

The Constitution and the Inauguration

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how the constitution outlines the basis for the presidential inauguration.

MATERIALS

An [online](#) or text version of the U.S. Constitution; access to a live broadcast of the inauguration or online video of the inauguration.

GET READY

Spend class time prior to the inauguration talking about the Constitutional requirements for inaugurations and the oath of office. Additional discussion questions are provided below.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have the students identify the sections of the Constitution related to the inauguration.
- ✓ Watch a live broadcast or online video of the inauguration and note Constitutional connections.
- ✓ Also note evidence of the three branches of government in the inaugural ceremony. It might be helpful to have students divide their papers into three columns – Legislative, Executive and Judicial – so they can jot down examples of each branch as they occur (e.g., ceremony takes place in front of the Capitol, president and vice president take power, chief justice swears the officers in, etc.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it important for all three branches of government to be involved in the inauguration?
- How does the inauguration symbolize the peaceful transfer of power in a democratic republic?
- What are other symbols/traditions connected to the inauguration (Bible, parade, galas, poetry)? What value do they provide?

MORE!

- Research the transfer of leadership in other countries. What special ceremonies occur?
- Write a poem suitable for the inaugural ceremony, or make a list of published poems one might incorporate into such a ceremony.
- Choose two different news sources to compare coverage of the inauguration. List the differences in how the two handle the following ideas:
 - How the president prepared for the inaugural ceremony
 - The ceremony itself: its symbols, traditions and people
 - How the new presidential administration will affect the American people
 - Reactions from people in the local community, statewide and nationwide
 - The opinions of people from around the world