

West Virginia Studies Resource Development

Title of Lesson: The West Virginia Constitution of 1863
Grade level: 8th Grade
Summary: In this lesson, students will work to analyze the text of the 1863 West Virginia Constitution. Students will analyze the various ideals covered in the document, and will consider the reasoning behind the inclusion of the various components of the document. Students will also compare and contrast the document to the United States Constitution to draw conclusions on similarities and differences between the two governing documents.
WV CCR Social Studies Standards: SS.8.3: Identify, analyze and evaluate the responsibilities, privileges and rights of citizens of the state of West Virginia found in the state and national constitutions. SS.8.4: Differentiate between the division of powers and responsibilities for each of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of the United States and West Virginia governments, describe the system of checks and balances, and explore local forms of government. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the functions and jurisdictions of the federal, state, local and special courts (e.g., United States Supreme Court, state supreme court, circuit courts, magistrate courts and family courts).• Cite the elected officials at the national, state and local levels, the constitutional requirements for election and responsibilities of each office.• Explain the amendment process of the <i>West Virginia Constitution</i>, give examples of amendments, and explain their purpose.• Explain the process of how a bill becomes a law in West Virginia.• Identify and explain the various types of elections in West Virginia (e.g., primary/general, state/local and partisan/non-partisan).• Compare and contrast the relationship and function of local, county, state and national governments. SS.8.22: Demonstrate an understanding of the American Civil War including its causes, effects, and the major events that led to West Virginia statehood. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the effects of key events leading to western Virginia's separation from Virginia after secession (e.g., First and Second Wheeling Conventions and John Brown's Raid).• Describe the moral, ethical, and legal tensions that led to the creation of the new state of West Virginia and how these tensions were resolved (e.g., Virginia vs. West Virginia 1871).• Compare and contrast the military strategies of the North and South with regard to specific events and geographic locations in West Virginia (e.g., the Battle of Philippi, Rich Mountain, Droop Mountain, Battle of Scary Creek and Battle of Carnifex Ferry).• Identify significant contributions of men and women of West Virginia during the Civil War and identify the roles of ethnic and racial minorities.

Essential Question (content):

- What are the similarities and differences between the US and WV Constitutions?
- Do both the US and WV Constitution emphasize the same ideals?
- What inspirations did the drafters of the WV Constitution draw upon when creating the 1863 Constitution?
- Does the WV Constitution address all appropriate areas, or are there areas of weakness?

Students will be able to do (skills):

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will understand the motivations and reasons behind the creation of the 1863 West Virginia Constitution. Students will also understand the areas of state government which arguably were deemed more important than others when considering the amount of the document dedicated to each subject. Students will also understand the amendment process for the West Virginia Constitution and identify any potential areas in which the document could be changed or revised.

Materials & Resources:

- **Copy of the WV Constitution of 1863**
<http://archive.wvculture.org/history/statehood/constitution.html>
- **This Week in WV History Recording on the 1863 Constitution**
<https://mpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/34ce2941-20e1-4e12-8a5d-56308c2d480e/this-week-in-west-virginia-history-march-26-wv-constitution/>
- **WV e-Encyclopedia Article on the Constitutional Convention of 1861-1863**
<https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1566>
- **Mapping the WV Constitution Worksheet**
- **Colored Pencils**
- **Calculators**
- **Mobile Computer Lab**

Learning Plan:

1. Students will begin the lesson by listening to the 2 minute clip from PBS Learning Media about the 1863 Constitution of West Virginia. This will serve to introduce the topic to the class.
2. Students will then quickly read and discuss the WV e-Encyclopedia article on the Constitutional Convention of 1861-1863.
3. Students will access a copy of the 1863 WV Constitution and complete a charting exercise inspired by an exercise from the National Archives on mapping the percentage of words in each Article of the Constitution.
4. Students will then participate in a class discussion on their complete charts to understand why certain areas of the Constitution were given more attention than others.
5. After analyzing the 1863 Constitution, students will identify 1 idea or subject they feel is missing from the document.
6. Working with a partner, students will research their idea and compose an amendment to propose to the WV Constitution of 1863.
7. Students will present their amendments to the class, as well as their arguments for their inclusion in the Constitution. As a class, students will vote on each amendment and identify the ones they feel would be worthy additions to the WV Constitution of 1863.

8. Students will conclude the lesson by discussing the Constitutional Convention of 1872 to understand that changes were indeed made to the document.

Checking for Understanding:

Students will demonstrate their comprehension of the lesson's activities through their participation in class discussions on the Constitution of 1863 and their completion of the mapping exercise. Students will also demonstrate their comprehension of the legislative process through their class presentations and votes on the proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Accommodations:

Accommodations for the lesson may include providing students with the calculated percentages of the words in the WV Constitution. Students could then be asked to just complete the rest of the chart and the colored grid exercise. Students could also be assigned a topic to research for an amendment to the Constitution rather than developing their own. Advanced students could consider the current WV constitution and develop an amendment or piece of legislation based on that document. Those students could contact legislators and dive deeper into the legislative process.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Word Mapping the West Virginia Constitution of 1863

Directions: Using the chart below and the copy of the 1863 West Virginia Constitution found at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/constitution.html>, calculate the percentage of words each article of the WV Constitution represents. Additionally, use the text of the Constitution to identify the main subject or topic of each article. Then, using the percentages you calculated, complete the grid below by coloring squares to represent the percentage of each article. Each square in the grid equals 1 percent. You may need to round up or down to complete the grid.

Part of the Constitution	Number of Words	Percentage (of 10,540 Words)	Main Subject, Structure, or Power Addressed in Article
Article I	498		
Article II	801		
Article III	825		
Article IV	2290		
Article V	685		
Article VI	1202		
Article VII	1541		
Article VIII	459		
Article IX	489		
Article X	523		
Article XI	776		
Article XII	403		

