



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

## STRATEGY: PREVIEWING LESSON ORGANIZATION

### Strategy Overview

If this is the first time your students have seen text for *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution*, take time to preview the entire text with them before focusing on a specific lesson. Let students take in the scene before wading in. One of the more engaging aspects of the We the People program is the structure and organization of the text. Vivid photos and images, bold headings and subheadings, bullet points, and the effective use of color are purposefully embedded to generate interest and provide clarity to readers. Previewing the table of contents, the text, and the reference section helps students to get “the big picture.”

The *We the People* text is designed to support readers as they study each lesson. Therefore, this previewing activity is mainly useful to alert students to lesson features that will help them understand the terms and concepts they will encounter. These features include the title, lesson purpose, terms to understand, subheadings, bulleted items, bold and italicized words, and many illustrations, ranging from photographs and cartoons to diagrams and charts. Also take note of the various fonts and the general appeal of the text.

### Strategy Procedures

Most of the blanks on the [Previewing Lesson Organization Handout](#) are self-explanatory. Once students have completed their survey of the lesson, working either individually or in pairs, then a whole-class discussion should be used to correct any misunderstandings, point out features that some students may have missed, and clarify how they will deal with the lesson during future class periods. Some questions or prompts for this discussion might include the following:

- Why do you think the heading for each section in the lesson is a question? What does that tell you?
- Where can you find the ideas that will be most important to remember?
- Where can you find what you may have to do for this lesson?
- How do the pictures and cartoons help you understand the concepts and ideas?

This is an ideal time to highlight content that students will focus on during the lesson. And sometimes it will be helpful to deal with nuances of meaning. For example, in Lesson 20 of the middle school *We the People* book, students are asked to learn what political parties are and how they began in American politics and to describe the two original political parties, their leaders, and the issues that divided them. *Learn* and *describe* may need clarification (or “unpacking”). Some discussion questions might include the following:

- What do we mean by *learn* and *describe*? Are they different?
- How do you know when you have *learned* something?
- What does *learn* mean?
- Are *learning* and *mastery* the same?

These also are important considerations when thinking ahead to assessment.