

Bio

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Course Synopsis

Citizenship in the Nation is a review of United States civics with emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The course begins with a virtual tour of historic landmarks and state government buildings, followed by a discussion of the structure and function of the parts of the federal government. Scouts will review national news, write their congressperson, and discuss a speech of national importance.

Lesson Plan

Prerequisite

1. Before the course begins, scouts must either watch the nightly news every night for five days or read the front page of a major daily newspaper every day for five days. Scouts should be prepared to discuss major stories and how they impact their family and community.

Lesson 1

1. Explain what citizenship in the nation means and what it takes to be a good citizen of this country. Discuss the rights, duties, and obligations of a responsible and active American citizen. How does a good citizen behave, what do they do every day? Citizenship is a legal affiliation with a nation and an obligation for the individual to practice good citizenship. Good citizens know how their government works, and they understand where authority and power lies in their nation. Good citizens work to stay informed and think critically, they participate in the democratic process. Citizenship is a right and a responsibility, and it can be hard work. Citizenship is a rewarding experience; an active citizen meets people in their community who care about the big decisions that influence everyone's lives. (Requirement 1)
2. Instead of visiting a National Historic Landmark in person, the group will take a virtual tour of Fort Adams. A video will be shown, following a discussion of the scout's experiences at Fort Adams. Recall why and when the fort was built, and reflect on how the fort is used today. Scouts will also take a virtual tour of the Rhode Island state capitol building and discuss what work gets done there. (Requirement 2) 7:45
3. Break (5 minutes)
4. Discuss your experience watching the news or reading the paper last week, how did the major stories change over time? What did the news seem to emphasize, and what stories seemed less important? How was watching or reading the news different from seeing it online? (Requirement 3)

Homework:

Choose a speech of national historical importance. Find out about the author, explain the importance of the speech at the time it was given, and tell how it applies to American citizens today. Choose a sentence or two from the speech that has significant meaning to you.

Lesson #2

1. Discuss each of the following documents and tell how you feel life in the United States might be different without each one. When were each of the documents written, and by whom? (Requirement 4)
 - a. Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman, a five-person committee elected by the Continental Congress)
 - b. Preamble to the Constitution (September 17, 1787, signed at the final session of the Constitutional Convention)
 - i. We the people of the United States, in order 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 to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America (Requirement 5)

c. The Constitution

.Composed of Articles which describe the structure and function of the US government.

1. Article 1 describes the legislative branch
2. Article 2 describes the executive branch
3. Article 3 describes the judicial branch
4. Article 4 separates the powers of the federal and state governments, and how a state can enter the US
5. Article 5 describes the process of amending the constitution
6. Article 6 confirms the constitution as the supreme law of the land
7. Article 7 sets the process for ratifying the constitution

d. Bill of Rights (December 15, 1791)

.Freedom of religion, speech, and the press; rights of assembly and petition

- i.Right to bear arms
- ii.Housing of soldiers
- iii.Search and arrest warrants
- iv.Rights in criminal cases
- v.Rights to a fair trial
- vi.Rights in civil cases
- vii.Bails, fines, and punishments
- viii.Rights retained by the people
- ix.Powers retained by the states and the people

e. Amendments to the Constitution

.There are 27 amendments to the constitution, each submitted by Congress to the states for an approval (ratification). Proposed amendments must be ratified by three-fourths of the states, either by the state legislatures or in a state convention.

2. Review the three branches of government. The federal government is composed of three branches: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. Who is in charge of the executive branch? What does the executive branch control? The president signs legislation into law, providing a check on the legislative branch. Who is in charge of the legislative branch? What does the legislative branch control? What are the two houses of congress, how are they different? The legislative branch controls how money is spent by the government, providing a check on the executive and judicial branches. Who is in charge of the judicial branch? There are many kinds of federal courts for enforcing different kinds of laws, what are some kinds of courts? The judicial branch controls how laws are enforced, providing a check on executive and legislative branches by ensuring public policy is just. (Requirement 7)
3. Break (5 minutes)

4. Discuss the speech of national historical importance. Introduce the person who wrote the speech, the person who gave the speech (if these are two different people), and talk about the time in history the speech was given. What was happening in the United States, what was happening in the world? What sentences seem to hold great importance? (Requirement 6)

Homework: Name your two senators and a member of Congress from your congressional district. Write a letter about a national issue and send it to one of these elected officials, sharing your view with him or her. (Requirement 8)