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***The Preamble: dead or alive?***

Standard 3, Objective 1a: Assess the underlying principles of the U.S. Constitution as the framework for the United States form of government; analyze the goals of the Preamble.

**Objectives:**

1. Explain the purposes of the United States Constitution as identified in the Preamble.
2. Discuss the ways the Constitution is still a living document by using primary sources.

**Instruction:**

1. Review and recite the Preamble as a class.
2. Discuss what each goal means as a class in our own words. Write ideas on the board.
3. Pass out copies of the Preamble to each student. Divide class into six groups.
4. Each group will have one primary source and some questions. After time for discussion and answering questions, they will divide up again into jigsaw groups to discuss with other groups their findings and conclusions.
5. Lesson will conclude with a whole group discussion and groups creating a page for a class book summarizing their findings and how the Preamble continues to serve as a guide to our rights.

**Time to allow:** Two 30-minute sessions

***Group One: Establish Justice***

1. Review the summary of Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections (go to [http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1965/1965\\_48](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1965/1965_48)).
2. Each member of the group will make a t-chart of the case showing the good points for each side.
3. Discuss: It costs money to hold an election. The tax being charged at Virginia polling places was used by counties for expenses such as conducting voting and by the state to support public education. The maximum tax was only \$1.50. Shouldn't anyone be happy to pay such a small amount for the privilege of voting and to help pay for the voting process? Would it be fair to ask people who do not vote to pay for voting through some other tax, such as a tax on items you buy at the store (a sales tax)? On the other hand, if you have no money at all, is that a good reason to keep you from voting?
4. What is another word for "justice"? How does this case prevent or promote justice?
5. What does it mean to establish justice?

### ***Group Two: Insure Domestic Tranquility***

1. Review the summary of *Burson v. Freeman* (go to [http://www.oyez.org/cases/1990-1999/1991/1991\\_90\\_1056](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1990-1999/1991/1991_90_1056)). Each member of the group makes a t-chart showing the pros and cons of the case.
2. Discuss: Should voters be able to go the polls to vote in peace and quiet? Should voters be able to talk to other people, even the candidates themselves, to find out who to vote for? Should candidates be able to campaign around a polling area?
3. How is this case an example for or against domestic tranquility? What is domestic tranquility? Can you list other examples of it?

### ***Group Three: Provide for the Common Defense***

1. Go to [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american\\_originals/fdr.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/fdr.html) and read the speech given by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Then go to <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/tlc0090.jpg> and study the recruiting poster. Discuss with your group the answers to the following questions, and each member record them on a sheet of lined paper:
  - a. Why did Pres. Roosevelt have to ask Congress to go to war?
  - b. Why is that a good idea?
  - c. How do we provide for the Common Defense?
  - d. What does the Common Defense mean?

### ***Group Four: Promote the General Welfare***

1. In 1906, a man named Upton Sinclair wrote a book called *The Jungle*. This book led to the passage of the “1907 Meat Inspection Act.” Read the letter from Mr. Sinclair to Pres. Theodore Roosevelt concerning conditions in the meat packing industry. Go to [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american\\_originals/meat.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/meat.html) . Each member of the group should answer the following questions on lined paper:
  - a. Should the meat companies inspect their own facilities and meat they sell?
  - b. Why should the government inspect the meat?
  - c. How does this promote the general welfare?
  - d. What does “promote the general welfare” mean?

### ***Group Five: Secure the Blessings of Liberty to Ourselves***

1. Go to [http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971\\_70\\_110](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971_70_110) and read the facts, question, and conclusion.
2. Make a t-chart showing the pros and cons of the case.
3. What does liberty mean according to the dictionary? Should everyone have unlimited liberty? Should there be laws as guidelines to liberties? What would happen if there were no laws?
4. What does it mean to “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves”?

***Group Six: Secure the Blessings of Liberty to Our Posterity***

1. Go to <http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/det/4a10000/4a16000/4a16300/4a16385r.jpg> and review and discuss the image of the “Coal Breaker Boys.”
2. Discuss the idea of leaving school at your age to find a job.
3. Why are there no “coal breaker boys” today?
4. The Constitution is still being changed today. How is that done?
5. How does improving the rules today help secure the blessings of liberty for people in the future (“our posterity”)?
6. How can the government ensure our posterity will have liberty in the future?

Resource used for lesson idea and primary sources: <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/preamble-constitution-how-do-you-make-more-perfect-union#section-16230>