



Constitution in the Classroom

Lesson Plan

## The Fourteenth Amendment

Grades 7-12

- Description:** This unit introduces students to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the decision of *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision.
- Objectives:** (1) Familiarize students with the facts of *Brown v. Board*; (2) Introduce them to the concept of Equal Rights; and (3) Leave them with an understanding of the Constitution and that the rights outlined in the Constitution have not always applied equally to everyone, but that we can work to make sure they do in the future.
- Lesson Length:** 45-60 minutes
- Age Group:** 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grades

### About Constitution in the Classroom

Lawyers, law students, and educators have a valuable resource to share with students: knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution. Constitution in the Classroom brings ACS members into high school, middle school, or elementary classrooms to raise awareness of fundamental constitutional principles and excite young minds about their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

### About the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy

Founded in 2001, the American Constitution Society realizes the promises of the U.S. Constitution by building and leading a diverse legal community that dedicates itself to advancing and defending democracy, justice, equality, and liberty; to securing a government that serves the public interest; and to guarding against the abuse of law and the concentration of power.

As we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the American Constitution Society (ACS) continues to be the nation's leading progressive legal organization, with over 200 student and lawyer chapters in almost every state and on most law school campuses. In addition to shaping debate on key legal and policy issues, ACS is building the bench for the next generation of progressive lawyers, judges, policy experts, legislators, and academics.

## I. Icebreaker

The League of Women Voters of Alameda County, in partnership with ACS, has created an online trivia game with general questions about the Constitution, VerifyIt!. This is a great, interactive way to start a virtual CITC lesson. You can either send the link to the students and they can play a round on their own or you can screen share and allow students to answer questions either out loud or by writing answers down and sharing their results at the end of the round.

The game is easily played on mobile phones, computers, or tablets using - **Individual Player** (on your own) or **Multi-Player** (in the classroom - virtual or online). These instructions for Multi-Player games will help you set up a game that all your students can play on their computers at one time - with you tracking their progress and knowledge as the "game runner." You will also be able to use the Leaderboard to make it fun to play - and you can choose whether to show students' names or give them anonymous numbers to keep names private.

### Instructions for using a Game with your class.

1. On your computer, go to VerifyIt! Game **URL**: <https://verifyit.buzz>.
2. Click on the "**I'm a Game Runner**" link. It's near the bottom, under the "Play Multiplayer" button.
3. Select the game you want to play: "**Civics-U.S. Constitution Mixed-6 - 6 questions**" is recommended for this lesson plan. like "U.S. Constitution-Civics" and click on it. (note the Game Code in the box)
4. Find the "**Start a new game**" button at the bottom of the list and click on it. Note that the next screen shows the questions selected for this Game
5. Follow the instructions listed on this screen to **distribute the Game** to your students - you have two different ways to do this: 1) click on the clipboard icon on the top of the screen to copy the Game number and email or text it to your students, or, if you are conducting class via Zoom, put it in the Chat; or 2) give the students [this URL](#) with the game code and they can enter the game themselves.
6. Students will enter their "handle" (name) and sign into the Game. You will see their names on your screen when they successfully sign in - and you can track their progress!

## II. Discussion Options

There are two resources available to guide the discussion portion of your lesson: The ABA Dialogue on Brown v. Board of Education and the Landmark Cases/Street Law Classifying Arguments Activity. Both provide more content than needed for a single lesson, so feel free to adapt however will work best for your classroom. You can also choose to use the Story of Brown v. Board in the ABA Dialogue with the additional discussion questions below.

[ABA Dialogue on Brown v. Board of Education](#)

[Landmark Cases/Street Law Classifying Arguments Activity](#)

### III. Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you think segregated schools were like in pre-1954 America? In what parts of the country were schools segregated? Were schools in your state segregated? How was the experience of a black student in public school different from that of a white student?
2. The *Brown* decision called for school desegregation to happen with "all deliberate speed." How quickly — and how fully — do you think schools de-segregated?
3. What is segregation? Does it still exist? Other than schools, where have segregation battles been fought?
4. Is your school segregated? In what ways? What could you do to work against that segregation, bringing more integration to your school?
5. Do you believe in what *Brown v. Board* stands for? How close to — or far from — fully embracing the *Brown* decision are we, as a society? What else needs to happen for us to move closer to the ideals of *Brown*?
6. How would schools have looked in your area had the Supreme Court not ruled against segregation in 1954? How would your life, and the lives of other students, be different?