

OUR PUZZLING CONSTITUTION

Learning Objectives: The students will

1. Analyze the goals of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution
2. Examine the structure and function of the three branches of the federal government.
3. Review the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment.

TEKS/TAKS: 8.19B; 8.25C; 8.15D; Govt.7D; govt.13C; Govt.16B

Materials Needed: Poster board or butcher paper; magazines, glue, scissors

Teaching Strategy:

1. Divide the class into the groups described below as to the type of collage the students are preparing.
 - **Collage on the Preamble of the Constitution**—Divide the class into groups of six. Give one piece of poster board or butcher paper to each group. Each group should draw and then cut their poster board or butcher paper into **SIX** fairly equally sized puzzle pieces, using the entire paper.
 - **Collage on the Three Branches of the Federal Government**— Divide the class into groups of three. Give one piece of poster board or butcher paper to each group. Each group should draw and then cut their poster board or butcher paper into **THREE** fairly equally sized puzzle pieces, using the entire paper.
 - **Collage on the Freedoms in the First Amendment**— Divide the class into groups of five. Give one piece of poster board or butcher paper to each group. Each group should draw and then cut their poster board or butcher paper into **FIVE** fairly equally sized puzzle pieces using the entire paper.
2. Each group should put a star or a symbol on the front of each piece of their puzzles after drawing off their puzzle pieces. This will be the side they use to paste their collage pictures and will assure that the puzzle fits together correctly when finished. After doing this, they should cut out their puzzle pieces.

3. Explain to the students that they are going to analyze a portion of the Constitution and then use that analysis to create a collage of images and phrases.

Collage Puzzle on the Six Goals of the Preamble

- Each person in the group is responsible for analyzing the meaning of one of the six goals of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. The goals are:
 1. to form a more perfect union
 2. to establish justice
 3. to insure domestic tranquility
 4. to provide for the common defense
 5. to promote the general welfare
 6. to secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity
- Instruct the students to find pictures and phrases that explain their assigned goals in writing the Constitution. Using glue and scissors, the students should create collages completely covering the puzzle pieces given to them.
- When the students have completed their portions of the puzzle, each student in the group should explain his or her visual representation to the group. Finally, the group should put the pieces of the puzzle together, creating the complete Preamble. The finished puzzle collages can be posted around the room and compared.
- After the puzzles are completed, ask the students to recall times in our history when we have been successful in meeting these goals and conversely, times when we have struggled in meeting these goals.

Collage on the Three Branches of the Federal Government

- Divide the class into groups of three. Each person in the group is to be responsible for analyzing one of the three branches of the federal government:
 1. Legislative (Article I)
 2. Executive (Article II)
 3. and Judicial (Article III)
- Each student is to look in the Constitution and find the answers to the following questions on the branch of government assigned to him or her:
 1. Who makes up the branch of government?
 2. What is the basic function of this branch?
 3. What are examples of the power of this branch?

- Instruct the students to find pictures and phrases that explain their assigned branches of the federal government. Using glue and scissors, the students should create a collage, completely covering the puzzle piece given to them.
- When the students have completed their portions of the puzzle, each student in the group should explain his or her visual representations to the group. Finally, the group should put the pieces of the puzzle together, creating a picture of the complete federal government. The finished puzzle collages can be posted around the room and compared.
- When all students have explained their collages, debrief the activity by asking the students one of the following questions:

Why do you think the founding fathers devised the three branches of government?

What are the advantages/disadvantages of having this structure of government?

Collage on the Five Freedoms in the First Amendment

- Divide the class into groups of five and assign each member of each group one of the freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment:
 1. freedom of religion
 2. freedom of speech,
 3. freedom of the press
 4. freedom of assembly
 5. freedom of petition.
- Instruct the students to find pictures and phrases that explain the assigned freedom and illustrate it as it is being exercised by citizens. Using glue and scissors, the students should create a collage completely covering the puzzle pieces given to them.
- When the students have completed their portions of the puzzle, each student in the group should explain his/her visual representations to the group. Finally, the group should put the pieces of the puzzle together creating, the complete First Amendment. The finished puzzle collages can be posted around the room and compared.
- Debrief the activity by asking the students the following questions:
 1. Are any of the freedoms in the First Amendment more important than others?
 2. Why do you think these freedoms are “first” in the Bill of Rights?