

Lesson 16:

Constitutional Republic

Teacher Version

Essential Question

What does it mean for the United States to be a constitutional republic?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 15: Expanding Voting Rights

- Voting rights expanded through constitutional amendments and legislation.
- More Americans participated in the democratic process.

Bridge Question:

- What does it mean for the United States to be a constitutional republic?

Hook Question

What does it mean to be part of a government where the people have a voice?

Key Vocabulary

Introduce and clarify the following terms:

- Constitutional Republic
- Pure Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Checks and Balances
- Civic Duty

Reading and Text Coding

CR = Constitutional Republic

PR = Pure Democracy and Republic

CL = Constitutional Limits

D = Civic Duties and Responsibilities

- Teacher Modeling—I Do
- Guided Practice—We Do
- Independent Practice—You Do

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

Category	Evidence (paragraph #)	What this evidence shows
Constitutional Protections		
Representative Government		
Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances		
Civic Duties and Responsibilities		

Video Segment (10 minutes)

Video: [John Hancock](#)

Teacher Prompt: “In today's text, we learned that the United States is a constitutional republic where citizens choose representatives, but those representatives must follow the Constitution. We also learned that the Constitution divides government power among different branches and includes checks and balances to prevent any one part of government from becoming too powerful. Now we are going to meet John Hancock, one of America's Founding Fathers, who played an important role in the movement for independence and the formation of the new government. As you listen and watch, think about how John Hancock's actions connect to what you learned about constitutional republics.”

Note: The biography and video introduce students to John Hancock and his role in the founding of the United States. The text remains the primary source for understanding what it means for the United States to be a constitutional republic.

Video Segment (10 minutes)...cont'd

- ***Students complete Handout #4 while watching.***
- ***Teacher prompts (after video and biography):***
 - “How did John Hancock participate in the founding of the United States?”
 - “How did John Hancock help America begin to form a constitutional republic?”
 - “Why do you think John Hancock believed the colonies needed to become independent?”
 - “How do John Hancock’s actions connect to what you learned about constitutional republics?”

Interpretive Discussion

- ***Teacher Prompt:*** “Which feature of a constitutional republic do you think is most important?”
- ***Students discuss:***
 - Constitutional Protections
 - Representative Government
 - Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances
 - Civic Duties and Responsibilities

Interpretive Discussion...cont'd

- ***Teacher Prompt (after students talk):*** “The text explained that the United States is a constitutional republic because citizens choose representatives, but government power is limited by the Constitution. Based on what you have read, which feature do you think is most important to making the United States a constitutional republic?”

Debate: Which feature is most important to making the United States a constitutional republic? (10-12 minutes)

Position statements:

Position A: Constitutional protections are the most important feature of a constitutional republic.

Position B: Representative government is the most important feature of a constitutional republic.

Position C: Separation of powers and checks and balances are the most important features of a constitutional republic.

Position D: Civic duties and responsibilities are the most important feature of a constitutional republic.

Note: The Directed Note-Taking categories provide evidence students may use to support any position.

Debate: Which feature is most important to making the United States a constitutional republic? (10-12 minutes)...cont'd

The Debate Question

Which feature is most important to making the United States a constitutional republic?

Debate Directions

Choose one position and explain why you believe it best reflects the author's message. Support your position with evidence from the text, the John Hancock biography, or the video.

Final Writing Prompt

Revolutionary Writers Essay: John Hancock and Constitutional Republic

How did John Hancock help America begin to form a constitutional republic?

Students should write a paragraph that:

- states how John Hancock helped America begin to form a constitutional republic.
- explains why his actions were important.
- uses evidence from the text, biography, and video.
- explains how John Hancock's actions connect to the formation of a constitutional republic.

Final Writing Prompt...cont'd

Important: This essay is the primary assessment for Lesson 16 and also serves as one of nine potential student essays for the FIREWORKS250 Revolutionary Writers Essay Competition for students with teachers participating in cohort 2. Participating teachers should save all student essays. Students will select their best essay at the end of the year to submit for the competition.

Closure (5 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “Today we learned what it means for the United States to be a constitutional republic. We focused on how the Constitution protects individual rights, limits government power, and creates a system in which citizens choose representatives.”
- **Turn-and-Talk:** “Which feature of a constitutional republic do you think is most important, and why?”
- **Exit Ticket:** “What is one thing that makes the United States a constitutional republic, and why is it important?”