

MY DOG ATE THE CONSTITUTION

By Stacey Lane

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SYNOPSIS: Studying for a test on the U.S. Constitution is boring enough to make you fall asleep! In this audience-participation adventure, a young girl does just that and is surprised to meet George Washington and Ben Franklin in her dreams. Even more surprising is that her dog is now wearing a wig and claiming to be James Madison. *My Dog Ate the Constitution* utilizes songs, games and humor to teach elementary students curriculum-based U.S. history and civic responsibility in a memorable and interactive manner.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 FEMALE, 3-15 MALES, 0-11 EITHER, 4-16 TOTAL CAST, 10-30 EXTRAS, DOUBLING POSSIBLE, GENDER FLEXIBLE)

CALLIE (f).....	A young girl. (237 lines)
MADISON (m)	Callie's dog. (110 lines)
WASHINGTON (m)	George Washington. (50 lines)
FRANKLIN (m).....	Ben Franklin. (45 lines)
ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION (m/f)	A weak, nerdy little document. (17 lines)
STATES (m/f).....	A rude offstage voice. (3 lines)
DELEGATE #1 (m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
DELEGATE #2 (m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
DELEGATE #3(m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
DELEGATE #4 (m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
DELEGATE #5 (m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
DELEGATE #6 (m).....	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)

MY DOG ATE THE CONSTITUTION

DELEGATE #7 (m)	An angry offstage voice. (1 line)
NEW JERSEY (m)	A small feisty state with a thick New Jersey dialect. (15 lines)
VIRGINIA (m)	A large uppity state with a southern drawl. (13 lines)
CONNECTICUT (m)	A happy and helpful state with a southern New England dialect. (12 lines)
PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER (m/f)	A robot. (13 lines)
LEGISLATIVE (m/f)	The Capitol Building. (10 lines)
EXECUTIVE (m/f)	The White House. (14 lines)
JUDICIAL (m/f)	The Supreme Court Building. (14 lines)
ANNOUNCER (m/f)	An enthusiastic offstage voice. (1 line)
BILL OF RIGHTS (m/f)	A proud jovial document. (52 lines)
REDCOAT (m)	A corrupt, but kooky officer with a British accent. (16 lines)
FALSE (m/f)	A large “F”, slick and smarmy, and not to be trusted. (15 lines)
TRUE (m/f)	A large “T”, honest as can be. (11 lines)
DAD (m)	Offstage voice of Callie’s father. (2 lines)

FLEXIBLE CASTING

This play can be performed with a large or small cast with many roles able to be cast gender/ ethnicity/ age blind.

LARGE CAST

The size of the cast may be increased by creating a chorus to join in the singing of the songs and reciting of the Preamble. Also, actors may be employed to hold up signs displaying the song lyrics, the Preamble, key vocabulary words and quiz questions. Additional actors may be designated to be at the front of the audience to encourage audience participation. If not double cast, WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN and MADISON may stay on stage for most of the play and react to the characters that CALLIE meets. Likewise, the offstage voices of the STATES, DELEGATES, ANNOUNCER and DAD may be characters that appear onstage. The STATES may be played by up to 13 actors and the DELEGATES may be played by up to 52 actors.

SMALL CAST/IN-SCHOOL TOURS

This play may be performed with as few as one female and three males. In order to have a cast of four, the female actor should play CALLIE. The first male actor should play MADISON, STATES, CONNECTICUT and JUDICIAL. The second male actor should play WASHINGTON, ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, DELEGATE #1, DELEGATE #3, DELEGATE #5, DELEGATE #7, VIRGINIA, EXECUTIVE, ANNOUNCER, REDCOAT, FALSE and DAD. The third male actor should play FRANKLIN, DELEGATE #2, DELEGATE #4, DELEGATE #6, NEW JERSEY, PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER, LEGISLATIVE, BILL OF RIGHTS and TRUE. The use of puppetry and/or masks makes transitions smoother and quicker when using a small cast.

GENDER NEUTRAL ROLES

The following roles may be cast as male or female and with actors of any age and ethnicity: ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, STATES, NEW JERSEY, VIRGINIA, CONNECTICUT, PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER, LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, JUDICIAL, ANNOUNCER, BILL OF RIGHTS, FALSE and TRUE.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET

This show may be performed on a bare stage. No specific set elements are required. The setting may be a child's bedroom that transforms into the Pennsylvania State House circa the Constitutional Convention or any sort of patriotic fantastical landscape. Because the play is a dream, there is much leeway in the set design.

COSTUMES

Costumes for the historical figures and objects may be suggestive, consisting of simple pieces such as hats, wigs, masks, signs or puppets or may be fully realized. CALLIE may wear pajamas. Due to the dream nature of the play, costumes choices are quite flexible.

PROJECTIONS/SIGNS/HANDOUTS

My Dog Ate the Constitution can be performed with few technical elements. However, if a projector and screen are available, displaying the song lyrics, the Preamble, key vocabulary words and quiz questions will greatly enhance the visual learning experience and make the audience more willing to participate. If projections are not an option, signs may be utilized or the words to the Preamble and the song lyrics may be printed in the program or handouts. If touring this play to schools, handouts of the Preamble and songs may be given to the teachers ahead of time for the classes to practice before the production. Then the students will be ready to participate when they watch the show.

PROPS

- History textbook (*CALLIE*)
- Constitution (*MADISON*)
- Dollar bill -preset in pocket (*CALLIE*)
- White powdered wig (*MADISON*)
- Constitution (*WASHINGTON*)
 - May be the same Constitution used earlier by MADISON
- Quill (*WASHINGTON*)
- Inkwell (*MADISON*)
- Dog treat -preset in pocket (*may be mimed.*) (*CALLIE*)
- Applause-O-Meter (*MADISON –May be brought on by TRUE*)

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ORIGINAL CAST LISTING

My Dog Ate the Constitution was first performed in October 2011 at Victoria Theatre in Dayton, Ohio. The show was produced by Zoot Theatre Company with executive director Michael S. Sticka and artistic director D. Tristan Cupp. Sydney Lanier directed. The set design was by Ray Zupp. The puppet design and construction was by D. Tristan Cupp and Shirley Perkins-Wasser. The lighting design was by Andy Balmert. The sound and projection design was by J. Gary Thompson. The stage manager was Dawn Roth Smith. The cast was as follows:

CALLIE Melissa Proffitt

MADISON, STATES,
CONNECTICUT and JUDICIAL..... Ray Zupp

WASHINGTON, ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION,
DELEGATE #1, DELEGATE #3, DELEGATE #5, DELEGATE # 7,
VIRGINIA, EXECUTIVE, ANNOUNCER,
REDCOAT, FALSE and DAD J. Gary Thompson

FRANKLIN, DELEGATE #2,
DELEGATE #4, DELEGATE #6, NEW JERSEY,
PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER, LEGISLATIVE,
BILL OF RIGHTS and TRUE..... Eric Arntz

To My Devoted Grandparents:

Raymond and Lulu Belle Smith

AT RISE:

CALLIE sits in front of an open history textbook. Her hand covers the book.

CALLIE: Legislative. Executive. Annnnd uhhhhh... *(She peeks at the book.)* Judicial. Man! I am never going to remember all this junk. *(She yawns.)*

MADISON: *(Running in.)* Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!

CALLIE: Not now, boy. I'm trying to study.

MADISON: Ruff?

CALLIE: Madison, I can't play right now. I've got a huge test on the Constitution tomorrow.

MADISON: Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!

CALLIE: I don't know why we have to learn this silly stuff anyway. It's sooooo boring.

MADISON: Ruff! Ruff! Ruff! *(MADISON chases his tail and runs offstage.)*

CALLIE: Legislative. *(Yawn.)* Executive. *(Bigger yawn.)* Judicial. *(CALLIE lays her head down on the book. MADISON runs back in carrying the Constitution in his mouth. He drops it in front of CALLIE. MADISON licks CALLIE's face.)*

CALLIE: Madison!

MADISON: Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!

CALLIE: I told you, I have to study for my test on the-

MADISON: Ruff? *(MADISON picks up the Constitution and playfully growls. CALLIE tries to take it back in a tug-of-war match.)*

CALLIE: Hey, what is that you have, Madison? Wait a second. That's the Constitution! Where'd you get that? That's a very important historical document- at least my teacher says it is- and I bet they don't want doggy drool on it! *(MADISON runs offstage with the Constitution. CALLIE chases after MADISON, taking her textbook with her.)* Hey! Drop it! Bad dog! *(WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN enter from the other side of the stage. CALLIE runs onstage and runs smack into WASHINGTON. She falls down.)*

WASHINGTON: Whoa. Where did she come from?

FRANKLIN: Young lady, are you all right?

WASHINGTON: Who are you? You don't belong here.

CALLIE: You're telling me! Where am I?

FRANKLIN: The Pennsylvania State House, of course.

WASHINGTON: Little girl, I am afraid you need to-

CALLIE: Hey! Wait a second. I know who you are. *(She rummages through her pockets, pulls out a crumpled dollar bill, and holds it up to WASHINGTON.)* Yep. You're George Washington!

WASHINGTON: Indeed, I am.

FRANKLIN: Do you recognize me? My face is as well-known as the moon.

CALLIE: Aren't you on the oatmeal box?

FRANKLIN: What? No! I'm on money, too.

CALLIE: Not on any of mine, you're not.

FRANKLIN: I am on the one-hundred dollar bill. I'm Ben Franklin.

CALLIE: Wow! Really? I've never seen a hundred dollar bill before. Do they actually make those?

WASHINGTON: See, I told you Ben. It's better to be on the lower bills, the ones people actually use.

FRANKLIN: What are you talking about? Ask anybody. They'd take money with my picture on it over yours any day.

CALLIE: Man! I am burning up! I'm going to open a window.

WASHINGTON AND FRANKLIN: No!

CALLIE: Why not? It's like a million degrees in here.

FRANKLIN: We don't want anyone out there to know what we are doing in here.

WASHINGTON: This is a private meeting. I'm sorry, little girl, but you are going to have to leave.

CALLIE: I'm just looking for Madison.

FRANKLIN: Oh, Madison. Of course. He's here.

CALLIE: Oh, good! *(MADISON enters wearing a white powdered wig.)*

FRANKLIN: Awh, James, my good man. This young lady has been looking for you.

MADISON: James Madison, at your service.

CALLIE: That's just my dog... in a wig.

MADISON: I bark your pardon!

WASHINGTON: Little girl, in my lifetime I have owned thirty-six dogs.

I think I know a thing or two about canines and that is not a dog.

FRANKLIN: Poor dear. She must have hit her head pretty hard.

CALLIE: Just ask all the kids out there. *(To the audience.)* That's my dog, right?

WASHINGTON: No, no. This is preposterous. That is James Madison, Father of the Constitution. *(MADISON chews on WASHINGTON's shoe.)*

CALLIE: He's chewing on your shoe. *(WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN turn to look, but MADISON is back on two legs and has assumed an air of properness.)*

MADISON: Well, I never! *(MADISON spins around in circles three times and sits down.)*

CALLIE: *(To audience.)* You guys saw that right?

FRANKLIN: I saw no such thing.

CALLIE: Okay. Whatever. But you better not let him near any trees or fire hydrants.

WASHINGTON: She can't be here, Mr. Madison. You know this is a top-secret meeting.

CALLIE: Top-secret?

WASHINGTON: How did you get past the guards?

CALLIE: Guards?

MADISON: Well, never you mind. I'm sure she won't want to stay anyway. She thinks what we are doing here is not important.

FRANKLIN: What?

WASHINGTON: How dare you!

CALLIE: I never said it wasn't-

MADISON: You said it was boring.

FRANKLIN: Boring! Good gracious me!

WASHINGTON: You think starting a new nation is boring?! How many countries have you founded?

CALLIE: None.

WASHINGTON: How many constitutions have you written?

CALLIE: None.

WASHINGTON: Well, then-

CALLIE: Wait a second. Constitutions. Hey! Is this the Constitutional Convention?

FRANKLIN: Shhh!

MADISON: Yes, history will later call it that, but right now we prefer to call it the Grand Convention or the Federal Convention.

CALLIE: Why? That just seems confusing. You know for kids that will have to learn this stuff for tests later.

WASHINGTON: You see, when we delegates came to this historical meeting, we weren't planning on writing a new Constitution.

FRANKLIN: Oh, no! In fact, that's exactly what we did not want to happen.

MADISON: We were sent here to patch up the Articles of Confederation.

CALLIE: Articles of Confederation? But I have a test on the Constitution tomorrow. So if you guys don't mind, let's talk about that instead.

WASHINGTON: But the Articles of Confederation was the set of rules that came before the Constitution.

MADISON: To understand history you must know why things happen, not just that they happened.

WASHINGTON: Not very long ago, there was no United States of America. Instead there were thirteen-

CALLIE: Original colonies!

WASHINGTON: Do you want me to tell it or do you?

CALLIE: I'll give it a try.

WASHINGTON: Be my guest, Miss Smarty Pants.

CALLIE: And the colonies were ruled by the King of England.

MADISON: That's right. King George the Third.

CALLIE: But for some reason you guys didn't like that.

WASHINGTON: He over-taxed us. Oh, how he over-taxed us!

FRANKLIN: He wouldn't let us vote for our leaders. That's taxation without representation!

MADISON: It was ruff!

WASHINGTON: We weren't allowed to hold public meetings.

MADISON: He put soldiers in our homes.

FRANKLIN: He threw innocent people in jail.

WASHINGTON: We wrote letters to the King, asking him to be fair.

FRANKLIN: I even traveled to England to try to reason with King George. But he wouldn't listen. Deborah, my dear wife, died while I was overseas.

CALLIE: That's so sad.

WASHINGTON: The King did not treat us like true English subjects, so we did not want to be English subjects any more.

CALLIE: So you guys wrote the Declaration of Independence, declaring your independence from Great Britain and went to war to fight to be your own country. (*FRANKLIN falls asleep.*)

MADISON: And which war was that?

CALLIE: I forget. There's been so many.

WASHINGTON AND MADISON: The Revolutionary War.

CALLIE: Oh, right.

WASHINGTON: And who was the General of the Army?

CALLIE: I don't know.

WASHINGTON: I was! It made me a national hero. (*FRANKLIN snores loudly.*)

CALLIE: (*Whispering.*) Mr. Franklin, wake up. We're talking about history.

FRANKLIN: Huh?

WASHINGTON: So our new nation needed some new rules.

CALLIE: Rules? Why do we need more rules? Didn't that king make too many rules for you guys?

WASHINGTON: Well, his rules were unfair.

CALLIE: Teachers are always making rules. Parents are always making rules. Rules make things not fun.

MADISON: Maybe you're right. We've been working too hard. Let's just play a game.

WASHINGTON: James, we really don't have time for-

CALLIE: I love games.

MADISON: Okay. I want everyone to play this game. (*To audience.*) That means all of you out there too. Everyone stand up. Okay here we go. Let the game begin.

CALLIE: Wait! How do you play this game?

MADISON: (*As rapidly as possible.*) If you have brown hair, raise your left hand. Keep your hands raised. If you are a boy, raise your right hand. If you like pudding, touch your nose. Everyone in the second row, sit down. You're out.

CALLIE: What? Wait! What did they do wrong?

MADISON: If you tied a key to a kite and flew it during a lighting storm, shout "Lucky to be alive!"

FRANKLIN: Lucky to be alive!

MADISON: If you are named Sarah, sit down.

CALLIE: Why? That's not nice.

MADISON: If you are named David, jump up in the air. If you have a brother, snap your fingers. If you are taller than the person standing next to you, sit down. If your hand is still raised, put it down. If your hand is not raised, put it up. Clap your hands.
(*FRANKLIN falls asleep. WASHINGTON claps his hands.*)

CALLIE: Who?

MADISON: Oh! You didn't clap your hands. You're out.

CALLIE: But I didn't know if I was supposed to- Ben Franklin didn't clap his hands either.

MADISON: Well, he is not out.

CALLIE: That's not fair!

MADISON: If your birthday is in February, shout "Hedgehog".

WASHINGTON: Hedgehog!

CALLIE: This game makes no sense.

MADISON: Make a scary face. Hey! You didn't make a scary face.

CALLIE: Because you said I was out.

MADISON: Now you're back in. Now you're out again.

CALLIE: What?

FRANKLIN: (*Waking back up.*) Huh? What?

MADISON: If you have a cat, pat your stomach. Oh no! You're all out!
You patted your stomach!

CALLIE: But you just told them to-

MADISON: If you're wearing blue shout "Red!" Everyone who shouted "red" is out. Everyone who stayed quiet is out.

CALLIE: But that would mean everyone is out.

MADISON: That's right. I win.

CALLIE: That's not fair!

MADISON: Wasn't that a fun game?

CALLIE: No.

MADISON: Why not?

CALLIE: Because everyone had no idea what they were supposed to do. It was just total craziness.

MADISON: Because there were no rules?

CALLIE: Yeah. I guess so.

MADISON: Rules make things fair. Rules help us know what we are supposed to do. Rules make sure that everyone gets to have fun.

CALLIE: Okay, so maybe you are right. Maybe we need rules. But didn't you say that the U.S. already had some rules. The Particles of Cornflower or whatever.

FRANKLIN: Articles of Confederation.

CALLIE: Right. So what's wrong with the Articles of Confederation?

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: (*Offstage.*) There's nothing wrong with me, um, right guys?

MADISON: Oh no. Not him.

FRANKLIN: Hide! (*MADISON, FRANKLIN and WASHINGTON dive for cover. ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION enters.*)

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: You guys are going to patch me up, good as new, right? Um, guys? Where'd they go?

CALLIE: Just when I thought this day couldn't get any weirder.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Oh, hello, there. I'm, um, the Articles of Confederation, the um, laws for um, the national government.

CALLIE: Hi. I'm Callie.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Well, Callie, I'm, um, looking for my delegates. (*To audience.*) Excuse me. Has anyone, um, seen my state delegates? They don't show up to my meetings a lot of the time and, um, you know there's not really much I can do about that.

CALLIE: Well, if you're in charge, can't you make them-

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: (*Calling.*) Oh, states! States! Are you listening to me? So, um, you know we just fought this war-

CALLIE: The Revolutionary War.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Yeah, that one. And well, you know, we, um, owe other countries a lot of money, so, um, if you states don't mind, it'd be great if could, you know, give me, the federal government, some, um, money, you know, um, some taxes.

STATES: (*Offstage voice.*) Do we have to?

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Well, no, um, I mean I can't make you if you don't want to, but I'd, um, appreciate it if-

STATES: (*Offstage voice.*) We don't want to.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Okay, yeah, sure. I, um, understand. But if you change your mind-

STATES: (*Offstage voice.*) We won't.

CALLIE: My dad complains a lot about paying taxes. I don't think he would pay taxes if it wasn't the law. Maybe you could make it the law that they have to-

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Oh, no, um, I couldn't do that. I don't want to seem too pushy.

CALLIE: You don't seem pushy at all. Maybe if you were a little pushier, you might actually get something done.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: I, um, can get things done. Just watch this. So, um, since all the kids out there in the audience have been so good, I was, um, thinking of maybe getting everybody a little treat. Should we, um, have brownies or cookies? If you want brownies, um, raise your hand. Any votes for brownies? Okay, um, everybody who wants cookies instead, raise your hand. Oh, gee, well, um, shucks. That's too bad. See I got to have a unanimous vote.

CALLIE: What's that mean?

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Unanimous? Oh that means, um, everybody has to agree. If just one person says "no", then I, um, can't do anything.

CALLIE: So we don't get a treat?

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Gee, I guess not. Sorry. I, um, really wish I could, you know, do more. But I, um, have to have everybody agree. And it's really really hard to get everybody to agree on anything. Besides I don't have, um, any money to buy food anyway.

CALLIE: Can't you just make money? You're the national government!

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Oh, golly, no. The states, they, um, make their own money.

CALLIE: But how does that work? There's a bunch of states and-

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Yeah, um, it makes travel and trade, um, pretty tricky. They don't want to take money from other states and they all over-tax each other on stuff they sell. It's, um, a real mess. They call it, um, a "firm league of friendship", but they sure don't act like friends. All they do is fight and fight and fight. They're like a monster with thirteen heads.

CALLIE: But why would anybody create a government like you, Articles of Confederation? I mean no offense.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Well, gee, you see, you got to understand, that, um, they were fighting a long and terrible, um, war, to get rid of that rotten old King of England.

CALLIE: King George the Third.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: Yeah, him. So everybody was real scared, see, of making a new federal government that was, um, too strong. They didn't want another mean king. They wanted a nice guy, like me. A nice guy that they could, um, push around, you know so the states could basically act like thirteen little countries, making their own rules, doing their own thing. They act like they don't even want me around. (*ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION cries and collapses.*)

CALLIE: Hey! Hey! Are you okay?

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: I'm just so weak. So very, very weak. (*ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION faints. CALLIE tries to lift him back up, but he is lifeless. MADISON reappears.*)

CALLIE: I don't think you're going to be able to fix this one.

MADISON: Yeah, I don't think so either. (*MADISON sniffs, growls and gnaws at ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION. With his paws, he tries to bury ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, then gives up and tosses ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION offstage.*)

MADISON: (*To the audience.*) Gentlemen, if I may-

CALLIE: (*Whispering.*) Don't you mean ladies and gentlemen?

MADISON: (*Whispering back.*) Oh no. All of the Framers of the Constitution were men.

CALLIE: Well, that's not fair!

MADISON: The work we are doing here today will decide forever the fate of republican government. Allow me to tell you about a plan to save this struggling young nation. I call it the Virginia Plan. We will divide the federal government into three branches- Legislative, Executive and Judicial. (*An uproar of surprised voices can be heard.*)

DELEGATE #1: (*Offstage voice.*) We are here to make changes to the Articles of Confederation!

DELEGATE #2: (*Offstage voice, overlapping.*) We don't want a strong national government. (*More shouting can be heard.*)

MADISON: Gentlemen, please. Hear me out. There will be an Executive Branch led by the President who will-

DELEGATE #3: (*Offstage voice.*) President? That sounds an awful lot like a king!

DELEGATE #4: (*Offstage voice.*) We don't want a king!

DELEGATE #5: (*Offstage voice.*) No king! No king! (*A chorus of angered agreement can be heard.*)

MADISON: In the Legislative Branch, the number of representatives for each state will be based on that state's population.

DELEGATE #6: (*Offstage voice.*) No! All states have equal say.

DELEGATE #7: (*Offstage voice.*) More people! More votes! (*Even more furious and louder shouting can be heard. MADISON barks aggressively.*)

CALLIE: Guys, stop fighting like cats and dogs! (*The sounds of shouting cease.*)

MADISON: It went on like this for seven weeks, in the smoldering heat. Talk about your dog days of summer. (*MADISON exits. VIRGINIA and NEW JERSEY appear.*)

CALLIE: Whoa! Who are you guys?

VIRGINIA: Pleased to make your acquaintance. I am the Virginia Plan. I believe Mr. James Madison was just talking about me.

NEW JERSEY: Yeah, and it was going real great, big guy!

VIRGINIA: George Washington, James Madison and Edmund Randolf came up with the wonderful ideas that are me. In my plan, large states, like me, have more representatives in Congress.

NEW JERSEY: No way Jose!

VIRGINIA: I have more people. I should get more votes. It's only fair.

NEW JERSEY: Are you kidding me? Fair? You wanna talk about fair? Under your plan, small states like me would be swallowed up!

VIRGINIA: Good gentlemen of the audience, do me this favor. Boys, please chant, "Big states!"

NEW JERSEY: Oh, it's on. Girls, let me hear you shout "Small states" as loud as you can. Let's put this big bully in his place.

VIRGINIA: Big states! Big states!

NEW JERSEY: (*Overlapping.*) Small states! Small states!

CALLIE: Wait! Stop! I don't get it. What are you fighting about?

NEW JERSEY: How many representatives each state should get in the Congress.

CALLIE: Why is the number of representatives such a big deal?

VIRGINIA: Dear child, the more representatives you have, the more votes you have and the more power you have over every other decision that is made by the government.

NEW JERSEY: It's all about the power, baby!

CALLIE: Oh. I guess that is pretty important.

NEW JERSEY: You bet your bottom it's important and there is no way I am supporting the Virginia Plan.

CALLIE: Well, do you have a better plan?

NEW JERSEY: Oh yeah. Mr. William Patterson from the great state of New Jersey proposed me, the New Jersey Plan. In my plan, each state gets the same number of representatives. That's the way it was in the Articles of Confederation and that's the way it should stay. One state. One vote. We are all equal.

VIRGINIA: The same number of votes for little states as big states! That's just plain silly!

NEW JERSEY: Maybe me and the other small states will just leave then. You'd like that, huh? Maybe we'll just find some other country who appreciates us and sign a treaty with them.

VIRGINIA: Now you are being downright ridiculous, my tiny friend.

NEW JERSEY: You think you're so big and tough? Huh? (*NEW JERSEY shoves VIRGINIA.*)

CALLIE: Hey! Hey! Cut that out. There's got to be a way that you can both be happy.

VIRGINIA: I simply can't imagine how.

CALLIE: My teacher- Mrs. Rumsby- says that when you and your friend can't agree on something you have to *compromise*. My best friend Regina wanted to play dolls, but I wanted to play ponies. Then we came up with a compromise. Our dolls can ride ponies!

VIRGINIA: Now, that's not a bad idea. (*CONNECTICUT pops up.*)

CONNECTICUT: I think it's a great idea!

CALLIE: Who are you?

CONNECTICUT: I'm the Connecticut Compromise, also known as the Great Compromise!

NEW JERSEY: Why are you here?

CONNECTICUT: To save the day! To put an end to all this bickering.

CALLIE: It's about time.

CONNECTICUT: Roger Sherman of Connecticut came up with a way to give both the large states and the small states what they wanted. The Congress will be bicameral.

CALLIE: What? What about buying caramel?

CONNECTICUT: No. Bicameral. It means two houses. The Congress has two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. In the Senate each state will get two votes regardless of their size.

NEW JERSEY: Yeah. That's what I'm talking about.

CONNECTICUT: And in the House of Representatives, the number of representatives will be based on the state's population. So the bigger states-

VIRGINIA: Like me.

CONNECTICUT: Will get more votes than the smaller states.

VIRGINIA: Like him.

CALLIE: Hm, the Senate and the House of Representatives. This is so confusing. How am I ever going to remember which is which?

CONNECTICUT: Here's an easy trick. The House of Representatives has a longer name and it has more people in it. And why does it have more people in it?

CALLIE: Because the House of Representatives is based on the state's population and in the Senate every state gets two votes, no matter what.

CONNECTICUT: Exactly!

NEW JERSEY: Hey! You're one smart cookie!

CONNECTICUT: I'm so glad we were able to work that out. It makes me so happy I feel like singing. Virginia, New Jersey, my good states, would you join me in song?

VIRGINIA: Most certainly, my friend.

NEW JERSEY: Eh, only if all the kids out there do it too.

CONNECTICUT: You heard him, kids. Everyone sing along.

CALLIE, VIRGINIA, NEW JERSEY and CONNECTICUT: *(To the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb".)*

MADISON HAD THE VIRGINIA PLAN,
THE VIRGINIA PLAN, THE VIRGINIA PLAN,
MADISON HAD THE VIRGINIA PLAN,
BIG STATES WOULD GET MORE VOTES.
SMALL STATES DIDN'T LIKE WHAT THIS MEANT,

WHAT THIS MEANT, WHAT THIS MEANT,
SMALL STATES DIDN'T LIKE WHAT THIS MEANT,
AND SO THEY ARGUED "NO!"
PATTERSON HAD THE NEW JERSEY PLAN,
THE NEW JERSEY PLAN, THE NEW JERSEY PLAN,
PATTERSON HAD THE NEW JERSEY PLAN,
ALL STATES WOULD HAVE FAIR SAY.
THE DELEGATES DID SCREAM AND SHOUT,
SCREAM AND SHOUT, SCREAM AND SHOUT,
THE DELEGATES DID SCREAM AND SHOUT,
THEY FOUGHT FOR MANY A DAY.
SHERMAN HAD THE GREAT COMPROMISE,
GREAT COMPROMISE, GREAT COMPROMISE,
SHERMAN HAD THE GREAT COMPROMISE,
THE CONGRESS SPLIT IN TWO.
IN THE HOUSE, IT'S BASED ON SIZE,
BASED ON SIZE, BASED ON SIZE,
IN THE HOUSE, IT'S BASED ON SIZE,
IN THE SENATE, ALL STATES GET TWO.

VIRGINIA, NEW JERSEY and CONNECTICUT exit.

CALLIE: Hey! This making a new government thing isn't so hard. All we have to do is find a way to work together and compromise to make everybody happy.

WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN and MADISON reenter.

CALLIE: So now that we've got all that big state, small state stuff figured out, there'll be no more arguing, right?

FRANKLIN: Oh good heavens no! There was plenty of more arguing at the Constitutional Convention.

CALLIE: About what?

WASHINGTON: There was much disagreement about the issue of slavery. (*Outraged bursts of arguments can be heard.*)

CALLIE: That's easy. Do away with it. It's so disgusting, it makes me want to puke. Get rid of it right now.

FRANKLIN: I wish we could, young lady. I wish we could.

CALLIE: You can. You're writing the Constitution. You're making the laws and the people have to do what you say.

WASHINGTON: No, we are representing the people. We have to do what the people say.

CALLIE: Well, everybody knows that slavery is wrong. So what's the problem?

MADISON: People in the South relied on slaves to pick their crops on their plantations. Farming is how they made their living.

CALLIE: Is everything always about money?

FRANKLIN: Yes, most of the time, it is.

WASHINGTON: But the delegates were not just fighting about whether or not to keep slavery. They were also fighting about whether or not the slaves should be counted in the population.

FRANKLIN: Remember the population count determines how many representatives the state gets to have in the House of Representatives. *(Sounds of arguing can be heard.)*

MADISON: I propose the Three-Fifths Compromise. For the sake of representation and taxation, a slave will be counted as three-fifths a person. *(More sounds of arguing can be heard.)*

CALLIE: Madison! You dirty dog! How can you say that any human being is three-fifths of a person? You make me sick!

WASHINGTON: Please, calm down, little girl.

CALLIE: I will not calm down. This is something worth getting angry about. All men are created equal. It says so in the Declaration of Independence. Didn't you guys write that?

FRANKLIN: I did.

MADISON: Remember how you just heard so much arguing about how many representatives each state should have? The people in the South wanted their slaves to be counted as full people.

CALLIE: What? But why is that when they didn't want to treat them like people?

MADISON: You see if the slaves are counted in the population, then the slave-holding states get more representatives and more votes so they can keep voting to keep slavery legal.

WASHINGTON: And it encourages them to buy more slaves to make their population count higher and their number of representatives more.

CALLIE: Oh. So I guess I get why you guys don't want the slaves counted as full people for the population count. But if you just get rid of slavery right now, then that will make everything better.

WASHINGTON: There was much debate about this matter, but the Southern States would not agree to abolish or get rid of slavery.

CALLIE: Well, make them, doggone it!

MADISON: Remember what you just said about compromise.

CALLIE: Some things should never be compromised!

FRANKLIN: I agree with the young lady.

MADISON: Well, at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the Founding Fathers did compromise. Slavery was outlawed in the Northwest Territories, the new land to the west of the thirteen states. But the slave trade was allowed to continue in the states for twenty more years.

CALLIE: I'm not so sure about this Constitution anymore.

MADISON: The word slavery is never used in the U.S. Constitution.

CALLIE: Still...

WASHINGTON: We know that the Constitution is not perfect. That's why we put in a way to make changes or amendments to it.

CALLIE: Oh, this slavery thing is going to get changed. I'm going to make sure of it.

MADISON: Despite disagreements, the Founding Fathers pushed forward to create the government that we have today. Once everyone had decided on how they wanted the new government to run, the Committee of Details worked to do the actual writing of the Constitution while the rest of the delegates took a much-needed vacation.

WASHINGTON: I'm going fishing. Care to join me, Ben?

FRANKLIN: No, thank-you, my good man. I think I'll just go home, read a book and take a nap. (*WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN exit.*)

MADISON: Then the delegates returned, discussed and debated some more-

CALLIE: Man! More fighting!

MADISON: And the Committee of Style and Arrangement reworked the Constitution to make sure every one of those famous words was exactly how they wanted it. The beginning of the Constitution, its most famous words, is called the Preamble.

CALLIE: That makes sense because "pre" means before, like a preview for a movie or preschool where little kids go before elementary school.

MADISON: Absolutely! The Preamble says why the Constitution is written. These words are so powerful and so beautiful that I think we should all say them together.

CALLIE: Okay. *(To audience.)* Everybody ready?

MADISON and CALLIE: We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

MADISON: Excellent!

CALLIE: You're right, Madison. That does sound pretty fancy, but I don't know what all those fancy words mean. *(PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER appears.)*

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: I am Preamble Descrambler. Give me Preamble. I will decode for you, human.

CALLIE: Wow! Cool! Okay.

MADISON: Let's begin at the beginning. "We the People."

CALLIE: Well, I know what that means.

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: Goodbye.

CALLIE: No, wait. Stay, Preamble Descrambler. We need you.

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: Preamble Descrambler happy.

CALLIE: "We the People."

MADISON: The Constitution does not start "We the Government" or "I the King". It begins "We the People". This is a set of rules for the people by the people.

CALLIE: Next up we have "In Order to form a more perfect Union." Preamble Descrambler, work your magic.

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(After a series of beeping sounds.)* To make our country better.

CALLIE: "Establish Justice."

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(A few short beeps.)* Make things fair.

CALLIE: "Insure domestic Tranquility"

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(A few short beeps.)* Have peace at home.

MADISON: Remember how all the states were fighting with each other? Well, we are saying we don't want that to happen anymore.

CALLIE: “Provide for the common defense.”

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(Many beeps.)* Work together to keep the United States safe from foreign attacks.

CALLIE: “Promote the general Welfare.”

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(Beeps.)* Help make happiness for everyone.

CALLIE: “And secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity”

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(Long series of beeps.)* We want these freedoms to be enjoyed not only by us but by future generations, our children’s children’s children.

CALLIE: Hey! That means me. I’m the posterity.

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: Affirmative.

CALLIE: “Do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America”. I got this one. *(PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER makes sad beeping sounds.)*

CALLIE: Wait! What does “ordain” mean?

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: *(Happy beeping sounds.)* Order.

CALLIE: We order and set up this Constitution for our country. *(PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER beeps approval.)*

MADISON: Indubitably.

CALLIE: So basically, the Preamble says that the people will work together to make this country the best it can be by being fair, getting along, and protecting the country, to make it a good place for us and the people that come after us.

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: Affirmative.

MADISON: Indeed.

CALLIE: One last question, oh wise, all-knowing Preambler Descrambler. That’s a dog, right?

PREAMBLER DESCRAMBLER: Dog. Canine. Affirmative.

CALLIE: Ha! I knew it!

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