arguments against each other on purpose. Not because we like to fight — because the best way to find the truth is to stress-test every side of it.
- **The Rule of Law Belongs to You:** This system doesn’t run on autopilot. It needs people who understand it, who participate in it, and who are willing to hold it accountable. That’s not a civics-class abstraction. That’s you, sooner than you think.

[BACK TO TOP OF DOCUMENT](#)