

Unit 9: Reconstruction

7th Grade Lesson Plan: The Constitution of 1876

(45 – 60 minutes)

Objective	<p>In this one-day lesson, students will examine the seven principles of government and categorize excerpts from the Constitution of 1876 based on which principle or principles they uphold.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>We will</u> examine the meaning and important seven key principles of government. 2. <u>I will</u> categorize different excerpts from the Texas Constitution of 1876 based on the principles they uphold or represent.
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are seven primary principles of government on which the Constitution of Texas was founded, including Federalism, Republicanism, Popular Sovereignty, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Limited Government, and Individual Rights. • The Texas State Constitution of 1876 upholds these principles in various ways.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary source analysis. • Using context to determine meaning and significance. • Categorizing • Making connections between beliefs or ideology and practical political information.
Essential Question	What are the seven principles of government that provide the foundation of the Texas Constitution of 1876, and how did the Constitution uphold those principles?
Assignment	<p>Warm-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students consider what the delegates to the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1876 would have focused on when creating the state's new constitution. • Students choose from a list of six statements proposing topics that the delegates may have considered. Students identify which topics they think would have been most likely to be important to the delegates.

	<p>Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read seven short passages introducing the seven principles of government on which the Texas Constitution of 1876 was based. After reading the passages, students use the information in the passages to categorize ten excerpts from the Constitution of 1876 based on which principle or principles the uphold. <p>Exit Ticket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students match the seven principles of the government to their most accurate description.
Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Slideshow (<i>Suggested use: present on the overhead; Upload to an educational platform like google classroom; print extra copies for note-taking assistance</i>) Warm-up / Exit Ticket (<i>Suggested printing: 1 per student. Assignment prints two copies per page.</i>) Readings – One level (<i>Suggested printing: 1 set of readings per student or partner group</i>) Assignment (<i>Suggested printing 1 per student</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Level work Grade Level work Foundations Level work
Differentiation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scaffolding including classwork at three different levels of academic ability Visual representations of directions Sentence stems to guide student responses Reduction in answer choices
TEKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.13(A) Identify how the Texas Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights. 7.14(B) Identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments such as property taxes, sales taxes, bonds, and fees. 7.15(A) Explain the rights of Texas citizens. 7.20(A) Differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as media and news

	<p>services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.20(B): Analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and conclusions.
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Teacher Guide: The Constitution of 1876

Warm-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are asked to consider what the delegates to the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1876 would have focused on when writing the new state constitution. Students choose from a list of various topics to determine which topics would have been most important to the delegates. Topics focus on the contrast between small, limited government and larger, more powerful government. The Constitutional Convention of 1876 was primarily focused on returning the state to a more limited government primarily in the hands of local governments. Slides 2 and 3 restate the directions and provide sentence stems to guide student responses when sharing with the class. Slides 4 and 5 provide the essential question and the “We will / I will” statements for the lesson.
Lesson	<p><u>Reading Passages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are short reading passages for each of the seven principles of government. These can be printed and cut out to be used in small groups or partner groups of students. They can also be presented in a packet format to individual students or uploaded to a learning management system like Google Classroom. Students use these readings to complete their worksheets. <p><u>Student Worksheets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 10 excerpts from the Texas Constitution of 1876 in the chart in the worksheets. Each excerpt contains information that represents or upholds one or more of the seven principles of government. Students read each excerpt and determine which principle or principles the excerpt upholds. Slides 6 – 12 provide images that represent each principle of the constitution.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Advanced:</u> Students choose from all seven principles when categorizing the excerpts from the Constitution. • <u>Grade Level:</u> Two of the seven principles have been eliminated for each excerpt. • <u>Foundations:</u> Three of the seven principles have been eliminated for each excerpt.
Exit Ticket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students match each principle with its best description in a matching activity. • Slides 13 and 14 restate the directions and provide sentence stems to guide student responses when sharing with the class.

Primary Sources and Other Resources Used

- The Constitution of 1876. Constitutions of Texas, 1824 – 1876. Tarlton Law Library. Jamail Center for Legal Research. Accessed on 10/8/25.
<https://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/constitutions/constitution-texas-1876>
- Texas Constitution of 1876. Accessed 10/8/25. Texas State Library and Archives Commission. <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/constitution/1875-01.html>
- Vote Here sign, Louisiana, March 2025. Accessed 10/8/25. Wikimedia Commons. Background removed for this slideshow.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vote_Here_sign,_Louisiana,_March_2025.jpg
- Boone Photo Co. [Texas State Capitol], photograph, 1947; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth124092/>; accessed October 8, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.
- Horberger, Carl. [Governor's Mansion with fence], photograph, 1971; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth124768/>; accessed October 8, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.
- The Supreme Court of Texas, 2025. Accessed 10/8/25.
<https://txcourts.gov/supreme>
- Checks and Balances infographic. Accessed on 10/8/25.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Separation_of_powers.png
- Federalism diagram. Accessed on 10/8/25.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Federalism.png>
- Student Protest March, photograph, [1970..1975]; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth124372/>; accessed October 8, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.