

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION - PREAMBLE

Lesson Plan for Grades 2-4

WE THE PEOPLE...

EMPHASIS

The Preamble of the United States Constitution

OBJECTIVE

To help each child gain a basic understanding of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

PREPARATION

Materials Needed:

- a) Picture of Gouverneur Morris
- b) Copy of United States Constitution
- c) Chart of the *Six Great Sayings* (included)
- d) Copy of *Hand Motions for Memorizing the Preamble* (included)

SUGGESTED OUTLINE

Show the picture of Gouverneur Morris and tell the children who it is. Explain that his name did not mean that he was a governor, but that when he was born, he was given the name Gouverneur as his first name. Have the children repeat his name (pronounced GOO-ve(r)-nore).

Tell the children a few things about Gouverneur Morris and his involvement in writing the Preamble.

Gouverneur Morris was a really good writer who lived a long time ago and played an important role in creating the United States Constitution. He helped write the words that come at the beginning of the Constitution. These words are called a "preamble." A preamble is like an introduction that

explains what something is all about and what it means.

Isn't that a strange word? Repeat it with me. PREAMBLE. Now I will show you where the Preamble is in the Constitution. (Show a picture of the Constitution and point to "We the People...") Tell the children that the Preamble is just one long sentence, and begins with these larger words, "WE THE PEOPLE".)

Now, look at all this other small writing. These are the rules for America. Just like we have rules in our classroom, our country has rules, too! (Discuss your class rules for a few minutes.) Yes, our rules make us feel good because we are working together so we can all learn.

WHAT IS A PREAMBLE?

Imagine you and your friends are making up some rules for a cool club that you want to start. Before you actually write down the rules, you might want to explain why you're making the rules and what you hope to achieve with your club, right? Well, the Preamble to the United States Constitution is kind of like that!

The United States Constitution is a very important document that was written a long time ago to create the rules and principles for our country. The Preamble is the introduction to the Constitution, and it's like a special paragraph that tells us why the Constitution was created and what it aims to do.

It starts with the famous words, "We the People." This means that the Constitution was made by and for all the citizens of the United States. It's a way of saying that the

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power to govern the country comes from the people themselves.

Then, it tells us the reasons why the Constitution was made. It says that it was created to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.

Now, what do all those big words mean? Let's break them down: (refer to the *Six Great Sayings* chart)

1. "Form a more perfect union" means that the Constitution was made to help the states work together better as one united country.
2. "Establish justice" means to create a fair and equal system of laws and courts so that everyone is treated fairly.
3. "Ensure domestic tranquility" means to make sure there is peace and calmness within the country, and people can live their lives without fear.
4. "Provide for the common defense" means to protect the country from any outside threats or dangers.
5. "Promote the general welfare" means to help make sure that all the people in the country can live happy and healthy lives.
6. "Secure the blessings of liberty" means to protect the freedoms and rights that we have as citizens.

So, the Preamble to the United States Constitution is like an introduction that explains why the Constitution was created and what it wants to achieve. It's a way of saying that the people of the United States came together to make rules that would

make our country a better and fairer place for everyone to live.

(After showing the picture charts, teach them the hand motions for memorizing the preamble. Refer to *Hand Motions for Memorizing the Preamble*. Encourage them to learn it so well that they can teach it to their families.

ASSESSMENT

Use follow up questions to see what was learned, such as:

- How does the Preamble begin? Can you recite the first few words?
- Why is it important to have a Preamble in a constitution?
- What are the goals listed in the Preamble? Can you name at least two of them?

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Hand Motions for Memorizing the Preamble

WE (both hands pointing to chest)



THE PEOPLE (arms outstretched)



OF THE UNITED STATES (fingers of both hands interlocked),



IN ORDER TO FORM (hands held as though molding something)



A MORE PERFECT UNION (fingers interlocked palm to palm),



ESTABLISH (outstretched hands pressing down)



JUSTICE (turn hands over and simulate balancing of scales),



INSURE (cover left thumb with right hand as protection)



DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY (folded hands to cheek simulating sleep),



PROVIDE (open hands pushing outward as though offering something)



FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE (fists doubled in posture of defense),



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PROMOTE THE GENERAL (salute)



WELFARE (hand over heart),



AND SECURE (right hand grasping air)



THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY (right arm high in a Statue of Liberty pose)



TO OURSELVES (hand on chest)



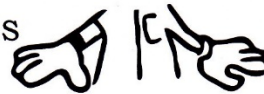
AND OUR POSTERITY (lift right hand stair step fashion to indicate different heights),



DO ORDAIN (laying on of hands)



AND ESTABLISH (outstretched hands pressing down)



THIS CONSTITUTION (simulate unrolling a scroll)



FOR THE UNITED STATES (fingers of both hands interlocked)



OF AMERICA (arms outstretched simulating an eagle in flight).



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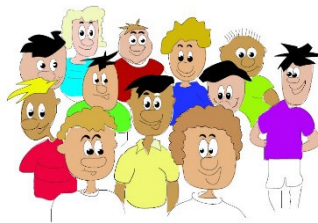
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Six Great Sayings

The Preamble says that when the rules in the Constitution are obeyed, these things will happen.

1. IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION

means that the Constitution was made to help the states



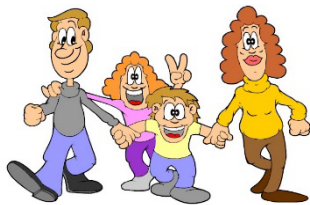
work together better as one united country.

2. ESTABLISH JUSTICE



means to create a fair and equal system of laws and courts so that everyone is treated fairly.

3. INSURE DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY



means to make sure there is peace and calmness within the country, and people can live their lives without fear.

4. PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE

means to protect the country from any outside threats or dangers.



5. PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE

means to help make sure that all the people in the country can live happy and healthy lives.



6. SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY

means to protect the freedoms and rights that we have as citizens.

