

Calling a Constitutional Convention

Lesson Plan: K-3

Overview

During this lesson, students will travel back in time to 1787 to learn about the debates and challenges that the founding fathers faced as they attempted to build a government.

Suggested Time Needed

90 minutes

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, students will:

- Have a greater understanding of what the Constitutional Convention was and why it was important.
- Develop and demonstrate reading skills in response to text
- Apply effective speaking and listening skills in collaborative discussion
- Follow instructions, according to classroom expectations

Guiding Questions

- How was life different in America in 1787 than today?
- Why is the Constitution so important?
- How do people work together to solve their differences?

Missouri Grade Level and Course Level Expectations

- K-3.R.1.A – Develop and demonstrate reading skills in response to text and read alouds.
- K-3.SL.1.A – Develop and apply effective listening skills and strategies in formal and informal settings.
- K-3.SL.3.A – Speak clearly using conventions of language when presenting individually.
- K-3.PC.1.B - Explain the major purposes of the Constitution by identifying reasons for making rules and laws.



Materials Needed

- *If You Were a Kid at the Signing of the Constitution* by Janel Rodriguez (available from Scholastic Books or your public library)

Procedure:

1. Gather students together for a read aloud. Begin by asking what they notice about the cover of the book. What is going on in the cover illustration? What do their clothes tell us about when this happened? What do their eyes and mouths tell us about what they are doing? What are they holding? What might the fan tell us? What do you think is going to happen in this book?
2. For older students, highlight the differences between the parts of the story that are fiction and non-fiction. Compare the characters of Elisabeth and Archie to the kids on the first page. Explain that Elisabeth and Archie are fictional characters who are going to help tell the story of something that happened in history. The text boxes with the white colored backgrounds tell about real people, places, and events.
3. Read the story to the class. Ask basic comprehension questions while reading.
4. Hold a class discussion. Take notes on chart paper to record their answers. Remind students to listen to answers given by other students. Refer back to the cover of the book to reinforce expectations about active listening.
 - How was life different in 1787 than today? Transportation, clothing, food, other? Who was allowed to hold public office?
 - What was the Constitutional Convention? Who was there? When and where did it take place? Why did they have one?
 - Why is the Constitution so important?
 - What were some things they argued about? How did they resolve the argument?
5. Hold a Classroom Constitutional Convention! Help younger students solidify their learning with fun hands-on activities that turn Constitution Day into a celebration. Here are some ideas:
 - Enjoy a feast of cornbread and boiled apples (share the recipes below with a parent volunteer!)
 - [Make butter to enjoy with the cornbread](#) (or it also tastes great on saltines)
 - [Make tricorn hats](#) or folded fans



A: Recipes

Yankee Doodle Cornbread

This recipe makes one 8x8 pan. May need to double for a large class.

Ingredients:

- 1 c milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c butter, melted
- 1 large egg
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ c yellow cornmeal
- 1 c all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar
- 1 T baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt

1. Heat oven to 400. Grease bottom and side of pan.
2. Beat milk, butter and egg in large bowl with hand beater or wire whisk. Stir in remaining ingredients all at once just until flour is moistened (batter will be lumpy). Pour into a pan.
3. Bake 20 – 25 minutes or until golden brown and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Boiled Apples

Ingredients:

- 5 sweet apples (such as pink lady, gala, etc) peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 tart apple (such as granny smith) peeled, cored and chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar
- Generous pinch of cinnamon, nutmeg, or ground cloves
- 1 t lemon juice
- 2 T butter

1. Toss apples with the sugar, spice and lemon juice in the crock of a crock pot.
2. Top the apple mixture with pats of butter.
3. Cook the apples on HIGH for 3 hours, or LOW for 6 hours. Stir the mixture about half-way through cooking.