

# COMMON CORE CURRICULUM MAPS || ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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## ESSENTIAL QUESTION



**Why is it important to choose words carefully for government documents?**

### Standards Checklist

Grade 3 ▶ Unit 6

# The People, The Preamble, and the Presidents

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## OVERVIEW

- Building on knowledge of the notable people in the last unit, students read informational texts about the people who came to America and established a new government in the eighteenth century. They read about the lives of presidents, research one president of interest, and write a "bio-poem" (i.e., a biography in poem form). Finally, students create and perform a cumulative choral reading of the Preamble and memorize it for an oral recitation.

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## FOCUS STANDARDS

- These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
- **RI.3.8:** Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, [and] first/second/third in a sequence).

- **RI.3.4:** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
- **SL.3.3:** Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
- **RF.3.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- **RF.3.4(b):** Read on-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, [at the] appropriate rate, and [with] expression on successive readings.
- **W.3.7:** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- **L.3.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 3 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **L.3.4(d):** Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

Common Core State Standards, ELA (1.5 MB)

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## SUGGESTED STUDENT OBJECTIVES

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- Ask and answer questions of a speaker invited to discuss immigration.
- Sequence the events of *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration* (Betsy Maestro and Suzannah Ryan).
- Define key words in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- Create an acrostic poem for a key word in the Preamble, demonstrating study of the definition.
- Dramatically read the Preamble in collaboration with classmates through a cumulative choral reading.
- Orally recite the Preamble.
- Study the illustrations in *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution* (David Catrow) to demonstrate the role of the illustrator in illuminating meaning of text.
- Compare and contrast two similar books on the presidents.
- Research a president and write a "bio-poem" with information gathered.

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## SUGGESTED WORKS

- (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

### LITERARY TEXTS

## Stories

- *Woodrow for President: A Tail of Voting, Campaigns, and Elections* (Peter J. and Cheryl Shaw Barnes)
- *Arthur Meets the President: An Arthur Adventure* (Marc Brown)
- *Otto Runs for President* (Rosemary Wells)
- *The Garden on Green Street* (Meish Goldish)
- *Vote!* (Eileen Christelow)

## Poems (Read Aloud)

- "The Star-Spangled Banner" (Francis Scott Key)
- *The Star-Spangled Banner* (Francis Scott Key)
- "The Flag Goes By" (H.H. Bennett)
- "George Washington" (Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet)
- "Washington Monument by Night" (Carl Sandburg) (EA)
- "A Nation's Strength" (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

## INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

### Informational Text

- *So You Want to Be President?* (Judith St. George and David Small) (E)
- *14 Cows for America* (Carmen Agra Deedy, Thomas Gonzalez, and Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah) (E)

### Informational Texts (Read Aloud)

- *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration* (Betsy Maestro and Suzannah Ryan)
- *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution* (David Catrow)
- *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution* (Jean Fritz and Tomie dePaola)
- *...If You Were There When They Signed The Constitution* (Elizabeth Levy and Joan Holub)
- *James Madison: Fourth President 1809-1817* (Mike Venezia)
- *The Presidency* (Scholastic, A True Book: Government) (Patricia Ryon Quiri)
- *The Presidency* (Scholastic, True Books) (Christine Taylor-Butler)
- *Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame (and What the Neighbors Thought)* (Kathleen Krull and Kathryn Hewitt)
- *Smart About the Presidents* (Smart About History) (Jon Buller, Susan Schade, Maryann Cocca-Leffler, Dana Regan, and Jill Weber)
- *Remember the Ladies: 100 Great American Women* (Cheryl Harness)

## ART, MUSIC, AND MEDIA

### Art

Washington

- Emanuel Leutze, Washington Crossing the Delaware (1851)
- Gilbert Stuart, George Washington (1796)

Adams

- John Trumbull, John Adams (1792-1793)

Jefferson

- Jean Antoine Houdon, [Bust of Thomas Jefferson](#) (1789)

Lincoln

- Daniel Chester French, [Lincoln Memorial](#) (1922)

Kennedy

- Aaron Shikler, [Oil Portrait of John F. Kennedy \(Official Portrait\)](#) (1970)
- Robert Rauschenberg, [Retroactive 1](#) (1964)

Reagan

- artist unknown, [Reagan Inaugural Parade](#) (1981)

Clinton

- Simmie Knox, [Bill Clinton \(Official Portrait\)](#) (2004)
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## SAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS

- **Note:** For the “people” part of this unit, bring in as many immigration stories, through texts and speakers (especially parents and grandparents), as you can to represent the students in your class. (SL.3.3)

### Class Discussion / Language

Introduce the unit by writing the three key words on the board: “people,” “preamble,” and “presidency.” As you work through each word (possibly over a few days /class periods), give students a copy of a [semantic map](#) and display yours (on an overhead projector, document camera, or SMART Board, for example). Using dictionaries for reference, begin with the word “people.” To ensure full participation, require each student to “turn and talk” about each part of the map before filling in the spaces. Maps such as these create a richer understanding of a word they already know (e.g., “people”) by looking at parts of speech and the word’s synonyms. (L.3.1b, L.3.1c, L.3.4b, RF.3.3a, L.3.4d, L.3.6)

### Language

Divide students into groups of three or four and give them one of the key words (“people,” “Preamble,” or “presidency”). Ask them to write the word on a poster in large bold print. Then have them use their semantic maps to create symbols, pictures, and words (synonyms) that illustrate the rich meaning of each word. Hang the posters around the room to refer to throughout the unit. (L.3.1b, L.3.1c, L.3.4b, RF.3.3a, L.3.4d, L.3.6)

### Class Discussion / Literature

Introduce the book *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration* (Betsy Maestro and Suzannah Ryan) as telling the story of immigration. Tell students that America is unique because so many people have come from so many different backgrounds. To understand how all of these people groups came to the same place, challenge students to think about the sequence of events in America’s history. Define “chronological order” and relate it to something like your daily schedule or school calendar. As you read the book aloud, have students jot down important events on Post-Its, keeping them in “chronological order.” Ask them also to be thinking about why we might need to have rules to guide our government. (You can extend this lesson to discuss those government rules by pausing on page 14, where students will notice how many people were living together in the growing cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Charleston, Baltimore, and New Orleans. As the page turns, students will see how people started moving west and there was a need for

different laws. Use this to launch a discussion of the need for a central government.) (RI.3.8, RI.3.4, SL.3.1, L.3.5b)

### **Dramatic Reading / Fluency**

Divide the class into eight groups to perform a cumulative choral reading of the Preamble to the Constitution. Have the first group read to the comma, the second group read to the next comma, etc. Continue adding voices/phrases until the whole class is reading the Preamble. Students will quickly and naturally memorize the Preamble and can perform it independently as an oral recitation. (RF.3.3c, RF.3.4, RF.3.4b)

### **Language Activity / Acrostic Poem**

Using the formatted Preamble text below, give students the following instructions: "Choose a key word (in bold) from the Preamble. Look up the meaning in the dictionary, practice using it in a sentence, and then create an acrostic poem showing what the word means. Include defining phrases, simple similes, or synonyms in the poems." You may want to do one as a class example and then have the students work independently or put the students with partners to complete the task. (RI.3.4, W.3.10, L.3.2g, L.3.4d, W.3.2b, SL.3.1)

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect **Union**, establish **Justice**, insure 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.*

### **Class Discussion / Literature**

Using the book *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution* (David Catrow) discuss the role of an illustrator in telling a story. Showing only the illustrations (by, for example, covering the text with Post-Its), have the students concoct a story aloud and together. After the students have created a story, show them that the text for the book is actually the Preamble to the Constitution. Together, read the book again to see how each illustration illustrates the meaning of a phrase. (RL.3.7, SL.3.1)

### **Class Discussion / Informational Text**

Choose two books about presidents for the students to compare and contrast, such as *So You Want to Be a President?* and *Lives of the Presidents*. Ask students the following questions:

- In what ways are the two books similar?
- How are they different?
- Did you feel that any of the humorous comments made about the presidents were inappropriate? (Note: Be sure they quote from the text to back up their opinion.) (RI.3.9, RI.3.6, RI.3.1, SL.3.1)

### **Research / Informational Writing**

Give the students this prompt: "Choose one president that interests you from the books we've read about the presidents. Research the president using online sources, an encyclopedia, and a biography (of him). Then, write a poem about him (called a "bio-poem" for a poem that is a biography) based on your research. Use the following format to organize your poem. Use the process of revising and editing before publishing your work." (Note: The example below about George Washington is for you, though you may decide to share it with the class to explain the activity.) (W.3.7, W.3.10, W.3.2, W.3.5, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, W.3.6)

*Formatting guidelines:*

Line 1: First, Middle, and Last Name

Line 2: Four jobs held by the man during his life (other than presidency)

Line 3: Birthplace, Child of  
Line 4: Lover of  
Line 5: Educated  
Line 6: Resident of  
Line 7: Three contributions  
Line 8: Number order of president (ordinal number)  
Line 9: Nickname

*Sample poem:*

*George Washington  
Surveyor, Planter, Soldier, Commander  
Born in Virginia, son of Mary  
Lover of Martha, math, and farming  
Educated in elementary school  
Resident of Mount Vernon  
Revolutionary commander, government creator, humble leader  
First president  
Father of our Country*

### **Class Discussion / Art Connection**

Select three or four works. Begin a class discussion by asking students if they can identify the subject in each work. Then ask students to describe the choices that the artist has made to convey each subject's importance.

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### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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- [The Preamble to the Constitution: How do You Make a more Perfect Union?](#) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RI.3.4)
- [Voting! What's It All About?](#) Voting! What's It All About? (ReadWriteThink) (RI.3.9)  
Note: This lesson is about the difference between fact and opinion.
- [Hands-On Presidential Activity: Children Write to the President](#) (Smithsonian, National Museum of American History) (W.3.4)
- [What Happens in the White House?](#) (National Endowment for the Humanities)
- [A President's Home and the President's House](#) (National Endowment for the Humanities)
- [How Was the White House Designed?](#) (National Endowment for the Humanities)
- *Schoolhouse Rock "Preamble"* (1976)
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### **TERMINOLOGY**

- 
- bio-poem

- chronological order
- cumulative choral reading
- define
- definition
- dictionary
- sequence
- synonyms

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## MAKING INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

- **This unit teaches:**

- Art: portraiture, Gilbert Stuart, Daniel Chester French
- **Geography:** U.S. geography (e.g., as related to immigration and migration)
- **History:** U.S. Constitution (g.g., James Madison and the Preamble), immigration, and the presidency

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

- **Geography:** Early American settlements
- **History:** Colonial times (e.g., focus on life before the first presidency)

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