



Constitutional Amendments, 1835

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does a state identity form?

Standards

Social Studies

(6-8) I.1.3, (9-12) I.1.3, I.1.4

8.B.1.1, 8.B.1.2, AH.B.1.3, AH.B.1.6, AH.B.1.7

8.C&G.1, 8.C&G.1.2, 8.C&G.1.3, 8.C&G.1.5

AH.C&G.1; AH.C&G.1.1; AH.C&G.1.2, AH.C&G.1.3, AH.C&G.1.4

8.G.1.2, AH.G.1.2

8.H.1, 8.H.1.1, 8.H.1.2, 8.H.1.3, 8.H.1.4, AH.1.1, AH.H.3.3

English Language Arts

RI.6 & 8-12.1, RI.6 & 8-12.2, RI.11-12.3, RI.6-12.4, RI.6-8.5, RI.6-12.6

SL.6-12.1, L.6.12.1, L.6-12.6

Visual Arts

I.V.1.3

6-8.CX.1.2, B.CX.1.1, I.CX.1.1, P.CX.1.1

Additional Extension Standards:

(6-8) I.1.10, (9-12) I.1.5

AH.B.1.2, AH.B.1.4

RI.6-8-12.9

W.6-12.1, W.6-12.2, W.6-12.6

I.V.1.4

Objectives

- Analyze the 1835 State Constitutional Amendments

- Identify and evaluate ways the amendments expanded and/or limited North Carolina's democracy.
- Analyze elements of state identity

Lesson Contents

By the mid-1830s, most voters in North Carolina believed that the 1776 state constitution needed to change. Because there was no provision for amendment, the General Assembly called for a constitutional convention. Most counties and larger towns were in the eastern part of the state, which meant more representatives in the legislature, but the area west of Raleigh had a larger population. Debates during the convention included separate legislative seats for towns, voting rights for free men of color, and religious requirements for office holders. The Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831 took place just north of the state border and increased fears of enslaved revolt. Rumors circulated about the involvement of free Blacks, and suspicion grew with discrimination

Primary Sources

Proceedings and Debates of the Convention of North Carolina, Called to Amend the Constitution of the State, which Assembled at Raleigh, June 4, 1835...(Raleigh: Joseph Gales & Son, 1836) analog pp. 412-425, digital pp. 424-431, digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/proceedings-and-debates-of-the-convention-of-north-carolina-called-to-amend-the-constitution-of-the-state-which-assembled-at-raleigh-june-4-1835-to-which-are-subjoined-the-convention-act-and-the-amendments-to-the-constitution-together-with-the-votes-of-the-people/5740443?item=5744929

North Carolina map, from *A New General Atlas*, Philadelphia: A. Finley, Young & Delleker, c. 1832, plate 19, MC.150.1829f, State Archives of N.C., also available online dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/623/rec/8

“Old North State,” [N.C. Symphony state song recording, TR.72.1](#)

Assignment Options

(files on thumb drive)

- **Background: Constitutional Amendments of 1835**
- **Activity: Selections & Questions-1835 Constitutional Amendments**
- **Activity: 1835 State Song “The Old North State”**
- **Activity: County Courthouse**
- **Exit Ticket**

Supplies

- projector (optional)
- internet to play sound recording

Lesson Preparation

- Review the primary source, transcription, related materials, and slides to determine which options are appropriate for your students. Note that this box contains a variety of options from which teachers can select, based on available time, learning goals, and student capacities.
- Access the [original document](#) to project for the class and zoom in as needed. These may be found via online links or as files on the accompanying flash drive. Consider printing copies to distribute for work with the document analysis sheet. The amendments are 7 pages, or 4 double-sided.
- Keep answer keys at hand for any handouts you choose.
- Make copies of any handouts you choose.
 - **Document Analysis** sheet (found in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder) is an optional assignment for individual work. Print a double-sided copy for each student. Given the length of the document to be analyzed (7 pages, or 4 double-sided), consider printing 10 copies to be shared by small groups.
 - **Background: 1835 Constitutional Amendments** can be printed out as a 1-sided background sheet or double-sided to include the capitol building and Greek revival information. If selecting this worksheet, print a copy for each student.
 - **Activity: Selections & Questions: 1835 Constitutional Amendments** includes 4 selections of the original document. There is also an **1832 North Carolina Map**, found in the **Primary Sources** folder, that can be printed to go alongside the activity.

- If completing **Activity: Constitutional Timeline**, found in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder, as individual work, students may already have this sheet from the 1776 Constitution lesson. Otherwise, print page 1 for each student. If discussing as a class, replicate the chart on a large piece of paper to tape to the wall.
- Print a copy of **Activity: County Courthouse** for each student.
- Print a double-sided copy of **Activity: 1835 State Song “The Old North State”** for each student.
- **Exit Ticket**. 4 tickets are on each page. Print 7 sheets for 28 students and cut into separate tickets.

Background Knowledge

(5 minutes)

Ask students: *Why might changes have been necessary to the state constitution after 60 years?* Student answers will vary but may include westward expansion and economic change.

Procedure

- Option—begin by showing the 1.5-minute video, “[NC Democracy, Expert Takes, 1835](#).” Professor Warren Milteer (formerly of UNCG but now teaching at George Washington University) discusses voting rights for free men of color and why that history matters. [youtube.com/watch?v=xqwEux0rM9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqwEux0rM9M). Ask students, *do you agree with professor Milteer on the importance of history? Why or why not?* (15 minutes)
- Review, project, or distribute vocabulary terms necessary to understand the document. Discuss any additional terms that cause students comprehension difficulty during the lesson. (10 minutes)

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|---------------------|--|
| aspersion | statement that could hurt someone’s reputation |
| debate | formal way to share opposing viewpoints |
| delegates | political representatives |
| democratic | decided by the people |
| emancipation | the act of freeing from slavery |
| freehold | ownership of property |
| ideals | a standard of perfection to guide action |
| inhabitants | people who live within a certain place |
| possess | own |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| preceding | came before |
| purge | get rid of |
| revolt | uprising; fight against something more powerful |
| statesman | political leader |

- Pass out **Document Analysis** sheet, along with the document. Allow students to come to their own conclusions. This activity may work as an option to replace the **Selections & Questions** activity. (20 minutes)
- Pass out **Background** worksheets and allow students to complete. Review fact-check answers using key. (15 minutes)
- Pass out **Activity: Selections & Questions: Constitutional Amendments of 1835** Option—students may mark or annotate the given selections.
 - Ask students: *What do we need to know to read documents from the 1800s?* Words may have different definitions than what we use today and other words may no longer be appropriate to use.
 - Discuss reflection questions as a class or students may write answers on notebook paper. Possible answers, not specific to a county, can be found on the key. (45 minutes for 9 questions)
- Allow time for students to complete the 1835 section of **Activity: Constitutional Timeline**. Ask: *Who is missing?* If continuing to work with the DocsBox for additional lessons, have students keep their completed charts for future review. (10 minutes)
- Pass out **Activity: 1835 State Song “The Old North State.”** Students can complete the first page on their own or as a class. Teachers can play the song for the whole class or students can use headphones to listen on their own.
Option: this activity can be done as a station, with a group, or individually.
 Encourage students to write their stanzas on notebook paper or in a journal if the worksheet space provided is not enough. (30 minutes)
- Distribute **Activity: County Courthouse**. Allow students to research historic and current images online to compare with the image of the State Capitol on p. 2 of the **Background** worksheet. (with additional image research, 20 minutes)
- Pass out **Exit Ticket**. (5 minutes)
Name a state symbol. Do you like it? How would you change it?

Modifications

- Student pages could be shared with students needing to take notes individually, with vision issues, or who have issues focusing (even if the slides are being used collectively).
- Students could be paired with a higher-achieving or differently behaving student for extra support.
- Students could be given extension activities if they finish early or and need more challenging or independent work. These can be done independently or collaboratively.

Extension Options (using notebook paper or computer)

- Review the 1832 map and use coordinates to find where your hometown is located. Since the counties are drawn differently and only larger cities are included on the map, you may have difficulty finding where your hometown is. Write one to two paragraphs describing the process you used to find your hometown and any changes you noticed in the boundary lines. Read articles about your county in NCpedia to include information about how your county changed over time.
- Write a short essay discussing the extent that the 1835 amendments reflect the democratic ideals in the state Declaration of Rights, or the democratic ideals of the nation. How did power shift with these changes?
- Write a brief essay (approximately 4 paragraphs) from the perspective of an individual affected by one or more of the amendments. Discuss the extent representation in government affects fairness and/or what we can learn from the 1835 amendments about balancing different interests in society. Conclude by reflecting why it matters nearly 200 years later.
- Listen to the State song and think about themes of identity and unity. After analyzing and discussing the amendments, reflect on the following: How do changes to the NC constitution align with the pride and unity expressed in the song? Respond in two to three paragraphs.
- Consider other unifying symbols and phrases about North Carolina, such as the state flag, state motto, state symbols, the state toast, or the phrase "[Vale of Humility between Two Mountains of Conceit](#)." Search NCpedia and Select several to

discuss and include your own thoughts about how you identify as a North Carolinian.

- Advanced option: Select a debate from the Constitutional Convention of 1835. Summarize and evaluate various points. The opinions that various congressmen expressed are available in the published journal of proceedings, digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/proceedings-and-debates-of-the-convention-of-north-carolina-called-to-amend-the-constitution-of-the-state-which-assembled-at-raleigh-june-4-1835-to-which-are-subjoined-the-convention-act-and-the-amendments-to-the-constitution-together-with-the-votes-of-the-people/5740443?item=5741418. Hint: because this journal is over 400 pages, use the “search this document” field and put search terms in quotes (e.g. “free men of color”) to hone in on relevant pages for the selected debate topic.

Field Trip Connection

Visit the North Carolina State Capitol. While on Capitol Square, students can also see the [First Presbyterian Church](https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/north-carolina-state-capitol), site of the Constitutional Convention of 1835, across Salisbury Street from the southwest corner of the square. <https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/north-carolina-state-capitol>

Recommended Resources

Greensboro History Museum, 2-minute video, “**NC Democracy Expert Takes 1835**,” youtube.com/watch?v=xqwEux0rM9M

North Carolina History Project, “**Constitution of 1835**,” northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/constitution-of-1835/#:~:text=The%20constitutional%20revisions%20of%201835,man%20in%20the%20political%20process.

“**Convention of 1835**,” *NCpedia*, ncpedia.org/government/convention-1835

“**Internal Improvements**,” *NCpedia*, ncpedia.org/internal-improvements-0

State Democracy Research Initiative, University of Wisconsin Law School, “**North Carolina’s Constitution**,” 50constitutions.org/nc