



The Two Constitutions and their Differences

Objective: This lesson will help students understand the constitutions of 1863 and 1872 and how they shaped present West Virginia. Students will understand the various reasons for creating both constitutions.

GRADE LEVEL

Eighth Grade

TIME REQUIRED

Two to three class periods, depending on how many activities you want each student to complete

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What were the main concerns of the people that led to the creation of the Constitution of 1863? What were the events that led to the necessity of the Constitution of 1872?
2. Who were the key players in creating the constitutions?
3. How did the Constitution of 1863 and the Constitution of 1872 affect the power and makeup of the current three branches of government?

STRATEGIC VOCABULARY

constitution	legislative branch
amendment	executive branch
Waitman T. Willey	judicial branch

LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Have students create a tri-tab foldable by folding a paper in half long ways (hot dog style) and then divide the top layer into three tabs by making two cuts in the top layer. These three tabs represent the three branches of government. This will allow the students to put the vocabulary word on top. On the inside they place a dictionary definition of the term and also a definition using their own words. Students may include drawings to illustrate the term.

Activities 2-10 are to be divided up with each student completing at least two activities depending on learning style.

2. Have one group of students look at the article “Constitutional Convention of 1861-1863” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1566>. Encourage them to pay close attention to what the constitutional convention was supposed to accomplish. Then follow the link at the bottom of the page and read the constitution. They will need to make a list of 12 important facts about the constitution and what it accomplished.
3. Have another group of students look at the article “Constitutional Convention of 1872” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1570>. Encourage them to pay close attention to what the constitutional convention was supposed to accomplish. Then follow the link at the bottom of



the page and read the constitution. They will need to make a list of 12 important facts about the constitution and what it accomplished.

4. Have the students look at the picture of Waitman T. Willey at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/media/4287> and read accompanying text. Students may complete an activity called “Climb Inside a Head.” Have them write a monologue of their thoughts as if they could climb inside Willey’s head at the exact moment the picture was taken.
5. Have students read the article “Judicial Branch” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1073> and learn how it expanded with the creation of the second constitution.
6. Have students read the article “Executive Branch” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2218> and learn how it expanded with the second constitution.
7. Have students read the article “Legislature” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1348> and learn how the legislative branch expanded with the second constitution.
8. Have students create a postal stamp using an 8 ½-by-11 sheet of blank paper depicting one important fact that the student learned throughout the unit.
9. For musically inclined students: Use the schoolhouse rock song “Conjunction Junction What’s Your Function” and change it to “Constitution, Constitution What’s Your Function.” List three things about each constitution, then have students sing their song.
10. Have each student create a dodecahedron with the graphic included with this lesson that lists one fact about the differences in the two constitutions on each face.
11. As an exit activity, have each student write a paragraph answering this question: If you could create a new constitution, what changes would you make and what significance would they have on today’s society?

WEST VIRGINIA NEXT GENERATION CONTENT STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL STUDIES

- 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.
- 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 West Virginia Constitution, 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.8.23: Demonstrate an understanding of major social, political and economic developments that took place in West Virginia during the second half of the nineteenth century.

- Identify the types of transportation that facilitated the growth of West Virginia.
- Compare and contrast the West Virginia Constitutions of 1862 and 1872.
- Summarize the changes that occurred in West Virginia agriculture and industry during the late nineteenth century, including changes in family life in various regions and the growth of industry.
- Explain the significance of increased immigration into the United States in the late nineteenth century to West Virginia, including cultural and economic contributions of immigrants, opportunities and struggles experienced by immigrants, increased racial hostility and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity on national identity.

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.

- Explain the effect 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.

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