

## ***Fault Lines in the Constitution***

### **Overview**

Great resource from IL Civics:

[How to pick a good simulation](#)

[How to get students engaged](#)

[Service Learning Ideas](#)

And so much more!



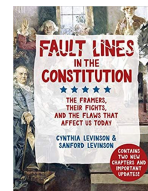
**INFORMED ACTION** Engage kids from day one! [Politicraft](#) is a fun interactive game for your students. It provides students with the opportunity to explore real-life civic scenarios that are critical to empowering students with a sense of political efficacy.

**From the Authors**  
**Cynthia Levinson & Sanford Levinson**

[Fault lines in the Constitution Teacher Resource Guide](#)

[Fault lines in the Constitution Blog](#)

Consider the audio book for students with special needs:  
book available at [Audible on Amazon](#)



## **General Resources for The Constitution**

[Constitute](#) is an online tool that allows students to compare and contrast the structure of the US Constitution with those of other constitutions from around the world.

[Interactive Constitution](#) from the National Constitution Center. Explore the Constitution's text, meaning, and history with leading constitutional scholars, including a Media Library for videos, podcasts, blog posts, and educational resources updated daily.

[Six Big Ideas in the Constitution](#) from the National Archives with a focus on the six major concepts within the Constitution.

[Key Constitutional Concepts Video](#) by Annenberg Classroom The Constitution Project. Wonderful resource and fun presentation.

## Content Support and Suggestions by Chapter

Book Topic/chapter	Content help	Lesson ideas/ Discussion questions/ Informed action
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Part I: How Bills Become (or, More Likely, Don't Become) Law</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions:</u> Does the system of checks and balances provide us with an effective and efficient government?</p>		
Ch 1: It takes Two to Tango/Bicameralism	<p><b>Lesson from the IL Civics Web page</b></p> <p><a href="#">Bicameralism video</a></p> <p><a href="#">Congress in Action (background on Congress)</a></p>	<p><b>From Author's Discussion Guide (DG):</b> How does the bicameral system of Congress often lead to gridlock in passing legislation?</p>
Ch 2: Big States, Little Say/The Senate	<p>Under the leadership of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, <a href="#">iCivics.org</a> leverages gaming to simulate democratic practices related to foundational concepts such as federalism, limited government, and checks and balances</p> <p><a href="#">iCivics Legislative Branch</a></p> <p><a href="#">Illinois Civics Lesson plan: Census 2020: How does your community count on you?</a></p> <p><a href="#">Illinois Civics Census Toolkit</a></p>	<p><b>DG:</b> Proportional representation is a key concept in the book and underlies many fault lines, including the Senate and the Electoral College. Revise the graphic (40) to compare the proportion of your state's population your senators represent with that of another state. <b>** CROSS CURRICULAR</b></p>
Ch 3: Delete! Presidential Veto	<p><a href="#">I'm Just a Bill Video:</a></p> <p><a href="#">Presidential Veto Power Lesson Plan</a></p> <p><a href="#">iCivics Executive Powers</a></p>	<p><b>DG:</b> How does presidential veto power breach the separation between the executive and legislative branches of government? <u>John Adams went so far as to suggest that presidential veto power changes Congress from a bicameral to tricameral legislature. Do you agree or disagree</u></p>

Ch 4: Majority Rules--Except When it Doesn't/ Supermajority Rules	What is a filibuster? <a href="#">Video clip:</a> <a href="#">iCivics filibuster lesson (HS)</a>	<b>DG:</b> The filibuster increasingly brings Senate business to a halt. Discuss the pros and cons of possible remedies for this problem.
<p align="center"><u>Part II: Hello, Can You Hear Me?</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions:</u> How can I exercise my power to make the government more representative of "we the people"?</p>		
Ch 5: Gerrymandering	<a href="#">Redistricting</a> Lesson from the IL Civics Web page: <a href="#">Low tech</a> version:  Mary Ellen Daneels <a href="#">M&amp;M challenge</a>	<b>INFORMED Action:</b> Write a letter to their state representative advocating for their opinion on Congressional Districts? (Independent panel, leave as is... etc..)
Ch 6: The District of Columbia	Hamilton connection: "In the Room where it happens"  <a href="#">A History of Washington, D.C.</a>	<b>DG:</b> Which of the options for addressing the lack of representation for residents in the District of Columbia make the most sense to you?  Should our national capital be moved to a more central location? Why or why not?
Ch 7: Direct Democracy	Issues around voting, <a href="#">voting apathy</a> etc...  <a href="#">Comparing Direct Democracy to Representative Democracy Lesson</a>	<b>DG:</b> Should citizens be able to bypass Congress and pass or eliminate laws on their own? If so, what kinds of laws should citizens vote upon directly?
<p align="center"><u>Part III: If America Threw a Party, Would You Be Let In?</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions:</u> <b>Do political parties help or hurt our government functions?</b></p>		
Ch 8: Voting Rights	<a href="#">Election Toolkit and Lesson</a> from the IL Civics Web page: ( Unit plan with links to multiple topics)	
Ch 9: Restrictions on Running for Congress	<a href="#">Congress in Action:</a> Organized by topic tons of links	<b>DG:</b> • Should there be any minimum requirements for citizens to run for (Congressional) those offices?
Ch 10: Restrictions	<a href="#">Ben's Guide</a> to all branches:	What should qualifications for the President be? (Rewrite the Constitution)

on Running for President	<a href="#">Executive Branch Lessons/games</a> from the IL Civics Web page	What roles does the President fill?
Ch 11: Presidential Term Limits	Extra: Why do we have term limits ( <a href="#">video</a> )	<a href="#">Should there be limits on elected officials?</a> <a href="#">Or Why do we limit just the President's term?</a>
<p><u>Part IV: "HURRAH! I'M 18. FINALLY I CAN VOTE FOR THE PRESIDENT." "NOT SO FAST."</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Question: The Electoral College: Is there a Better Way?</u> How can we make our republic more democratic?</p>		
Ch 12: The Electoral College	Extra: <a href="#">Ted Ed video</a>  <a href="#">School House ROCK</a> : (entertaining, not as informational)  <a href="#">The Electoral College Lesson</a>  <a href="#">Supreme Court Case: Chiafalo v Washington (07-06-2020)</a>  <a href="#">NYTimes Article about Chiafalo v. Washington Case</a>	How should we elect the President of the USA?  <a href="#">C3 Teachers/Student Inquiries</a> — C3 Teachers publish inquiries collected at different grade levels in vary to content topics from around the country.
<p><u>Part V: CAN THE PRESIDENT REALLY DO THAT?!</u></p> <p><u><a href="#">Background content for entire UNIT from the IL Civics Web page</a></u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions: To what extent have Constitutional structures been successful in limiting the risk of tyranny?</u></p> <p><u>Is a strong president in the best interests of the nation?</u></p>		
Ch 13: Presidential Pardons	See above link	Should there be limits on the President's power of Pardon?  Does your Governor have the power of Pardon?

Ch 14: The Unitary Executive	iCivics: A Very Big Branch looks at who else is in the Executive Branch. <a href="#">Lessons/games</a> from the IL Civics Web page:  <a href="#">Lesson Plan on Executive Branch Departments</a>	<b>DG:</b> Why is it problematic that the president cannot appoint a high-ranking official without “advice and consent of the Senate” (156), but can dismiss an appointee without Senate involvement?
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Part VI: Who’s Running America?</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions:</u> To what extent does continuity of power keep the government running smoothly?</p>		
Ch 15: Continuity in Government	<a href="#">Lessons</a> on Congress and the President combined	How do you suggest a state choose a replacement member of Congress?
Ch 16: Presidential Succession	<a href="#">Designated Survivor</a> : Topic that fascinates students Short article and video clip of show.	<b>DG:</b> Review the Presidential order of succession (179). Would you make any modifications? If so, what would you change?
Ch 17: Inauguration Day	<a href="#">Lame Duck</a> Video: (maybe too fast for students/slow down play speed)  <a href="#">How Lame is a Lame Duck President? Article</a>	<b>DG:</b> Why is inaugurating a president more than two months after Election Day a problem?
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Part VII: Emergency! Emergency!</u></p> <p><u>Potential Essential Questions:</u> What is the balance between individual liberty and the common good? What do we do when certain civil liberties conflict with one another? To what extent should the executive and judicial branches be involved in creating public policy? How do competing interests influence how power is distributed and exercised?</p>		
Ch 18: Emergency Powers	Good History lessons: <a href="#">Executive Order 9066</a>  <a href="#">Emergency Orders since 1979</a>  <a href="#">What limits should there be on the emergency powers of the President? Lesson plan</a>	<b>DG:</b> Is it ever appropriate for citizens to be denied their constitutional rights in a time of emergency? If so, under what circumstances?  <b>INFORMED ACTION:</b> Write a letter to an elected official (school, local etc..) discussing an issue around student rights  2 Great lessons on First Amendment (Flag Burning

		and Cyberbullying) on Il Civics. <a href="https://www.illinoiscivics.org/2019/resources/lesson-plans">https://www.illinoiscivics.org/2019/resources/lesson-plans</a>
Ch 19: Habeas Corpus	From IL Civics Source for content on Executive Orders and other concepts introduced by <a href="#">video</a> ::  Amazing Lessons on <a href="#">Federal Responsibility</a>	Have students examine the story of the Ebola crisis to COVID response; Venn diagram with INFORMED ACTION: Write an elected representative their opinion on a policy.  From the book: Can the President issue a “stay at home” order? (p208) Or who has the power to give a “stay at home order” Governor vs President. Suggest a T chart to summarize YES and NO arguments.
Ch 20: Amending the Constitution	Focus on Current Issues around rights: <a href="#">Lesson plan</a> on Theme: The Judicial Branch and/or Criminal Justice System and Race.  Understanding <a href="#">Judicial Review</a> Video:  <a href="#">Lesson Plan Amending the Constitution: Article V</a>  <a href="#">History of the ERA: 3 Things You Should Know-Harvard Video</a>	<b>DG:</b> The battle over the Equal Rights Amendment shows how difficult it is to amend the Constitution. After reading about the numerous fault lines in the Constitution in this book, do you agree with James Madison that it should not be easy to change? Or, do you believe that the amendment process should be simplified, as it is in other countries and in many states?  <b>ERA Discussion</b> Examine the process and time limits on the amendment process.(p223)
Ch 21: Grading the Constitution	Suggestion: Examine “Faults” (pick one as a class jigsaw the others) Report on: a. Describe the Fault (including defining any key terms to understand) b. How can the fault be solved (besides an amendment) Is this an opportunity to <b>take action</b> ? c. Should the Fault be Corrected? <b>How or who would correct it? Taking informed action</b> (Methods or models discussed ch 22)	<b>DG: <u>Suggestion from the Discussion Guide</u></b> • What does each aspect of the Preamble mean to you today? How is it different from what the Framers intended? <b>OR</b> • The authors give the lowest grade, a C-, to “Promote the general Welfare” and “Form a More Perfect Union.” What are the authors’ reasons? Do you agree or disagree that these principles deserve the lowest grade? If you disagree, which aspect of the Preamble do you think deserves the lowest grade?
Ch 22	Models methods of “fixing” the fault	Consider using <a href="#">Philosophical Chairs</a> with your

<p>Now What?</p>	<p>lines. Change Senate rules, Pass New Laws, Work around, amend the Constitution</p> <p>Articles for discussions in class.</p> <p><a href="#">Changes in the Constitution Experts Would Like to Make: ABCNews</a></p> <p><a href="#">Why the Constitution Needs To Change: The Week Magazine</a></p> <p><a href="#">Don't Even Think About "Updating" the Constitution: Chicago Tribune</a></p> <p><a href="#">Amending Justice Stevens: How and Why We Shouldn't Change the Constitution Like This: Forbes Magazine</a></p>	<p>students on the topic of Changing the Constitution. <a href="#">Here is a video</a> to introduce Philosophical Chairs.</p> <p>Sign up for ME Daneels <a href="#">Monthly newsletter</a> to find out about the next Guardians of Democracy on line PD. to improve your skill of using engaging projects.</p>
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