

GRADES 4-8

U.S. CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT COURSE BOOK



The Good AND THE Beautiful CURRICULUM

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ABOUT THE COURSE

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Good and the Beautiful US Constitution and Government is a course designed to teach students about the establishment and early development of America's government through the study of the founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the 27 Amendments—and the lives of the Founding Fathers and Mothers. This course includes inspirational biographies, an exciting adventure story, informative lessons, fun and instructive hands-on activities, teacher-led discussion, beautiful mini books, and a complete reading of the founding documents, all in an easy-to-teach format. Students in grades 4–8 will gain a deep understanding of the principles that guided those who founded America's Republic, including justice, liberty, duty, and equality.

An Emphasis on Character

This course teaches about the courageous men and women who founded America, with an emphasis on their strength of character and the hardships they overcame. Students will be inspired by the courage, faith, perseverance, determination, selflessness, patience, and the spirit of compromise that the Founders displayed.

A Focus on Truth

This course was written to promote the original intent of the Framers of the Constitution and to combat the revisionist history that has overtaken many of the texts covering the Revolutionary Era. For this reason we rely heavily upon primary sources and original writings, letters, and speeches to present facts and promote meaningful discussion.

Engaging Material for All Types of Learners

We at The Good and the Beautiful believe that the Constitution is an important document to read and understand; therefore, we want to ensure all children are fully engaged through the entire lesson. This course includes hands-on activities and 3D models of important government buildings for your kinesthetic learners; audio biographies for your auditory learners; and stunning full-color mini books for your visual learners.

Flexible Lessons

With 32 lessons each intended to take approximately 45 minutes, this course is designed to be flexible. You can teach it to a large class of students or to only one child. You can teach one lesson a week for 32 weeks or twice a week for 16 weeks, using the second semester to study your state's history. If you need shorter class periods, each lesson can easily be split into two parts. This flexibility allows for the course to meet the needs of every family or class.

Teaches the Whole Scope of the Founding of the American Republic

This US Constitution and Government course covers the entire span of the establishment of America's government from the Declaration of Independence through the Twenty-seventh Amendment. The course aims to present the history and ideas surrounding the founding in addition to the principles of a republic.

GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL STYLE LEARNING

The unique approach taken by The Good and the Beautiful US Constitution and Government course promotes truth, beauty, family interaction, and meaningful discussions.

The course includes the following unique components:

Course Book

Containing the lessons, the course book directs the teacher or parent when to use the other three components. It also includes the activities, pages to cut out, and the mini books. Additionally, History Case Files are included in the course book to walk students through how to critically think about bias, truth, facts, and primary sources.

US Constitution Bullet Journal

Each student needs a copy of the *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. The bullet journal incorporates the full text of the founding documents and original coloring and activity pages. Each student will complete his or her own bullet journal, which will serve as a treasured keepsake when the course is finished. It is highly recommended that each student has a set of erasable gel pens for writing and doodling in the bullet journal.

A PDF answer key for pages 24–43 of the *US Constitution Bullet Journal* can be downloaded for free at goodandbeautiful.com/usconstitution.

Biographies

These short audio biographies are inspirational accounts of the lives of important men and women during the framing of the Constitution and constitutional amendments. The recordings of the biographies can be accessed online at goodandbeautiful.com/usconstitution.

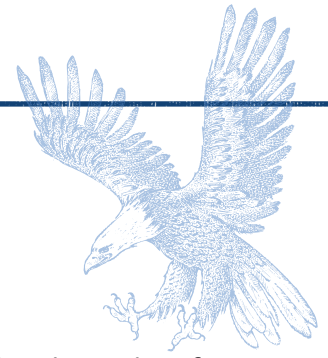
Mystery on Constitution Island

An exciting adventure story written just for this course, *Mystery on Constitution Island* is a unique and fun way to learn about the Constitution. This book can be purchased as a physical copy or accessed as an audiobook at goodandbeautiful.com/usconstitution.

Activity Book

This optional activity book for grades K–3 allows for younger students to join in and learn along with their older siblings. The Activity Book is not integrated into the course, nor does it follow the scope and sequence of the course. It simply has fun activities about colonial times and Founding Fathers for younger children to enjoy.

Note to Parents and Teachers: Because this course uses primary sources, authentic letters and speeches as they were written, and original transcriptions of the founding documents, you will see capitalization, punctuation, and spelling that is incorrect according to today's standards. In order to be as faithful to the original sources as possible, we have kept the capitalization, punctuation, and spelling as originally written. Explain this to your students as necessary.



ITEMS NEEDED:

Manila envelope or file folder

LESSON 1:

SEEKING TRUTH

Preparation: Remove pages 5–6 from the course book. Insert the “History Case File” page into a manila envelope or file folder. Label the envelope or folder “History Case File” with a pen or marker.

☆ Read to the students:

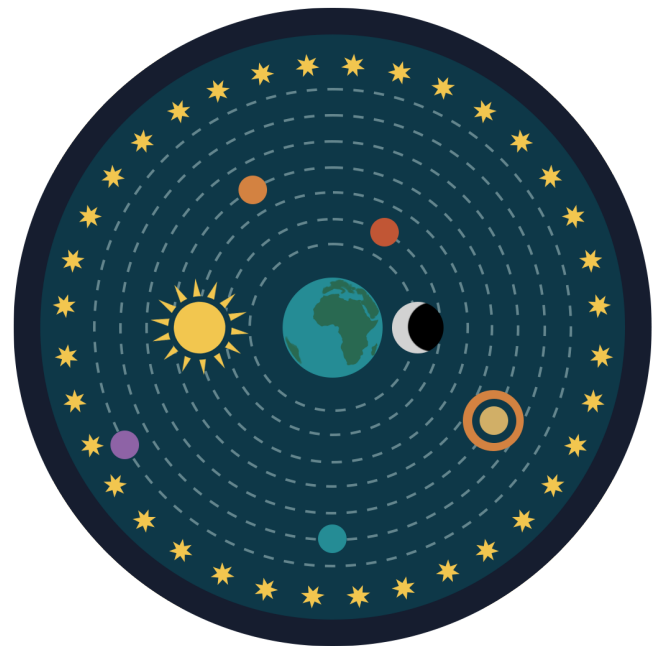
“What is truth?” This age-old question has been asked throughout the centuries by many people, one of the most famous being Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea presiding over the trial of Jesus. Pilate asked this question immediately after Jesus had just called himself a witness to the truth (John 18). Perhaps Pilate was searching for truth just as people have for generations. So, what is truth, and why does it matter?

Noah Webster, in his 1828 dictionary, called truth “conformity to fact or reality.” That means that things that are true are those that agree or line up with things as they actually are. If you throw a baseball and it breaks a window, and then you tell your mom that you don’t know who broke the window, you are not telling the truth because the fact or reality is that you actually *do* know who broke the window. Sometimes people believe that certain things are true, and then later learn more that reveals that the truth is different from what they had originally believed. For example, look at the picture on this page. [Show the students the picture of Earth as the center of the universe.]

Most people in the Middle Ages thought that everything in the solar system revolved around the earth. They believed this geocentric view of the universe was true. Does that make it true? [Pause for answers.] In the 16th century, Nicolaus Copernicus proved that the planets, including Earth, actually revolve around the sun. The truth had always been that the planets revolve around the sun, even if people in earlier times did not know or believe it to be so.

Truth can be easy to find in the realm of science or math because we can observe nature or perform experiments to find what is true. We know that $2 + 2 = 4$ because we can put two pennies on the table, add two more, and every time it will equal four pennies. We know that plants need light, water, and nutrients to survive because if we try to grow a plant with only two of those things, it will not grow well or at all. Someone could believe that $2 + 2 = 5$ or that plants need only light to survive, but his or her belief does not make it true.

It is important to seek out truth in all things because we want to live our lives in line with reality; we do not want any part of our lives to be lived falsely. We live in a world, however, that sometimes does not value and seek truth. Remember what truth is: “conformity to fact or reality.” Many people believe that truth is whatever they personally think to be right without analyzing whether it conforms to fact or reality. Other people automatically believe that whatever they see on TV or social media or hear on the news or from a friend is true.





Can you think of a time when you read or heard something that you thought was true, and then you later found out it was not true? [Pause for discussion; share a similar experience with your students.]

Unfortunately, we can't believe everything we hear or read about America's founding because it isn't always true. Some people inadvertently spread misinformation or don't know all the facts. Others purposefully distort the truth or tell falsehoods, often because they want Americans to try a new form of government with less freedom. Many texts about the early days of America focus only on bad things that happened or only on the faults of the Founders without acknowledging the greatness of either.

Yet, the extraordinary ideals promoted by the Founders and in the founding documents eventually ushered in the greatest freedom and equality ever experienced in history. In this course you will be learning about these courageous men and women and the foundational principles they promoted that became an inspiration to people and nations all around the world. You can read, listen, think, and discuss with your teacher to discern the truth about whether the people—and more importantly, the ideas—are good and just or immoral and unfair.

The more you study history, the more you will discover that there are forces advancing the causes of both good and evil. Because distortions of truth are so prevalent today, it is critical that you understand how information can be twisted, taken out of context, omitted, and manipulated to try to tell things in a certain way. Sometimes the truth is hard to find or deceptively shaped by authors, so it is important for you to be truth-seekers as you read books and articles, watch documentaries and online videos, and visit museums.

When you hear or read things about history and historical figures and you aren't sure if they are accurate or believable, what should you do? This first lesson of the US Constitution and Government course will give you skills to seek and find the truth. You will get to apply these truth-seeking skills in a History Case File later in this lesson and again later in the course. Then, hopefully, you will continue to apply

the skills you learn in this course to discern truth in all your future studies.

- ★ Have each student open to page 1 in his or her *US Constitution Student Journal*. Read to the students:

primary source: an original, firsthand account (such as original journal entries, letters, or news reports by someone who witnessed an event), arising directly from the time or event

secondary source: a summary, analysis, or interpretation of primary sources (such as documentaries, articles, or textbooks), usually produced later than the original event

The steps to seeking truth are broken into five Ds to help you remember them:

- **Distinguishing** between types of sources
- **Digging** up trusted sources
- **Determining** bias of the author
- **Detecting** any underlying or hidden agenda
- **Discovering** context

The more we practice our truth-seeking skills, the more we will be able to separate facts and truth from deception and disinformation.

Each "D" includes some questions we can ask ourselves as we seek truth.

- ★ Have each student read the first D, "Distinguishing between types of sources," and the corresponding questions. Discuss the set of questions and how they can help in seeking truth. Then repeat these steps with the other four Ds.

History Case File Activity

- ★ Hold up the labeled envelope or folder with the History Case File for the students to see. Read to the students:



Now we will practice applying these skills to a real History Case File, which I have right here. Inside this folder is a real case file with a claim about a Founding Father. You will read the claim and the evidence, and then put the clues into context with



more historical background. By the end, hopefully, you can draw your own conclusion as to whether the claim is true or false.

☆ Have the students remove the History Case File from the envelope or folder and read through it together, taking turns and discussing as appropriate.

☆ Read to the students:

Now that you are familiar with the History Case File of George Washington’s teeth, and you have read the known facts and context, you will put the truth-seeking skills you learned earlier into practice. There are many articles and documentaries that claim George Washington took teeth from his slaves to use as dentures for himself. He is vilified in many instances as a cruel and uncaring slave master, with some instances even going so far as to say that George Washington “yanked” teeth from his slaves’ mouths.

Look at the ledger on page 7. This is the primary source document from which the claim originated. The sixth full line (by the red arrow, added for clarity) is the only original document known to give information about teeth being purchased by George Washington or someone working on his estate.

What do you make of the claims against George Washington? [Pause and allow for discussion.]

☆ Read to the students:

The purpose of the activities today was to give you an example of the kinds of information you will come across as you read about history. Unlike math and science, history is retold based on the author’s viewpoint. As a seeker of truth, you can use the skills you’re learning to make your own conclusions. You know you can’t believe everything you read or hear just because it was in an article or a textbook, on a blog, an online video, a news station, or even at a museum. Unless you are looking at primary source documents, you are reading or watching somebody’s interpretation of history.

In this course you will learn about several of the Founding Fathers and Mothers of the United States.

This course focuses on many of the positive things the Founders did because those true stories inspire us to seek God’s help in our own lives, to educate our minds, and to stand up for what is right. Does this course claim that our Founders were perfect, infallible human beings? Absolutely not.

For example, there was, unfortunately, a great deal of discrimination, proslavery sentiments, and other evils that were prevalent during the period of the founding of our country. As we will read in a later lesson, some of our Founding Fathers were raised thinking slavery was acceptable, then later changed their minds and worked to abolish the evil practice. Others were against slavery their whole lives, and still others argued to keep slavery indefinitely.

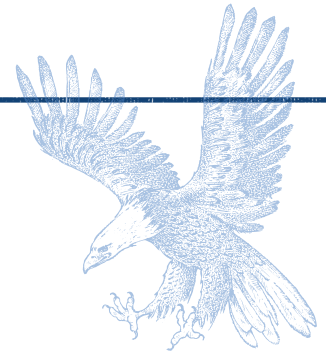
Likewise, the US Constitution is not perfect, and the implementation of the document after it was signed has not been perfect. It is an imperfect document created by imperfect people. But isn’t it inspiring that, because the Founders of the Nation sought God’s divine guidance, the US Constitution has become one of the most important documents in history—one that has brought liberty to so many people in our own nation and around the world?

As you can see from today’s activities, there are many questions we have to think about while seeking truth. However, it is important that we take the time to learn and sharpen our truth-seeking skills so that we can make wise decisions about what sources we allow to inform our opinions. Developing these skills in our own lives will help us to live lives full of justice, mercy, and truth.

☆ Have a student read aloud the quote by Thomas Jefferson at the bottom of page 1 of the student journal. Then ask the following questions:

Why is it important for you to be “bold in the pursuit of knowledge” in today’s world? [Pause and allow for discussion.]

What are some examples of how you can be bold in the pursuit of knowledge? [Pause and allow for discussion.]



ITEMS NEEDED:

- A nickel for each student
- If possible, a two-dollar bill (can sometimes be acquired from a bank)

LESSON 4:

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Preparation: none

★ Read to the students:

During our last lesson, we read from *Mystery on Constitution Island*. The Bailey family had just boarded their boat, *Liberty*, and were headed to the island. They had with them a collection of items from Great-grandpa Bailey's box. Do you remember what items were in the box? [A leather journal, a map, a key, a note with a riddle, a nickel, and a two-dollar bill]

Remember, Dad had just asked Roger to read a biography of Thomas Jefferson, written by Great-grandpa Bailey in his leather journal. Let's listen to it now.

★ Listen to the biography of Thomas Jefferson, which can be found at goodandbeautiful.com/usconstitution. Students may color page 5 of the bullet journal while listening, if desired.

★ Have each student open to page 5 in the *US Constitution Bullet Journal* if it hasn't been opened already.



JOURNAL TIME

Read to the students:

This is Thomas Jefferson. Write **Thomas Jefferson** in the banner at his feet.

Complete the following eight facts about Thomas Jefferson on your page as I read them.

- Born **April 13, 1743**

- **Scholar, lawyer, and violinist**
- **Wrote the Declaration of Independence**
- **Served as Governor of Virginia during the American Revolutionary War**
- **Served as 1st Secretary of State under President George Washington**
- **Served as 2nd Vice President of the United States with President John Adams**
- **Served as 3rd President of the United States from 1801 to 1809**
- **Completed the Louisiana Purchase in 1803**

Read the words in the box titled "Values." These are all things that Thomas Jefferson highly valued. Circle one thing he valued that you also value. If you are willing to commit to standing up for that value should the need ever arise, fill in the blank in the medallion to the right.

★ Give each student a nickel (and display a two-dollar bill, if possible, or show the picture on the following page). Read to the students:

When you look at this, do you feel something more about the man memorialized here than you did before? From now on, anytime you hold a two-dollar bill or spend a nickel, I urge you to remember what great things Thomas Jefferson did to make our country what it is today, the sacrifices he made, and the high values he upheld.

★ Have each student turn to page 16 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. Read to the students:

This is the Declaration of Independence. Color in the words "**Declaration of Independence**" in the banner at the top.

Relate:

How does this relate to the Articles of Confederation? Amendments—or changes—to the Articles of Confederation had to be approved unanimously (by all 13 states), making it nearly impossible to get anything approved.



Fold



Relate:

How does this relate to the Articles of Confederation? Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government had no power or authority to settle disputes between states. There was also no executive branch of the government—the branch that executes (enforces) the laws.



Read:

Imagine you are with a group of 13 friends, and you're all trying to decide what you want to do—go swimming, go for a hike, or go watch an outdoor movie at the park. You decide to cast votes on little pieces of paper, but the rule is that you all have to choose the same option or else you don't get to do anything at all.

Ask the question:

Why would this scenario be a problem?

Read:

Imagine you were hired to babysit two young boys. When you get to the boys' home, the parents of the boys tell you that you are not allowed to settle disputes between the boys. They also tell you the rules of the house that the boys must follow, but explain that you are not allowed to enforce those rules.

Ask the question:

Why would this scenario be a problem?



The delegates gathered for over four months, from May to September. In their discussions they realized they could not just revise the Articles of Confederation; they needed an entirely new constitution. As you would expect, this was no easy task. Naturally, there were many disagreements and debates during the Constitutional Convention, and without compromises, our nation would have collapsed in its infancy.

Role-Play Activity

☆ If you are teaching two or more students and would like to role-play a debate at the Constitutional Convention, continue below. If you are teaching one student or would rather not role-play, skip ahead to the instructions in the gray box.

☆ Read to the students:

We are going to role-play one very important debate that took place during the Constitutional Convention. It is now known as The Great Compromise.

☆ Hang up the “The Great Compromise” sign that you cut out. Assign one student (or ask for a volunteer) to role-play George Washington. Give him or her the tricorne hat to wear. Assign two others to be James Madison and William Paterson and have them wear the corresponding name tags. If you only have two students, you will role-play one of the delegates. Give each role-player a copy of the “Virginia Plan vs. New Jersey Plan Debate” script and have them perform the debate.

If you are teaching only one student or choose to skip the role-playing activity, go to goodandbeautiful.com/usconstitution to watch the role-play performed by students taking this course.

☆ Read and discuss the following review questions:

The delegates of the Constitutional Convention debated for months in Independence Hall in

Philadelphia, poring over the details of how to form the government. While the delegates agreed unanimously on many decisions, others were very challenging to work out. Compromises had to be made on several occasions. Benjamin Franklin said, “When a broad table is to be made, and the edges of the planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint. In like manner, here, both sides must part from some of their demands, in order that they may join in some accommodating proposition.”

What is compromise, and what is an example of a time you have compromised? [Discuss.]

☆ Have each student turn to page 2 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. Read to the students:

Where it says **May 1787** on the timeline, write **Constitutional Convention**.

Where it says **1789–1797** on the timeline, write **George Washington 1st President**.

☆ Have each student turn to page 6 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. Read to the students:

In the box with a heart, write two reasons you are thankful to George Washington. You may write them as bullet points or in the form of a thank-you letter to George Washington.

☆ Give each student a quarter and display a one-dollar bill. Read to the students:

When you see the face of George Washington on our currency, remember the humble lesson taught by this mighty man—that being an honest person is the best title of all, above power, prestige, and admiration. Let us be honest in our dealings with one another. Let us have courage and stand up for what is right. And let us work hard doing good things, as he did. We should never forget the price that was paid by so many, earning the freedoms we enjoy in the great United States of America.

HELLO
MY NAME IS

James Madison

Delegate of Virginia

HELLO
MY NAME IS

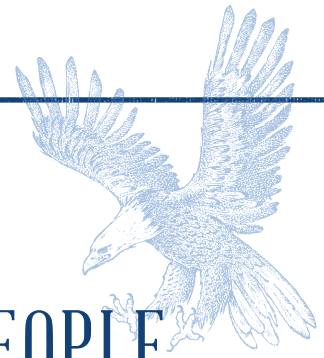
William Paterson

Delegate of New Jersey

The Great
COMPROMISE



"Washington at Constitutional Convention of 1787" by Junius Brutus Stearns (1810–1885), c. 1856



ITEMS NEEDED:

Color photocopy machine
and laminator with
lamination supplies (optional)

LESSON 10:

OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Preparation: Remove pages 45–46. Cut the strips along the dashed lines. Tape the paper strips to the underside of the students' chairs or other places around the classroom.

Constitution. Allow and encourage discussion on how the students feel about reading and learning the Constitution, even if they express disinterest or lack of confidence. Be encouraging.

- ★ Have each student open to page 69 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*.

- ★ Read and discuss the review questions:

In our last lesson, we learned about James Madison, the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, and *The Federalist Papers*.

1. Who wrote *The Federalist Papers*, and what was their purpose? [Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote them to help convince people to ratify the Constitution.]
2. Which group, Federalists or Anti-Federalists, supported the Constitution and wanted it ratified? [The Federalists]
3. Which group did not support the Constitution or want it ratified? [The Anti-Federalists]

- ★ Read to the students:

In *Mystery on Constitution Island*, the family just listened to the biography by Great-grandpa Bailey about James Madison, which they found in a metal box at Hope Harbor.

We're going to listen to the next chapter today.

- ★ Read aloud or listen to Chapter 5 of *Mystery on Constitution Island*. Students may color page 60 of the bullet journal while listening, if desired.
- ★ Ask the students to summarize Chapter 5 of *Mystery on Constitution Island*, including both the story plot and some reasons Dad taught them they should read and learn the



JOURNAL TIME

Read, or ask a student to read, the instructions at the top of page 69 of the bullet journal. Take turns reading each quote and discussing its meaning. Then have the students create a bookmark as instructed. Instruct the students that they have 10 minutes to create the bookmark. After 10 minutes, allow each student who would like to share his or her bookmark.

Optional: Make a color photocopy of each student's bookmark, laminate it, and give it to the student to use.

Preamble Activity

- ★ Have students find the hidden strips of paper. Once all eight have been collected, have the students take turns reading them in order. After each phrase is read, ask the students what they think the phrase means, and then read the correlating point below. Allow discussion before moving on to the next paper strip.

1. **We the People of the United States:** The first three words of the Constitution are not only the most famous but also the most important.

The page features a decorative border on the left and right sides, consisting of a dark blue background with a vertical line of white stars. This is flanked by two vertical red stripes. The main body of the page is a light beige, textured paper.

We the People of the United States,

in Order to form a more perfect Union,

establish Justice,

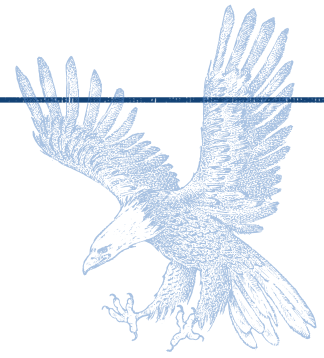
insure domestic Tranquility,

provide for the common defense,

promote the general Welfare,

and secure the Blessings of Liberty to
ourselves and our Posterity,

do ordain and establish this
Constitution for the United States of America.



ITEMS NEEDED:

Small treats or prizes for students who answer review questions (optional)

LESSON 11:

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Preparation: Cut out the “Articles of the Constitution Memory Game” cards on pages 49–52. Shuffle the cards.

- ★ Follow up with the students on whether any have worked toward memorizing the Preamble. Recite the Preamble together. Students have a copy on page 60 of the *US Constitution Bullet Journal*.
- ★ Ask the following review questions. **Optional:** Give a treat or prize to each student who answers a question, right or wrong.

In the United States, it is the *people* who hold the ultimate power. Why is this significant? [Pause and allow for discussion.]

The Constitution established a “more perfect union” of the United States in place of the weak “loose league of friendship.” What was the previous system called? [The Articles of Confederation]

What was the first, or most important, purpose of the Constitution? [To establish a strong union among the states]

Another goal of the Constitution was to create a unified legal system for the whole nation. Why was this important? [Under the Articles of Confederation, it was difficult to settle disputes between states.]

What does “provide for the common defense” mean in the Preamble? [The National Government would provide protection for the entire nation instead of each state having to provide its own militias and defense.]

- ★ Read to the students:

During our last lesson, we read from *Mystery on Constitution Island*, and the family talked about a

mnemonic device they used to remember north, east, south, west. Do you remember what it was? [Never eat soggy waffles.] Do you use a mnemonic device to help you remember the cardinal directions? [Pause for answers.]

They also used a mnemonic device to remember what they needed to do in a survival situation. Do you remember what that was? [When you’re lost in solitude, shelter, water, fire, food.]

Mnemonic devices help our brains to not only learn and memorize something easily but also retain that memory long term.

We’re going to learn a mnemonic device today that will help you remember the seven articles of the Constitution.

- ★ Have each student open to page 22 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*.



JOURNAL TIME

Read to the students:

There are seven articles in the Constitution, and to help you remember them, you can use this mnemonic device: “Let everyone just sit and silently read.” The first letter of each word represents an article: Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, States, Amendment Process, Supremacy of the Constitution, and Ratification Process.

Have each student say the mnemonic device (“Let everyone just sit and silently read”) aloud. Then have the students trace the names of the articles in the color or colors of their choice.

Articles
OF THE Constitution
Memory Game

Articles
OF THE Constitution
Memory Game

Articles
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Memory Game

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Articles
OF THE Constitution
Memory Game



LESSON 14:

ARTICLE I, SECTION 7: HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW, PART 1

Preparation: Remove pages 63–70 and cut along the dashed lines. Assemble the mini book.

Also remove the 3D paper models from the back of the course book. Do not throw the models away because you will be using them in future lessons.

★ Have each student open to page 29 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*.



JOURNAL TIME

Read to the students:

We are going to read Article I, Section 7 today. Just as in the previous two lessons, we will read it aloud together, pausing at each star to answer the questions in the margins for the clause or clauses we just read. We will discuss any discussion questions, and then move on to read the next clause.

★ Ask the following review questions:

What is the mnemonic device we learned for the articles of the Constitution? [Let everyone just sit and silently read.]

What does the mnemonic device stand for? [Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, States, Amendment Process, Supremacy of the Constitution, Ratification Process]

What do you remember about John and Abigail Adams? [Pause and allow time for discussion. Have students refer to page 8 of their bullet journals if necessary.]

★ Have the students assemble the Capitol Building 3D Model and the White House 3D Model.

★ Read to the students:

We will be using these models for an activity later in this lesson, but first we're going to learn more about the United States Capitol Building.

★ Read the mini book titled *The US Capitol Building*.

★ Ask the following review questions:

How is the layout of the Capitol Building symbolic of the way the legislative branch works? [The two branches are separate (two wings) but must work together and compromise to pass legislation (central structure).]

What is your favorite piece of art from the mini book? [Pause for answers.]

★ When you have finished reading Article I, Section 7 and the students have colored the arrows on their flowcharts, complete the activity below. There will be another How a Bill Becomes a Law Activity in the next lesson.

How a Bill Becomes a Law Activity 1

★ Have the students gather in a circle around a table. Set the four “Bill” cards and the “Passed” and “Died” cards faceup on the table. Set the 3D models of the Capitol Building and the White House about a foot apart from each other. Have a student choose a “Bill” card and read the corresponding text for each card as it is chosen. Have the student or students place the card in front of either the Senate or the House of Representatives wing of the 3D Capitol Building, depending on which chamber presented the bill. Then, as you read, pause at each star and have the student or students move the card to the next place the bill should go—the House, the Senate, or the White House (the President). The answer



is in brackets. The students should refer to the flowchart whenever necessary. When they have moved the card to the correct place, read until you reach the next star and so on. At the end of each card, have the students place the card either in the “Passed” or “Died” pile.

The Homestead Act

In the 1850s, to encourage westward expansion, the House of Representatives presented the Homestead Act, which would give land to settlers. ☆ [Place the card in front of the House.] The bill passed in the House. ☆ [Senate] When the bill reached the Senate, the bill failed, and the two chambers could not agree on a compromise. ☆ [Place in the “Died” pile.] In 1860 the Senate presented the Homestead Act with some modifications. ☆ [Senate] The bill passed the Senate. ☆ [House] It went to the House and also passed. ☆ [White House] President James Buchanan, however, vetoed it. ☆ [Congress] In 1862 the House took up a new Homestead Act, now without the opposing Southern delegates who had left Congress after the secession of the South. The measure passed 107 to 16. ☆ [Senate] The same bill passed in the Senate 33 to 7. ☆ [White House] President Abraham Lincoln signed the act into law on May 20, 1862. ☆ [Place in the “Passed” pile.]

The Pure Food and Drug Act

After many years of unsanitary and unhealthy manufacturing conditions, the Pure Food and Drug Act was presented in the Senate in 1906. ☆ [Place the card in front of the Senate.] The purpose of the bill was to prevent “the manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs or medicines, and liquors.” The bill passed the Senate. ☆ [House] It passed out of committee (a small group of legislators in charge of specific issues) but with revisions. It then sat for three months before Representative James Mann of Illinois gave a convincing speech, after which the House approved the bill 240-17. ☆ [Place the card below the central part of the Capitol Building.] Because it was not the exact bill the Senate had passed, it went to a joint committee where legislators from both the House and Senate met together and made revisions. Both House and Senate passed the revised version. ☆ [White House] President Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill the next day. ☆ [Place the card in the “Passed” pile.]

The Immigration and Nationality Act

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 was a complex bill revising several laws relating to immigration and the nationality of immigrants. The bill was originally introduced by the Senate. ☆ [Place the card in front of the Senate.] After some revisions the bill passed in the Senate. Meanwhile, a companion bill (a bill with similar language) was introduced in the House. ☆ [House] After some revisions the bill passed the House. ☆ [Place the card below the central part of the Capitol Building.] A joint committee reconciled the differences between the two versions of the bill, and it passed both the House and Senate. ☆ [White House] President Harry S. Truman, however, vetoed it. ☆ [Congress] The House overrode the veto with a 278 to 113 vote in favor of the bill, and the Senate with a 57 to 26 vote in favor of the bill. ☆ [Place the card in the “Passed” pile.]

The Texas Seed Bill

In 1887 Texans were suffering from a long drought and ended up eating most of their seed corn, which left them with very little seed to plant the next crop. The Senate presented the Texas Seed Bill to provide \$10,000 to Texas farmers. ☆ [Place the card in front of the Senate.] The bill passed in the Senate. ☆ [House] The bill also passed in the House. ☆ [White House] President Grover Cleveland, however, felt that government was never meant to support the people and that charity should come voluntarily from the people, not from forced taxes. He vetoed the bill. ☆ [Congress] Back in Congress, neither the Senate nor the House got a 2/3 majority vote to override the veto. ☆ [Place the card in the “Died” pile.]

☆ Read and discuss the following:

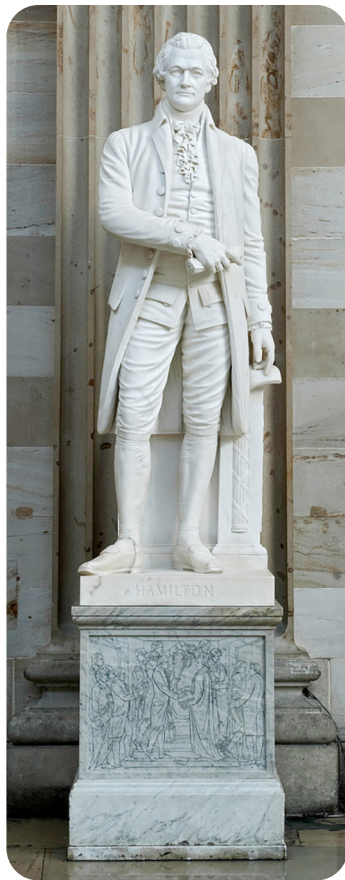
What is Article I, Section 7 of the US Constitution about? [How a bill becomes a law]

You may have heard the term “checks and balances.” This means that there are limits and controls placed on all the branches and chambers of Government so that one branch or chamber does not have too much power. What checks and balances are placed on the legislative branch in Article I, Section 7? [Neither the House nor Senate can write and pass laws without the approval of the other chamber and the President.]

The US CAPITOL BUILDING



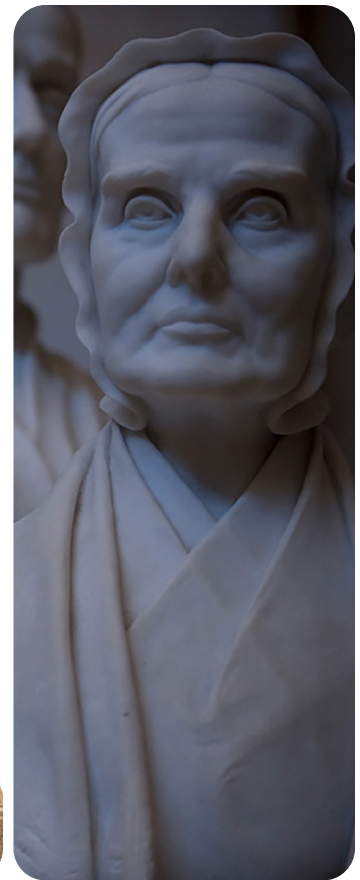
Once serving as the House Chamber, the National Statuary Hall now contains bronze and marble figures gifted by each of the states—two favorite citizens from each state, one from Washington, DC, and one as a gift from all states (Rosa Parks). Initially, Statuary Hall housed all the statues but, due to the addition of other statues and the overwhelming weight of them all, they are now scattered throughout the Capitol Building.



Alexander Hamilton

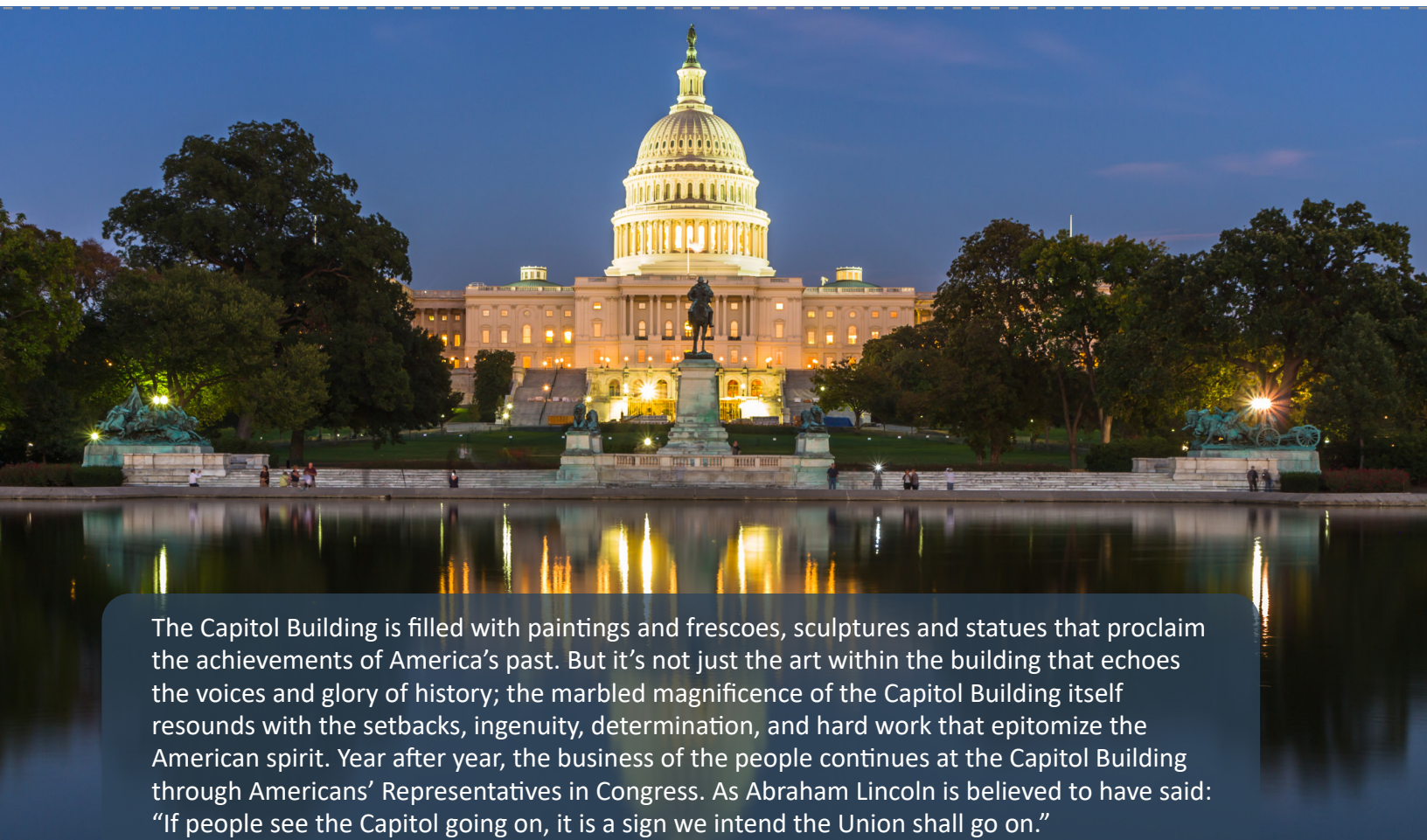


Frederick Douglass

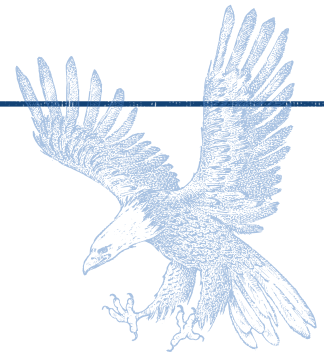


Susan B. Anthony

(ANSWER TO THE QUESTION ON PAGE 7:
THEY WERE ALL ASSASSINATED.)



The Capitol Building is filled with paintings and frescoes, sculptures and statues that proclaim the achievements of America's past. But it's not just the art within the building that echoes the voices and glory of history; the marbled magnificence of the Capitol Building itself resounds with the setbacks, ingenuity, determination, and hard work that epitomize the American spirit. Year after year, the business of the people continues at the Capitol Building through Americans' Representatives in Congress. As Abraham Lincoln is believed to have said: "If people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on."



ITEMS NEEDED:

White House 3D Model

LESSON 18:

ARTICLE II,
SECTION 1

Preparation: Remove pages 89–94 and cut along the dashed lines. Assemble the mini book.



JOURNAL TIME

☆ Read to the students:

During our last lesson, we read from *Mystery on Constitution Island*. In the story, where are Dad, Martha, and James? [In a cave]

Why didn't they make it back to camp by nightfall?
[Because Dad's ankle is injured]

What did Benjamin and Roger see from the tree?
[Smoke]

Could it have been from Dad, Martha, and James?
Why or why not? [No, because they were unable to start a fire]

What, where, or who do you think the smoke was coming from? [Accept any answer.]

What did Mom, Roger, and Benjamin decide to do when the rest of the family still didn't show up the next day? [They decided to go looking for the source of the smoke.]

Where did Martha and James find the next clue? [In a tin box wedged into the rock cliff]

What did they find inside the tin box? [A pocket watch and a biography on Benjamin Banneker]

Let's listen to the biography now.

☆ Listen to the biography of Benjamin Banneker. Students may color page 10 of the bullet journal while listening, if desired.

☆ Have each student open to page 10 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal* if it hasn't been opened already.

Read to the students:

This is Benjamin Banneker. Write **Benjamin Banneker** in the banner at his feet.

Complete the following six facts about Benjamin Banneker on your page as I read them.

- **Born November 9, 1731**
- **One of very few free African Americans at the time**
- **Received very little or no formal education**
- **Became a self-taught mathematician, astronomer, and natural historian**
- **The first African American to author an almanac**
- **Served on the team appointed by George Washington to design the Federal Capital City, Washington, DC**

At the bottom of the page is a quote by Benjamin Banneker. Follow along with me as I read it. "The colour of the skin is in no way connected with strength of the mind or intellectual powers."

[Read the following questions, pausing between each one and allowing for discussion.] What do you think the quote means?

How do you think it applied to Benjamin Banneker?

How does it apply to you?

On the remaining lines of the box at the bottom of the page, write down what the quote means to you.

The White House is much more than just the State Floor. In the Executive Residence, or the central building, the First Family lives on the second and third floors. The most famous room on the second floor is called the Lincoln Bedroom. President Abraham Lincoln never slept there, but he did use it for his office, and many of the current furnishings, including the ornate bed, were used or purchased by Lincoln. It was in this room that he first read the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet and then signed it on January 1, 1863. One of five signed copies of the Gettysburg Address is kept on display in this room that is used as a guest bedroom today.

Lincoln Bedroom



9

"The White House has been pulled apart, rearranged, gutted by fire and renovation, reassembled; yet it is always the same. Its idea has become its essence."

-William Seale, White House historian



Like the Capitol Building, the White House has been built, destroyed, and rebuilt, and thereafter constantly renovated and improved. The White House that stands today is a testament to the rich history of our nation and also to the hard work and determination of the American spirit. The "House for ages to come" that has seen weddings, funerals, babies born, wars, and families come and go is a symbol for the story of a young nation working through her own troubles and successes—a story that is still being written.

11



☆ Read to the students:

What is the mnemonic device we learned for the articles of the Constitution? [Let everyone just sit and silently read.]

What are the topics of the seven articles in order? [Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, States, Amendment Process, Supremacy of the Constitution, Ratification Process]

We have read the first and second articles of the Constitution, which were about the legislative and executive branches. Which branch comes next in the Constitution? [The judicial branch]

☆ Have each student open to page 40 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*.

Read to the students:

We are going to read Article III, Sections 1–3 of the Constitution, pausing at each star, as in previous lessons, to answer the questions.

☆ Have the students assemble the Supreme Court 3D Model.

We will be using this model for an activity later in this lesson, but first we're going to learn more about the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Supreme Court is the highest court and the apex of the judiciary. It is tasked with deciding whether laws violate the Constitution. The decisions made by the Supreme Court are supreme law, meaning they cannot be overridden by any other court.

What is the Supreme Court tasked with deciding? [Whether laws violate the Constitution]

☆ Read the mini book titled *Supreme Court of the United States*.

☆ Ask the following discussion question. If needed, have the students look up the word “vigilance.” Show the picture on the back of this page after you ask the question. Encourage discussion.

Remember, there are two statues in front of the US Supreme Court building, a female and a male. Below the male figure is the inscription, “Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty.” What does it mean?

☆ Remove the infographic (page 107) from this lesson. Set it on a table or the floor where students can gather around and read it. Set the Supreme Court 3D Model on the edge of the page where indicated. Have the students take turns reading through the information in order.

☆ Ask the following review questions:

What is the highest court in the United States? [The US Supreme Court]

Where is the US Supreme Court located? [Washington, DC]

Under what circumstances can a case go to the US Supreme Court from state courts? [If a case deals with Federal laws]

The majority of Supreme Court cases come from where? [On appeal from the Federal court system]

How many Justices serve on the Supreme Court? [Nine]

How long does a Justice serve in the US Supreme Court? [For life as long as they have “good behavior,” unless they retire]

Who nominates a Supreme Court Justice, and who must confirm the nominee? [The President nominates a Justice, and the Senate must confirm him or her.]

The Supreme Court is the apex of which branch of the Federal Government? [The judicial branch]

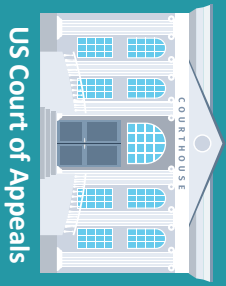
Which article of the US Constitution outlines the jurisdiction of the US Supreme Court? [Article III]



SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES



Taft did not live to see the Supreme Court Building because he died two years before construction began. President Herbert Hoover and the new Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes laid the cornerstone on October 13, 1932, and as they did so, Chief Justice Hughes said, "The Republic endures and this is the symbol of its faith."



US Court of Appeals

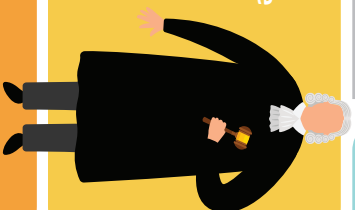


Place (but do not glue) the completed Supreme Court 3D Model here with the steps facing this way.



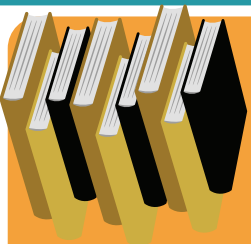
Supreme Court Justices

- There are nine Supreme Court Justices—a Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices.
- Justices are appointed for life as long as they have “good behavior.”
- Openings on the Supreme Court occur when a Justice dies or retires.
- When an opening needs to be filled, the President nominates a candidate. The Senate must confirm the nominee.



Number of Cases Each Year

- The Supreme Court receives 7,000–8,000 requests for review every year.
- The Court only hears oral arguments from about 1% (about 80) of cases a year.
- Only one or two of the cases each year are under original jurisdiction (the rest are under appellate jurisdiction, meaning they come to the Court through the appeals process).



What Happens When a Case is Selected?

Justices review written arguments and hear oral arguments.

In private, the Justices discuss the case and vote. Whichever side has the most votes writes the majority opinion.

After the Justices finalize their opinions, the Court “hands down” its decision, releasing both majority and dissenting opinions to the public.

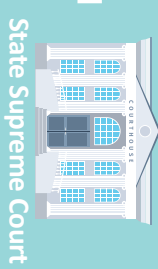
Fun Fact: Each side has only 30 minutes to present its case!



Fun Fact: The Justices in the minority get to write a dissenting opinion!



Fun Fact: It may take up to nine months to issue a decision!



State Supreme Court



State Court of Appeals



State Trial Court

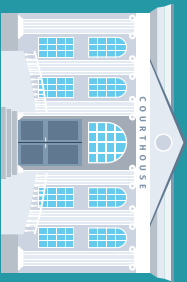
On appeal from a State court system (ONLY if a case deals with Federal law)

2 State Courts

There are 3 WAYS a case can reach the Supreme Court.

1 Original Jurisdiction

(cases not tried in any other court, such as a case between two states)



Federal Trial Court



On appeal from the Federal court system (the majority of Supreme Court cases originate in the Federal court system)

3 Federal Courts

INFLUENCES

on the Constitution



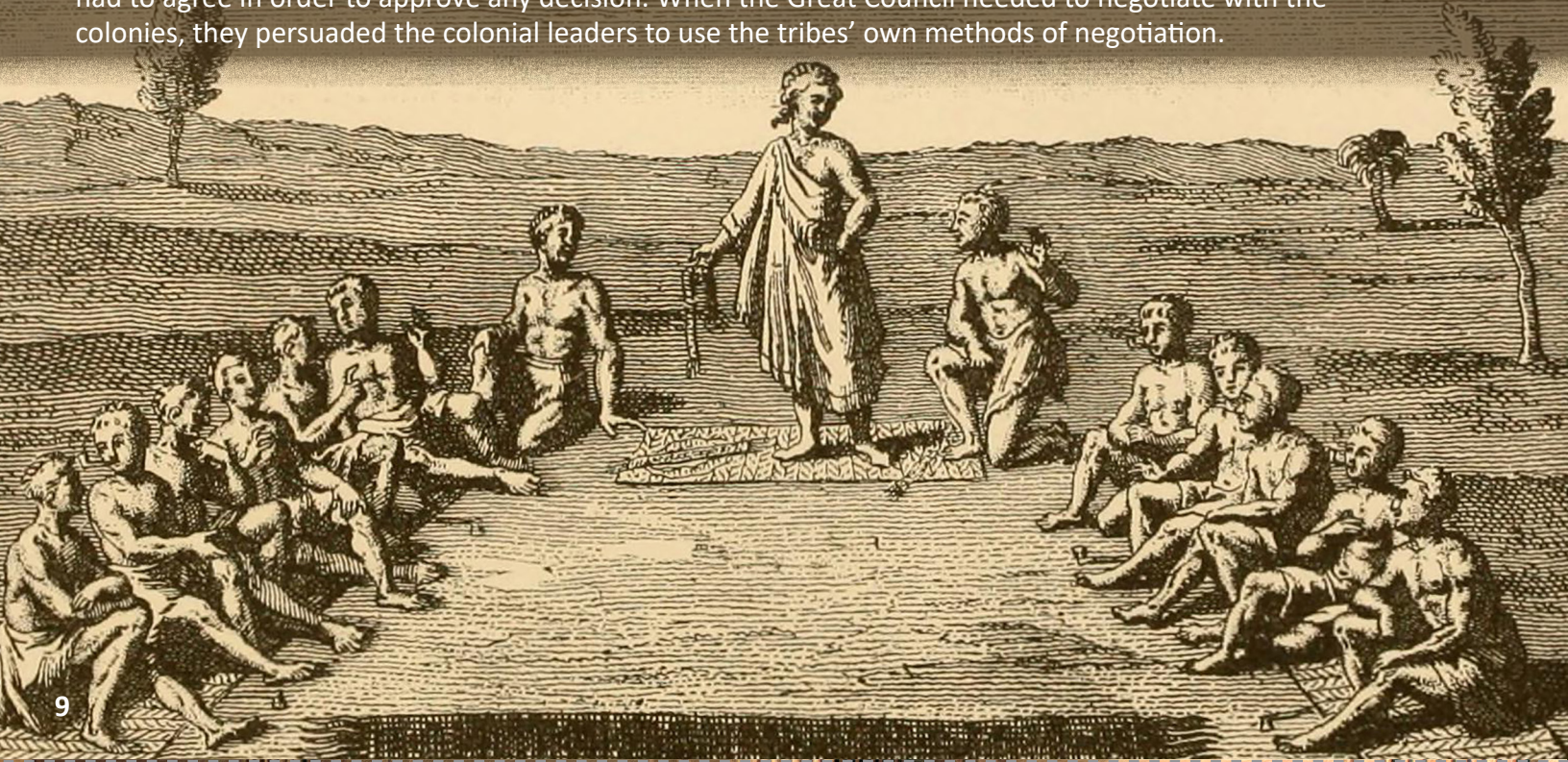
Historical Influences

The United States Constitution is a magnificent document bringing together the very best ideas from governments and political philosophers of times ancient and contemporary to the 18th century. When the Founding Fathers set out in 1789 to write a constitution for their new government, it was the first time a document like this had ever been written. All other constitutions in the past had formed organically out of the workings of the already-established government, in which the leaders codified in writing the way the government already functioned in practice. In the new United States of America, the constitution would be drafted first, giving the rules for how the government would then operate.

The Founders were educated men who studied classic texts (like *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*) and European political philosophers, and who possessed a deep knowledge and appreciation for the history and godly principles found in the Bible. They had learned about ancient Biblical civilizations, Greek city-states, Roman republics, and medieval British monarchies. All of these ideas helped inform the Founders on what makes a good government, and they hoped to craft a document that would unite all of the best ideas from the past.

Iroquois Confederacy

Did you know that a group of Native American tribes known as the Six Nations helped shape the United States Constitution? In the period before the Revolution, the Iroquois Confederacy, which is considered one of the oldest democracies in the world, encompassed six different tribes in upper New York that formed a loose government. The Six Nations had a common council called the Great Council. All tribes had to agree in order to approve any decision. When the Great Council needed to negotiate with the colonies, they persuaded the colonial leaders to use the tribes' own methods of negotiation.



9

The Holy Bible

Possibly the *greatest* influence on the drafting of our Constitution was Christianity and the Holy Bible. When you read the large volume of letters the Framers wrote during their lives, Biblical principles and scripture are woven all throughout, flowing as naturally from their pens as their own thoughts. However, the Constitution is a document meant for practical governing. So, while you will not find Bible verses sprinkled throughout the Constitution, or direct references to God, as in the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers included principles to preserve the liberty of the people—a concept that came directly from their Christian faith—into the very structure of the government. The whole idea of natural law, in which people have rights that have been given to them by their Creator, and the foundational belief that people are created equal by God, undergirds the entire Constitution. Benjamin Franklin later wrote that the delegates at the Constitutional Convention were “influenc’d, guided and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent & beneficent Ruler, in Whom all . . . live & move and have their Being.”



11



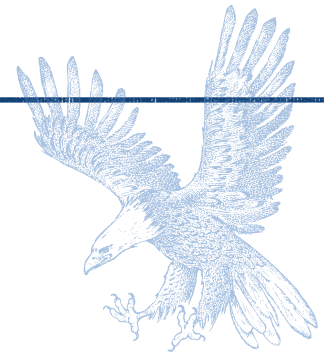
SCOREBOARD

Team 1 Name:

Team 2 Name:

Points:

Points:



ITEMS NEEDED:

- Manila envelope or file folder
- Scissors and glue for each student

LESSON 25:

FIRST AMENDMENT

Preparation: Remove pages 135–138 from the course book. Insert the “History Case File” pages into a manila envelope or file folder. Label the envelope or folder “History Case File” with a pen or marker.

Read “Instructions to the Teacher” on page 134.

★ Read to the students:

In this lesson we will begin studying the Bill of Rights by learning about the First Amendment.

Have each student open to page 77 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal* and cut out the first box next to the words “Lesson 25” along the dashed lines (but not the dotted line). Then have the students apply glue to the back side of the tab on the side of the box and paste it to the First Amendment box on page 44 of the bullet journal.

Have a student read the First Amendment aloud.

Have a student list the five freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment.

★ Ask the students the following review questions:

How many articles are in the Constitution? [Seven]

What are the topics of the seven articles in order?
[Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, States, Amendment Process, Supremacy of the Constitution, Ratification Process]

The first 10 amendments are collectively known as what? [The Bill of Rights]

Patrick Henry, George Mason, and others did not believe the Constitution should be ratified until it contained what? [A Bill of Rights]

The Bill of Rights was ratified on December 15, 1791, officially becoming part of the US Constitution.

★ Have each student open to the timeline on page 2 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. Review the events on page 2. Then prompt the students to write where indicated in red.

★ Read to the students:

Before we dive more into the First Amendment, we are going to seek truth about one subject in particular: freedom of religion.

History Case File Activity

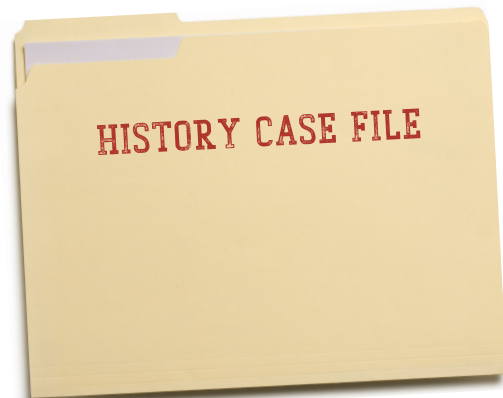
★ Have each student open to page 46 in his or her *US Constitution Bullet Journal*. Hold up the labeled envelope or folder with the History Case File. Remove the History Case File and have the students read through it together, taking turns and pausing at each numbered star to answer the questions in the bullet journal.



JOURNAL TIME

Where it says **December 15, 1791**, on the timeline, write **Bill of Rights ratified**.

How long after the ratification of the Constitution were the first 10 amendments officially added? [A little over three years]





HISTORY CASE FILE

DID THE FOUNDING FATHERS WANT NO RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE?
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE "SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE"?

THE CLAIM

The Constitution calls for a "separation of church and state," meaning that the government should not support or encourage religion in any way, nor should religion be allowed in any form in the public square or government. ★

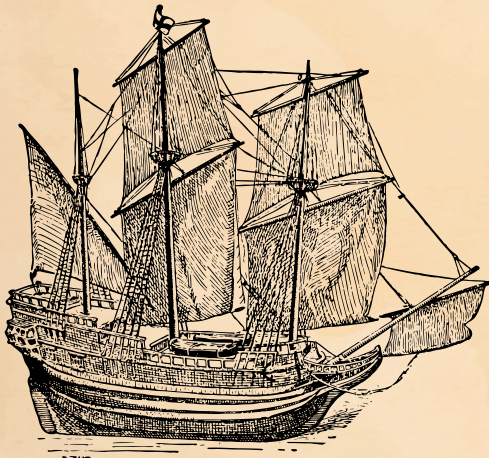
THE EVIDENCE

The Constitution itself does not include the phrase "separation of church and state." Rather, Thomas Jefferson penned a letter in 1802 that stated the First Amendment had built "a wall of separation between Church & State." The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." ★



PUTTING IT INTO CONTEXT

It is safe to say that the Constitution would not have been ratified in its current form, except that assurances were given that a Bill of Rights would promptly be added. The state delegates wanted to ensure that a Bill of Rights would provide protection to the people by restricting the powers of the Federal Government.



The colonies were made up of descendants of Christians who had come to America over the years seeking religious freedom. When it came time to form a national government, many states did not want any restrictions put on the ways they worshipped God, and the delegates to the Convention agreed. Not only did the different states have allegiance to varying denominations, but so did the Founders. They did not want an established State church like the Church of England, and neither did they want any particular denomination favored in the new union.

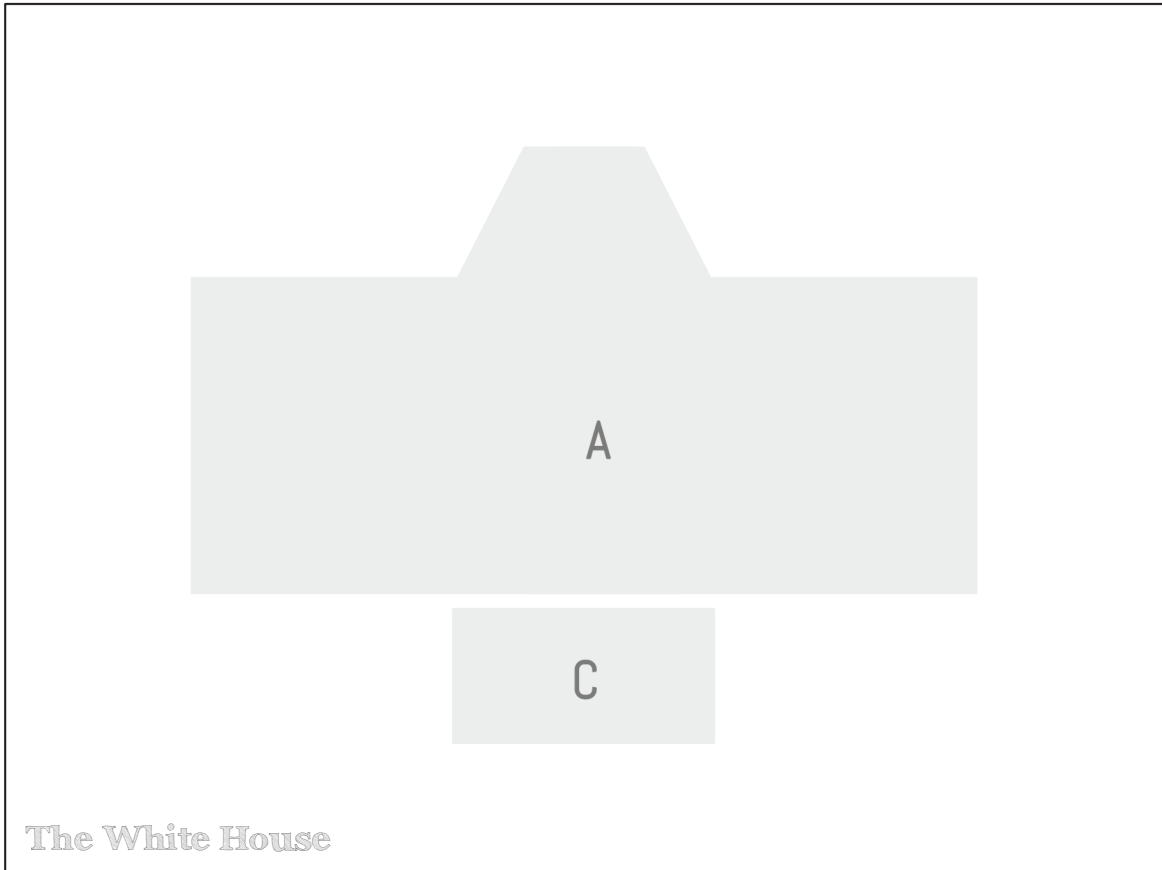
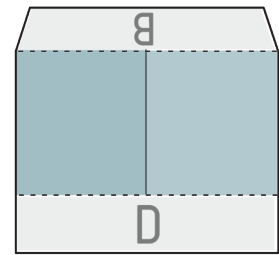
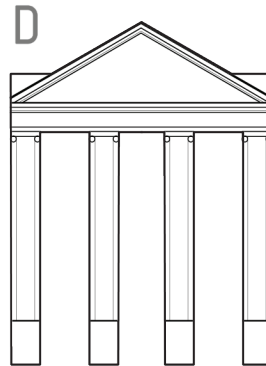
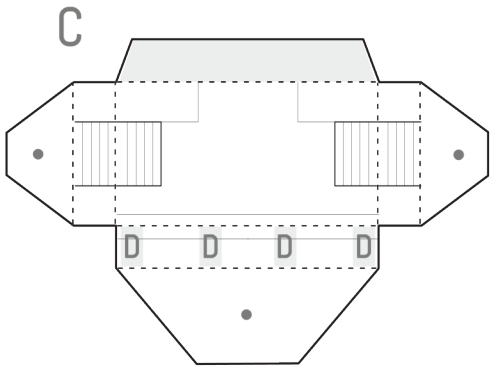
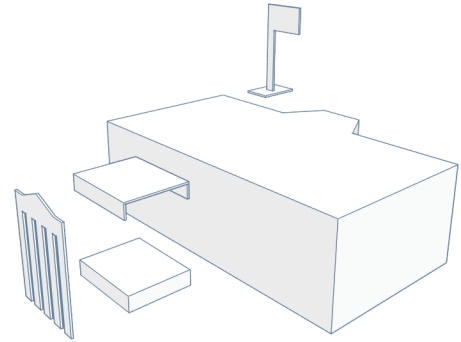
However, this did not mean that they did not want the general beliefs and principles of the Christian faith to be reflected in the government and encouraged in the populace.

George Washington, often called the "Father of His Country," declared that "while we are zealously performing the duties of good Citizens and soldiers we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion—To the distinguished Character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian." Rather than wanting religion ousted from politics, the Founders spoke as if they believed religion was a necessary part of self-government. ★

BUILD YOUR OWN White House

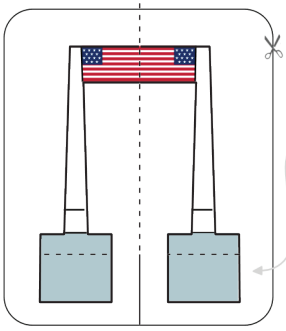
Building Instructions:

1. Carefully remove pieces from the punchout pages.
 2. Pre-bend all folds.
 3. Working from A to E, use white glue on glue tabs marked with a dot. (Letters indicate which part goes where.)
- Tip: Spread glue thinly, then pinch and hold until it sticks.

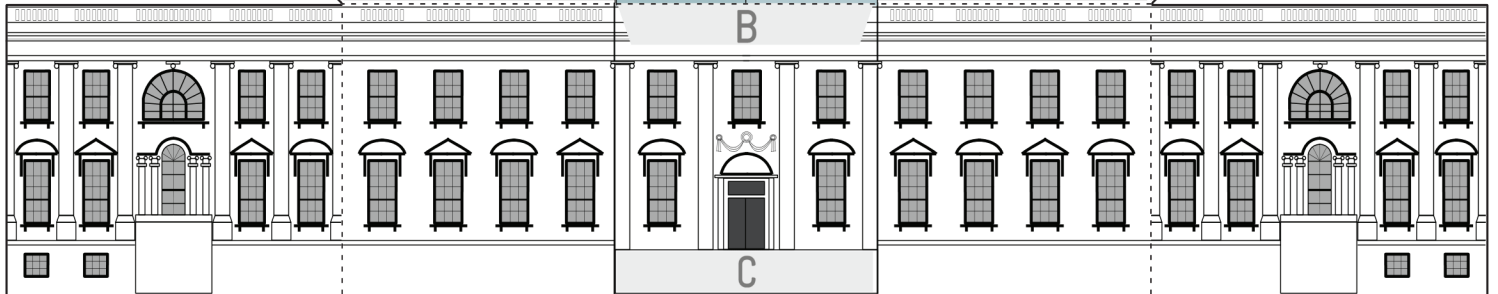
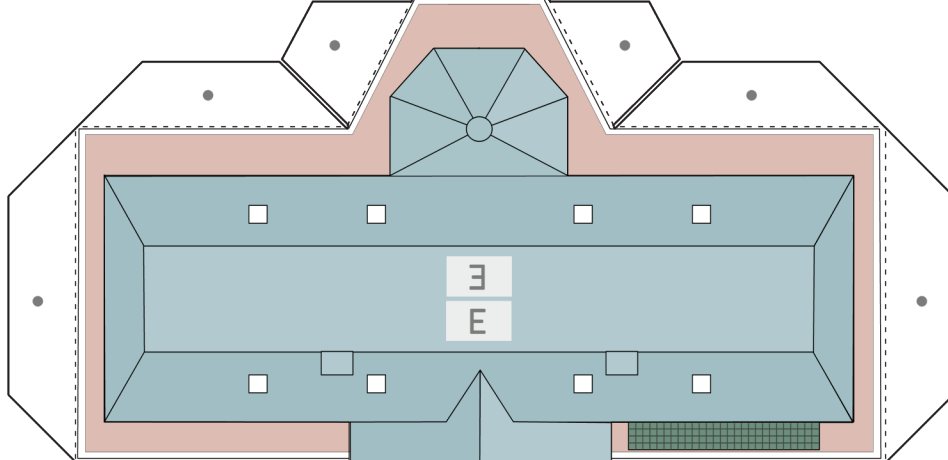
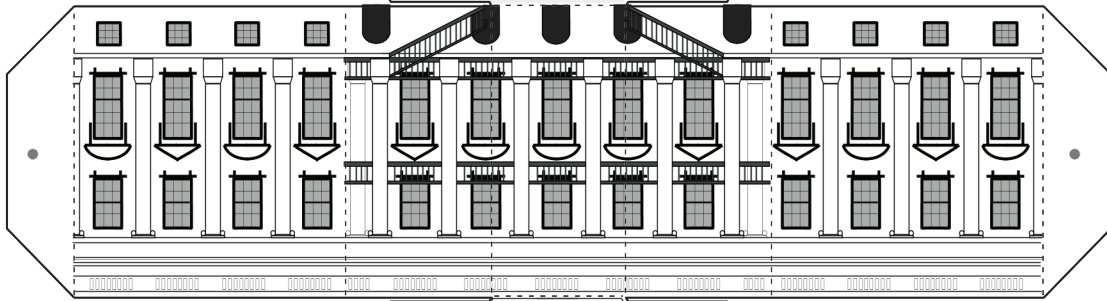
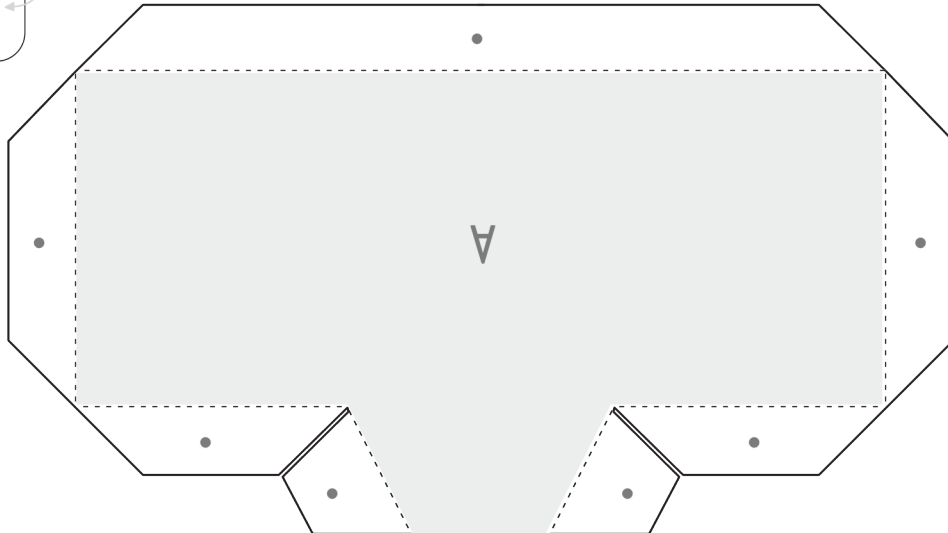


Flag Instructions:

1. Fold the flags at the vertical score line.
2. Glue the two halves together, but make sure the bottom flaps are not glued together.
3. Remove the folded flag with the bottom flaps.
4. Glue the flag on the roof of the White House.



E





MYSTERY ON CONSTITUTION ISLAND

Maggie Felsch & Jenny Phillips



For use with the US Constitution and Government course



MYSTERY
ON
CONSTITUTION
ISLAND

Written by
Maggie Felsch & Jenny Phillips

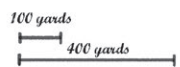
This book accompanies *The Good and the Beautiful*
US Constitution and Government course.

Cover illustration by Dan Burr
Cover design by Phillip Colhouer

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goodandbeautiful.com

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CHAPTER ONE

The Old Box

You could call it a tree house, but the Bailey family called it their loft. Though it was built in a large oak tree, it was also connected to their house through a wooden walkway that stretched from the upstairs deck of the home to the loft entrance. The roof and walls were strong and tight. In the loft is where the four Bailey kids loved to read, draw, and learn about fascinating things with their parents, from the wonders of the microscopic world to the historical timeline of the Holy Bible.

Huge windows on one side of the loft looked out upon the thick branches and fluttering leaves of the spacious oak tree. Twelve-year-old Martha loved the window seat near these windows. When it was breezy, like it often was at their home near the coast of Maine, she would open the window and listen to her favorite sound: the wind swirling the drifts of leaves with a gentle rushing sound like the ocean. She sat there now, absorbed with the book in her hands.

The wall of windows on the other side of the loft was James' favorite place. A porch swing hanging from the ceiling in front of the window was the perfect spot for the nine-year-old boy to cuddle up with a book or, as he was doing now, watch

the sea roll into the bay at the end of their backyard.

“Dad’s late,” James said aloud.

“Do you know why he’s late?” asked Benjamin, the youngest Bailey boy at five years old, who stood near the swing looking out at the bay. Benjamin stroked Daisy’s head. She was the family’s border collie, a loving and faithful friend.

Sixteen-year-old Roger, the oldest child, looked up from the worktable in the middle of the loft and said, “Dad will be home soon. The morning is still young. You’ll see.”

Mom had gone to help a neighbor and wouldn’t be home until lunchtime. So Martha, taking on the role of “temporary mom,” gave Benjamin a reassuring nod and smile and then continued reading.

Their father caught and sold crabs from the sea on his boat, the *Liberty*. Crabbing was at times, they all knew, a dangerous occupation, so the family was always grateful when Dad returned safely from the sea.

About forty-five minutes later, the loft door flew open, and Dad stepped in carrying an old metal box and a small bowl of strawberries. He had a mysterious smile on his face as he set the box carefully down on the worktable.

“Hi, Dad!” said Martha, happy to see that he’d made it home. “What is that?”

“You won’t believe this!” he said, setting the bowl next to the box before sitting down in his chair. “After work I stopped by my brother’s house to help him move a few heavy boxes into his attic. Whew! It was hot up there! As I was about to hurry down the ladder, I noticed this tin box. It was all covered in dust, but it stood out to me! Well, you know Uncle Harry. He’d inherited it after Grandpa Bailey died, but he’d forgotten about it. He said to me, ‘I’m sure glad you found that. Grandpa wanted it to go to his great-grandchildren. Since I don’t have

any children and you do, why don't you take it back to your kids?' So I did!"

The Bailey children all hurried to gather around their father to see the unique old metal box.

"What's in it?" asked wide-eyed little Benjamin.

"Didn't he love to read and write?" asked Martha. "Maybe he wrote us some poetry or left us some of his favorite books. Hopefully he didn't leave us his favorite snack—smoked oysters!" she added with a laugh.

"I'm sure it's something more important than oysters," said James.

"Great-grandpa Bailey loved history," Roger theorized. "If he wanted us to have this box, then maybe it's something like a family time capsule with pictures and stuff."

"He loved pirate stories, too, so I bet it's gold!" said Benjamin. "And maybe even jewels. I've always wanted a ruby. If there's a ruby in it, Dad, may I please have it?"

Dad shook the box. It didn't make a lot of noise. "It doesn't sound like gold or rubies inside. Sorry, Benjamin. Look at this lock, though. It's sealed tight, and there's no key. I suppose we'll have to pry it open."

"I'll go get a crowbar!" said James excitedly. "I've always wanted to break something open with a crowbar!"

"Hold on!" said Dad. "Let's do our history lesson first."

"Oh, Dad, do we have to?" asked Benjamin. "This is the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me."

"Suspense is good for you," said Dad with a laugh. "But we'll keep the lesson short today. Everyone gather around."

The four children sat while Dad took Great-grandpa Bailey's box over to his desk in the corner, and then took something out of a drawer. It was a piece of yellowed, antique-looking paper, burnt around the edges.

“Okay,” Dad said, returning to the table with the paper. “I want you all to imagine you’re Pilgrims on the *Mayflower*. You used to live in England where the British government passed a law called the Act of Uniformity, which made it illegal not to attend the official Church of England services.”

Martha raised her hand. “What if you wanted to attend a different church?”

“Well,” said Dad, “you would have been fined. The fines got more and more expensive, and if you didn’t pay up, you could lose your home and land.”

“That isn’t fair!” piped up Benjamin. “The government can’t tell people what church to go to.”

“That’s true for you, Benjamin, but that’s not how it used to be in England. The Pilgrim Separatists began meeting secretly in the village of Scrooby, England. They were so persecuted that they fled to Holland. But life was not good for them there, either, and they were worried that their children were becoming too worldly and not following their faith. So they came to the New World on the *Mayflower*, and once they arrived, something significant happened right before they got off the ship.”

“What?” asked little Benjamin, all excited now.

Dad pulled a pen from his shirt pocket and handed it to Roger. “I want you to sign this paper, Roger. We are pretending it is the Mayflower Compact.”

“What’s a compact?” asked James.

“It’s an agreement,” his father explained. “The Mayflower Compact was written and signed by the Pilgrims when they arrived in New Plymouth in 1620. There was something unique about this agreement. Throughout the history of England, the people didn’t have much say in their government. The Mayflower Compact changed that for the Pilgrims. Now they

had a say in how things were governed. In fact, the Mayflower Compact is regarded as a key document in American history because it shows the determination of a group of people to live under a law based on the consent of the people—a people setting up their own rules for their government. It was the first of many similar compacts, or agreements, to be made by colonists who would come to the New World. The compact was signed by forty-one adult male passengers before they disembarked from the ship, becoming the first example of written laws in the New World.”

“Eventually, there were thirteen colonies,” said Martha. “What colony did the Pilgrims live in?”

Dad pointed to a map of the colonies on the wall. “The colony they lived in eventually became known as Massachusetts.”

“That’s not far from Maine!” James said excitedly.

“Right! They landed not too far from here,” Dad answered. “Now, let’s fast forward to the mid-1700s, a hundred years or so after the Pilgrims landed in the New World. Roger, you have been reading a wonderful book on the US government, so I’m going to have you help me teach. What were the thirteen British colonies, and how were they politically connected?”

Roger rattled off the names of the colonies: “Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.” Then, feeling encouraged by the attentive eyes of his brothers and sister, who looked impressed, Roger continued, “In the middle of the 1700s, the American colonists were British subjects. That means they were under the rule of Britain’s king, King George III. They were also ruled by the Magna Carta, which was a document signed in 1215—some five hundred years earlier.

The Magna Carta said that nobody, including the king, was above the law, and the same rights the document gave to British citizens applied to colonists living in America. Even though they were under British rule, Great Britain was literally thousands of miles away from the American colonies, and each colony had established its own written laws. They had their own legislators—you know, the people who write the laws.”

“Excellent, Roger. Thank you,” Dad said. “Colonists in America handled their own affairs, colony by colony, for nearly 150 years. Merchants and shippers had to pay some taxes to Britain, but for the most part, each colony had formed its own government and written its own laws. But things changed. In 1765, Britain was struggling financially, and King George needed money. Roger, do you know why?”

The children all turned their attention to Roger again.

“Yes, I think so,” said Roger. “England and France fought in the Seven Years’ War, which lasted seven years, just like the name says. Part of that included the long French and Indian War, which was fought in North America over who would get control of Canada and the Great Lakes region. Britain lost that war, and they ended up in deep debt because of it.”

“Thank you, Roger, that was perfect. Okay, kids! Let’s review,” said Dad. He picked up the basket of strawberries. “If you get the question right, you get a strawberry from Uncle Harry’s garden—if you can catch it,” he added with a wink. “All right, Benjamin, youngest first. Who ruled the colonists in the thirteen colonies?”

Benjamin beamed as he shouted, rather loudly, “Great Britain!”

“Correct!” Dad threw a strawberry to Benjamin, who caught it with both hands and quickly popped it into his mouth.

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