

# Lesson Plan: How History Shaped the Alaska Constitution

## Lesson One

02-01-2006

### Introduction

This lesson guides students through a variety of readings and questions that will help them to understand the historical issues that impacted the development of the Alaska Constitution. Students will read selected articles from the Alaska History & Cultural Studies and Creating Alaska sites and answer questions that will help prepare them for the final writing assignment.

### Enduring Understandings

The development of the Alaska Constitution in 1955 was similar to the development of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. The U.S. Constitution was influenced and shaped by the weaknesses contained in the Articles of Confederation, and the Alaska Constitution was shaped by the failure of the Alaska territorial government to establish effective political and economic control in Alaska, particularly control over the state's resources. The Morgan-Guggenheim Syndicate, fish traps in Southeast Alaska, and the weak territorial government were a few factors that influenced the thinking of the 55 delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention. The delegates crafted a Constitution that sought to remedy the economic and political problems that impacted Alaska during territorial days.

### Alaska State Standards

History: A-6, A-7, A-9, B-2  
Government and Citizenship: C-3, C-7  
AK History: AH.ICGP 12, AH.CC 6, AH.ICGP 3

### Estimated Time:

The 49th Star: Creating Alaska Video Guide completed &mdash; 2 hours, including discussion time  
Three Task Assignments &mdash; 3 hours (approx. one hour per task)  
Final Essay &mdash; 1 hour of class time, plus 2-3 hours of individual homework or more to complete the essay.

## Materials

Video Guide: Act 1 and Act 2

Task 1: Readings and Guided Questions

"A Delegate for Alaska" / "Morgan-Gugenheim Syndicate Creates Shipping Monopoly"  
Guided Questions

Task 2: Reading and Guided Questions

"Salmon Politics"  
Guided Questions

Task 3: Readings and Guided Questions

"Excerpt from Bob Bartlett's Speech" / Alaska Constitution Article VIII  
"Alaska Constitution: A Citizen's Guide" – Article VIII excerpt (whole article on the Creating Alaska site)  
Guided Questions

Essay Prompts

Essay Graphic Organizers:

Imagine you are a framer of the Alaska Constitution;  
How far has Alaska progressed?  
What issues do you see in Alaska today?

## Procedure

Prior to the Lesson: Before watching The 49th Star: Creating Alaska

documentary, review the glossary that contains vocabulary words students will encounter during the video. Have students watch the video and complete the video guide. The students should focus on the political and economic issues that Alaska struggled with during territorial days.

Day 1: Students will read Task 1 and Task 2 readings and answer the Task 1 & 2 reading guides. Choose an approach with the readings. You can have the students access the readings on the web, or print them off to use in small groups of 2-3 students. You might also save the readings on your school's public access server in the event your internet connection is not solid.

Day 2: Students will read the Task 3 readings. Structure this activity in a way that best suits the peculiar needs of your students. Today's readings focus on the resource section of the Alaska Constitution and include a speech by Bob Bartlett, Article VIII sections, and the Citizen's Guide to the Alaska Constitution.

Day 3: Inform students that they are going to write a 2-page essay on a topic related to the information they have been learning about the past few days. Hand out the essay prompts and review with the class. Explain to the students that these essays will require them to use historical and factual information they have been collecting over the past two days. They should use their video guide, and reading guides to assist during the writing process. Included with this lesson are graphic organizers to help the students organize their thinking. Make a transparency of one of the graphic organizers to help students understand the process of brainstorming and organizing their thoughts prior to writing.

#### Assessment for Essay Prompts 1 & 2

**Exceeds:** Essay demonstrates a strong understanding of at least three key sections in the Alaska Constitution and three events that helped shape the Alaska Constitution and/or the drive for Alaska statehood.

**Meets:** Essay demonstrates a basic understanding of at least two key sections in the Alaska Constitution and two events that helped shape the Alaska Constitution and/or the drive for Alaska Statehood.

**In Progress:** Essay demonstrates a basic understanding of at least one key sections in the Alaska Constitution and one events that helped shape the Alaska Constitution and/or the drive for Alaska Statehood.

**Not Started:** Essay demonstrates little or no understanding of the key sections in the Alaska Constitution or events that helped shape the Alaska Constitution and/or the drive for Alaska Statehood.

### Assessment for Essay Prompt 3

**Exceeds:** Essay identifies and expresses an understanding of two important issues Alaska faces today. The essay uses two to three historical references from the Constitutional Convention and Statehood in the discussion of possible solutions to these problems.

**Meets:** Essay identifies and expresses an understanding of one important issue Alaska faces today. The essay uses two historical references from the Constitutional Convention and Statehood in the discussion of possible solutions to this problem.

**In Progress:** Essay identifies and expresses an understanding of one important issue Alaska faces today. The essay uses one historical reference from the Constitutional Convention or Statehood in the discussion of possible solutions to this problem.

**Not Started:** Essay does not identify an understanding of one important issue Alaska faces today. The essay does not use historical references from the Constitutional Convention and Statehood in the discussion of possible solutions to a problem Alaska faces today.