

- Have students ask their mothers and grandmothers how their rights have changed since they were little girls, and to bring answers to the class.
- Abraham Lincoln is one of the most written-about people in American history. Ask students to imagine they are writing a biography about Lincoln. What aspects of his life do students consider the most important for people to know? Why? As a follow-up, ask students to write down ten facts that they feel would best describe themselves in their own personal biographies.
- Break students into small groups and ask each group to create a collage of images that represents the many facets of Lincoln's life, i.e., as a frontiersman, politician, lawyer and president. Students may also create a pictorial time line of Lincoln's life for display in the classroom.
- In her speech at the 1848 Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke about women's rights, such as the rights to speak freely, to own property and to go to college. Break students into small groups and ask students in each group to reflect on their own lives and create lists of rights that they feel all young people should have. Students can also present speeches in support of their lists.
- Many changes to the Constitution, such as the Bill of Rights and the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments, have been made in order to provide and protect the rights of all Americans. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to think about other changes that might improve the Constitution. Ask each group to choose one potential amendment and to write a list of reasons why it would be a good change. Then have each group present its proposed amendment to the class, which can vote on each proposal.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com.

- www.gettysburg.com/bog/bogcent.htm
This site provides a history of the Battle of Gettysburg in both words and pictures.
- www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/sbhome.html
This site on Susan B. Anthony's trial includes photographs of Anthony, political cartoons by people opposed to women's suffrage and a map showing when the 19th Amendment was ratified in different states.

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- members.aol.com/RVSNorton/Lincoln2.html
The "Abraham Lincoln Research Site," created by a former American history teacher, provides factual and anecdotal information of interest to children and contains extensive links, including a section on lesson plans and classroom activities.
- www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/douglass/
This National Park Service "American Visionaries" site about Frederick Douglass includes historical information, photographs and a virtual tour of his home.

Suggested Print Resources

- Burgan, Michael. *Bill of Rights*. Compass Point Books, Minneapolis, MN; 2002.
- Corey, Shana. *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer: A Very Improper Story*. Scholastic Press, New York, NY; 2000.
- McKissack, Patricia and Frederick. *Frederick Douglass: Leader Against Slavery. Revised*. Enslow Publishers, Berkeley Heights, NJ; 2002.
- Rappaport, Doreen. *Freedom River*. Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children, New York, NY; 2000.
- Rockwell, Anne. *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY; 2000.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Equal Rights for All

Grades K-4

Studying history is an essential part of understanding the world we live in today. The history of the United States includes the experiences and accomplishments of diverse peoples, from Native Americans and immigrants to the descendants of European settlers and of Africans brought here by force. Key events such as the Revolutionary War, the writing of the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation influenced how the nation developed. The study of history also involves facing painful aspects of the country's past, such as slavery and the treatment of Native Americans. Over time, songs, holidays and other observances have shaped and reflected how Americans see themselves and their country. History provides a framework for interpreting and living in the ever-changing present.



Program Overview

Equal rights means everyone should have the same privileges and freedoms as everyone else. Shortly after the Constitution was written, ten changes, known as “amendments,” were added to guarantee equal and fair protection under the law to all people. This section of the Constitution is called the Bill of Rights. People have turned to the Bill of Rights throughout the history of the United States to see what they are allowed and not allowed to do. At times, people have also used the Bill to argue for what they thought was right. For instance, abolitionists, or people who opposed slavery, believed that the Bill of Rights should protect everyone. Over time, new amendments have been added to the Constitution to make the treatment of all people more fair. Abraham Lincoln played a central role in bringing an end to slavery. During the Civil War, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation as the first big step to end slavery, and in 1865, the 13th Amendment ended the enslavement of all African Americans. Susan B. Anthony was a highly-educated woman who fought to end unfair treatment of anyone and, especially, to win equality for women. Her work resulted in the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. To this day, the Constitution and its amendments continue to be used to protect the right of all Americans to be treated equally and fairly.

Vocabulary

Constitution — A document that describes how the three main parts of the U.S. government — the president, Congress and the Supreme Court — work together.

Bill of Rights — The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which include guarantees of individual rights.

amendment — An addition or change made to the U.S. Constitution.

militia — A group of citizen soldiers formed for defense in an emergency.

defendant — Someone accused of a crime and put on trial.

Quakers — Also known as the Society of Friends, a religious group that believes strongly in religious freedom. During the Civil War, many Quakers chose not to fight for religious reasons.

slave — A person forced to work for someone else for no money.

abolitionists — Americans who opposed slavery and who worked hard to end (abolish) it.

Underground Railroad — A system of secret places set up by abolitionists to help slaves escape to the North and to Canada.

13th Amendment — The Constitutional amendment that ended slavery.

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ratified — Formally accepted and approved.

patriotic — Being loyal to and enthusiastically supportive of one’s nation.

Gettysburg Address — An important speech delivered by President Lincoln after thousands were killed at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

plantations — Large farms in the South where many enslaved Africans lived and worked to farm the land.

debate — A public argument about an issue or an idea.

Emancipation Proclamation — President Lincoln’s order in 1862 to free (emancipate) people who were enslaved.

memorial — Anything to help people to honor and remember some very important person or event.

suffrage — The right to vote.

discrimination — The unfair treatment of a person or a group of persons because of prejudice against characteristics such as race, ethnicity or national origin.

19th Amendment — The Constitutional amendment that gave women the right to vote.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Ask students to define the term “equal rights.” What does it mean to have “equal rights for all”? Ask students whether all people in the United States have always been treated equally.
- During much of the United States’ history, African Americans and girls and women did not have the same rights to get an education as white boys and men did. Ask students why it is important to go to school and get an education.
- Although our country was officially a democracy, most women could not vote until 1920. Explain to students why voting is important in the United States. Discuss why it would be wrong for some people in our country to be allowed to vote while others could not.
- Bring up the name of Abe Lincoln and ask students what comes to mind when they hear his name.

Focus Questions

1. What is the Bill of Rights? Why was it written?
2. Name five important rights that the Bill of Rights protects.
3. Who were the Quakers and how did they use the Bill of Rights?
4. Who were the abolitionists? What was their goal?
5. What did the 13th Amendment do?

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6. What was the Gettysburg Address?

7. What was unique about Abraham Lincoln’s education?

8. In the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. What did it say?

9. How were girls and women treated differently than boys and men when Susan B. Anthony was young?

10. What did Susan B. Anthony do, even though it was against the law? Why?

Follow-up Discussion

- Review the amendments of the Bill of Rights and the rights that each one guarantees. Which of these do students believe is the most important? Why?
- When Harriet Tubman helped slaves escape on the Underground Railroad and when Susan B. Anthony cast her vote in the presidential election of 1872, each broke laws that she felt were unjust. Eventually, these laws changed. Ask students to consider if and when people are justified in breaking laws that they feel are wrong. In many other countries, unfair laws cannot be changed. Ask students to discuss why it is important that we can change laws in the United States.
- Discuss Abraham Lincoln’s stated reason for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation: “The moment came when I felt that slavery must die, that the nation might live.” What did he mean?
- Abraham Lincoln is one of our country’s most revered presidents. Ask students to give as many reasons as they can think of for why this is so.
- It is often a long and grueling battle for people who are unfairly deprived of their rights to gain entitlement to them. Ask students to consider why it was so difficult and took so long for women to win the right to vote.

Follow-up Activities

- Ask the students to propose a list of rights to include in a Bill of Rights for their classroom or school. What guarantees do they think are important to ensure equal and fair treatment for all students? Why? Once the list has been generated, ask students to vote for the ten that they feel are most important.
- Share with your class short biographies of famous abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. Ask students to write several basic facts about each person. In what ways did each one fight against slavery? Ask students to compare and contrast the methods used by these abolitionists.

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