

LESSON ONE: ELEMENTARY PRE-VIEWING LESSON

Who are We the People?

Grade Level	Elementary School: 3 rd - 5 th Grade
Time	Fifty minutes
Materials	Handout A: The Preamble Handout B: Preamble Cards Handout C: We the People Cards Large piece of butcher paper Magazines Scissors and glue
Movie Clips	Flag Scenes vs. We the People

ACTIVITY I

15 MINUTES

- A. Put up a five to six foot long piece of butcher paper. Using a brightly-colored marker, write the words of the Preamble. Leave plenty of space between and around words for students to add words and phrases later. Call on a student to read the Preamble aloud. Explain to students who are not familiar with the Preamble that it is the opening of the United States Constitution. Distribute **Handout A: The Preamble** and read it aloud together.
- B. Discuss how the words used in the Preamble may sound fancy or unfamiliar, but that they convey well-known things. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Cut out and give each group 3-4 slips from **Handout A: Preamble Cards**.
- C. Have groups look at the words and phrases on their card and think of ways that they explain the types of things described in the Preamble.
- D. Have each group in turn send one person up to the butcher paper to annotate the Preamble by gluing their slips near the appropriate Preamble phrase. *(See the Answer Key for suggested matches. Note: some phrases have more than one correct placement.)*
- E. Give the class a few moments to stand and view the "Preamble Wiki." Ask students to summarize what they have learned with each other as they do.
- F. Have students return to their seats and call on individual students to share new understandings they have.

ACTIVITY II

15 MINUTES

- A. Now that you've discussed the purposes of government, ask students, "Who 'ordained and established' (made official) the Constitution?" The answer is in the first three words: "We the People."
- B. Emphasize to students that unlike other countries where a King or Queen gave people certain rights, the American people created their own government and decided what powers it should have. The states and the people kept all other powers.
- C. Tell students you'll now work together on understanding the most famous phrase from the Preamble, "We the People." With students still in their groups, give each group a card from **Handout A: We the People Cards**.

- D. Have students read the information on their card. Have them put the quotation in their own words. Then, using the information on the card and their own background knowledge, they should write a one-sentence response to the question, “How does this person’s help you understand what ‘We the People?’ means?”
- E. Have one student from each group stand and read the information from their group’s card, along with their quote paraphrase and summary sentence. Then another student from the group should stand up, glue their card to the Preamble, and write down words or phrases associated with that individual.

ACTIVITY III: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

20 MINUTES

- A. Ask students to reflect on their own place in “We the People.” Ask students to reflect individually about:
- one thing they can do **today** as a citizen of the United States, and
 - one thing they will do in the **future**.
- B. Have students do one of the following to create a representation of their contribution to “We the People:”
- Write a short sentences
 - Draw a picture
 - Cut out a picture from a magazine
- C. They should come up and continue to annotate the Preamble with their ideas.



George Washington

1732 – 1799

Commander of the Continental Army
 President of the Constitutional Convention
 First President of the United States

The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and alter their Constitutions of Government... -1796



James Madison

1751 – 1836

“Father of the Constitution”
 Proposed amendments to the Constitution in Congress
 Fourth President of the United States

“A people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” -1822



Benjamin Franklin

1706 – 1790

Early advocate for Independence
 United States Diplomat
 Elder statesman at the Constitutional Convention

We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately. -1776



Abraham Lincoln

1809 – 1865

Sixteenth President of the United States
 Issued the Emancipation Proclamation
 Led the United States through Civil War

Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth. -1863

Handout A: Preamble Cards

<p>Making the country better</p> <p>People with different backgrounds coming together</p> <p>Amending (changing) the Constitution</p> <p>Shared values</p>	<p>Court system</p> <p>Protecting rights</p> <p>Equal laws</p> <p>Fair trial</p>
<p>Keeping Peace</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Homeland</p> <p>Getting along</p>	<p>Army</p> <p>Navy</p> <p>Air Force</p> <p>Marines</p>
<p>Helping people do the things that make them happy</p> <p>Good way of life</p> <p>Respecting state governments</p> <p>Helping all the states</p>	<p>Freedom</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Deciding for yourself</p> <p>Free will</p>

NAME: _____

Handout A: We the People Cards



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In my own words:

How does Washington help you understand “We the People?”

NAME: _____

Handout B: We the People Cards



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Proposed amendments to the Constitution in Congress

Fourth President of the United States

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Handout B: We the People Cards



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