

CONSTITUTION TRUTH OR MYTH

Learning Objectives: The student will

1. Understand the American beliefs and principles reflected in the United States Constitution
2. Analyze how the United State Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights.
3. Determine whether a statement about the Constitution is truth or myth.

TEKS: 8.15D

Materials: Copies of the U. S. Constitution, text or supplemental

Vocabulary: Ratification, impeachment, majority, quorum, electoral college, judicial review

Teaching strategy:

1. The teacher will lead a class discussion about the structure of the Constitution. (Preamble, Article 1, Article 2, etc.)
2. After a direct teach of content, the students will play a game set up like Jeopardy.
3. Statements about the Constitution are created by the teacher. A playing board is created on the board. The first round of play will award scores of 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500. The categories for the first round will be the Articles of the Constitution.
4. Students are split into groups, and they may pick team names.
5. The only answers a student may give are TRUTH or MYTH. Points are awarded for correct responses. If the statement is a MYTH, the students can double the points by correcting the myth.
6. Statements can get more detailed or increase in difficulty as the point totals rise.
7. The categories for the second round may be based on the Principles of the Constitution.

Modifications for SpEd/ESOL: Give students a list of the questions to be asked. They study only the information from the Constitution that will be used for the game.

Extension for GT/Pre-AP: Organize statements by theme (i.e. restriction on powers, or the amendment process).

Sample Statements

1. The Congress is made up of the Senate and House of Representatives.
TRUTH
2. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years.
TRUTH
3. The number of Representatives for each state is not to exceed one for every 30,000 persons.
MYTH—changed by the Fourteenth Amendment, Section Two, which states the number of Representatives for each state is determined by population
4. The Senate has the power to try impeachments.
TRUTH
5. The President of the Senate is elected by majority vote of its membership.
MYTH—The Vice President serves as President of the Senate

Truth or Myth Statements

Article 1

- 100 A representative must be 25 years of age. (Truth)
- 200 The Senate and the House of Representatives make up the Congress. (Truth)
- 300 The term of office for a Senator is four years. (MYTH: **Six years**)
- 400 The House of Representatives has the sole power of impeachment. (Truth)
- 500 The House of Representatives is lead by the Vice President. (MYTH: **The Speaker of the House is the leader of the House of Representatives**)

Article 1

- 100 A Senator must be 30 years of age. (Truth)
- 200 The U.S. Senate currently has 100 members. (MYTH: **100 members**)
- 300 The Congress must assemble at least three times a year. (MYTH: **Once a year**)
- 400 A majority of each house constitutes a quorum. (Truth)
- 500 The number of Representatives for each state is not to exceed one for every 30,000 persons. (MYTH: **That was changed by the Fourteenth Amendment, Section Two, which states the number of Representatives for each state is determined by population**)

Article 2

- 100 The term of office for the president is six years. (MYTH: **Four years**)
- 200 The president is chosen by direct election of the people. (MYTH: **The president is chosen by the Electoral college**)
- 300 The president is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. (Truth)
- 400 The president appoints the Supreme Court justices. (Truth)
- 500 A candidate for president must have lived in the United States for fifteen years prior to running. (MYTH: **Fourteen**)

Article 3

- 100 The judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court and all the inferior courts. (Truth)
- 200 The power of judicial review was established in the *Marbury v. Madison* case. (Truth)
- 300 Supreme Court justices serve a 20 year term. (MYTH: **Justices serve for life, during good behavior**)
- 400 A conviction of treason can be made with only one witness. (MYTH: **Two witnesses**)
- 500 The chief executive presides over impeachment trials. (MYTH: **The Chief Justice presides**)

Article 4/5

- 100 A citizen of the U.S. only has rights in his or her state of residence. (MYTH: **All states**)
- 200 A person who commits a crime if caught in another state must be surrendered to the state in which he or she committed the crime. (Truth)
- 300 One-half of the vote of both houses of Congress is needed to propose an amendment to the Constitution. (MYTH: **Two-thirds**)
- 400 An amendment must be ratified by three-fourths approval of state legislatures. (Truth)
- 500 There are currently 30 amendments to the Constitution. (MYTH: **27**)

Article 6/7

- 100 The Constitution is considered the Supreme Law of the land. (Truth)
- 200 A religious test is only necessary for the office of the president. (MYTH: **A religious test is not required for any office**)
- 300 The ratification of the Constitution required seven states' approval. (MYTH: **It required the approval of nine states**)
- 400 The United States Constitution was ratified by a unanimous vote. (Truth)
- 500 African Americans, Native Americans, and women were not represented in the original Constitution. (Truth)