

## The Supreme Law of the Land in Action

### **Descriptive Characteristics:**

**Unit Topic:** The US Constitution/Bill of Rights and Amendments

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Class/Discipline:** United States History

**Time Required:** About 1 to 2 weeks

**Main Purpose of this Unit:** To have students learn what the founders were thinking when they formed the Constitution and see how it applies to their lives. This unit explores how cultural impacts have factored into the formation of the Constitution and its amendments. From there, it shows how the Constitution and its amendments influence today's government system and how we go about our daily lives still today.

### **Standards Covered:**

8.4.2 "Explain factors (e.g., lack of economic power, lack of central government, no court systems) that contributed to the demise of the Articles of Confederation and explain how they led to the creation of the US Constitution"

**8.4.3 "Explain how the United States Constitution and Amendments influence society (e.g., voting rights, equal protection, due process)"**

8.4.4 "Explain the political party process at the local, state, and national level (e.g., the structure and functions of political parties, electoral college, how campaigns are run and who participates in them, the role of the media in the election process, various kinds of elections)"

8.4.5 "Describe the relationship (e.g., power, responsibility, influence) among the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the government at the local, state (i.e., North Dakota), and national level

### **Performance Goals:**

*The learner will be able to:*

1. Use technology effectively to communicate ideas
2. See how issues in the past effect the government's actions today
3. Explain some of the intentions the Founders had when they formed the Constitution
4. Describe what the Constitution looks like in action (How does the federal government use it? How does it limit state's actions?).
5. Analyze the impact the Constitution has had on American culture, and vice versa.

### **Student Objectives:**

*The learner will be able to:*

1. Have a basic understanding of how the process of amending the Constitution works.
2. Compare the Constitution to past documents and show how this one was successful and the past were not
3. Describe a current event that has been impacted by what the Constitution dictates
4. Form an opinion either for or against a specific amendment explaining why this is good or bad for the country (I would then possibly have my student come up with their own amendment they would like to see passed and form an argument for it)
5. Evaluate a primary source from a Founder and explain how their opinion in it influenced the formation of the Constitution/ the US government system

6. Relate an amendment to a Supreme Court decision, describing how the Supreme Court has the power to interpret the law stated in the Constitution
7. Research a specific topic (An amendment) and report back to the class about the history of it, arguments for/against it, and how it impacts us today.
8. Describe the powers that the Constitution gives or limits.

### **Project Outline**

1. Lectures, readings, and activities will take place, giving the students the information and knowledge they need to understand what the amendments do and say (And how they came to be).
  - a. Within each lesson there will be authentic application
2. Students will be allowed time to research which specific amendment they would like to present/report on
3. Students will spend time researching the information in order to meet the student objectives
4. Students will craft an “artifact” that shows their knowledge of the amendment. This can be in any form, hopefully within their learning preference
5. Student will create a presentation that includes the necessary information required and teaches the class about their amendment.

### **Assessment**

Students will be assessed through two main ways in this unit: a unit quiz and their presentation. The unit quiz will consist mainly of surface knowledge of what the amendments say/do. The presentations will be assessed by the information included from research (if it is all there and if it is relevant), the effort put into it, their artifact, and presentation skills.