<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/game.html>

**The Constitution Paper Clip Game**

**Objective:**

To describe how the members of the Constitutional Convention might have felt as they gathered and began the arduous and memorable task of writing the United States Constitution.

**Materials needed:**

Envelopes containing:

* 1 die
* 12 paper clips
* The following rhymed instructions:

It's time to play a little game.
No two groups will play the same.
What and how is up to you.
The group must choose what it will do.
Use the things that you find here.
It won't take long; you need not fear.
In six short minutes you'll share your fame
By telling how you played your game.

**Procedure:**

1. Arrange students into groups of three or four.
2. Distribute one prepared envelope to each group, instructing participants to wait for a signal to open them.
3. Instruct the students to follow the instructions contained in the envelope. Caution them to remember how they feel as they follow the instructions.
4. Give the signal to begin. The word "Archives" works well as a signal.
5. Circulate around the room, and remind students to remember how they are feeling as they play the game. When students ask what they are to do, simply say, "Follow the instructions you found in the envelope."
6. After 6 minutes, instruct participants to stop the game.
7. Ask a spokesperson from each group to describe the game they devised, and how they felt as they played. Some of their remarks might include the following: we were confused, we thought it was dumb, we did not know what to do, or we were excited about getting to make it up as we went along.
8. List the responses on the chalkboard.
9. After all groups have reported, begin describing the Constitutional Convention:

In May of 1787, outstanding citizens from 12 states gathered in Philadelphia. They planned to be there only a little while. They had come to improve the Articles of Confederation and try to create more unity and cooperation among the states. Rhode Island sent no representatives.
How did those men feel that May?

Today, you used 12 paper clips. They represent the patriots who came from the 12 states. The die represents luck and each day that rolled around from May 25 to September 17. You figured out how to play the game. They figured out how to write our Constitution. And while they went about the great task of writing the United States Constitution, they probably felt much the same as you did today.

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