

Tennessee Secretary of State *Blue Book Lesson Plans*

The U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights vs. the Tennessee Constitution's Declaration of Rights

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Grade Level: High School, U.S. Government and Civics

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For additional lesson plans, click [here](#).



There are a limited number of hard copies of Blue Books available. To see about ordering a set for your classroom, please contact the Secretary of State's office at (615) 741-2819 or one of your local legislators. The online version of the Blue Book is also available [here](#).

Introduction:

The Tennessee Constitution's Declaration of Rights has many similarities to the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. In this lesson, students will explore these similarities and additional rights of Tennesseans utilizing the *Tennessee Blue Book* as a primary resource.

Guiding Questions:

- What does the Tennessee Constitution's Declaration of Rights do that the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights does not?
- What two basic principles are the cornerstone of the Tennessee Constitution and Declaration of Rights?
- How are civil rights protected in both documents?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- List rights in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights.
- Explain why Tennessee has a Declaration of Rights in its state constitution.
- Describe why both documents are important and necessary.
- **Compare** and **contrast** these two documents.
- Explain how these documents make a difference in a citizen's everyday life.

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Curriculum Standards:

GC.7 – Analyze how the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments. (P)

GC.54 – Identify and describe the provisions of the Tennessee Constitution that define and distribute powers and authority of the state government. (P, TN)

Materials Needed:

- 1) Copies of the graphic organizer for each student (attached): [Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU Worksheet: Analyzing Sources from Multiple Perspectives](#).
- 2) *Tennessee Blue Book* (PDFs provided)
 - [pgs. 474 – 475, U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights](#)
 - [pgs. 628 – 631, Tennessee Constitution’s Declaration of Rights](#)
- 3) Chart paper

Background: Excerpts from:

[“Tennessee Government & Politics: Democracy in the Volunteer State”](#)

(1998) Vanderbilt University Press

Chapter 2: The Tennessee Constitution, Lewis L. Laska, pgs. 7-13.

[“State Constitutions in the Federal System”](#)

(July 1989) Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Chapter 4: The States & Civil Liberties, G. Alan Tarr, pgs. 49-55

Chapter 5: Equality under State Constitutions, G. Alan Tarr & Robert F. Williams, pgs. 59-64.

Teacher’s current textbook – most all Tennessee U.S. Government and Civics textbooks will have a section on State Government and State Constitutions. (Example: Magruder’s American Government & Civics, William A. McClenaghan; 2013; pg. TN33; pgs. 709-711.)

Preparation Instructions:

- 1) Read the articles listed in the materials and background section.
- 2) This lesson assumes that students have already covered the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the “Foundation” section of the U.S. Government & Civics coursework.

- 3) Determine if a print copy of the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Rights or internet access will be used. If you are going to print the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Rights, you will need one per student.
- 4) Copy graphic organizer ([Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU Worksheet: Analyzing Sources from Multiple Perspectives](#), also attached) for each student.
- 5) Create a rubric for scoring the opinion piece (see attached as an example).
- 6) Familiarize yourself with the sources prior to the lesson.
- 7) Prepare chart paper with Amendments I through X of the U.S. Bill of Rights, each amendment on a separate piece of chart paper. Prepare two additional charts labeled, “Other Parts of the U.S. Constitution” and “NOT in the U.S. Constitution” to be placed on walls throughout the classroom.

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1: Introduction

HOOK: Teacher will ask students

- Does anyone know anything about the Tennessee Constitution?
- What was Tennessee called before we were Tennessee? (Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio)

“The original 1796 Constitution was deemed superior to most other state constitution in existence at the time. Thomas Jefferson supposedly called the Tennessee Constitution, ‘the least imperfect and most republican of the states constitutions.’” (Quotation from *Tennessee Government & Politics: Democracy in the Volunteer State*, 1998)

- 1) Display on the overhead projector the Tennessee Constitution (pages 628-631) from the *Tennessee Blue Book*. Pass out copies of the *Tennessee Blue Book* or selected pages.

- [pgs. 474 – 475, U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights](#)
- [pgs. 628 – 631, Tennessee Constitution’s Declaration of Rights](#)

- 2) Have students briefly review the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights with a partner. Then briefly review the Tennessee Constitution’s Declaration of Rights.
- 3) Bring the class back together for discussion. Explain that the Declaration of Rights was original from the 1796 Constitution up to Section 31. Sections 32 – 35h were added over time. Various parts of the Tennessee Constitution were amended in 1834, 1870, 1953, 1960, 1966, 1972, 1978, 1998, 2006, 2010, and 2014.



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- 4) Ask the students: **Which document has stronger protections and rights for citizens?**
- 5) Have the students compare and contrast these two important documents.

Activity 2: Working with Primary Sources

- 1) Divide students into partners/groups and distribute the graphic organizer (Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU Worksheet: Analyzing Sources from Multiple Perspectives) to each student.
- 2) Assign each student/group “sections” of the Tennessee Declaration of Rights, the number of sections per student/group depending on the size of the class.
- 3) Place chart paper with each separate amendment from the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights and the two additional charts labeled “Other Parts of the U.S. Constitution” and “NOT in the U.S. Constitution” around the classroom.
- 4) Have students write their “section” number on the appropriate chart with their first name in parenthesis beside it. Students will have to determine which amendment their “section” of the Declaration of Rights would be placed, and write that section number on the chart.
 - a. Example: Section 3 would be placed on the “Amendment I” chart - #3 (Joey)
- 5) Teacher will then instruct students to discuss with a classmate why they placed their section where they did.
- 6) Have students get out their graphic organizer (Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU Worksheet: Analyzing Sources from Multiple Perspectives.) Students will label “Source 1” as the Bill of Rights and “Source 2” as the Declaration of Rights. Have students “tour” the classroom and note on their graphic organizer where each “section” would be located.
 - a. Example - #3 would be located in the intersection of the circles where both meet, because the right to worship God is in the First Amendment and Declaration of Rights. All “section” numbers will be somewhere on the graphic organizer by the end of the activity.
- 7) Students will naturally start comparing their results to the placement on the chart. If time allows, the teacher can discuss with the class each amendment and “section” placement, particularly if there is disagreement.



Tennessee Constitution, 1796, Tennessee State Library and Archives

Lesson Activity 3 – Writing

Instruct students to write a short opinion piece (paragraph to ½ notebook sheet) utilizing the graphic organizer, in response to the following question:

After participating in today’s activity: **Which document – the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights or the Tennessee Constitution’s Declaration of Rights, has stronger protections for the rights of citizens? Please give specific references and reasons from the two documents.**

Assessment:

Teachers can use the new Social Studies Writing Rubric attached to this lesson to potentially use for the writing assignment.

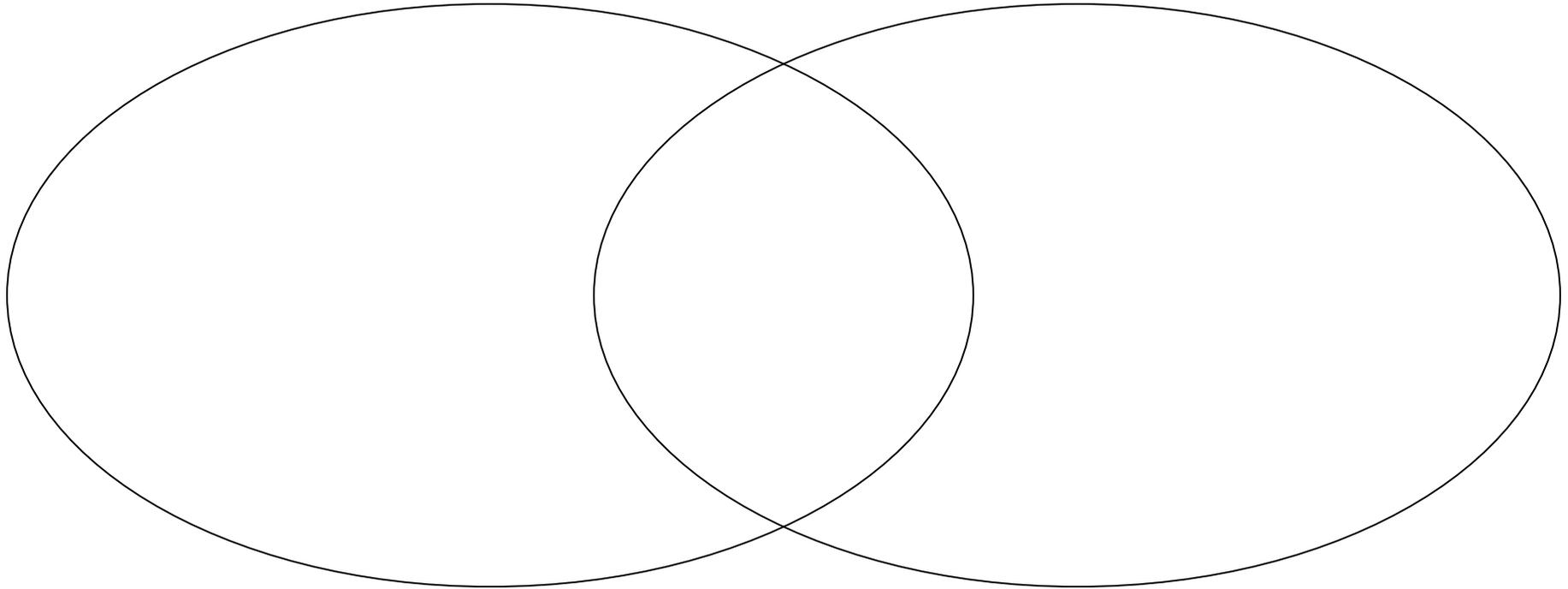
Extending the Lesson:

- As a class, invite a local judge, district attorney or assistant district attorney, public defender, or local attorney to come to class and discuss the application of the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights and the Tennessee Constitution’s Declaration of Rights in today’s courtrooms.
- Have students research recent court decisions on the national level or state level to discuss the practical application of these important documents.

Option for extension: Invite state legislators or local elected officials to come speak to the classroom about their role in government.

Source 1: _____

Source 2: _____



What conclusions can be drawn based on these two sources? _____

TN SS Constructed Response Rubric Grade 8 - U.S. History

Score	Social Studies Content	Literacy in Social Studies
4	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates historical awareness, such as an understanding of chronological placement, historical trends, and historical decision-making, through clear, focused explanations and thoughtful analysis. • Demonstrates a comprehensive, focused understanding of the content strand(s)—geography, culture, economics, politics, history, and Tennessee connection—referenced in the question. • Addresses all aspects of the question. • Cites evidence from the stimulus (or stimuli) to support all facets of the response. • Consistently exhibits proper use of historical data related to the question, such as comparing and contrasting information, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, and supporting inferences or conclusions. • May include minor content errors that do not reflect a misunderstanding of primary social studies concepts. 	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on topics or makes claims directly related to the question. • Introduces the topic or claim with accuracy and clarity. • Provides an analysis of the topic or claim consistently using relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. • Creates cohesion and clarity of relationships among ideas and concepts. • Utilizes appropriate social studies terminology to inform about or explain the topic. • Establishes and maintains an objective tone. • Provides a conclusion that follows from and is supported by the information or explanation presented. • May contain minor errors in grammar and mechanics that do not detract from overall comprehensibility.
3	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates historical awareness, such as an understanding of chronological placement, historical trends, and historical decision-making, through adequate explanation and analysis. • Demonstrates a general understanding of the content strand(s)—geography, culture, economics, politics, history, and Tennessee connection— 	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on topics or makes claims generally related to the question. • Introduces the topic or claim with adequate clarity. • Provides an analysis of the topic or claim frequently using relevant facts, definitions, details, or other information and examples. • Identifies relationships among ideas and concepts.

	<p>referenced in the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses many aspects of the question. • Cites evidence from the stimulus (or stimuli) to support some facets of the response. • Frequently exhibits proper use of historical data related to the question, such as comparing and contrasting information, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, and supporting inferences or predictions. • May include content errors that indicate a minor misunderstanding of primary social studies concepts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misuses some social studies terminology, creating minor flaws in the information or explanation of the topic. • Establishes and maintains an objective tone. • Provides a conclusion that offers some support for the information or explanation presented. • Produces information generally appropriate for the task, purpose, and audience. • May contain a few errors in grammar and mechanics that detract little from overall comprehensibility.
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates some historical awareness, such as an understanding of chronological placement, historical trends, and historical decision-making, but explanations often lack depth and detail, and analysis lacks focus and clarity. • Demonstrates a partial understanding of the content strand(s)—geography, culture, economics, politics, history, and Tennessee connection—referenced in the question. • Addresses few aspects of the question. • Cites little evidence from the stimulus (or stimuli) to support the response. • Occasionally exhibits proper use of historical data related to the question, such as comparing and contrasting information, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, and supporting inferences or conclusions. • May arrive at an acceptable conclusion, but the response might be incomplete, contain content errors, or misuse social studies terminology. 	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on topics or makes claims partially related to the question. • Introduces the topic or claim, but with limited clarity. • Provides an analysis of the topic or claim occasionally using adequate support of facts, definitions, details, or other information and examples. • Describes some of the relationships among ideas and concepts. • Misuses social studies terminology. • Establishes an objective tone, but introduces some unsupported conjectures. • Provides a conclusion with little support for the information or explanation presented. • Produces some information inappropriate to the task, purpose, or audience. • May contain errors in grammar and mechanics that partially detract from overall comprehensibility.

1	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates little to no historical awareness, such as an understanding of chronological placement, historical trends, and historical decision-making, with explanations that contain little depth and detail, and analysis that has little focus or clarity.• Demonstrates little to no understanding of the content strand(s)—geography, culture, economics, politics, history, and Tennessee connection—referenced in the question.• May address some of the elements of the question, but the conclusions are inadequate or inaccurate.• Rarely exhibits proper use of historical data related to the question, such as comparing and contrasting information, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, and supporting inferences or conclusions.• May contain many content errors, flaws in reasoning, or misuse of social studies terminology.	<p>The student response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focuses on topics or makes claims unrelated to the question.• Fails to introduce the topic or claim or introduction lacks clarity.• Provides an analysis of the topic or claim using little or no support of facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples.• Fails to describe relationships among ideas and concepts.• Misuses social studies terminology.• Fails to establish and maintain an objective tone, introducing opinions and unsupported conjectures.• Fails to provide a conclusion that contains support for the information or explanation presented.• Produces information inappropriate to the task, purpose, or audience.• Contains errors in grammar and mechanics that detract from overall comprehensibility.
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