

LESSON PLAN:

CONSTITUTIONS

GRADES: 4th

SUBJECT: Social Studies

Curriculum Standards Met:

4.4.02 Describe the Constitution of the United States and the Tennessee State Constitution in principle and practice.

- b. Identify the purposes and explain the importance of the creation of Tennessee's colonial government, and the Tennessee Constitution.
- c. Explain the purposes of the United States Constitution as identified in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- d. Explain the system of checks and balances.
- e. Identify and explain the basic functions of the three branches of state government.

4.4.spi.1. identify the 3 branches of federal and state governments.

4.4.spi.4. using a chart showing checks and balances, explain how one branch of government can limit the power of others.

4.5.09 Recognize major events, people, and patterns in Tennessee.

- b. Identify the accomplishments of notable Tennessee individuals such as William Blount, and John Sevier.

4.5.spi.7. Determine why the United States Constitution was necessary (i.e., no single currency, no judicial branch, no enforcement of laws, small and large states having unequal representation).

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to identify why a constitution is created, discuss differences between the Tennessee State Constitution and the United States Constitution, and create a classroom or school constitution modeled after the state and federal constitutions.

1. After visiting Blount Mansion, have students discuss what they learned at Blount Mansion about William Blount's role in the United States and Tennessee State Constitutions. Why are state and federal Constitutions so important? (If they played the "Buckle Game" on site, remind them of the game—they should remember the importance of rules.) [10 minutes]
2. Have the class discuss what rules are important for the country and for the state. [10 minutes]
3. Have students create a classroom constitution based on the rules of the classroom. Break students into groups of 4 or 5 to decide the rules of the classroom. They should also decide who the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative powers should be. [30 minutes]
4. When students have completed the classroom constitution, have each group share their rules. Have groups raise their hands if they had similar rules. Write these rules down on the board. [15 minutes]
5. EVALUATION: When this is complete, have students write a journal entry about the importance of constitutions and Blount's role in the U.S. and state Constitutions. [10-15 minutes]

Resources:

- [Tennessee's original state constitution](#), available from Tennessee State Library and Archives
- [Tennessee Blue Book](#), containing the current state constitution



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