

**WALCH**  
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# Daily Warm-Ups

# LAW

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Brad Lawwill


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The *Daily Warm-Ups series* is a wonderful way to turn extra classroom minutes into valuable learning time. The 180 quick activities—one for each day of the school year—cover all aspects of law. They may be used at the beginning of class to get students focused, near the end of class to make good use of transitional time, in the middle of class to help students shift gears between lessons—or whenever you have minutes that now go unused. In addition to helping students warm up and focus, they are a natural lead-in to more in-depth activities.

*Daily Warm-Ups* are easy to use. Simply photocopy the day's activity and distribute it. Or make a transparency of the activity and project it on the board. You may want to use the activities for extra credit points or as a check on your students' critical-thinking skills as they are acquired and built over time.

However you choose to use them, *Daily Warm-Ups* are a convenient and useful supplement to your regular class lessons. Make every minute of your class time count!

## What Is the Law?

Laws are rules for conduct that are established by government. Citizens are required to follow these rules and face consequences if they fail to do so. The severity of the consequence depends on the nature of the law that they violate.

The first known set of laws is the Code of Hammurabi, which was compiled sometime between 1792 B.C.E. and 1750 B.C.E. when Hammurabi was the king of Babylon. The Code of Hammurabi lists 282 rules and consequences for a variety of actions. Included among these rules are the concepts of “an eye for an eye” (“If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out”) and “a tooth for a tooth” (“If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out”).

Why is it important for a society to have laws? Write two or three sentences for your answer.



## Law in the United States

As the United States was declaring its independence from British rule, John Adams, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress, said, “We are a nation of laws and not men.”

The early history of the United States demonstrates the emphasis placed on the law. One of the first acts of the founders was to create a supreme law of the land, the Articles of Confederation, in 1777. This document was eventually replaced with the current supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution, which was written in 1787.

What did John Adams mean when he said that the United States was “a nation of laws and not men”? Write two or three sentences for your answer.





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## The Articles of Confederation

The first document to draw the colonies together as a nation was known as “The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union” and was adopted by the Continental Congress in 1777.

This document established a federal government but gave it limited powers. The current United States government is comprised of three branches: the legislative branch to make laws; the executive branch to enforce laws; and the judicial branch to interpret laws. The Articles of Confederation merely established a legislative branch and gave the federal government no ability to enforce the laws against the individual states. The states maintained control over matters such as foreign affairs, defense, and public finances.

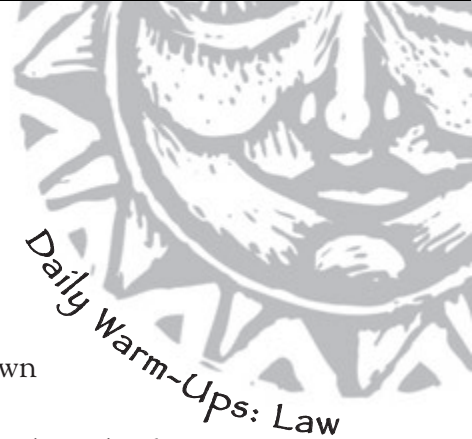
The limited power given to the federal government under the Articles of Confederation made it difficult to bring the states together as a united nation. Why would this be the case? Write two or three sentences for your answer.



# The United States Constitution

In 1787, the Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia for the express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation. In the ten years since the Articles were adopted, it had become clear that a stronger central government was necessary. While the Articles of Confederation established only a legislative branch of government and reserved a great deal of power to the states, the U.S. Constitution created a legislative, an executive, and a judicial branch, each with its own set of powers. The powers established for each branch were intended to strengthen the role of the federal government, while ensuring that no one branch of government held too much power.

The U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution in the world. Part of why it is so enduring is a provision contained in Article V that allows for changes, or amendments, to be made to the document. Since its original adoption, the U.S. Constitution has been amended 27 times. Why is it important to allow for amendments? Write two or three sentences for your answer.



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## The Bill of Rights

One of the early criticisms voiced by the state legislatures that were asked to approve the U.S. Constitution was that it did not contain a list of citizen's rights that were to be protected. The first United States Congress remedied this concern by creating such a list. This *Bill of Rights* was drafted by James Madison and was ratified, or approved, by the states in 1791. The Bill of Rights is contained in the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

You have just been selected to write a Bill of Rights for a newly formed government. What is one freedom or right that you will select to protect? Why? Write two or three sentences for your answer.



# The Bill of Rights: The First Amendment (Religious and Political Freedom)

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution reads:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

What rights are protected by the First Amendment? Do you agree that all of these rights should be protected? Why or why not? Write two or three sentences to explain your opinion.

