

Lesson Plan

"The Constitution's Promise: E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One"

How can journalists help?

Overview and Rationale

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day – the second part is new for 2025 – is a U.S. federal observance that honors the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is observed Sept. 17, the day delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document in Philadelphia in 1787. Our national motto, and the theme for 2025, is “E Pluribus Unum -- Out of many, one,” reminding us of our responsibility to each other and to creating a unified country out of a wide range of diversity.

This is especially a good reminder for journalists, who are often considered the Fourth Estate – the one that keeps the other three – legislative, executive and judicial branches of government – in line. Today this is particularly important when Congress and state legislatures often battle over who has enough votes to pass very impactful laws, the President and governors often seem to wield more power than in the past, and courts at various levels may be asked to decide what should be legal.

It also seems today recognizing the many different kinds of diversity is not always acceptable. But ignoring race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social background, age and other kinds of differences certainly doesn't help us become one nation – or even one school with people who help each other.

With that in mind, this lesson plan is designed to help you seek out a variety of sources and tap their voices to report what's going on in the lives and minds of your student body, helping them accept each other and work together for a better, more unified school environment – “Out of many, one.”

Goals for Understanding

- Explain how diversity works within the school and outside in the broader community
- Practice effective communication techniques to effectively interview and discuss topics with a variety of students who may not be like you
- Analyze how diversity impacts those in the school
- Note how diversity impacts those in the wider community

Resources/Materials

- Short video about diversity in journalism (Amna Nawaz, co-anchor PBS NewsHour)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwxdywUHYBg>
- Access to computers to investigate more background on the holidays
- Some good sites for reading about holidays
<https://studyabroad.georgetown.edu/news-story/experiencing-global-fall-around-the-world/>
<https://placement-international.com/blog/fall-holidays-you-didnt-know-about>

Activity

- Brainstorm about the holidays (fall or winter) those on the staff already know
- Spend a few days talking to other students who might celebrate different holidays with their families
- Check with guidance counselors and other instructors for leads on students (or teachers) to interview.
- Follow your regular news schedule. Brainstorm photos, graphics, infographics for an outstanding package in an appropriate version of a print publication or the logical time to post it on your website.
- Debrief when the package is published.
 - o What did you learn while you got background?
 - o What did you learn about interviewing?
 - o What do you think your audience learned?