**Social Studies**          **Grade Level: 4th Grade**          **Lesson Title: The Constitution: Is it a Living and Breathing Document?**
**Author of Lesson: Tammy Ponder, Patti Moss, Donna Stone**          **School System: Paulding County**
**Lesson Time Frame: 2- 30 minute segments/ plus assessment time**

**Description of Lesson:** Utilizing primary source documents, students will examine images, and interpret text to examine the Constitution. They will determine if the founding fathers were finished when they created the Constitution after the completion of the Declaration of Independence in 1789.

**Georgia Performance Standards:**
- **SS4CG1** The student will describe the meaning of
  a. Natural rights as found in the Declaration of Independence (the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness).
  b. “We the people” from the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution as a reflection of consent of the governed or popular sovereignty.
- **SS4CG4** The student will explain the importance of Americans sharing certain central democratic beliefs and principles, both personal and civic.
  a. Explain the necessity of respecting the rights of others and promoting the common good.

**Map and Globe Skills:**

**Information Processing Skills:**
GOAL: The student will be able to locate, analyze, and synthesize information related to social studies topics and apply this information to solve problems/make decisions. -identify and use primary and secondary sources

**Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies:**
- **ELACC4RI1:** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **ELACC4RI9:** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

**Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies:**
- **ELACC4W9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **ELACC4W2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
  b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
  d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

**Essential Questions:** Was the Work of our Founding Fathers Finished with the Signing of the Bill of Rights in 1789?

**Enduring Understandings:** Students will understand that the Constitution is a living document and has evolved to meet the needs of American citizens.

**Opening: Connection to Previous Learning:** Teacher will project various paintings to activate prior knowledge. Prior to this lesson, students have learned about the ideals of our nation as set forth by the Declaration of Independence, the goal of our Constitution as established by the Preamble, and the protection of individual rights as established by the Bill of Rights. Because of this prior knowledge, students will be able to identify the Founding Fathers illustrated in the painting, and the fact that they are signing the Constitution. (Images of paintings included)

Teachers will then lead into the essential question, “Was the Work of our Founding Fathers Finished with the Signing of the Bill of Rights in 1789?” (Images of paintings included)

**Lesson Instructions:** Explain to students the task they will be completing by projecting the writing prompt that students will utilize to assess students’ understanding:  
**Task Description:** With the founding of our country, the founding fathers created a series of documents to outline our nation’s beliefs about the rights of man and to frame our government. In doing this, they used ideas from various documents. It was their goal to create a country based on the idea of liberty for all. Were they successful?
Utilizing the document based question format, students will utilize their prior knowledge and examine various documents to determine the importance of the Constitution. In the Cooperative Learning structures of Think- Pair- Share, students must examine and discuss each document. The class would then discuss their interpretation of each document making changes and/or highlighting information that they determined was important. Please note that the evaluation of documents could be done utilizing various instructional grouping methods. Teachers should determine this based on the performance levels of students and student needs.

Real Life Connections:

Link to the past:
Students will utilize primary documents to discover what equality and liberty meant to our founding fathers and to whom they were referring to in “all men are created equal.”

Link to the Present:
Students will be aware of their rights as citizens of the United States and whether or not the phrase, “all men are created equal” is applicable to America today.

Closing: Students share their written responses and discuss whether or not liberty exists in the United States of America for all groups of people today.

Differentiation:
Students with Disabilities/English as a Secondary Language
- Word banks to use when writing
- Reduce number of questions
- Define difficult words as a subscript within the text

Extensions:
- Research one of the Founding Fathers who signed the Constitution; what did he contribute towards its creation, why is he memorable
- Pretend you were alive during this time period. Create a news report describing what happened and the importance of the Constitution.
- Design a picture book to explain the importance of the Constitution to your classmates or to younger students; use web based websites to create the book. Share your creation.
- Create your own cartoon explaining the importance of the Constitution using information from these documents, Utilize we based websites like www.goanimate.com

Vocabulary:
- Founding fathers, framers
- Constitution
- unalienable rights
- consent
- Declaration of Independence
- posterity
- prohibitions
- compensation
- creed
- James Madison
- Martin Luther King
Resources:
- Images to project
- Document Based Questions
- Writing Task

Assessment(s): Write a short written response answering the following question:
Using your knowledge of the four documents and your prior knowledge of US history, was the work of our founding fathers finished with the signing of the Bill of Rights in 1789? In your answer, be sure to think about the various groups of people that lived in the United States during the time of the documents and currently. (Student Resources Included)

Images For Opening of Lesson:
The Constitution: Is it a Living and Breathing Document?

Directions: The following task is based on the accompanying documents (1 - 4). Examine and interpret the meaning of these documents. Use them to complete the assigned task.

Historic Background: The United States of America was built on the ideas of freedom and opportunities for citizens. A democratic government, it works well for many of its citizens. Many historical events have influenced and shaped our country but many historians believe that the Constitution plays a major role in our country’s development.

Task Description:

With the founding of our country, the founding fathers created a series of documents to outline our nation’s beliefs about the rights of man and to frame our government. In doing this, they used ideas from various documents. It was their goal to create a country based on the idea of liberty for all. Were they successful?

Document 1:

“...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed…”

-Declaration of Independence, 1776

1. What rights were men guaranteed?


2. Who was Thomas Jefferson referring to, in writing the Declaration of Independence, when he wrote “all men are created equal?”


Document 2:

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

-Preamble to the Constitution, 1787

1. Who was the audience of this document?

__________________________________________________________________________

2. Explain the meaning of the text quote, “… secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity…”

__________________________________________________________________________

Document 3:

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. Written by James Madison in response to calls from several states for greater constitutional protection for individual liberties, the Bill of Rights lists specific prohibitions on governmental power.

Included are:

1st Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise … the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government …

4th Amendment

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause…
5th Amendment

No person shall … be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Bill of Rights, 1791

1. Why was the Bill of Rights added to the Constitution?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

2. In your own words, what rights were guaranteed by Amendments 1, 4, and 5?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Document 4:

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood....

...I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

Martin Luther King Jr., 1963

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’

1. What dream does Martin Luther King Jr. have for his children?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2. Based on the text above, what does Martin Luther King Jr. believe about equal rights in the United States?

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Assessment:

Write a short written response answering the following question:

Using your knowledge of the four documents and your prior knowledge of US history, was the work of our founding fathers finished with the signing of the Bill of Rights in 1789? In your answer, be sure to think about the various groups of people that lived in the United States during the time of the documents and currently.