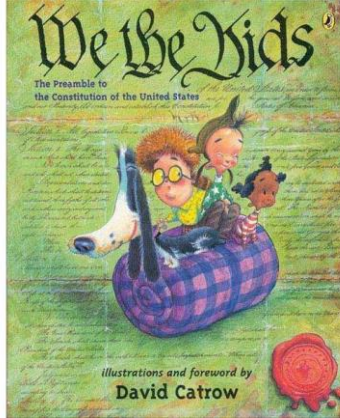


We the Kids



We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

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Topics: Constitution, Student voices, Rights and responsibilities, Building community

Genres: Nonfiction historical narratives for juveniles, Reading skills document analysis nonfiction, US Constitution document, Juvenile non fiction

This work can be used grades 4 to 8

The preamble to the United States Constitution is a very important part of a very important document! But what is a preamble? What is the meaning of the term "preamble"? What does the Preamble say? Learn about the Preamble in this fun illustrated book. Talk about what it all means and signifies about our democratic process.

Listen closely as you hear lots of new words and look at the pictures for help in understanding. This picture book is a very accessible introduction to document analysis and interpretation, a key literacy and history skill all informed citizens need.

Before the Read Aloud:

1. How would you introduce a group of friends to your favorite book, tv show or game? What would you say to get them excited?

During the Read Aloud:

2. What is a preamble (let them try to answer)? If you don't already know, a preamble is an introduction to a document. It can tell the reader the purpose of the document, give a

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summary of the document, or simply explain what the document is. Why do you think the Preamble is so important to the Constitution?

3. The Preamble starts with “We the People of the United States, come together to form a more perfect Union”. Think about those words as you answer these questions. Have you ever heard the words “more perfect” before? They seem sort of odd! Why do you think the writers of the Preamble chose this language? Why didn’t they just say, “a perfect union”?
4. About halfway through the book, we hear the line “provide for the common defense”. What does it mean to provide for the common defense? What are some ways that the government provides for the defense of its citizens? Do you feel protected by the government? Why or why not?
5. Right near the end of the Preamble, one of the listed purposes of the Constitution is to “secure the Blessings of Liberty”. When America was still under British control, there were a lot of things people weren’t allowed to do. When America won its independence, the leaders of the new country wanted to make sure everyone had the rights they deserve and the rights they did not have when the British were ruling. These rights are what the author is talking about when the Preamble says, “the Blessings of Liberty”. Can you name any of the rights in the Constitution? Do you think these rights are blessings?

Take Action Project:

6. If people had preambles – little introductions explaining a bit about themselves – what would yours be? Think of a 1-2 sentence preamble for yourself and share what you came up with.