

***We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* Transition Guide (Level 3)**

This transition guide highlights key updates from the *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* (Level 3) fourth edition to the fifth edition, helping educators, decision makers, and key stakeholders understand changes in content, instructional features, and resources. It also spotlights new tools and learning supports found in the fifth edition designed to enhance teaching and student engagement with civic knowledge, constitutional principles, and inquiry-based learning.

Major Changes

Category	Fourth Edition (2016) ISBN: 978-0-89818-218-7	Fifth Edition (2026) ISBN: 978-0-89818-307-8
Number of lessons	39	36
Lesson features	• Unit Purpose • Lesson Purpose • Lesson Objectives • Terms to Understand	• Unit Purpose • Lesson Purpose • Lesson Objectives • Terms to Understand • Descriptions of Visual Aids
Civic learning features	• Questions associated with images • Critical Thinking Exercises • Reviewing and Using the Lesson questions • What Do You Think? questions	• Questions in the margins • Stop and Reflect questions • Reviewing the Lesson questions • Archive Investigation/ Think like a Historian boxes and questions • Beyond the Basics boxes and questions • Collaborate Together Activities
Online supports	The Resource Center (contains links to podcasts, videos, and outside support)	Civic Learning Center (contains resources tied to and designed for specific lessons, topics, and elements of the <i>We the People</i> textbook and teacher's edition)
Visuals/graphics	322 A variety of historical and contemporary photos and paintings. Cartoons illustrating key concepts.	432 A variety of photos and paintings with more recent events represented throughout the book. Extensive use of infographics, maps, and graphs illustrating key concepts throughout the fifth edition.
Year of publication	2016	2026

Total number of pages	378	422
We the People National Competition	School year 2026–27 will utilize the fourth edition for competition questions and content.	School year 2027–28 will utilize the fifth edition for competition questions and content.

Lesson-by-Lesson Comparison

Unit	Lesson #	Fourth Edition Lesson Title	Fifth Edition Lesson Title
1	Unit 1	What Are the Philosophical and Historical Foundations of the American Political System?	What Are the Philosophical and Historical Foundations of the American Political System?
	1	What Did the Founders Think about Constitutional Government?	How Do We Study the Constitution?
	2	What Ideas about Civic Life Informed the Founding Generation?	What Major Ideas Influenced the American Perspective About Civic Life and Government?
	3	What Historical Developments Influenced Modern Ideas of Individual Rights?	How Did Colonists Think About Constitutional Government and Rights?
	4	What Were the British Origins of American Constitutionalism?	Why Did American Colonists Want to Free Themselves From Great Britain?
	5	What Basic Ideas about Rights and Constitutional Government Did Colonial Americans Hold?	How Democratic Were Early State Constitutions?
	6	Why Did American Colonists Want to Free Themselves from Great Britain?	N/A
	7	What Basic Ideas about Government and Rights Did the State Constitutions Include?	N/A
2	Unit 2	How Did the Framers Create the Constitution?	How Did the Framers Create the Constitution?
	6	N/A	What Did America's First Government Look Like?



	7	N/A	What Problems Were Delegates Trying to Solve at the Constitutional Convention?
	8	What Were the Articles of Confederation, and Why Did Some Founders Want to Change Them?	How Did Compromises Shape the Constitution?
	9	How Was the Philadelphia Convention Organized?	How Did the Constitutional Convention Shape the Powers of the Executive and Judicial Branches?
	10	Why Was Representation a Major Issue at the Philadelphia Convention?	Did the Constitutional Convention Create a Complete Government?
	11	What Questions Did the Framers Consider in Designing the Three Branches of the National Government?	Were the Anti-Federalists Justified in Opposing the New Constitution?
	12	How Did the Delegates Distribute Powers between National and State Governments?	How Did Ratification Succeed?
	13	What Was the Anti-Federalist Position in the Debate about Ratification?	N/A
	14	What Was the Federalist Position in the Debate about Ratification?	N/A
3	Unit 3	How Has the Constitution been Changed to Further the Ideals Contained in the Declaration of Independence?	How Have Constitutional Values and Principles Shaped American Institutions and Practices?
	13	N/A	What Is the Role of Congress in the American Constitutional System?
	14	N/A	What Is the Role of the President in the American Constitutional System?
	15	How Have Amendments and Judicial Review Changed the Constitution?	What Functions Do Administrative Agencies Serve Within the Constitutional System?



	16	What Is the Role of Political Parties in the Constitutional System?	What Is the Role of the Judiciary in the American Constitutional System?
	17	How Did the Civil War Test and Transform the American Constitutional System?	How Does the Constitution Balance Power Among the Branches of Government?
	18	How Has the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment Changed the Constitution?	In What Ways Has the Constitution Been Interpreted or Amended to Shape American Institutions?
	19	How Has the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment Changed the Constitution?	N/A
	20	How Has the Right to Vote Been Expanded Since the Adoption of the Constitution?	N/A
4	Unit 4	How Have the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices?	How Has Federalism Shaped Our Constitutional Democracy?
	19	N/A	What Kind of Union Did the Constitution Create?
	20	N/A	Why Do the States Matter?
	21	What Is the Role of Congress in American Constitutional Democracy?	How Much Power Do State Governments Have Under the Constitution?
	22	How Does Congress Perform Its Functions in the American Constitutional System?	How Did the Reconstruction Amendments Change American Federalism?
	23	What Is the Role of the President in the American Constitutional System?	How Does the Constitution Recognize the Sovereignty of Indigenous Nations?
	24	How Are National Laws Administered in the American Constitutional System?	N/A
	25	What is the Role of the Supreme Court in the American Constitutional System?	N/A



	26	How Does American Federalism Work?	N/A
5	Unit 5	What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?	What Rights Are Protected by the Constitution and Its Amendments?
	24	N/A	What Is the Bill of Rights?
	25	N/A	How Does the Bill of Rights Protect People From Illegal Search, Seizure, Arrest, and Interrogation?
	26	N/A	How Does the Bill of Rights Protect Rights to Fair Trial and Just Punishment?
	27	What Are Bills of Rights and What Kinds of Rights Does the U.S. Bill of Rights Protect?	How Have the People's Rights to Vote and to Have Representation Evolved?
	28	How Does the First Amendment Affect the Establishment and Free Exercise of Religion.	How Do Civic Organizations Give the People a Voice in Government?
	29	How Does the First Amendment Protect Free Expression?	How Does the Constitution Reflect the Will of the People?
	30	How Does the First Amendment Protect Freedom to Assemble, Petition, and Associate?	N/A
	31	How Do the Fourth and Fifth Amendments Protect against Unreasonable Law Enforcement Procedures?	N/A
	32	How Do the Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments Protect Rights within the Judicial System?	N/A
6	Unit 6	What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-first Century?	What Challenges Face American Citizenship and Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-First Century?
	30	N/A	Why Is Defining "We the People" Challenging?

	31	N/A	What Does Civic Engagement Look Like in America's Constitutional Democracy?
	32	N/A	What Challenges Do Media Pose for Civic Engagement?
	33	What Does It Mean to Be a Citizen?	How Has the American Constitutional System Influenced Other Nations?
	34	What Is the Importance of Civic Engagement to American Constitutional Democracy?	What Are Some Challenges and Opportunities of Participation in World Affairs?
	35	How Have Civil Rights Movements Resulted in Fundamental Political and Social Change in the United States?	How Do Compromises Made at the Constitutional Convention Impact the United States Today?
	36	How Have American Political and Social Change in the United States?	What Does Returning to Fundamental Principles Mean?
	37	What Key Challenges Does the United States Face in the Future?	N/A
	38	What Are the Challenges of the Participation of the United States in World Affairs?	N/A
	39	What Does Returning to Fundamental Principles Mean?	N/A

High-Level Overview

The fifth edition of the *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution* textbook, published in 2026, introduces a stronger and more thorough civic learning experience designed to help students build connections between constitutional principles and real people, communities, and questions. New features throughout the text encourage reflection, collaboration, inquiry, and deeper engagement with voices and experiences that have often been left out of traditional civic education.

- Stop and Reflect
 - Short reflection prompts are strategically embedded throughout the lesson to encourage student reflection and independent application of civic knowledge at key points. Students are invited to pause, connect lesson content to their everyday lives, critically analyze what they have learned, and apply their understanding through brief written responses in their notes. They encourage the use of relevant academic vocabulary to strengthen literacy development and support writing objectives.



- Collaborate Together
 - Team-based activities are designed to foster critical thinking, consensus-building, and effective simulated congressional hearing team dynamics. Students work together to discuss and deliberate civic questions, practice active listening and respectful dialogue, support evidence-based claims, and respond constructively to differing perspectives while working toward shared understanding. These experiences strengthen communication, civic reasoning, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Beyond the Basics
 - Providing an opportunity to deepen students' constitutional knowledge, this section extends learning beyond the core lesson with content to promote critical thinking, deeper analysis, and connections to contemporary issues. In tandem with the teacher's edition, students are challenged to answer a civic inquiry question by developing evidence-based responses that analyze constitutional principles, civic ideas, and historical issues.
- Archive Investigations
 - Students engage directly with primary sources and historical materials through guided investigation and supplementary, contextual information. These investigations help students practice evidence-based reasoning and better understand how historical documents interact with their civic education.
- Intentional Focus on Unheard Voices and Marginalized Communities
 - The fifth edition places greater emphasis on the experiences and contributions of communities that have historically been underrepresented in civic and constitutional history. This includes more thorough and integrated representation of Indigenous communities, LGBTQ individuals and communities, people of color, and women.
 - Indigenous Communities
 - The fifth edition more thoroughly incorporates the histories, perspectives, and experiences of Indigenous communities, highlighting their role in American civic life and their ongoing relationship with American democracy. This includes attention to Indigenous sovereignty and the continuing challenges Indigenous nations face in asserting self-government, protecting rights, and navigating their relationship with federal and state governments.
 - LGBTQ
 - The fifth edition includes more opportunities to examine how LGBTQ individuals and communities have shaped, challenged, and expanded civic life, rights, and democratic participation.
 - People of Color
 - The text more fully incorporates the experiences, leadership, and civic contributions of people of color, helping students understand the broader and more complex and diverse story of democracy and constitutional development.
 - Women
 - The fifth edition gives greater attention to women's roles in civic life, reform movements, constitutional debates, public leadership, and the ongoing expansion of democratic participation.
- Demonstrating Your Knowledge: Simulated Congressional Hearing



- Each unit includes one Simulated Congressional Hearing section, giving students a structured opportunity to synthesize what they have learned, develop evidence-based arguments, and practice civic communication in an authentic format.

Civic Learning Center Offerings

The fifth edition is designed to work alongside the Center's new Civic Learning Center, a curated collection of resources aligned to specific lessons, topics, and elements of the *We the People* textbook and teacher's edition. This digital instructional toolkit complements classroom instruction, extends and deepens student learning, and provides educators with additional resources to support planning and implementation.

- Multimedia
 - Multimedia resources provide students with multiple ways to access and engage with constitutional knowledge through videos, images, interactive materials, and other digital supports. These resources help bring constitutional principles, historical events, civic deliberations, and contemporary issues to life while supporting varied learning needs and offering students additional pathways to explore, analyze, and understand complex civic concepts.
- Biographies
 - Biographical resources highlight individuals connected to the principles, historical developments, civic moments, and democratic questions explored throughout the fifth edition. Featured individuals in both the student and teacher's editions receive dedicated profiles that help students understand civic life through the experiences and contributions of real people, including leaders, activists, public officials, community members, and individuals from historically underrepresented groups.
- Court Cases
 - Court case resources help students investigate how constitutional principles have been interpreted and applied over time, strengthening their ability to develop evidence-based testimony for simulated congressional hearings. By analyzing how judicial decisions shape government, public policy, and evolving interpretations of the Constitution, students deepen their understanding of constitutional democracy. These resources help students connect textbook content to real legal questions involving rights, representation, federalism, due process, equal protection, and the role of the judiciary.
- Key Terms
 - Key term resources provide students with additional support in understanding and applying essential civic vocabulary and concepts. These materials reinforce terms introduced throughout the lessons, support review, and help students develop the academic language needed to participate in meaningful civic conversations, engage in discussion, write evidence-based responses, complete assessments, and prepare for the simulated congressional hearing.
- Instructional Toolkit for Educators
 - The instructional toolkit provides educators with ready-to-use, practical resources to support lesson planning, instruction, and student engagement. Resources include instructional activities, graphic organizers, slidedecks, scaffolding supports, discussion strategies, primary source activities, and materials aligned to the simulated congressional



hearing format. In partnership with the teacher's edition, the toolkit helps educators adapt instruction to meet diverse learning needs and create engaging, accessible, and meaningful civic learning experiences.

Benefits to Educators

The fifth edition supports educators by providing a stronger student edition and teacher's edition. The student edition provides updated lesson content, new visuals and graphics, enhanced civic learning features, and a more intentional focus on reflection, collaboration, inquiry, and historically underrepresented voices. With these features, educators can encourage students to engage more deeply with the principles, ideas, and questions they are studying while maintaining the familiar structure of units, lesson purposes, objectives, and key terms.

The teacher's edition, paired with the new Civic Learning Center, provides educators with comprehensive instructional support for each lesson. It includes activities, lesson guidance, and a range of learning opportunities designed to help teachers adapt instruction for diverse student needs and learning styles, including kinesthetic, audio, visual, artistic, collaborative, and discussion-based approaches. Together, these resources help educators plan effectively, increase student engagement, and connect textbook content to classroom activities and the simulated congressional hearing experiential learning opportunities.

Together, the student edition, teacher's edition, and Civic Learning Center create a comprehensive instructional system that not only updates content but also expands the tools available to teach civic knowledge, skills, constitutional reasoning, and active participation. This integrated approach provides educators with greater flexibility to support meaningful civic learning and is especially important as the national competition transitions from the fourth edition to the fifth edition.

Benefits to Learners

The fifth edition benefits learners by making civic education more engaging, interactive, and connected to real people and communities. In the student edition, learners encounter features such as Stop and Reflect, Collaborate Together, Beyond the Basics, and Archive Investigations, which encourage them to think critically, work with peers, examine evidence, and connect lesson content to broader life. The expanded use of visuals, graphics, infographics, and digital supports also helps students engage with complex ideas in multiple ways.

Learners also benefit from the support built into the teacher's edition because those resources help educators provide more varied and responsive instruction. Scaffolded lessons can help students build understanding in steps, and unique activities allow learners to access content through movement, discussion, listening, visual analysis, creative expression, writing, and collaboration. This creates multiple entry points for students who learn in different ways and helps make concepts more understandable and meaningful.

The fifth edition also gives students a broader and more inclusive understanding of American democracy. By placing greater emphasis on Indigenous communities, LGBTQ individuals and communities, people of color, and women, the text helps learners see how many different people and groups have shaped civic life, rights, reform movements, and democratic participation.