

## Constitution and Connect with Wisdom Project

**Essential Questions:**

1. How did the people who created the founding documents of the United States of America learn to work together to achieve lasting results? (What vital ingredients did they share as a team?)
2. How can we learn from them what we need to do to make our work together more effective? (How do we connect to their wisdom?)
3. How do the documents they created show evidence of the special working relationship they had among themselves as a team?
4. What would the United States be like without a Constitution?
5. Under what conditions should the government involve itself in the lives of its people?

**Identifying, Representing and Describing the Problem**

The framers of the founding documents of the United States of America represented lots of differing interests, values, and perspectives. It was difficult for them to come to agreement on the different documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The documents that they created have been used as inspirational models for democratic ideals throughout the world and have sustained government in the United States of America for 232 years.

The power of a team is revealed in the presence of *synergy*, a word that means that what has been produced by the team as a whole (collectively) is better than what would have been produced by combining the best efforts of each person on the team individually. Synergy requires trust, respect, acceptance, and a willingness to work with each other's ideas and not to insist on only one point of view. For modern teams to function effectively, they must also learn to bring synergy present as they work and to have it be revealed in their work products.

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### **Sub-questions:**

#### *1. Synergy*

What is synergy?

How can we see synergy in a document?

How can we see synergy in a team?

#### 2. Framers of the founding documents of the United States of America

Who were they?

What did they believe in?

Where did their ideas come from?

How did they work as a team?

How did they work together and build trust, show respect, and encourage synergy?

What special values did each contribute to the team?

3. Where did these people get their ideas? What historical events during the time-frame (roughly 1700 to 1800) that influenced the thinking and emotionally felt beliefs of these framers?

In Europe?

In America?

Anywhere else that had an impact on the framers of these documents?

4. What are the goals of the Constitution?

5. What are your rights and responsibilities under the Constitution?

6. Why is the Constitution a “living document”?

### **Goals and Curriculum Fit**

Social Sciences—Political Systems

14.F.3a Analyze historical influences on the development of political ideas and practices as enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the United States

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Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Illinois Constitution.

English Language Arts—Reading

1.C.3a Use information to form, explain and support questions and predictions.

English-Language Arts--Research

5.A.3a Identify appropriate resources to solve problems or answer questions through research.

5.B.3a Choose and analyze information sources for individual, academic and functional purposes.

5.C.3a Plan, compose, edit and revise documents that synthesize new meaning gleaned from multiple sources.

5.C.3b Prepare and orally present original work (e.g., poems, monologues, reports, plays, stories) supported by research.

5.C.3c Take notes, conduct interviews, organize and report information in oral, visual and electronic formats.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Reading—Level Three--Developing  
Sequence pictures, events, and processes.

Identify main ideas.

Use context clues to determine meaning of words.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Writing—Level Three—Developing

Produce bare bones expository or narrative text.

Compare and contrast information.

Describe events, people, processes and procedures.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Speaking—Level Three—Developing

Formulate, hypotheses, make predictions.

Describe processes, procedures.

Retell stories or events.

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Social Emotional Learning

2C.3b. Demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group effectiveness.

### Key Vocabulary

Amend	Appeal	Civil Rights
Compromise	Constitution	Democracy
Domestic	Executive Branch	Federal
Foreign	Government	Judicial Branch
Legislative Branch	Representative	Republic
Veto		

### Products

Some students will prepare Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft PhotoStory3 presentations. Other students may choose to create a mural or other artistic piece to reflect what they are learning. Others may write stories, poems, or draw sketches to illustrate key learning from the project. Students could also write and enact a play or other dramatic performance of the results of their research.

### Technologies

Computers and the Internet will be used extensively in the research and documentation of this project. Students will also access “streaming video” from the Discovery School ([UnitedStreaming](#)) and will work with resources made available from the [Library of Congress](#).

Public libraries (in school and in neighboring communities) will be used for some

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of the reading needed to complete the assignment.

Part of the learning activities of this unit will be the way in which students engage with the technology and learn to work with it to conduct research, to store and organize their data, and to prepare their final results.

This unit has a reflective component in that students will continually observe and reflect on their own process to look for evidence of synergy.

### **Student Roles**

One phase of the project will be to explore the world views of key framers of these founding documents, so student teams will represent a framer. For example, one team may represent Benjamin Franklin and another team may represent Thomas Jefferson.

Students will also be investigators, authors, team members, directors, authors, and have specific duties in support of the cooperative learning processes of the teams to which they are assigned.

### **Team Assignments**

#### **Benjamin Franklin Team**

Where did Ben Franklin get his ideas?

How did he influence the other framers of the important documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights)?

What are some of his legacies (things that we have today that came from him)?

#### **Thomas Jefferson Team**

Where did Thomas Jefferson get his ideas?

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How did he influence the other framers of the important documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights)?

What are some of his legacies (things that we have today that came from him)?

### **John Adams Team**

Where did John Adams get his ideas?

How did he influence the other framers of the important documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights)?

What are some of his legacies (things that we have today that came from him)?

### **James Madison Team**

Where did James Madison get his ideas?

How did he influence the other framers of the important documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights)?

What are some of his legacies (things that we have today that came from him)?

### **George Washington Team**

Where did George Washington get his ideas?

How did he influence the other framers of the important documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights)?

What are some of his legacies (things that we have today that came from him)?