**Constitution USA Extra Credit Assignment**

**Watch the PBS Series *Constitution USA with Peter Sagal.* There are 4 one hour episodes that are available to stream at pbs.org. You can choose to only watch one or to watch them all. You must complete the questions for the episode(s) you watch on another piece of paper.**

**Episode 1: Federalism**

***Segment 1: Constitutional Battle Ground State***

Is it fair that a local business owner has to be caught between the laws of the state and federal government? Whom should he listen to?

Who wins—state or federal power? Why?

What did the Founding Fathers have in mind when they created a shared power system?

Why don’t DEA agents shut down the Harborside Health Center in Oakland, CA?

How could the Commerce Clause of the Constitution apply to medical marijuana?

Why does the owner believe it does not apply to Harborside?

***Segment 2: The Big Bang Theory…The United States Constitution***

Where is the Constitution?

How does it affect you?

Do you feel like we govern ourselves?

After fighting a war to leave a strong government (Britain), why did the Founding Fathers want to create a strong government?

***Segment 3: Philadelphia and the Constitutional Convention***

What were the issues that were causing our new country to fall apart?

What plan laid the groundwork for our new government?

What did they create? What powers did the new government have? List some of them.

In this new system did they balance the power? What were some of the negative outcomes?

***Segment 4: Power Struggle: Tug of War***

In what ways does the federal government step on the rights of the states? Why?

What is the advantage of the state government making laws for the people?

What is the role of the federal government in dealing with state law?

***Segment 5: We Can’t Go it Alone!***

Why would the government concern itself with building a dam in the middle of the desert?

How did the Great Depression put our nation in crisis? What actions did the federal government take to ensure the general welfare of the United States?

Through what branch did the New Deal arise?

What were seen as the negatives of the New Deal?

***Segment 6: Separate but NOT Equal***

Why did the students have to put themselves at risk for our country?

What federal branch ruled that the state laws were unconstitutional?

Why did the federal government need to step in?

What was the reason the soldiers walked the students straight up the front steps rather than bring them in another entrance?

Resistance. That’s the word that was used by Minnijean to describe what she felt that day. Why did she choose that word? Have you ever felt this way?

***Segment 7: The Commerce Clause***

Why did Wickard believe he was right? Why did he not win his case? How did his case affect other states?

Why might it be better for laws to be made by local government?

Why is it not always possible to vote with your feet?

Where do we fight these battles today?

**Episode 2: Rights**

***Segment 1: It’s a Free Country: Know Your Rights!***

What does the Constitution establish?

What does the Bill of Rights establish?

Listing out the 10 big ones! Quickly list out each amendment and what right it guarantees.

Amendment Right

Amendment 1

Amendment 2

Amendment 3

Amendment 4

Amendment 5

Amendment 6

Amendment 7

Amendment 8

Amendment 9

Amendment 10

**Segment 2: Protesting Funerals: The First Amendment Put to the Test**

Is all speech protected? Should offensive speech be protected? Why would someone want speech to be limited? Why would someone want speech to always be free?

What rights do fallen soldiers have?

What tools or steps does the constitution put into place for citizens to stand up and fight for what they believe in?

What is the remedy for free speech?

***Segment 3: Right to a Fair Trial***

Who insures our rights are protected? What did Gideon do to make sure the 6th amendment was protecting him?

Why would someone need a lawyer? What is the responsibility of a court appointed attourney?

Which part of the Constitution guarantees your right to a fair trial?

***Segment 4: Battles of School Prayer***

Do you or other people in your school pray? Do you go to a public school?

Why would some students be uncomfortable with a banner? Why might some students object to taking down such a banner?

Does prayer have a place in public school?

What exactly does the First Amendment say about religion? Hint: there are TWO parts.

***Segment 5: Eminent Domain Case: How Can You Take My House?***

What does Eminent Domain mean?

What reason did the government can take away property of citizens?

What part of the Constitution gives the government the right to do this?

Who was supposed to benefit from taking the land? In this case, did the Constitution protect the majority or the minority?

What happens when the reason for the taking doesn’t come to pass?

***Segment 6: Rights are Changing?***

In what year was the Bill of Rights, as we know it today, ratified?

How has our understanding of our rights changed over time?

Why does it seem like the definitions to these rights change over time?

***Segment 7: Privacy***

When and where can you be searched without a warrant?

Give some easy examples of how people can dig into your privacy.

Did you know that your online social media outlets are allowed to use your info? Does that make you re-evaluate your online activity?

Do you believe, like the people at Twitter, that what you tweet is private?

Do we have a reasonable expectation of privacy online?

The first ten amendments are written to balance individual rights and rule of law by the government.

Through court cases, interpretation and laws, have we struck the right balance?

Is technology putting cracks in the Bill of Rights? Where?

The Bill of Rights was established to protect our rights, and the original Constitution was established to give us the framework through which we can fight for rights. Has this two-part system given us an adequate pathway to use our rights and responsibilities?

**Episode 3: Equality**

***Segment 1: Becoming part of We the People…part I***

“We the People?” is a very complicated concept. In 1787 women did not have the right to vote, but they were clearly citizens and represented by the phase, “We the People.” So, arguably, were free blacks, though not slaves. What do these words mean to you today?

***Segment 2: Becoming part of We the People…part II***

In this segment you will be introduced to the new founding fathers and the three Amendments they added to the Constitution.

Read each of the three amendments, then write what they say and what they mean. List below what rights they have granted and what new rights are people using them for in current constitutional struggles.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Amendment 13** | **Amendment 14** | **Amendment 15** |
| **What it says** |  |  |  |
| **What it means** |  |  |  |
| **Rights it guarantees** |  |  |  |
| **What is a current struggle?** |  |  |  |

***Segment 3: Equal Protection…part I***

Robert George explains that the 14th Amendment is set-up to stop racial discrimination. In the Loving case it protects marriage because race is being used to discriminate but the courts will decide if it will protect gay marriage. What types of inequality will the 14th amendment allow?

Do you agree with this? Where should those limits be?

***Segment 4: Equal Protection…part II***

Who gets to vote depends on which amendment was passed?

Listen to this clip and spell out the three votes that expand voting rights. Write down the amendment, what year it was passed, and the citizens who gains the voting rights.

***Segment 5: Equal Protection…part III***

The right to vote can be taken away. Take a closer look at the 14th Amendment while watching this clip. Why would the 14th Amendment take away someone’s rights, when it was meant to protect them?

Do you think that this is fair?

***Segment 6: Affirmative Action***

What is the reason for Affirmative Action?

Why was it established and how does it protect the rights of the minority? In this clip examine the unintended consequence of Affirmative Action.

Insuring freedom is always an active balancing act, how would you suggest insuring the needs of fair employment move forward?

***Segment 7: Football and Education***

The 14th Amendment protects any persons in America, not just citizens. Where are the limits on the 14th Amendment? Should there be any?

Does the 14th Amendment apply outside the country?

***Segment 8: Rights of Privacy…in the bedroom or any room.***

Where does the right to privacy begin and end? Think about all the possible places you have an expectation of privacy. List them

***Segment 9: Economic Liberty***

Is economic liberty essential to the pursuit of happiness in America?

Examine the case of the monks. Where in the 14th amendment is economic liberty spelled out?

**Episode 4: We the People**

***Segment 1: Crowd-sourcing Iceland***

Iceland is in the middle of building a new constitution. The tactic they are using to keep this document as much by the people as for the people is crowd-sourcing their national charter.

What are the pros of writing their constitution in this manner?

Are there cons as well?

Did our Founding Fathers crowd-source in 1787?

***Segment 2: The Long View***

How did the Founders give the Constitution the ability to change? What are these changes called and what do they do?

What part of the Constitution spell out how to change the Constitution? Is change easy?

Why would you want to change the Constitution?

How is your generation going to fill in the whitespace after the Constitution?

***Segment 3: Change does not always mean you need an Amendment…***

Amendments are not the only way to change rights. What other ways can rights change?

How else has equality for women changed?

There have been lots of changes to women’s rights by other means. Explain the examples below.

How did the President change the law to support women’s rights?

How did Congress change the law to protect women’s rights?

How did the courts change the law to protect women’s rights?

***Segment 4: Separation of Powers***

Our system of government is set up to control power. The Founders controlled the power by dividing it. By doing this, they created a balance of powers. Diagram the three branches of government and list out each branch’s role, as well as how they check another branch.

***Segment 5: Too Much Power***

How can our country ensure that one branch does not gain too much power?

Congress set up an investigation on the president, but who ordered Richard Nixon to turn over the full transcripts of his secret taping system?

What do you think would have happened if Nixon did not follow those orders?

Watergate was a test of the balance of powers. This happened without bloodshed. Can you name another time in history where a conflict was resolved in the courts and not in the streets?

When are the streets a valid and positive method of dissent? (Hint: think about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

***Segment 6: Framework***

What are the steps of understanding the law, as described by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor? She spells out three basic steps.

To Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To Read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To Follow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What does “original intent” mean?

Justices don’t always agree with each other either. They have lots of information to read about how past courts have interpreted the law, but there are two ways current justices interpret the Constitution. Describe the two styles.

The bottom line is that we all follow the rule of law and the decisions of the courts have the same power as law. So what can you do if you feel the courts have made an unfair ruling?

***Segment 7: Balance does not always hold—Wartime***

In times of war, the executive branch has sometimes been accused of going too far and upsetting the balance between civil liberties and national security. Do you think that this is okay in wartime?