Grade 8 Civics

Oak Meadow Coursebook

Oak Meadow, Inc.

Post Office Box 1346 Brattleboro, Vermont 05302-1346 oakmeadow.com

Item #b086010



Contents

Introduction

General Guidelinesvii						
Research and Other Materials Neededix A Note About Research and Reportsix Keep Your Materials in a Special Placex						
				Lessons		
				Lesson 1: What is Civics?	1	
Lesson 2: Why Do We Need Government? Values and Rules	5					
Lesson 3: America's Political Heritage State Constitutions The Articles of Confederation The Constitutional Convention	13					
Lesson 4: The Constitution	19					
Lesson 5: The Bill of Rights The Bill of Rights	25					
Lesson 6: Freedom of Religion	33					

Introduction Grade 8 Civics

Lesson 7: What Does Freedom of Religion Mean? 3	39
Lesson 8: Citizenship	17
Lesson 9: Immigrants	51
Lesson 10: Helping Others	51
Lesson 11: Information and Freedom	59
Lesson 12: Duties & Responsibilities of Citizenship 7	75
Lesson 13: Political Parties	31
Lesson 14: The Executive Branch	39
Lesson 15: The Legislative Branch 9 Powers of Congress Congress in Action	€7
Lesson 16: The Judicial Branch)7
Lesson 17: Voting and Voting Rights 11	15
Lesson 18: State Government	27
Lesson 19: State Legislature	35
Lesson 20: State Judiciaries	11

iv Oak Meadow

Grade 8 Civics Introduction

Lesson 21: Criminal Justice	151
Lesson 22: Local Government Local Issues	157
Lesson 23: Champions of Freedom Local Champions	163
Lesson 24: Community Leaders Community Programs Good Neighbors	167
Lesson 25: Land Use & the Environment Zoning Planned Developments Property Rights Public Lands	171
Lesson 26: Pollution & Recycling Local Industries	179
Lesson 27: Disability Awareness	183
Lesson 28: Physical Fitness & Public Health Household Safety	193
Lesson 29: Family Life	201
Lesson 30: Careers	207
Lesson 31: Budgeting Payroll Taxes Income Taxes Balancing a Checkbook	213
Lesson 32: Advertising Contracts The Economy	221

Introduction Grade 8 Civics

Lesson 33: Decision Making
Lesson 34: Relationships & Communication
Lesson 35: Using Anger Constructively 24 Mediation
Lesson 36: Final Words

vi Oak Meadow



America's Political Heritage

Before the pilgrims left the *Mayflower* in November of 1620 and set foot on land along the coast of Massachusetts, the men held an important meeting. Shocked to discover themselves far from the Virginia colony where they had planned to settle, they realized that they were not going to be part of an established colony with existing laws and leaders, but of their own community in which they would have to decide their own laws and leaders.

In this historic meeting these men, who had always lived in a country where laws were imposed on them by others, made an agreement that "just and equal" laws would be made for the "general good of the colony." We remember this agreement today as the Mayflower Compact.



signing the Mayflower Compact

The Mayflower Compact said, in part, "We whose names are underwritten.... covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony..."

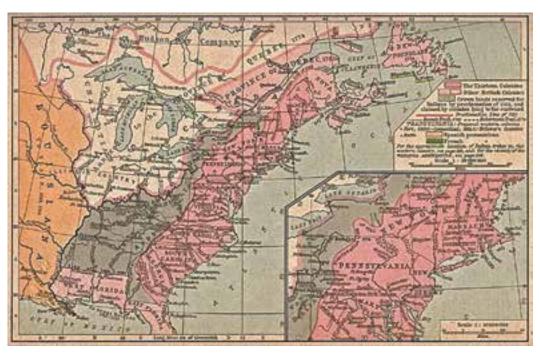
These pilgrims didn't set out to create their own government, but were forced to do so. They were far from their "mother country" of England, and in order to create peaceful coexistence in their new land, rules of some kind were required.

By 1750 there were three different kinds of colonies in America. The *royal colonies* (Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York,

Lesson 3 Grade 8 Civics

America's Political Heritage

(continued)



the British Colonies in 1775

North and South Carolina, and Virginia), were ruled directly by Britain through a royal governor and council who were appointed by the king. The colonists elected their own lower council which had limited freedom. The governor was able to veto decisions by the lower council, but the lower council couldn't veto decisions by the higher council or the governor. As time went on, these colonists became increasingly frustrated and angry about their lack of decision-making power.

Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were *proprietary colonies*. They were ruled by individuals or groups who had been given grants of land by the King of England. The king was still the ultimate ruler in these colonies, but the proprietors had a great deal of freedom. They appointed the upper council or legislature and the governor, and the colonists themselves elected the lower council. As in the royal colonies, the governor could veto decisions made by the lower legislature.

The King of England granted a charter to groups of settlers in some colonies which allowed them to create their own government. Connecticut and Rhode Island were *charter colonies*. The charter colonies elected their own governors and both councils, or houses. In these colonies the king could approve or disapprove the choice of governor, but the governor had no power to veto the decisions of the councils.

In each of these types of colonies, the citizens elected representatives to a special council whose job was to make the laws. This council or house was called the *legislature*. Although the colonies had some freedom in this system, they were still subject to the authority of England and the approved governor. Gradually they became more interested in seizing their own authority, and on July 4, 1776, the colonies declared themselves free from English rule.

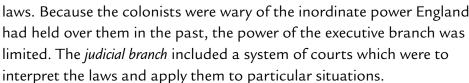
1. Read the Mayflower Compact (you can find it in an encyclopedia, World Book or Internet source), and then rewrite it, using your own words. What principles and values does it mention?

State Constitutions

While the Declaration of Independence was being presented to the British government by the colonies as a group, each individual colony was also working to organize their own state government and to create a state

constitution. Each of these state constitutions proclaimed that the government is run by the people; seven of the colonies included a special section called a "bill of rights," which specified certain rights that each person was to have.

Three separate branches of government were established for each state, each with its own area of responsibility. The *legislative branch*, whose responsibility it was to make the laws, had the most power. The *executive branch* had the power and responsibility to enforce the



2. Find a copy of the Declaration of Independence and read it. Focus on the third section, where the writers listed a number of grievances against the King of England. Describe at least ten principles of good government that you find in these grievances.

America's Political Heritage

(continued)

being presented to the British individual colony was also lent and to create a state	
inordinate power England the executive branch was of courts which were to lar situations.	
endence and read it. Focus sted a number of grievances least ten principles of good	

Lesson 3 Grade 8 Civics

America's Political Heritage

(continued)

The Articles of Confederation

The American Revolution was won in 1783. The United States became an independent country with thirteen states, but as you have read above, there was no constitution or group of laws that operated in all thirteen states.

There was no central government at that time, so the Continental Congress (a group of men gathered together specifically for this purpose) created a plan called the *Articles of Confederation*. The Articles of Confederation were supposed to unite the colonies in "friendship with each other, for the common defense, the security of their Liberties, and their mutual and general



George Washington

welfare..." Under the Articles, each state retained most of its own power; because of their experiences with England, the colonists were still cautious and concerned about the possibility of a central government having too much authority over them.

While the Articles of Confederation were an important first step toward uniting the colonies, they fell far short. Under this arrangement the Congress had no authority to make anyone obey the laws. It had no power to charge taxes, so couldn't raise any money to establish programs to benefit the colonies. There was no money even to build a navy to protect American ships from pirates! In fact, there wasn't even any standard form of money from one state to another, because most states printed their own paper money and some states used tobacco or whiskey instead of the coins and bills we consider to be money.

The states began to argue with each other and several of them almost entered into war about issues involving land boundaries, taxes, and trading. Leaders such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, who had helped to bring the new nation to independence, started to speak out about the need for a stronger national government which would unify all of the states.

3. Briefly research the Articles of Confederation and discuss two strengths (or accomplishments) and two weaknesses (or failures) of this plan.

The Constitutional Convention

The 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia was called to consider the organization of a new government. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison were there along with others of the group we now remember as the "Founding Fathers." There were 55 delegates from twelve states. James Madison boasted that he didn't miss a single day of meetings! Patrick Henry, on the other hand, whom we remember for his statements, "Give me liberty or give me death," and "Taxation without representation is tyranny," during the time of turmoil before the American Revolution, refused to attend at all because he did not believe in the idea of a strong federal government. He was concerned that it would put too much power in one place. Rhode Island felt the same way, and did not send a delegate to the convention.

James Madison proposed a framework for a strong national government with three branches (similar to the system the individual states were currently operating under). He called for the existing alliance of independent states to be replaced by a strong national government. Many of the delegates feared that this would take away important powers from the states. The states were used to controlling their own affairs as they had done under the Articles of Confederation.

It was a long, hot summer as the delegates argued back and forth, trying to protect their rights and foresee problems that might arise in the future. They had to determine how much power would be in the hands of individuals and how much in the hands of the government. They had to decide whether large states would have more power than smaller ones and if so, how the rights of smaller states could be protected. They had to figure out how one government could meet the needs of people from all walks of life and all parts of the country. The convention went on for four months, and when it was over, a new form of government, not quite like any that had existed before in the world, emerged. This new government is embodied in the Constitution of the United States.

4. Select one of the men who was instrumental in developing either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States.

America's Political Heritage

continue	eu)		

Lesson 3 Grade 8 Civics

America's Political Heritage

(continued)

- Write a brief biography of this man, highlighting his contribution to the development of government in this country.
- 5. Complete the journal you started last week about the laws you follow in daily life.
- 6. Complete the discussion you began last week of laws that have resulted from values held by Americans.
- 7. Extra reading idea:
- From Colonies to Country: A History of US, by Joy Hakim



Benjamin Franklin



The Constitution

The challenge that faced the delegates at the Constitutional Convention was to establish a strong national government without making the states weak. With the new governmental system that emerged, Americans would be citizens of both the national government and the government of their own particular state. Some of the power would be held by the federal government, so it could make some laws to be applied to the whole country. Other powers would be kept by each of the state governments, to make laws that would apply to the people in that state.

There was also a great deal of debate and discussion about the decision making power of the northern states versus the southern states. These two parts of the country had very different geographies, types of crops, and economies. While the North ran small farms, factories, fishing and trapping operations, the South grew cotton, tobacco, and used slaves on large plantations. Each side feared that a federal government would pass

laws regulating shipping and trading that would have negative effects on it. More important was the issue of slavery. There were many slaves in the South, and southern states wanted to include them in the population count so they could have more representation in the new government. At the same time, the southern states didn't want to count the slaves in the population when it came to determining federal taxes. In opposition, the northern states argued that slaves shouldn't be counted in determining the number of representatives in the new federal government, because the slaves were treated as property, not as people. At



Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Constitutional Convention met

Lesson 4 Grade 8 Civics

The Constitution

(continued)

the same time, the North wanted to include slaves in the population count so that more taxes could be collected from the southern states. A strange compromise was reached: it was decided that five slaves would be counted as three people in deciding how many representatives each state could have, and how much tax would be demanded from each state. A slave was not constitutionally considered to be equal to one whole person until 1865!

The basic framework proposed by James Madison was finally adopted in principle. It provided for a strong national government with three



Patrick Henry addresses the Constitutional Congress

branches (similar to the system the individual states were currently operating under). These branches are the Legislative, the Executive, and the Judicial Branches. You will be learning more about each of these in turn later.

It was also decided that the Legislative Branch would be a two-house legislature, or Congress. The two houses of Congress would be the House of Representatives and the Senate. In order for a law to pass, both the Senate and the House of Representatives would have to approve it. The House of Representatives would be elected based upon the state's population, so a larger state would have more Representatives. In the Senate, however, each state would have two Senators regardless of population, so the small states would be represented. This plan, along with the issue of how to count slaves, became known as the Great Compromise. Each side gave up part of what it wanted in order to reach an agreement that would benefit both.

In addition to the Legislative Branch, which would make the laws, the Executive Branch was established to enforce the law, and make sure it was carried out properly. In addition, a Judicial Branch was established to act as the interpreter of federal law and the Constitution. The convention finally drew to a close with 38 delegates signing the Constitution on September 17, 1787.

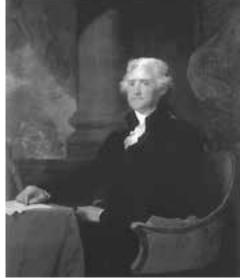
Next, the new Constitution had to be ratified or accepted by at least nine states. Immediately, strong opposition arose to this Constitution. Its supporters, which included Alexander Hamilton and James Madison and many others, were known as Federalists because they supported a strong federal, or national, government.

Anti-Federalists, such as Patrick Henry, felt that a strong central government would endanger the people's liberties. According to them, a federal government that met so far away from local communities could not truly be called government by consent of the people. The anti-Federalists believed that representatives of the government should meet in a location close to the people they were protecting and serving. They were concerned that the people themselves would not be properly protected from the federal government. The statement in the Constitution that caused the anti-Federalists the most difficulty was, "Congress shall have the power to make laws necessary and proper to carry out its stated powers." They felt that a strong national government might eventually swallow up the state governments.

Thomas Jefferson, who was in Europe during the Constitutional Convention and therefore didn't attend, agreed with many concerned people, particularly the anti-Federalists, that a Bill of Rights, which would detail specific rights or liberties for the American people, should be added to the Constitution. Many argued that the Constitution should not be ratified without it, but eventually it was agreed that the Bill of Rights could be

added later. The Constitution was finally ratified in mid-1788, and the Bill of Rights was added in 1791.

- 1. Choose one of these assignments:
 - a. Learn about one or two
 Federalists and one or two
 anti-Federalists. Write at
 least two pages, discussing
 these men's particular viewpoints and concerns. What
 role did each of them play
 in helping America gain
 independence? What role



Thomas Jefferson

The Constitution

(continued)

Lesson 4 Grade 8 Civics

The Constitution

(continued)

did they each play in the establishing of the new government? What were their arguments and concerns about a strong central government versus strong state governments?

- b. Compose a discussion between at least one Federalist and one Anti-Federalist. Using correct punctuation for dialogue, engage these men in a conversation which makes their opinions and ideas clear to each other and to your reader. Write at least one full page, single spaced.
- c. If you had lived during the time when the Constitution was being written, would you have been a Federalist or an Anti-Federalist? Explain your answer and include specific examples to back up your opinion.

The Preamble (introduction) to the Constitution states the goals of our government:

- To form a more perfect union. (To unite the thirteen separate states under one central government.)
- To establish justice through the legal system. (To have a system of laws that would be used to settle conflicts in a court of law.)
- To ensure domestic tranquillity. (To establish a peaceful society in which people in all the states are protected.)
- To provide for the common defense. (To be able to protect individuals and the society from enemies, and to establish an army.)
- To promote the general welfare. (To work for the health, prosperity, and happiness of the citizens; done through many institutions such as the Post Office, Social Security Administration, Food and Drug Administration, etc.)
- To secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. (The freedom to choose both for ourselves and our descendants; current and future citizens are free and are protected by the Constitution.)
- 2. Choose one of these assignments:
 - a. Copy, by hand, the Preamble to the Constitution. The Preamble may be found in an encyclopedia or from an Internet resource. (Note: The Constitution is a *primary* source of information.

It is the original document, not a discussion about an original document.)

b. Memorize the
Preamble to the
Constitution and
present it orally
(on tape) for your
teacher to hear.
(If you like, you can



ratifying the Constitution

play dramatic or patriotic music in the background during the

3. Choose one of these assignments to complete:

taping of your speech.)

- a. Choose the goal described in the Preamble to the Constitution that you think is the most important one. Discuss your opinion, offering details and examples. Write at least one page, single spaced.
- b. Are there additional goals that you think should be added to the Preamble? What are they? Why are they important enough to be added? Write a page about your ideas.

Following the Preamble is the plan for our government. This plan is organized into seven parts called *Articles*. A series of Amendments (additions) follow the seven Articles. The first ten Amendments are called the *Bill of Rights* and were added in response to the concerns of the anti-Federalists. Since the Bill of Rights was included, there have been only seventeen other Amendments.

- 4. Extra reading ideas:
- Ssh! We're Writing the Constitution, by Jean Fritz

The Constitution

(continued)

zed	
w	
ce	

Lesson 4 Grade 8 Civics

Notes



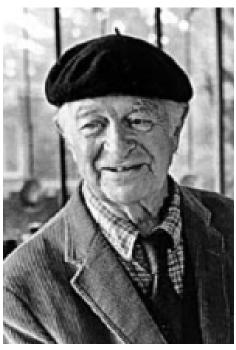
Champions of Freedom

Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. President from 1933-45, once said, "Freedom from war is ideally linked with freedom from want." Both Franklin and his wife, Eleanor, were tireless champions of his dream of "peace and a more abundant life for the peoples of the world." Eleanor Roosevelt became the world's foremost spokesperson for human rights.

Dr. Linus Pauling, a chemist who won the Nobel Prize for his work in antibiotics, filed suit against the U.S. Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, and their counterparts, to protest their right to conduct nuclear bomb tests. Dr. Pauling wrote a book entitled *No More War*, encouraging people to find peaceful ways to coexist. He believed that the way to avert nuclear war was to begin making safe, just, and effective international agreements, and that the first of these should involve the ending



Eleanor Roosevelt



Dr. Linus Pauling

Lesson 23 Grade 8 Civics

Champions of Freedom

(continued)



Nelson Mandela

of all nuclear weapons tests. Needless to say, he was not very popular in many circles. One city paper even commented philosophically, "Nonconformists often play a lone role in our society, but society for its own health needs them."

Martin Luther King, Jr. was another tireless champion of freedom, leading the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s with peace and dignity. Nelson Mandela continues the fight for freedom for all Africans as the President of South Africa today. Mother Theresa,

who died in 1997, was a nun who worked nearly all her life to help poor children living in the streets of Calcutta, India.

The United Nations was formed in order to promote peaceful relationships among nations of the world.

1. Cut out newspaper or magazine articles this week about the United Nations. At the end of the week, write a brief summary about the many activities of the U.N. in the world today.

NOTE: If you are unable to find news of the U.N. this week, keep looking until you find at least five articles. Keep your teacher informed of your progress, and send your summary when you have collected at least five articles to discuss.

Extra project idea:

 Choose one of the "champions of freedom" mentioned above, or someone else in whom you have an interest, and learn about him or her.
 Write a brief report about this person's altruistic work.



General Assembly, United Nations headquarters

Local Champions

Your local fire department helps you to live without fear. You know that they are there to help should you need them.

- 2. Write a report on the fire department in your community, and include responses to the following:
 - a. How is your local fire department organized? What are the various ranks within the department? What career opportunities exist within the fire department?
 - b. Describe some of the ways in which the fire department is involved in your community.
 - c. What are the requirements for becoming a firefighter?
 - d. If you can, interview a firefighter. How, or why, did this person choose this career? What does he or she find most rewarding about being a firefighter? What problems does he or she encounter; what are the negative aspects of the jo the same career choice again?

There are police officers at every level of govern for city police departments. Police officers are a Their job includes protecting people's lives and



neigh prop lawb ticket the fl highv and h and o

Champions of Freedom

(continued)

is does lie of sile elicounter,	
ob? Would he or she make	
ment. Most of them work	
llso called "Peace Officers."	
property, patrolling	
borhoods, finding stolen	
erty, finding and arresting	
reakers, writing traffic	
ts and helping to control	
ow of traffic on streets and	
vays, dealing with disputes,	
nelping to maintain peace	
order in the community.	

Lesson 23 Grade 8 Civics

Champions of Freedom

(continued)

- 3. Write a report on the police department in your community. In this report, include responses to the following:
 - a. How is your local police department organized? What are the various ranks and jobs within the department? What are some of the career opportunities within the police department?
 - b. Describe some of the many ways your police force is involved in the community.
 - c. What are the requirements for becoming a policeman?
 - d. If you can, interview a police officer. How, or why, did this person choose this career? What does he or she find most rewarding about being a police officer? What problems does he or she encounter; what are the negative aspects of the job? Would this officer make the same career choice again?

4. Extra project idea:

• Find out about the emergency medical response unit in your area. If you can, visit its headquarters, and interview an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic. Find out about his or her job; its rewards and problems. What is the hardest part about the job? What makes it worthwhile?





Community Leaders

You have learned a lot about the way your community functions. It is every citizen's duty to understand how the government works, what opportunities are available to the community and its individuals, and what the issues of the community are. Finally, it is every citizen's responsibility to vote, as each vote makes a difference in local, state and national outcomes. Every person makes a difference in the local community.

 Write a two-page report on a person who has made a difference in the quality of life in your community. Interview this person face-to-face. If this is not possible, a telephone conversation is acceptable.

If it is not possible to speak with the person you would like to write about, either find another person to research, or find another way to gain the information you need in order to complete the assignment. You may have to speak with people who work closely with the person you are interested in.



teaching bicycle safety

If it is truly impossible to write about someone in your own community, you may select someone else, anywhere in the world, who is currently alive and actively involved in contributing to the quality of life in his or her community or in the world.

Generate your own list of questions to ask before you begin the interview. As you talk to this person, make notes about the following points to include in your report:

Lesson 24 Grade 8 Civics

Community Leaders

(continued)



collecting for a food bank

- a. Character: Give specific examples of this person's character traits and how these are manifested in his or her actions.
- b. Ideals: How does this person live his or her ideals? How does his or her life portray these ideals?
- c. Achievements: Give examples of past achievements, and ideas this person has for future contributions and projects.

Community Programs

There are many wonderful programs in most communities that are designed to help the people of that community. The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) trains young people for search and rescue in emergencies. The SHARE program offers people a monthly grocery allotment from surplus food for a nominal cost, in return for two hours of public service each month. This is available to all people, regardless of income. Some communities also have special programs for senior citizens, the homeless, or others in need.



2. Write a one-page report on CAP, SHARE, or any other program that benefits members of your community. If you are unaware of such an organization, ask your local librarian, city hall, or Chamber of Commerce for ideas. If your



Community Leaders

(continued)

community has no such organization, research a national service organization that you have not learned about already.

Good Neighbors

This week, we want you to be a good citizen of your neighborhood. Some of the ways to do this are:

- Protect a neighbor's newspaper when it is about to rain.
- Keep your pets and other belongings out of your neighbor's yard.
- Take a neighbor a gift of flowers you picked or food you prepared.
- Help your neighbors do yard work or offer to cut it for them when they are ill or out of town.
- Give a neighbor something from your garden.
- · Run an errand for a neighbor.
- Visit an elderly neighbor who lives alone and might enjoy company.
- Clean up around your neighborhood to make it look better.

Offer to help a mother with young children with childcare,

chores, or errands.

3. Choose a minimum of three neighborly acts and do them this week. Perhaps you thought of ways to be helpful that were not included in the above list. Write a report of your experience.



Lesson 24 Grade 8 Civics

Community Leaders

(continued)

What did you do? How did you feel after being a good neighbor? What was your neighbor's response? How can you continue to be a good neighbor?

A good citizen is not only a good neighbor, but is also a good family member.

4. Do several secret good deeds to help one or more members of your family this week. Tell your teacher about it. Were you able to keep your identity a secret? Don't worry if you weren't. The main point was to do something nice for your family!

