

SC Signers of the Constitution: A Biography

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OVERVIEW: This lesson briefly discusses the Constitution (to be covered in more detail in a later lesson), Articles of Confederation, and the signers of the Constitution from South Carolina. The students will have time in the computer lab to research the signers and write biographies in their own words about these founding fathers.

Connection to the Curriculum:

This lesson will be taught to a Social Studies class at the beginning of the chapter on the Constitution. This is written for an 8th grade class.

SC Social Studies Standards:

8-2.4 Summarize events related to the adoption of South Carolina's first constitution, the role of South Carolina and its leaders in the Continental Congress, and the ratification of the United States Constitution, including Henry Laurens's actions, Charles Pinckney's role, and the importance of issues debated during the Philadelphia Convention for South Carolina. (H, P)

SC Social Studies Literacy Elements:

- L: Interpret calendars, time lines, maps, charts, tables, graphs, flow charts, diagrams, photographs, paintings, cartoons, architectural drawings, documents, letters, censuses, and other artifacts
- S: Interpret and synthesize information obtained from a variety of sources—graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, texts, photographs, documents, and interviews

Grade Range:

8th grade

Time:

2 class periods

Materials Needed:

Computers with internet
Handout with websites on SC signers
Textbook
Handout with questions about signers

Objectives:

TSWBAT answer biography questions correctly regarding the four signers of the Constitution after performing research online and in the textbook.

TSWBAT write an essay concerning the importance of the Constitution.

TSWBAT list the differences and similarities between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.

Procedures:

I will just introduce the students to the Constitution as a document. Each student has a copy in their textbook, but I will pass around a manuscript that I have purchased for them to look at an “original”. We will talk about the need for a new document. We will talk about the time it took to write it and just briefly mention some of the compromises made for it to happen. We will also discuss the major weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation again and the strengths of the new Constitution. I will show them a picture of a bust of John Rutledge at the Supreme Court, the original Supreme Court that he served in, and the original signatures on the Constitution from the National Archives.

We will head to the computer lab and begin our research on the SC signers of the Constitution and what they went on to do after signing the document. Each student will research one signer of their choice and write a 1-2 page biography of their own on the signer that they chose. I will hand out the list of websites and questions and they will get started. I will allow one more class period in the computer lab for them to research and type or write their biography.

Evaluation:

I will grade all handouts given to the students in class.

I will test over the Constitution and the SC signers as part of the SC curriculum standards.

I will assess the biography upon completion by the students.

Lesson Extensions:

A lesson on amendments, Bill of Rights specifically, would follow the discussion on the importance of the Constitution to the beginning of America.

I would use any primary documents from National Archives or Library of Congress websites for any application of these documents. I will target letters written by the founding fathers about the importance of freedom and country.

Materials Provided:

Handouts

Computers with internet

Textbook

Resources:

All websites listed

Textbook

Washington trip pictures about John Rutledge, the Supreme Court in the Capitol, THE Constitution

Copy of the Constitution to distribute

Background Information:

The students cover the Revolutionary War and the Articles of Confederation before they cover the Constitution. George Washington as a man and leader will have been covered as well before this point.