



## OVERVIEW

Students will understand the importance of having rules and laws. They will draft their classroom constitution. In developing rules for the classroom, students will gain an understanding of how the framers of the U.S. Constitution practiced debate and compromise.

## PREPARATION

To introduce the concept of rules, download the “Rules, Rules, Rules” lesson plan on [www.lawday.org](http://www.lawday.org). This lesson will guide classroom discussion about the need for rules in various settings.



Law Day on the Web  
[www.lawday.org](http://www.lawday.org)

# Creating A Classroom Constitution

## PROCEDURE

1. Review and discuss the importance and purpose of having rules. Ask students to recall rules they have at home, at school, or at play. Next, they should consider those rules by responding to the following questions:

*What is the purpose of having rules?*

*What would happen if we did not follow rules?*

2. Introduce the concept of “constitution,” i.e., “A constitution is a set of rules by which people agree to live.” Guide the discussion to help students understand the purpose of the U.S. Constitution and the “rules” it represents, emphasizing those listed in the Bill of Rights.
3. Reflect on the fact that a constitution contains the most important rules for a group. Brainstorm a list of classroom rules with students. Ask them to review their list to determine if less important rules may be dropped or if some rules may be included under other rules.
4. Indicate to students that since these rules will form the basis for their classroom constitution, it is important that a majority of members of the class accepts each rule. Have the students vote on each rule individually. A majority vote means that the rule will be part of the new constitution.
5. Create and post a new list with each of the rules that the students have accepted as part of their constitution.
6. Write the word “preamble” on the board. Review the definition with the students: “an introductory part of a constitution that states its purpose and intent.” Remind students of their earlier discussion regarding the purpose of the rules. Work with students to incorporate these reasons into a preamble for their constitution.

### Sample Preamble

We the students in \_\_\_\_\_’s class, in order to live in harmony, learn well, stay healthy, and enjoy each day together, have made these rules ...

7. Make a copy of the constitution (with the preamble and list of rules) on chart paper that can be posted. Explain to students that everyone — including you — will now sign the constitution you have drawn up together. Each person’s signature will signify that he or she agrees to live by this constitution.
8. Display the classroom constitution prominently so that students can refer to the rules easily throughout the school year.
9. Provide a copy of the constitution for each person to keep and one to take home. (*Send a note home for parents to promote awareness of the process, encourage discussion of the ideas, and suggest follow-up in the home setting.*)