

## THE MAKING OF THE CONSTITUTION LESSON PLANS

**Introduction:** These lessons are based on the CALLA approach. See the end of the lessons for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach.

### Lesson Elements

**Prepare:** Engage students in the topic and identify objectives for the lesson. Find out what students already know about it and motivate them to learn more. Teach new vocabulary.

**Present:** Present new information. Explain the target learning strategy for the lesson. Model what the students are asked to do. Discuss connections to students' prior knowledge.

**Practice:** Give students an authentic, active task that they can do in a small group or in pairs. Remind students to use the target learning strategy.

**Self-Evaluate:** Question students so they will reflect on their own learning. Ask students to evaluate their own learning rather than wait for the teacher to assess them. Find out if using the learning strategy helped students' understanding.

**Expand:** Guide students on how to apply what they learned to their own lives. Point out other contexts where the learning strategy may help. Make connections between content and language or to the student's first language. When appropriate, request that parents contribute to learning.

The Making of the Constitution can be broken into three lesson themes:

- The People Who Made the Constitution
- The Culture of the Time
- Events Surrounding the Making of the Constitution

These lessons can be presented sequentially or individually.

## 2. The Culture of Early America

**Essential Question:** What is your higher priority: freedom or order?

**Strategy focus:** *Use What You Know*

**Materials:** Paper for students to write Know-Want to Know-Learn (K-W-L) chart or printed blank K-W-L chart for students to fill in.

### Prepare

Introduce the story: "We are reading a story today called 'The Making of the Constitution.' We will be looking at the story to learn all we can about the culture of the times. That means we want to answer the questions, 'How did the American people live in 1787? What did they care most about? How did they feel about being free from the control of the British?'"

Show the K-W-L chart below on the board or a shared screen. "Before we begin, I want you to tell me what you already know about early America. I'll give you an example on this K-W-L chart. Make a chart like this on your own paper. I will be asking you to fill it in as we go along today. I KNOW about the war between the colonies and Great Britain. I WANT to know how the new government worked after the war. So I write these things on the chart. How about freedom? What do you know about the way early Americans felt?" Elicit student comments on the concept of freedom. How did the early Americans define it? Suggest that they wanted power over their local governments, and they were afraid of a distant, central government because they had problems with it under British rule. Write these ideas on the K-W-L chart.

Introduce the topic of slavery. "We know the early American cared about freedom. We also know many of them owned slaves. What do we want to know about this?" Take questions from students and write them on the chart.

Continue with reference to the chart. "We've got some good ideas here. Another thing we know about the people who settled in America -- they were very independent. They came, in some cases, because they wanted to be able to practice their own religions. So maybe we can learn more about their values. What did they care about? What was MOST important to them? These are what we call *priorities*." Ask students to volunteer other things they know and want to know more about to add to the chart.

Write the strategy name on the board or screen: *Use What You Know*. Explain, "As we read the story today, we will *use what we know* to help us understand the new information we are learning. Since we know a little about early America, we can use that to build on. We will look for ways to connect what we already know to the new things we can learn from this story."

Be sure students know the words in this story (listed at the end of the lesson plan). Provide the list to them electronically or as printed material along with the blank K-W-L chart.

Lesson Plan - The Culture of Early America

K-W-L Chart:

<b>KNOW</b>	<b>WANT to Know</b>	<b>LEARNED</b>
<p>The US declared independence in 1776. They fought with the British til 1783.</p>	<p>Did the 13 states have a good government? Did people agree on how to govern? How did they come to agreement?</p>	
<p>Settlers in America were independent. Some were very religious.</p>	<p>What were the values of the early Americans? What rights did people want?</p>	
<p>[write other student ideas here] The current US system of government is democratic.</p>	<p>Possible questions: What is the structure of the early US government? Who really had power in early America? What role did women play?</p>	

## Present

Explain the task for the lesson. "As we read about the making of the Constitution, I want you to keep this essential question in mind: What is *your* highest priority: freedom or order? We will learn about how the early Americans answered this question, of course, but we can also apply the question to our own lives today.

"Remember, the settlers have just fought a war for their freedom. Do you think they want to lose that freedom?" Give students time to consider the question and give their answers. "I think some people wanted peace, but others were willing to keep fighting. Let's begin reading."

Read aloud or have students read aloud or silently to "Madison had come to Philadelphia with a plan to strengthen the power of a central government."

Refer to the K-W-L chart. "Let's see if we can answer any of our questions now. I am using the strategy use *what you know* to help me understand the new information. I knew the 13 states were independent of Britain. In the story, I read that they had a government based on the Article of Confederation. 'And in the Confederation Congress, each state had one vote. The states were all equal. In contrast, Madison wanted to give more populous states more power than less populous states.' This connects well to my knowledge about the 13 states. I know they liked being independent." Write this information under 'LEARNED' on the K-W-L chart.

"The story tells us 'They did not want another strong, central government that ruled them from a distance. Ending that system, they said, was why they had fought a war with Britain!'" Write a summary in the third column.

"Our third box on the chart asks about values. We read about protests. Part of the reason for the meeting in Philadelphia was the worry people in power had about the protests. They worried about disorder – ‘anarchy’ is another name for a lack of order. They needed peace and stability in their states in order for the economy to work and the government to operate successfully." Write notes on Shays’ rebellion in the K-W-L chart. Check to see that students are writing similar notes on their own charts.

<b>KNOW</b>	<b>WANT to Know</b>	<b>LEARNED</b>
The US declared independence in 1776. They fought with the British till 1783.	Did the 13 states have a good government? Did people agree on how to govern? How did they come to agreement?	They had Articles of Confederation. This let states operate as equals. They don't want a strong central government.
Settlers in America were independent. Some were very religious.	What were the values of the early Americans? What rights did people want?	There was a protest (Shays’ Rebellion) -- people in power were worried about disorder.
[write other student ideas here] The US system of government is democratic.	Possible questions: What is the structure of the early US government? Who really had power in early America?	

## Practice

### Practice Stage 1

Ask students to form groups of four. "In your groups, you will read the story together and look for the answers to our questions on the K-W-L chart. Choose one student to read aloud. Choose another student to ask the questions and lead discussion on the answers. Another student in the group will write the answers you agree on. The fourth student will report to the class on your group's answers. Please note that just because I wrote something in the chart, it doesn't mean that's the complete answer. You will find more answers as you read more of the story."

Have students begin reading at "James Madison was very intelligent" and end at "But the Connecticut Compromise, as it was called, raised another question."

Give students time to read and discuss the questions. Depending on the size of the class, ask each group's representative or a few group representatives to report on their answers. Write their answers on the K-W-L chart on the shared screen or board.

### Practice Stage 2

Ask students to continue reading at "At the time of the convention, about one in five people living in the U.S. was a slave" and end at "And, they said officials in every state must return escaped slaves to their owners — even if the slave escaped to a state that banned slavery." Instruct students to continue working in their groups, with this change in roles: "Now, shift everyone's role to the left one person. That is, the person sitting to the left of the reader for the first section will read now. The reader will now ask the questions, and so on."

Introduce the topic of this section. "This section will help us answer the questions about freedom and slavery. Read carefully and look for the information that will help you answer those questions. Remember to *use what you know* to connect with what you are learning."

Give students time to read and discuss. As before, ask student group representatives to report and write what they say on the shared K-W-L chart.

### **Practice Stage 3**

Have groups shift roles again. Instruct students to begin reading at "The Philadelphia Convention was reaching an end" and finish at the end of the story, "Their ability to find unity, he wrote, was 'little short of a miracle.'"

Introduce the topic of this section. "This section is about the government the delegates finally agreed on. Was it a democracy? Did it spell out the rights of the people? What rights did people want? What kind of leader did they want? You will also learn about the process of ratifying, or approving, the Constitution."

Give students time to read and discuss. As before, ask student group representatives to report and write what they say on the shared K-W-L chart.

### **Self-Evaluate**

While students are still in groups, ask them to come back to the essential question: What is *your* higher priority: freedom or order? "Think about the choices the delegates made. They want order in their states. To get that, did they give up some of their freedoms? Write your answer to the essential question at the bottom of your K-W-L chart to hand in at the end of class."

Give students time to discuss the essential question. Bring them back to attention and ask about their application of the focus strategy: "How did *using what you know* help you in reading the story today? Did you make connections to the new information? Will you remember what you read today about the making of the Constitution?" Ask students to write their answers on their papers to hand in.

### **Expand**

Suggest other times the students can use the focus strategy. "What other times can you apply the strategy of *use what you know*? I think this strategy works when you are reading about a controversial topic -- you have probably heard

something about the topic before. It also helps when you are reviewing for a test -- you can bring the things you are sure about to mind and then look for more details that will help you when you take the test. Try this strategy when you are working on homework for another class and let me know how it goes."

Collect the students' papers and congratulate them on working hard to learn about the Constitution.

### **Words in This Story**

**priority** - *n.* something that is more important than other things and that needs to be done or dealt with first

**anarchy** - *n.* a situation of confusion and wild behavior in which the people in a country, group or organization are not controlled by rules or laws

**democracy** - *n.* 1. a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting; 2. an organization or situation in which everyone is treated equally and has equal rights

**ratify** - *v.* to make a treaty or agreement official by signing it or voting for it

**monarchy** - *n.* a country that is ruled by a monarch (such as a king or queen)

**aristocracy** - *n.* the highest social class in some countries : the people who have special titles (such as *duke* and *duchess*), who typically own land, and who traditionally have more money and power than the other people in a society