

A Note to Educators:

Thank you for your interest in the Make Your Voice Count: Learning About the First Amendment program for grades K–2!

Program Objectives: After completing the Make Your Voice Count: Learning About the First Amendment program with the National Archives, students will be better able to:

- Explain what rights are and why they are important
- Understand how one can exercise their rights
- Identify the concept of rules and rights
- Identify and analyze primary sources

Program Documents: You can access all the documents and images included in this teacher guide and the National Archives presentation in this [folder](#) on DocsTeach.

How To Use This Guide: There are no required pre-program activities for this distance learning program. Instead, we've assembled a collection of activities that you can select from to share with students before or after their program with the National Archives or throughout your unit on the Bill of Rights as you see fit. Get started with the optional pre-program activity here or use the table of contents on the next page to navigate this guide.

Pre-Program Activity: An optional activity to prepare students for their National Archives program.

[What Are Rights?](#) (45 minutes) *Class Discussion*

Introduce the concept of rights and to discuss their importance. **Materials:** Classroom Rights Graphic Organizer on [page 4](#) and the transcript of the First Amendment on [page 6](#)

Post-Program Materials: Keep the conversation going after the program with post-program activities that start on [page 7](#), including:

[Create a Classroom Book on First Amendment Freedoms](#) (60 minutes) *Class Discussion and Craft*
Review the First Amendment Freedoms from the program with the National Archives and create a classroom book with illustrated examples of those freedoms in action. **Materials:** Paper or printed template on [page 8](#), writing utensils

[Writing to the President](#) (30 minutes) *Online DocsTeach Activity*

Analyze a letter written by third graders to President Gerald Ford asking for a "Kids Day."
Materials: [Online](#)

We want to hear from you!

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Pre-Program Activities

What Are Rights?

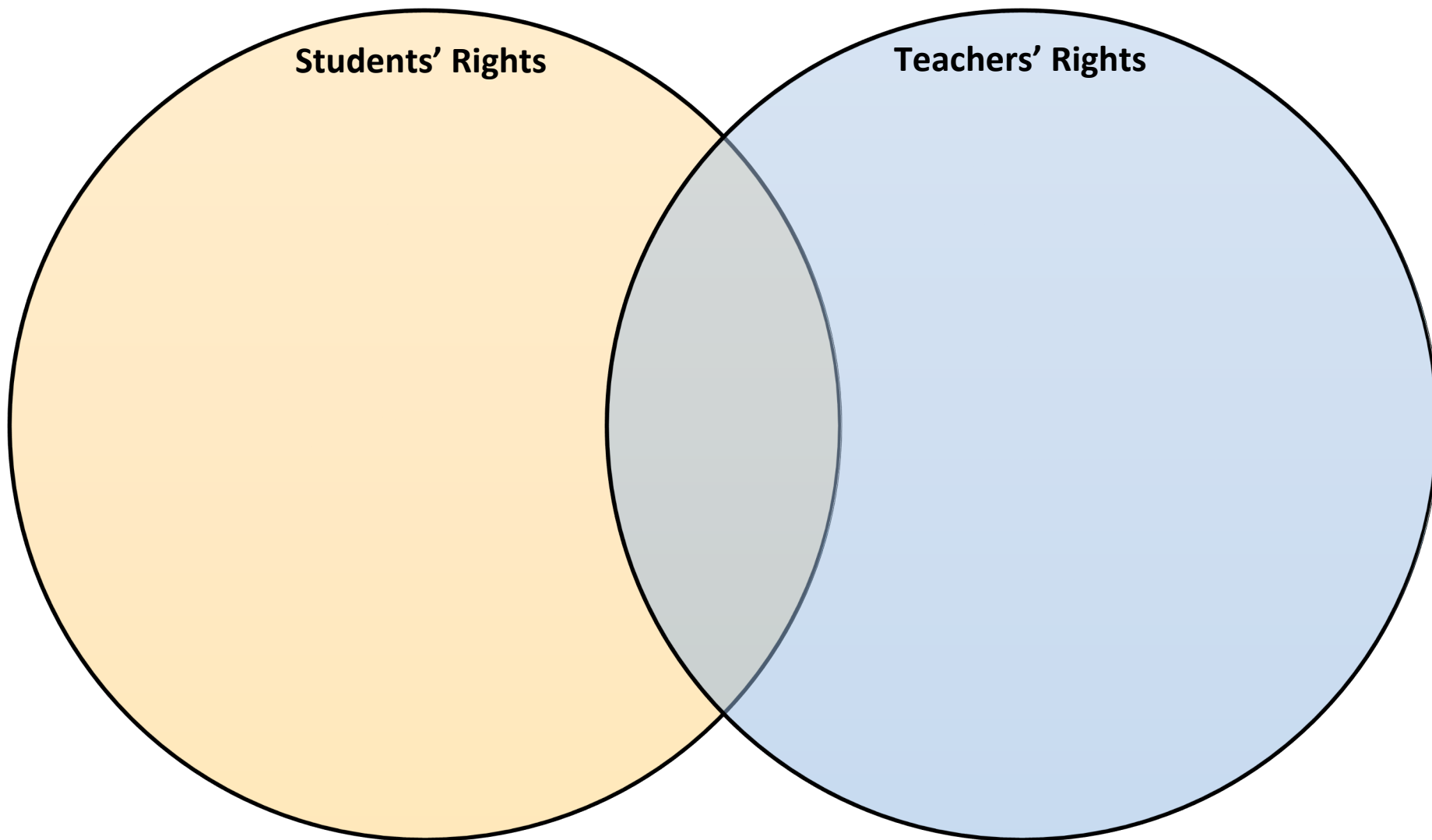
The objective of this activity is to introduce the concept of human rights and to discuss the importance of rights.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Part 1: Rights in the Classroom

1. Conduct a class discussion on rights and what rights are.
“A right is a person’s justifiable claim, protected by law (rules), to act or be treated in a certain way.” Source: [Annenberg Classroom](#)
2. Ask students to think about their classroom. Another way to think about the definition of rights is rights are actions we can expect to be able to do and actions from which we can expect to be protected. What are students’ expectations for what they get to do or how they get to be treated in the classroom?
3. Create a list of rights for students that the class thinks are important and record them on a whiteboard or use the Classroom Rights Graphic Organizer on the [next page](#). Next, work together to create a list of rights the teacher has in the classroom. If there are rights that students and teachers share, add them to the center.
4. Ask students to think about how it might feel did not have these rights. Have students share their thoughts.

Classroom Rights Graphic Organizer



Part 2: The Bill of Rights

5. Introduce the concept that the people who first organized the government of the United States wanted to make sure everyone had certain rights. They created a document called the Bill of Rights. Project the text of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights (found on [page 6](#)) and explain that this amendment specifically protects five freedoms. Share that today we'll be focusing on three of these freedoms. Highlight the following sections: "freedom of speech, . . . the right of the people to peacefully assemble, and petition the Government." Ask students what they think each right means:

Freedom of speech

Right to peacefully assemble

Right to petition the Government

Add information to each one as needed.

6. Return to the list of rights created at the beginning of the activity. See how many of the rights on the list are included in the First Amendment.
7. Share that during the program with the National Archives, students will discover how people have exercised these rights throughout the history of the United States.
8. Note that the other two First Amendment freedoms in the First Amendment include freedom of religion and Freedom of the press (which protects news organizations ability to report the news).

Activity Vocabulary

exercise: the act of putting into use, action, or practice

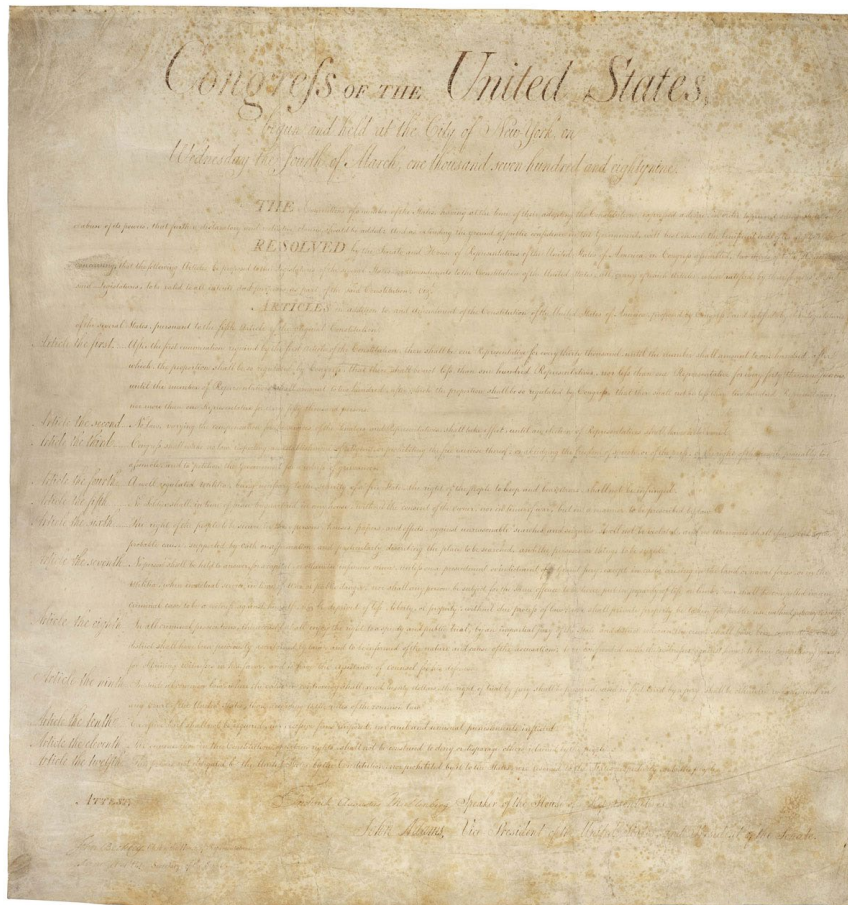
assemble: to meet together in one place

petition: a written request, often signed by many people, asking the government to fix a problem

The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Bill of Rights



Post-Program Activities

The following post-program activities provide opportunities to review key ideas from the program and build on students' knowledge of the Bill of Rights.

Create a Classroom Book on First Amendment Freedoms

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Materials:

- Paper or the template on page 8
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- Whiteboard or chart paper

1. Ask students to list the three rights in the First Amendment that they learned about during the program. Make three columns on a whiteboard or chart paper, one for each Freedom.

Freedom of Speech	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Petition
--------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------
2. Have students generate examples of what people might do to exercise each freedom.
Ex. "You can have a school assembly about the environment."
3. Ask each student to pick one of the examples and make an illustration of it using blank paper or the template on [page 8](#).
4. Compile students' illustrations into a classroom book.

Writing to the President DocsTeach Activity

In this activity, students will analyze a letter written by third-graders to President Gerald Ford asking for a "Kids Day." They will focus on details in the letter using guided questions to understand it, and finish by writing their own letter to the President in support of an issue they feel is important. New to DocsTeach? Check out the [Getting Started](#) page for more information.

Estimated time: 30 minutes

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions.

Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the activity with the whole class.

Our Classroom Book

FREEDOM OF _____

BY: _____



Make Your Voice Count: Learning About the First Amendment with the National Archives

Related Picture Books for K–2 Students

Allen, Tessa. *Sometimes People March*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2020, 32 pages.

This picture book explains why and how people work together to make positive social change. The back matter includes a description of social justice movements, marches, and key figures depicted in the illustrations.

Bohrer, Jessica and Sandy. *Your Voice Is Your Superpower: A Beginner’s Guide to Freedom of Speech (and the First Amendment)*. New York: City Point Press Kids, 2020, 32 pages.

The co-authors are a father/daughter team who work to protect First Amendment rights. The rhyming couplet text explains how we each have a superpower inside—the ability to use our voice. The words and digital art help empower children to use their voices to express themselves and work to make positive change.

Eggers, Dave. Art by Shawn Harris. *What Can a Citizen Do?* San Francisco: Chronicle Books: 2018, 40 pages.

Collage art features scenes from a variety of countries and citizens. Spare text describes actions citizens can take to make an impact. The illustrations are paper-cut images with drawings.

Lindstrom, Carole. Illustrated by Michaela Goade. *We Are Water Protectors*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2020, 40 pages.

Winner of the 2021 Caldecott Medal, this story describes how a community rallies together to protect the water from the “black snake.” The back matter includes information about the Standing Rock protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline, a glossary, an illustrator’s note, and a pledge to be an earth steward and a water protector.

Sanders, Rob. Illustrated by Jared Andrew Schorr. *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018, 48 pages.

This alphabet book describes different civic actions people can take to make a positive change in their communities and their country. Engaging paper-cut illustrations provide much content for conversation.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework Alignment

- D2.Civ.2.K-2 Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.
- D2.Civ.3.K-2 Explain the need for and purposes of rules in various settings inside and outside of school.
- D2.Civ.8.K-2 Describe democratic principles such as equality, fairness, and respect for legitimate authority and rules.
- D2.Civ.12.K-2 Identify and explain how rules function in public (classroom and school) settings.
- D2.Civ.14.K-2 Describe how people have tried to improve their communities over time.
- D2.His.9.K-2 Identify different kinds of historical sources.
- D2.His.10.K-2 Explain how historical sources can be used to study the past
- D2.His.11.K-2 Identify the maker, date, and place of origin for a historical source from information within the source itself
- D4.6.K-2 Identify and explain a range of local, regional, and global problems, and some ways in which people are trying to address these problems
- D4.7.K-2 Identify ways to take action to help address local, regional, and global problems.