

## Donald Whitaker, Inverness Middle School, Citrus County



*“The Times allows us to take the topics we cover – from John Locke’s Social Contract to political parties – and put a new perspective on them, while at the same time allowing the students to start to form their own opinions. The news relates strongly to civics because we are constantly dealing with how government and citizens interact. When teaching civics, we first teach the concepts like checks and balances, obligations and responsibilities, and levels of government. The Times allows us to take those concepts and turn them into real, picturable events.”*

Donald was chosen as the 2019 Grand Prize Winner because of his use of the newspaper to teach students about core civics concepts.

Throughout the year, he uses the news stories, editorials and political cartoons in the *Tampa Bay Times* to enhance lessons on government and current events. The newspaper helps students to visualize new material and apply the lessons learned to daily life.

For example, articles in the *Times* have helped him explain how and why each branch of government is doing the things that they are doing, clarify concepts such as separation of powers and checks and balances, and explore propaganda and public opinion.

In 2017-2018, Donald and his co-teacher Paul Hoyt created a week-long current events unit using the Times as a key resource. The goal of the project was to reinforce students' knowledge of the constitutional principles of checks and balances, separation of powers, limited government, federalism, due process and rule of law. Students began by choosing an article from the *Times* and examining it using a K-W-L (Know, Want to Know, Learned) chart. Students then participated in a Socratic Seminar, where they discussed the issues and constitutional principles raised by their articles.

In 2018-2019, Donald created a newspaper-based activity to help students see how the six purposes of government outlined in the Preamble of the Constitution actually function in real life.

Students used the newspaper to find articles illustrating each purpose of government and described why that article was an example of that specific purpose.

Citrus County Supervisor of Elections Susan Gil has worked with Don Whitaker and knows firsthand that he is an outstanding teacher. "His passion for the subject matter is the reason the students will always remember Mr. Whitaker."

Newspaper Article Activity:

1<sup>st</sup> Choose an Article and Read it.

2<sup>nd</sup> - Fill out the following KWL Chart:

I Know.	What I want to Know.	What I learned.
Title of the Article: Sheriff: Man and items to make bombs	1 Question that you have before reading the article. • What kind of bomb? Chemical or explosive? - lithium p. • Why was he trying to make a bomb? - Trinity E	What branch of government is involved? (legislative, executive, judicial) • Executive
Date of Article: Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017	• How did he make a tiny pipe bomb inside a toy car?	What level of Government is involved? (federal, state, local) • local
Where was the Paper found. (main, parts) Tampa Bay and Ft News	• Why was <sup>he</sup> <sup>growing</sup> psilocybin mushrooms?	Who was involved? (examples: President Trump, Paul Ryan, etc) Grant, Chitwood, Lancer, Lancers brother, several Police, and others

Summarize the article: Explain in two - three sentences what the article was about. (Who, what, when, where, why).

This man who made lots of bombs  
 Lancers brother was charge with  
 making and possessing a destruc.  
 device

What constitutional principle is being observed? (rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances, due process, popular sovereignty, limited government, federalism).

due process, rule of law

***Keeping Current: Preamble in Pictures***

**Directions:**

1. *Find a picture for each of the six purposes of government using the Tampa Times.*
2. *In the right box glue or write the headline of each article.*
3. *In the left box explain how your article represents that purpose of government*

Examples – Establish Justice – this article is about a police officer arresting someone for speeding. Right Box (place the article headline)

<b>We the People:</b>	
<b>Establish Justice:</b>	
<b>Ensure Domestic Tranquility:</b>	
<b>Provide for Common Defense:</b>	
<b>Promote the General Welfare:</b>	
<b>Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity:</b>	

3. In the left box explain how your article represents that purpose of government

Principles – Establish Justice – this article is about a police officer arresting someone for  
violating. Right Box (place the article headline)

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le: Recanting our g we have the power	It's recant by Hard
Justice: Law has been 2 laws that are made apply to everyone	Florida law for fixing ballots under scrutiny
Domestic Tranquility: Cost too high for police, health care, "Trying to get peace at home"	The high public cost of domestic violence
vide for Common Defense: Sargent ed while stationed in tican country	2 Navy sailors, 2 marines charged in green beret's Death
omote the General Welfare: relying too much on medicare	Stem ridiculous rise in drug cost
Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity: In the future we will see more scooters and use them more for transportation	Tampa aims to skirt scooter legislation

