# Lesson plan example: 8th grade social studies, the Bill of Rights

Example 4 of 6 · 45 minutes · from draftmylesson.com/blog/lesson-plan-example

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| **Framework reference** | NCSS C3 D2.Civ.5.6-8. Explain the origins, functions, and structure of government with reference to the US Constitution, state constitutions, and selected other systems. Check your adopted state or district standards before using the code. |
| **Objective** | Students will match the first ten amendments to real-world scenarios with 80% accuracy and explain in writing which amendment best applies to a given case. |
| **Materials** | • One-page Bill of Rights reference sheet (plain language summaries)<br>• Ten scenario cards (one per amendment, drawn from school-appropriate news)<br>• Graphic organizer: "Scenario \| Amendment \| Why"<br>• Exit ticket slip |

| Step | Time | What happens |
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| **Hook** | 5 min | Read this scenario aloud: "A student is suspended for writing a blog post criticizing the principal." Pause. "Is that allowed?" Take three responses without correcting. Tell students the answer lives in a single document written in 1791. |
| **Direct instruction** | 12 min | Pass out the plain-language reference. Walk through amendments 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8. For each, give one modern example. Stress that the Bill of Rights restricts the government, not private actors. This is the number one student misconception. |
| **Guided practice** | 13 min | Pairs receive five scenario cards. They use the reference sheet to decide which amendment applies and write a one-sentence justification on the graphic organizer. Debrief two scenarios as a whole class, picking ones where students disagreed. |
| **Independent practice** | 12 min | Each student receives five new scenarios and completes the organizer alone. Tell them to flag any scenario where they think more than one amendment applies. Those are the most interesting cases. |
| **Exit ticket** | 3 min | One scenario, one answer. "Police search a student's locker without a warrant. Which amendment is at issue and what is the strongest argument the school could make in response?" |

## Why this works

The opening scenario forces students to take a position before they have the content, which makes them want the content. The reference sheet keeps cognitive load on application, not memorization. Flagging dual-amendment scenarios surfaces the nuance that distinguishes a B answer from an A answer on state assessments. Edutopia has additional civics scaffolds for lower readers.

Sources: https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf · https://www.edutopia.org/
Check the standard adopted by your state, district or school before teaching. Adapt timing and materials to your students.