



# Iowa Council For The Social Studies

An Affiliate of the National Council for the Social Studies

## SUCCESSFUL CIVIC PROGRAMS USE ‘ORPs’

One of the hallmarks of successful civic learning programs is the involvement of outside resource persons in the classroom. These ‘ORPs’ not only bring real world experiences and expertise, but also serve as community role models for students. More than old-fashioned ‘guest speakers’, ORPs work with teachers to engage students in interactive strategies, help to debrief heavy content-oriented lessons, and/or inspire further study. This Fall, two opportunities present themselves to start the school year off with a positive ORP experience.

### America’s Legislators Back to School Program

Begun in 1999 by the National Conference of State Legislators [NCSL], this event gives elected officials in all 50 states the opportunity to meet per-

sonally with their young constituents and to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns and impart a greater understanding of the legislative processes necessary for developing effective public policy and engaged citizens. The third week in September has been designated as **America’s Legislators Back to School Week**. The program is emphasized as a bipartisan event. Legislators of both political parties are urged to participate in this national event and help bring civics to life for young people. For more information about the project including resource materials, suggested classroom activities, and con-

tact information for program organizers in each state, visit the **NCSL special website** at [www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/public/backsch.htm).

**Constitution Day** : Most Americans know that July 4th is our nation’s birthday. Far fewer Americans know that September 17th is the birthday of our government, the date in 1787 on which delegates to the Philadelphia Convention completed and signed the U.S. Constitution.



Last year, U.S. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia

accomplished a long-standing goal, passing a law designating September 17th as Constitution

Day. Schools and federal agencies are **required** to hold educational programs on the Constitution on Constitution Day.

A number of organizations have stepped in to offer expert assistance in talking to students about the Constitution. One such organization is the **Iowa State Bar Association [ISBA]**. To celebrate Constitution Day, the ISBA is offering to set up visits from legal resource persons to schools either during the week leading up to September 17th or during the week following. These attorneys, judges and other legal professionals can work with students in a classroom setting or as part of a school event. For more information about the ISBA’s Constitution Day Program, please contact **John Wheeler** via phone at **515-243-3179** or via email at [jwheeler@iowabar.org](mailto:jwheeler@iowabar.org).

## FROM THE PRESIDENT’S PEN *By Nancy Peterson*



Last fall, I stopped into the Principal’s Office with a Constitution Day suggestion... a play by The History Club. My principal at first was puzzled with my suggestion and after a few minutes I realized why...he was not as informed as I was about the new Constitution Day requirement. Anyway, he said he would let me know. When he did get back to me, he said that he and the elementary principal were relieved that I had a plan in place to make sure our schools were in

compliance. So, why did I just mention this story?

I was ahead of the curve on this requirement because ICSS members are kept informed on the various factors affecting social studies. In terms of the Constitution Day requirement, the informational route was **ICSS Online** - an email newsletter distributed weekly from Labor Day to Memorial Day. In the current educational climate, social studies educators need to continue to be

proactive voices to show that we give students the content knowledge, intellectual skills and civic values they need to fulfill the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy. Examples which show this approach working are:

- ✓ **Iowa Senate File 2320** which requires the development of an Iowa Studies Professional Development Plan to provide Iowa’s teachers with effective ways to infuse Iowa Studies into their sec-

ondary school classrooms.

- ✓ **Iowa Senate File 2272** which strengthens the high school curriculum and requires the class of 2011 to complete three years of social studies.
- ✓ Testimony invitation by the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee to the National Council for the Social Studies concerning **NCLB’s reauthorization**.

## AUGUST 2006

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**FALL 2006 CONFERENCE**

*Civic Literacy in a Global Age*

**October 16-17, 2006**

**Des Moines Airport Holiday Inn**

The mission of ICSS is to provide leadership, service, and support for Iowa’s social studies’ educators. This is why you are receiving this newsletter. **ICSS cordially invites you to become a member for 2006-2007.** The easiest way to join is by attending the Fall 2006 Conference. If you can not make it to the conference, please read the membership article inside. I am an optimist and thus, I look forward to seeing every one of you at the conference.

## THE BILL OF RIGHTS IS FOR US TODAY LESSON PLAN

**OVERVIEW:** A bill of rights is needed in a free society in order to protect the rights of the individual from abuses by the government. Government rarely acts against the interests of the majority, and often the beneficiary of a specific decision is one of the minorities. Yet, the entire society benefits from the protection of minority rights. Oftentimes protecting the minority causes great controversy, but each person benefits ultimately. We are all a part of some minority, whether it is race, religion, economics, political beliefs, or social beliefs. We all need our individual rights protected. Thus, the purpose of this middle school-high school activity is to acquaint the students with the guaranteed rights of the Bill of Rights, and assist them to see the application of these rights in their daily lives.

**OBJECTIVES:** The students will be able to: Identify and locate the Bill of Rights; List the rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights; Apply the rights to their daily lives; Learn the advantages and disadvantages of committee work; Use the news-

paper to identify three rights currently being protected or questioned by the Bill of Rights; Memorize the titles or summary statements for the Bill of Rights.

**MATERIALS:** Newspapers, butcher paper, copy of the Bill of Rights.

**ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:** All students will individually list the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to the Constitution. These will be checked and discussed to insure all students understand these rights. The students will be separated into groups of three or four people, preferably with students of dissimilar interests. Each group will take a piece of butcher paper and make three headings: Rights in School; Rights at Home; Rights in Public. The students will then list ten rights for each column. These could include rights such as loud music, large groupings of friends, prayer at home, etc. The students will then write to the side of each item in each list the number of the amendment that corresponds to the right

listed. The group will add one more right from an amendment they had not used into one of the columns. Each group will present its lists to the class. [Note--Add a rule that no group may ask the instructor for clarification or information unless the whole group agrees on the question. Also, the whole group must agree before something can be written on the paper.] The students will locate and mount on lined notebook paper three newspaper articles demonstrating current use of the Bill of Rights. The students will memorize the titles or summary statements of the Bill of Rights.

### TYING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Have each group orally present one newspaper article to the class with a follow up discussion; Test the students' ability to identify the titles and content of the Bill of Rights; Discuss the problems and advantages of committee work; Have the students discuss which one right is most important...they should eventually realize that each right is as important as the next, given the set of circumstances.




## BECOME AN MEMBER TODAY!

The Iowa Council for the Social Studies [ICSS] is an association of educators who have come together to strengthen the social studies profession and social studies programs in the schools. As an Iowa affiliate of history, geography, economics, and other organizations related to the social science disciplines, ICSS is a growing professional organization with hundreds of members annually. At this time, ICSS invites you to join for the 2006-2007 academic year.

ICSS members take advantage of publications, recognition programs, conferences, information services, and special offers. Whether you're looking for lesson plans, textbooks, or new insights, you'll find it in ICSS. As an ICSS member, you will receive:

- ✓ **ICSS Online** - an email newsletter distributed weekly from Labor Day to Memorial Day that provides time sensitive current information regarding various aspects of social studies especially Websites of Interest.
- ✓ **ICSS Newsletter** - a published newsletter that provides lesson plans and information regarding recertification, professional fellowships, grants, awards, and conferences.
- ✓ **ICSS Journal** - published annually, it provides practical classroom perspectives on important social studies topics and themes.
- ✓ **ICSS Annual Conference** - where opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with colleagues from throughout Iowa develop and thrive.

We also invite ICSS members to participate in the Council's important work where you can test and expand your leadership skills and increase your professional contacts.

We hope you'll decide to become an active member of your professional organization! Visit our website [<http://www.uni.edu/icss>] and/or send us an email [[icssmember@hotmail.com](mailto:icssmember@hotmail.com)] for further details and downloadable membership forms.



## CONSTITUTION DAY LESSON PLAN: “WHAT BASIC IDEAS ARE IN THE CONSTITUTION’S PREAMBLE?”

**Editor’s Note:** *This Constitution and citizenship lesson is © 2005, Center for Civic Education. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to freely reproduce and use this lesson for nonprofit educational purposes only. Copyright must be acknowledged on all copies.*

**Lesson Overview:** This elementary-middle school lesson explores the ideas in the Preamble to the Constitution. Students learn the importance of the words, “We the People.” The lesson emphasizes that the power to govern belongs to the people who have created the government to protect their rights and promote their welfare. Students read the Preamble and develop definitions for the six key phrases in the document.

**Introductory Activity - Understanding the Importance of the Preamble:** Read to the students the following: *The Framers wrote an introduction, also called a preamble, to the Constitution. The Preamble states the purposes of our Constitution. It includes some of the basic ideas about government. When you finish this lesson, you should be able to explain these ideas.* Prior to reading the Preamble, use a vocabulary-building activity of your choice for the following “Terms to Understand”: a more perfect union; blessings of liberty; common defense; domestic tranquility; establish; general welfare; justice; ordain.

**Idea to Discuss - What do you think should be the purpose of government?:** Have students work with a partner or in groups of three to five to discuss the following: What is a purpose?; Why is it important to know what your own purposes are?; Why is it important to know what the purposes of a government are?; List five or six purposes that you think a government should have; Explain why you think each of the purposes you have listed for government is important. They should be encouraged to examine their own experiences and to form reasoned opinions. Have each group or pair share their responses with the class.

**Idea to Discuss - Why does the Preamble say “We the People do ordain and establish this Constitution?”:** Read the following aloud to the students: *In 1787, the Framers wrote and signed the Constitution. The Preamble to the Constitution says that “We the People of the United States do ordain (give official approval) and establish (accept) this Constitution for the United States of America.” This means that the Constitution was approved by the people of the United States and that they agreed to live under the government it created. Each generation of Americans—including yours—must give its approval or consent to live under the government created by the Constitution.* Then lead a discussion using the following questions: How do you and other Americans show that you consent to be governed under the Constitution? How do you, as one of the people, ordain and establish the Constitution? To help stimulate the discussion on the above mentioned question, consider using the following: *There are many ways of answering these questions. One way is by willingly obeying the laws. Another way to show your consent is by repeating the Pledge of Allegiance. You also give consent when you take part in solving your community’s problems. When you are older, you can give your consent by voting, serving on a jury, or holding public office. Taking your place as a citizen, one of “We the People,” means that you consent to live under the Constitution.*

**Problem-Solving Activity: What ideas are expressed in the Preamble?:** Have the class work in groups of three to five students. Assign each group one of the purposes of our national government: do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America; establish justice; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; promote the general welfare; secure the blessings of liberty. Students are responsible for explaining their assigned purpose and should give examples of how our national government tries to accomplish the purpose. To help each group focus on their part of the activity, use the following questions: What do the words that your group studied mean? Give an example; Why is the part of the Preamble that your group studied important?; What does the part your group studied have to do with protecting your rights and the common good? This activity presents the opportunity for groups to not just answer the questions but to engage in the exercise in a variety of ways: drawing a poster; preparing a short dramatic skit; conducting an imaginary radio call-in show; or conducting an imaginary interview with a member of Congress, the President of the United States, or a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Concluding the Lesson:** Use the following questions and additional ones developed by you and/or by students:

- + Some people have said the most important words in our Constitution are the first three words of the Preamble. These are the words, “We the People.” Explain why you agree or disagree with this opinion.
- + In your own words, explain what establishing justice means. Why is this an important purpose of government?
- + Explain the difference between ensuring domestic tranquility and providing for the common defense.
- + What is the general welfare? What are some ways to promote the general welfare?
- + What are some of the blessings of liberty that you enjoy? How can you help to make sure that future generations will also enjoy them?
- + How can you and other Americans show that you consent to live under the Constitution?



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## Fall 2006 Conference

**Civic Literacy  
in a Global Age**

**October 16-17**

**Des Moines**

## 2006 NCSS CONFERENCE

Promise & Practice 06

The next NCSS Annual Conference will be held in **Washington, D.C. December 1-3, 2006.**

December in DC? The conference will be held at the **Washington, DC Convention Center** for the first time! Inside the modern glass box of the Center, it is warm and filled with light, wood paneled walls, carpeted walkways, and low cushioned benches giving the space a gallery feel. It is also convenient to many of the Washington museums, great restaurants and other attractions, as well as across the street from the **Renaissance Washington, DC**, the headquarters hotel.

For more information, visit <http://www.socialstudies.org/conference/>.



## 2007 GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

The 2007 Great Lakes Regional Council for the Social Studies Conference will be hosted by the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies on **March 8-9, 2007** at **Mystic Lake Casino Hotel** in Prior Lake, MN which is located about 20 minutes south and west of the Twin Cities International Airport. The theme for the conference will be: *The Civic Mission of the Social Studies*.

Plans include round table discussions of all the social studies disciplines. Those interested in being a presenter are encouraged to contact the Co-Chairs of the 2007 Great Lakes Regional Council for the Social Studies Conference, **Lynn Genter** [[lgenter@mcss.org](mailto:lgenter@mcss.org)] and **Bruce Robb** [[dbrobb@tcq.net](mailto:dbrobb@tcq.net)], via email and/or submit a proposal form online at [www.mcss.org/spring\\_conf.html](http://www.mcss.org/spring_conf.html).