

Focus Question:

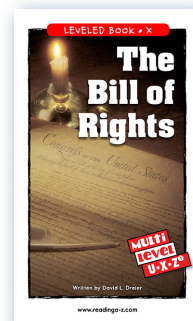
What is the Bill of Rights, and why is it important?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Historical

What is the highest law of the land? *The Bill of Rights* explores how changes to the Constitution have allowed it to remain a “living document” that provides important protections for all Americans. This book can also be used to teach students how to determine an author’s purpose and the proper use of possessive nouns.

The book and lesson are also available for levels U and Z1.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Determine author’s purpose
- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Describe information provided by a glossary
- ☐ Recognize and use possessive nouns
- ☐ Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

- ☐ Book: *The Bill of Rights* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Summarize, possessive nouns, alphabetical order worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *amendment* (n.), *Bill of Rights* (n.), *Constitution* (n.), *freedoms* (n.), *principles* (n.), *right* (n.)

Enrichment: *confederation* (n.), *Founders* (n.), *freedom of speech* (n.), *privacy* (n.), *racial segregation* (n.), *revolution* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *allow* (v.), *approve* (v.), *document* (n.), *individual* (adj.), *necessary* (adj.), *protect* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to share what they know about laws and rights. Then, have them discuss how these are helpful in society.
- Direct students to the photographs on page 6. Ask students if they are familiar with the words “We the People” and the images on the page, and have them share what they know. Explain to students that the phrase “We the People” is from the U.S. Constitution. Explain that this document contains the basic laws of the United States. However, after it was drafted, many of the Founders wanted a separate set of statements added that would protect the rights of all citizens and limit the power of the federal government.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The Bill of Rights*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author’s name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Author’s purpose

- Explain to students that authors have a purpose, or reason, for what they write. Write the words *inform*, *entertain*, and *persuade* on the board. Explain to students that to inform means to provide information, to entertain means to amuse, and to persuade means to convince another to act or feel a certain way.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

- Review with students a book the class has previously read. Have students work in groups to determine the author's purpose, and guide students to a class consensus. Have students work with a partner to predict the author's purpose for *The Bill of Rights*.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

- Explain to students that one way to understand and remember information in a book is to write a summary, or brief overview, of the most important information in a section or chapter. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.
- Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read pages 17 and 18 aloud and model summarizing while writing information in the corresponding columns on the chart.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 24. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the Bill of Rights. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What events led to the Constitution's approval?* (level 2) pages 6–11
- *What facts would you select to support the idea that the Bill of Rights is the highest law of the land?* (level 3) pages 6–8
- *What did James Madison use as a model for the Bill of Rights?* (level 1) page 11

- *How would things be different without the Bill of Rights?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How are the Fourth Amendment and the Sixth Amendment related?* (level 2) pages 12–14, page 16
- *Why is the Second Amendment still widely debated today?* (level 1) page 15
- *What conclusions can you draw about passing new amendments?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How does the Bill of Rights affect the Constitution?* (level 2) multiple pages

Text Features: Glossary

Explain that a glossary helps readers define the words that are in the book. Have students work with a partner to review the glossary on page 24. Ask students: *Where can you locate these vocabulary words in the book? How would you define the word freedoms? On what page can you find the word confederation?* Have students review other vocabulary words in the glossary and discuss in groups where they would be found in the book and how they know. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Skill Review

- Have students work in groups to periodically review the details they have read and discuss their effects on the reader. Have groups discuss their opinion on the author's purpose for writing each time they convene.
- Model evaluating details to determine the author's purpose.
Think-aloud: *The book is presenting many details about the Bill of Rights: its history related to the Constitution, its guarantee of citizens' rights, and so on. All of these facts give me new information on the topic, so I believe the author's purpose is to inform. Still, I will read to the end of the book, examining each detail, to see if he has a different main purpose or more than one.*
- Model for students how you summarize as you read, fill in the chart on the board, and direct them to stop at several points during reading to answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 4 and 5 with a partner. Ask students to summarize what they read in groups. Invite volunteers to share their summaries with the rest of the class. Assign student pairs a section from the table of contents to summarize.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [summarize worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Skill Review

Worksheet: **Summarize**

Review the summarize worksheet with students. Have students share their ideas in groups. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class the details they chose.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Example: *The Bill of Rights is a document of amendments to the U.S. Constitution. It is important because it protects citizens' freedoms.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Possessive nouns**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *The Tinker family was very happy with the Supreme Court's decision in 1969.* Read the sentence aloud, pointing to the word *decision*. Ask a volunteer to explain whose decision the sentence is referring to (the Supreme Court's). Explain that the word *Court's* shows that the decision belonged to the Supreme Court because it includes an apostrophe and the letter *S*.
- Review or explain that words like *Court's* are called **possessive nouns**. A possessive noun is formed by adding *-s* (or just an apostrophe if the word is a plural noun and already ends in an *s*) to the end of a word to show ownership, or possession.
- Direct students to page 5. Have them find a possessive noun in the second paragraph (*citizens'*). Ask a volunteer to read aloud the sentence containing the possessive noun *citizens'*. Ask another volunteer to explain what belongs to citizens (*freedoms*).
- Have students find another possessive noun on page 8 (*people's*). Repeat the process, explaining the placement of the apostrophe.
- Remind students that a contraction using *-s* is not the same as a possessive. For example, on page 12, *Let's* is a contraction for *let us* and does not show ownership.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students find and circle all the possessive nouns in the book and underline the item that each one owns.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **possessive nouns worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Alphabetical order**

- Write the words *right* and *rights* on the board. Point out that the words begin with the same letter (*Rr*). Remind students that, when alphabetizing words, if the first letters of two words are the same, they must compare the second letters instead. Explain that if the second letters of the two words are the same, they continue on to compare the third letters, and so on, until they find two letters that are different. Model how to list these words in alphabetical order. Review the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order.
- Write the words *citizens* and *civil rights* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*citizens*) and why. Point out that the letters in *citizens* and *civil rights* are the same until the third letter. Point out that the *Tt* in *citizens* comes before the *Vv* in *civil rights*.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *government* and *guarantee* on the board. Have the students write the words in alphabetical order and explain their thinking on a separate piece of paper. Discuss their answers with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **alphabetical order worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.