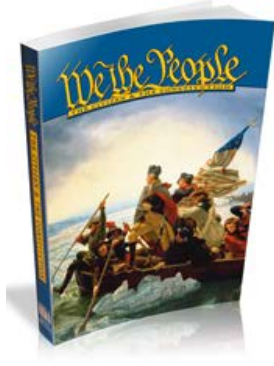




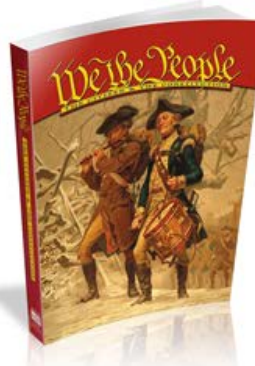
We the People  
The Citizen and the Constitution

## WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

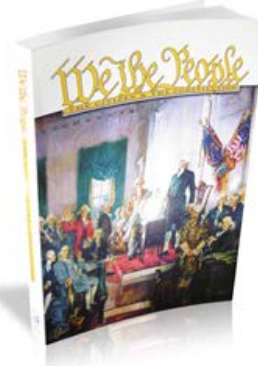
The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education organization that administers national and international civic education programs. The Center's flagship civic education program, We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, was developed in 1987 and adopted by the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, chaired by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, as the principal education program of the federal Constitution's bicentennial. The success of the program at the Bicentennial Commission led to Congress continuing the program through the U.S. Department of Education from 1993 to 2011 as an authorized program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.



Upper Elementary



Middle School



High School

## THE CURRICULUM

The foundation of the We the People program is the classroom curriculum. It complements the regular school curriculum by providing upper elementary, middle, and high school students with an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of U.S. constitutional democracy. The high school text covers these six units:

- Unit One:** What Are the Philosophical and Historical Foundations of the American Political System?
- Unit Two:** How Did the Framers Create the Constitution?
- Unit Three:** How Has the Constitution Been Changed to Further the Ideals Contained in the Declaration of Independence?
- Unit Four:** How Have the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices?
- Unit Five:** What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?
- Unit Six:** What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-first Century?

## SIMULATED HEARINGS

The We the People program's culminating activity is a simulated congressional hearing in which students "testify" before a panel of judges acting as members of Congress. Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles and have opportunities to evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues. Teachers may engage their students in a noncompetitive simulated congressional hearing or a competitive hearing at some levels in certain states.



Photo: Casey Christie / The Californian

## STATE AND NATIONAL SIMULATED HEARINGS

Each year the We the People national academic competition for high schools is held in Washington, D.C., in the spring culminating with a top-ten final round in hearing rooms on Capitol Hill. In addition, a National Invitational event is held in Washington, D.C., allowing middle schools and high schools to have the same rich academic experience of presenting prepared statements on constitutional topics and responding to questions from adult judges.

The student simulated hearing not only deepens student knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, it builds important 21st-century workplace skills and dispositions, such as working cooperatively as a team, public speaking, managing conflict, and reaching consensus.

## HOW THE PROGRAM IS IMPLEMENTED

The Center for Civic Education partners with a network of fifty state-based civics, government, and law programs sponsored by state bar associations and foundations, colleges and universities, state departments of education, and nonprofit civic education organizations to promote teaching and learning about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. We the People state coordinators maintain a network of local coordinators who promote the program to teachers and schools within their congressional district. The national breadth of the program means it reaches students in every geographical area, from rural poor areas to high-need urban school districts.

## CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

The coordinators work with local and Washington, D.C., congressional offices to involve members of Congress and their staffs in various aspects of the program, such as participating in student hearings, speaking to teachers at training workshops, and signing achievement certificates upon completion of the course of study. Many staff from Senate state office and House local district offices serve as judges in local and state student hearings.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

A research team from Georgetown University has conducted independent studies of We the People that have been confirmed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, which includes the highest standards for research scholarship. The team found that We the People students scored significantly higher on tests of both civic knowledge and civic dispositions than their peers. These dispositions include (1) respect for the rule of law, (2) political attentiveness, (3) civic duty, (4) community involvement, (5) commitment to government service, and (6) the norms of political efficacy and political tolerance. Additional information and studies can be found at [www.civiced.org/research](http://www.civiced.org/research).

## DEMOCRACY GOES DIGITAL

An enhanced ebook edition of *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* is available for both high schools and middle schools. The ebook makes the Constitution and American government accessible to a new generation of learners with engaging visuals and interactive technology that illustrate the fundamental principles of American democracy. This new ebook edition is cloud-based and accessible on desktops, laptops, and mobile devices, including Apple iPads and iPhones, Android tablets and smart phones, and Windows 8 touch-screen devices. The *We the People* ebook accommodates multiple learning styles. The use of narration and interactive tools lead to greater knowledge gains and retention, particularly for students who have not responded well to traditional didactic educational approaches.

**W**e the People changed my life. It's as simple as that. Any and all academic, personal, or professional success I've enjoyed can, in some way, be traced to my participation in We the People as a high school student 16 years ago. We the People taught me the history of our country and our Constitution. It taught me how our government works—and how it might work better. We the People taught me constitutional law and political philosophy. Even more importantly, it taught me how to learn, how to think, how to work on a team, how to be a friend, how to speak in public, how to listen, how to write, how to take constructive criticism, how to give it, how to believe in myself, how to rely on others, how to compete with dignity, and how to...you name it. We the People taught me more than any other class I've taken—in high school, college, and law school. We the People taught me that our government serves—and responds to—the People. We the People taught me that writing Congress isn't a futile gesture. We the People taught me that citizens—of all ages, from anywhere—can shape national policy. We the People taught me to believe in this country.

—Benjamin Glickman, Attorney, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, LLP

---

CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION  
5115 DOUGLAS FIR ROAD, SUITE J  
CALABASAS, CA 91302  
818-591-9321 / 818-591-9330 FAX  
[WWW.CIVICED.ORG](http://WWW.CIVICED.ORG)