

Hopes for the Future

Overview

On January 6, 2021 supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the United States Capitol building after repeated claims by Trump that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him.

This activity provides an opportunity for students to think about the future of American democracy by responding to four prompts. It aims to help them understand that change is possible and the roles that government and “We the People” could have in strengthening American democracy.

Before assigning the prompts, you may want to review the roles and powers of:

The U.S. President

The U.S. Congress

“We the People”

For the final prompt, (“What is a word or phrase that describes your hope for the future of the United States of America?”), you could have the students create a sign or poster to share with others.

Note: Constitutional Rights Foundation would love to see what your students say! Please feel free to share their responses: crf@crf-usa.org with subject line “Hopes.”

Assessment

There are no right or wrong answers here. If you need to assess for a grade, consider emphasizing one of the options below:

- Is there evidence that the student understands the roles or powers of the President, Congress, and citizens in our democracy?
- Is there evidence of a thoughtful response to Prompt #4?
- If you want to assess writing skills, perhaps add that students must write a well-constructed paragraph, or complete sentences, etc.

Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Use critical thinking skills to be forward-thinking about the future of the United States.
- Demonstrate understanding of the difference between presidential and congressional powers.
- State at least one thing people can do to participate in strengthening democracy or civically engage.
- State at least one thing youth can do to civically engage.
- Gain understanding about the role that citizens and youth can play in determining the future of democracy in the United States.

Activity

Review the powers and roles of the president and congress. Help students understand the importance to our democracy of an informed and engaged citizenry.

Assign the prompts below (adding any additional assessment information students need.)

Prompts:

1. What are three things you hope the new President of the United States will do in 2021?
2. What are three things you hope the new Congress will do in 2021?
3. What are two things you hope the people of the United States will do in 2021?
4. What is one thing young people could do to make U.S. democracy stronger in 2021?
5. What is a word or phrase that describes your hope for the future of the United States?