TEACHING THE COVER STORY

A Great Debate

STANDARD
SOCIAL STUDIES—Students should draw upon data in historical narratives, plays, maps, and other accounts to understand how events in our past have affected our current society and culture.

SUMMARY
America’s Founders fiercely debated whether to include a bill of rights in the U.S. Constitution.

PRE-READING DISCUSSION
● Go over rights covered by the Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech and of the press. Ask students if they know that these rights are part of our Constitution, in the form of Amendments.

BACKGROUND
● In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed December 15 as Bill of Rights Day. Bill of Rights Day honors the ratification of the Bill of Rights as Amendments to the U.S. Constitution on December 15, 1791. The day’s purpose is to make people more aware of their rights.

POST-READING DISCUSSION
● Ask students to discuss the nature of debate and how it’s a useful tool for people to decide important matters.

CLASS BILL OF RIGHTS
Give each student a list of the Amendments in the Bill of Rights. (A list can be found on page 9 of the How Our Democracy Works skills book that you received with your 9/29/08 issue. The list also includes real-life situations the Bill of Rights protects.) Next, have your students make lists of rights they think should be included in a classroom bill of rights. Combine the lists and put this list on the board. Have your students debate which rights should be included and which left out. Then, have students vote on each right, with rights that get a majority of votes making the final list.

LESSON EXTENSION
Ask students if there are any other basic rights they believe our Constitution should include.

RESOURCE
● For another lesson plan about the Bill of Rights, including a Bill of Rights test, go to http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=147.

We are committed to your satisfaction. You can contact us at 1-800-724-6527.
Help for Frogs

**STANDARD:** SCIENCE: POPULATIONS AND ECOSYSTEMS

**SUMMARY**

Scientists named 2008 the Year of the Frog. They launched a global campaign to help raise awareness of threatened frogs and amphibians. Habitat loss, pollution, climate change, and a deadly fungus have put many species at great risk of extinction.

**PRE-READING DISCUSSION**

- Do you think it is important to help protect endangered animals? Why or why not?

**BACKGROUND**

- Large parts of Central America, South America, and Australia are where the chytrid fungus is mostly found.
- The chytrid fungus attacks the skin and causes it to thicken. Eventually, sickened frogs can't breathe or regulate the passage of fluids through their skin.

**POST-READING DISCUSSION**

- How might the world be affected if frogs died out?

**LESSON EXTENSION**

Research an amphibian species that is endangered. What are the greatest threats to it?

**RESOURCE**

- Learn more about the Year of the Frog at www.amphibianark.org.

This Week Online FOR KIDS

www.scholastic.com/sn4

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!**

Your students can learn their rights and responsibilities by playing The Constitution Game at www.scholastic.com/constitution.

The game is quick and can be played many times with different results. Includes a free lesson plan and a reproducible.

After reading A Great Debate, your students can participate in their own discussion about the Bill of Rights on the Scholastic News Online blog. Kids from around the world participate in these safe online discussions, moderated by Scholastic News Online editors.

For answers to this issue’s online quiz, go to www.scholastic.com/sn4answerkey.

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String of Events

In the play *A Great Debate*, you read about the Bill of Rights and its importance to the U.S. There were many states, names, dates, and facts in the piece. It’s important to understand how all of them fit together. In this activity, you’ll put events from the play in the order in which they happened in history.

**DIRECTIONS:** In the circles below, number the events from the play in the order in which they happened in history. Keep in mind that the sequence won’t necessarily be the same as the events’ positions in the story.

1. In January 1789, the country holds its first presidential election under the U.S. Constitution.
2. James Madison presents the House of Representatives with a draft of what will become the Bill of Rights.
3. As the U.S. Constitution is written, people fear another government with too much power. They demand guarantees that their rights will be protected.
4. On September 17, 1787, a final draft of the Constitution is presented to state delegates at the Constitutional Convention.
5. After 28 days of debate, Virginia narrowly ratifies the Constitution by a vote of 89-79.
6. In December 1791, 10 Amendments are ratified by the states and become part of the Constitution as the Bill of Rights.
7. The delegates vote, and the original draft of the Constitution is approved.
8. One by one, the states hold conventions to debate the proposed Constitution.
Solving Problems

In most short stories, plays, and novels, the main character confronts a problem that is identified in the beginning and solved by the end. As you read the play The Great Debate, think about the problem James Madison faces and about how the problem will be solved.

DIRECTIONS: As you read, write down the problem the main character is facing. Then use clues from the story to predict how the problem will be solved. When you finish reading, explain how the problem was solved.

THE PROBLEM:

My ideas for how the problem might be solved:

SOLUTION 1

SOLUTION 2

SOLUTION 3

How the problem was really solved: