*Agenda for Distance-Learning or In-Person Class*

**50-Minute Civics:  The Principles of the Preamble**

**And What They Mean in Your Life**

**Overview of the Activity: What’s On Your Mind?**

This 50-minute activity includes showing a two-minute, thought-provoking video

[Promises of the Preamble](https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/us). Supporting materials are the Preamble to the Constitution downloaded by each student, and on the screen shared with the group by the facilitator. No preparatory research or reading.

**Materials on the Facilitator’s Shared Screen or on Each Participant’s Screen:**  The Preamble to the Constitution.

**An option to consider:** Contact a local chapter of the [Federal Bar Association](http://www.fedbar.org/Menu/Contact-Us.aspx) and request a lawyer to lead, or co-lead this activity with a federal judge.

This activity can be facilitated by a teacher, a federal judge, or an attorney volunteer, either in person and/or in the distance learning space. A brief video prompts student to think about what the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution means in their lives. In pairs, they talk about which principle has a significant impact on what is important to them.

The judge leads a conversation through the questions and quotes about justice in the handout. Students get into small groups and discuss the quote assigned to their group. They also develop a list of questions they want to ask the judge.

**Objectives**

1. To give students experience with the vital skills of 1) forming and asking questions, and 2) engaging in civil discussion on controversial issues with peers and adults.
2. To give students the experience of claiming their personal stake in the Bill of Rights and the role of the courts in protecting those rights.

**Program in a Nutshell**

* **Activity Duration:** 50 minutes
* **Location:**  Distance-Learning Space; Courtroom; Classroom
* **Participants:** High school students
* **Teacher/Student Preparation:** None
* **Judge/Lawyer Preparation:** 10 minutes reviewing the video and the guidance tips
* **Centerpiece:**  Two-Minute Video -- [Promises of the Preamble](https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/us).
* **Discussion:**  Why does “To establish justice” come first?

*Agenda and Guidance for the Judge, or the Teacher, or a Volunteer Attorney*

**Principles of the Preamble and What They Mean to You**

*Video and Dialogue with a Federal Judge or Attorney Volunteer*

 *(5 minutes)* **Judge Introduces Himself/Herself, the Court, and Gives a Program Overview**

 **Introduction** is the judge’s “heart reason” for choosing the law as a career. Program Overview: Participants watch a brief video and talk with the judge about it.

*(5 minutes)* **Video and Reflection**

 Students have a copy of the Preamble on their computer screen or printed out. After watching the two-minute video, participants have about one minute of quiet time on their own to identify the principle in the Preamble that is most **meaningful to them, personally, and why.**

*(15 minutes)* **In the Large Group**

* The judge reads a phrase from the Preamble and asks which participants chose that principle. The judge asks them to explain their reasons for selecting that phrase as important to them.
* The judge builds on the participants’ comments to create teachable moments and repeats the process until all phrases are discussed.

 *(15 minutes)*  **Open Floor for General Questions**

The judge/lawyer encourages questions about the courts, the law, careers in the legal field, and issues of interest raised by the students.

 *(5 minutes)* **Wrap Up**

The judge makes some concluding remarks about the points expressed during the discussion. The judge congratulates the students, and thanks the teacher.