

## WE THE ASTRONAUTS

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. apply the principles of the phrases of the Preamble to a modern setting.
2. use dictionary and thesaurus skills to reword the Preamble

TEKS: SS 5.15B, 24B; LA 3.4C, 5.2E

Materials Needed: copy of the Preamble to the Constitution, Task Cards (attached), worksheet for modified Preamble (attached)

Vocabulary: justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare, liberty, posterity

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce lesson by reading the Preamble. Ask if students recognize the document and if they understand what it means. Describe the Preamble as a list of reasons why our government wrote the Constitution, which are the rules for our country. Compare that to rules in the classroom or in city government.
2. Express understanding of how complex the wording of the Preamble is and offer students the opportunity to simplify the language using thesauruses and dictionaries.
3. Assign each student a partner and distribute printed sheets for rewording or modifying the Preamble. Supply dictionaries and thesauruses for students to use.
4. After appropriate work time, ask several students to read the Preamble again, in simplified language. Check for understanding of each phrase.
5. Ask students to identify what “in order to” means, gleaning a definition of “so that” or “for the purpose of.” Help students to understand that the Constitution was written by “the People” for the purpose of (“in order to”) establishing justice, enduring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our descendants.

6. Divide students into six groups, representing the phrases:
  - establish justice
  - ensure domestic tranquility
  - provide for the common defense
  - promote the general welfare
  - secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves
  - secure the blessings of liberty to our descendants (posterity)
7. Set up the following scenario. *Pretend that you are a group of astronauts, getting ready to colonize a settlement on the moon. Your new colony needs to be organized in order to be successful. This means establishing some rules or laws that everyone will follow. Our own constitution tells us why we need laws: to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide a way to defend ourselves, promote the general welfare, and make sure we and our descendants always have the liberties that we value. Now it is up to you to write some laws that will make sure these things happen in our new colony.*
8. Each group will be assigned one phrase for which to write a set of 3-5 rules that would result in that value being assured. Distribute one Task Card to each group.
  - What laws will you write to make sure that anyone who feels like they have been treated unfairly will have a place to report what has happened to them? (establish justice)
  - What laws will you write to make sure that people have peace and quiet? (ensure domestic tranquility)
  - What laws will you write to make sure everyone helps out if aliens threaten your colony? (provide for the common defense)
  - What laws will you write to make sure that the colony you build (places to live, work, and play) will be used fairly by everyone? (general welfare)
  - What laws will you write to make sure everyone is free to do what they want as long as it doesn't hurt someone else? (securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves)
  - What laws will you write to make sure that freedoms will be in place for future generations as well as current members of the colony? (securing the blessings of liberty to our posterity)
9. When all groups have completed and recorded their laws, they will report to the class, allowing each group to analyze the suggested laws to determine if those would indeed attain the intended goal. Other laws may be suggested by the group.
10. Ask students recall rules or laws that we have that assure these values for us. These may be compared to the rules written for the new colony.

**The Preamble of the Constitution  
Of the United States**

**We, the People of the United States  
In order to form a more perfect union  
Establish Justice  
Insure Domestic Tranquility  
Provide for the Common Defense  
Promote the General Welfare  
And Secure the Blessings of Liberty  
To Ourselves and our Posterity  
Do ordain and establish  
This Constitution for the  
United States of America.**

# Preamble

**We, the People of the United States**

**In order to form a more perfect union,**

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**(establish justice)**

---

**(ensure domestic tranquility)**

---

**(provide for the common defense)**

---

**(promote the general welfare)**

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**(and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our  
posterity)**

**Do ordain and establish this Constitution for the  
United States of America.**

## **Task Cards**

- **What laws will you write to make sure that anyone who feels like they have been treated unfairly will have a place to report what has happened to them? (establish justice)**
- **What laws will you write to make sure that people have peace and quiet? (ensure domestic tranquility)**
- **What laws will you write to make sure everyone helps out if aliens threaten your colony? (provide for the common defense)**
- **What laws will you write to make sure that the colony you build (places to live, work, and play) will be used fairly by everyone? (general welfare)**

- **What laws will you write to make sure everyone is free to do what they want as long as it doesn't hurt someone else? (securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves)**
  
- **What laws will you write to make sure that freedoms will be in place for future generations as well as current members of the colony? (securing the blessings of liberty to our posterity)**