

Lesson Title: The Long Life of the U.S. Constitution

Teacher-led Activity Sheet: Hamilton!

The *We The Voters* film “#FoundingFathers” shows how the wisdom of the Founders endures through more than 12 generations.

Show your students this 8-minute segment from PBS NewsHour, which contains footage of Lin Manuel Miranda performing as Hamilton, and includes biographical information about him. <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/8c7143e7-71e6-4e22-b451-f7a55821b05a/hamilton-the-musical-tells-the-immigrant-story-of-a-founding-father/>

Follow up with the following activity:

Below are four quotations from Alexander Hamilton that seem prophetic in the election of 2016. Connect each of them to a current controversy.

“Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct. Even the ardent love of liberty will, after a time, give way to its dictates.”

- *Answers to look for: Muslim ID cards, opposition to Syrian refugees entering the US, violations of online and cellphone privacy of private citizens, opposition to gun control, wall to keep out “rapists and murderers” from Mexico. Teacher should also refer students to suspension of Habeas Corpus during the Civil War, Japanese American internment camps during World War II, and the Patriot Act after 9/11.*

“Constitutions should consist only of general provisions; the reason is that they must necessarily be permanent and they cannot calculate for the possible change of things.”

- *Answers to look for: very wide, but can include current Supreme Court cases on cyber searches, property cases, Title IX cases (which especially interest kids who play sports), gay and transgender rights issues.*

“Power over a man's subsistence is power over his will.”

- *Answers to look for: Clinton's appeal to the poor/minimum wage hike; Trump's appeal to unemployed or underemployed blue collar workers; tax hikes or breaks. For further discussion: “Do people vote their pocketbooks?”*

“There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty, that makes human nature rise above itself in acts of bravery and heroism.”

- *Answers to look for: references to service in the armed forces, veterans, American exceptionalism, admiration for the courage of police officers, the very words “land of the free and home of the brave.”*