

WE THE KIDS
THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE UNITED STATES
K-3

Illustrations and Forward by David Catrow

Published by Penguin Group

Book Summary

In this humorously illustrated preamble to the Constitution of the United States, David Catrow breaks down and defines the phrases in the preamble to help make it understandable to young readers. With the help of a dog and a cast of cartoon-like characters, teachers, parents and librarians can explain these words written by our forefathers to the very young, and readers will enjoy this on their own.

Objectives

1. To understand, in everyday language, the meaning of each phrase of the preamble to the Constitution.
2. To understand that the preamble is a small part of the actual Constitution.
3. To understand how these phrases apply to our contemporary lives.
4. To develop a curiosity to explore additional parts of the Constitution.

Before viewing the video

Tell the children that they will be viewing a video that explains the meaning of the first part of a very famous document. It is so famous, in fact, that in order to see it you need to go to Washington, D. C. where it is guarded and protected. If you can secure a copy, show it to the children so they can compare the length of the preamble with the complete Constitution. After you see this video, you will be able to understand the difficult words that were written hundreds of years ago and you can decide if you think it was important to write this.

Questions to ask after viewing the video

1. What is a “preamble?”
2. Where do you need to go if you want to see the real Constitution?
3. Do you think you would be able to understand all, some or none of the words in the preamble the way it was first written?
4. What are some of the hard words that you understand better now?
5. Who are “We the people of the United States?”
6. Do you think it is important to have rules in the United States? Why?
7. What are some of the rules we have that you think are important?
8. What happens when some people choose to break important rules?
9. Which “blessings of liberty” are important to you?
10. What are some of the important promises that our government makes to us?

Activities

1. Give each child in the group an opportunity to recite a phrase and then the meaning as presented in the book.
2. Have the children read the meanings of the phrases and provide examples of what it means to them in their lives. For example, how are we protected from other people or countries who might want to harm us?
3. For older students, initiate an activity to start exploring the meaning of the Bill of Rights. Work on changing the original language into easily understood sentences.
4. Draw your own illustrations. Have the children select a phrase and draw their own illustration of a phrase that is meaningful to them. Bind the illustrations in a class book that represents their preamble.