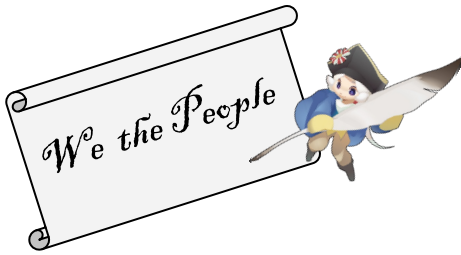


Anatomy of the Constitution

Name: _____

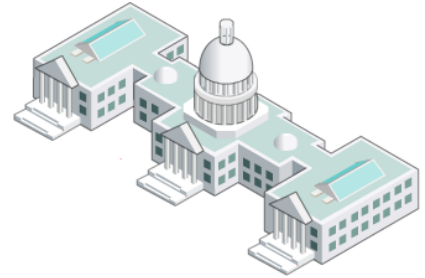


How Do They Govern?

The U.S. Constitution is the document that creates our nation's government. The contents of the Constitution create the three branches of our government and give directions for how the federal government works. Although the Constitution was written over 220 years ago, it still guides our officials in running our country today.

Creating Congress: Article I

Article I is the first and longest part of the Constitution. This is because the people who wrote the Constitution realized that a legislative branch is very important in a government that represents the citizens. Members of Congress are responsible for turning the wants and needs of the people into laws.



Represent Me!

The legislative branch makes our government a representative democracy. In a *representative democracy*, citizens elect people to represent their needs and concerns in Congress. Article I tells us that the legislature is divided into two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. It describes how Congress should be organized, states the qualifications necessary for a person to serve, and tells how often Congress should hold elections and meet as a group. There are other details that the two houses get to decide for themselves.

	The Senate	The House of Representatives
Qualifications	You must be at least 30 years old, been a U.S. citizen for at least 9 years, and live in the state you represent	You must be at least 25 years old, been a U.S. citizen for at least 7 years, and live in the state you represent.
Size	2 senators per state = 100 total	Number per state depends on population = 435 total (in 2011)
They represent...	the interests of the citizens in the entire state for 6 years per term.	the interests of the citizens who live in the district they represent within the state for 2 years per term.
Special Duties	The Senate acts as a court during impeachments.	All bills that raise money must start in the House of Representatives.
Role in Lawmaking	A bill must be approved by BOTH houses of Congress before it can go to the President to become a law.	

What can Congress do?

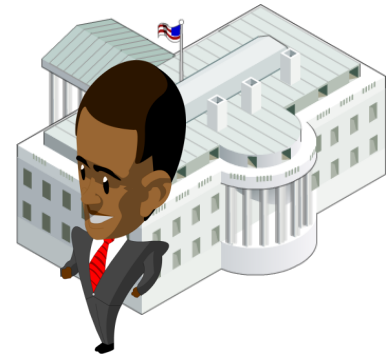
- Collect taxes
- Borrow money and pay debts
- Make rules for how to become a citizen
- Regulate *commerce* (trade) with other nations, between the states, and with Indian tribes
- Coin money and punish counterfeiters
- Establish post offices
- Give patents to new inventions
- Create the lower federal courts
- Punish pirates
- Declare war and support an army and navy
- Make any other laws that are "necessary and proper" to carry out the powers in this list.

Anatomy of the Constitution

Name: _____

Creating the President: Article II

Article II of the Constitution describes the job of the executive branch. The president heads this branch, which includes the vice president, the cabinet, and many civilian and military employees. Article II describes who qualifies to be the president, what powers the office has, and what happens if a president misbehaves! It also explains the Electoral College, which is the process of how the president is selected.



Presidential Powers

- Act as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces
- Maintain a *cabinet* of advisors who run the 14 executive departments like the State Department and the Treasury
- Grant pardons in all federal criminal offenses, and *reprieves* (postpone punishments like executions)
- Negotiate treaties with other countries
- Appoint ambassadors, Supreme Court Justices and federal court judges, and Cabinet members
- Make a State of the Union address to Congress
- Represent the United States when dealing with foreign countries
- Make sure that laws are carried out (*executed*)



The U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC

Creating the Courts: Article III

Here come the judges! Article III creates the judicial branch. The judicial branch has the job of interpreting laws to decide what they mean.

Article III is the shortest of the first three articles. This is because it only creates one court—the Supreme Court. All of the other federal courts are created by Congress. Federal judges are appointed and given terms that last until they retire, die, or are removed for bad behavior. Article III gives directions about what kinds of cases the Supreme Court and federal courts can hear. It also guarantees trial by jury in criminal court and explains what the crime of treason is.

Who Said It? First, match the quote about working in government to the correct branch. Then name the article that describes the powers of this branch.

Floor debate [on a bill] is an exhilarating experience and important duty.
Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, D-MI

The presidency has many problems, but boredom is the least of them.
Richard Nixon, R-CA

We apply laws to facts. We do not apply feelings to facts.
Justice Sonia Sotomayor



Article _____

The Executive Branch



Article _____

The Judicial Branch



Article _____

The Legislative Branch

Anatomy of the Constitution

Name: _____

The States: Article IV

We already know that the states have the power to create and enforce their own laws. Article Four of the Constitution describes how the states should interact with one another.

- Each state has to respect the laws and court decisions of the other states.
- If a criminal flees one state for another, the state where the crime was committed can request the criminal be returned to face criminal charges. This is called *extradition*.
- New states can be admitted to the Union with the authorization of Congress and the president.
- All states must have a *republican*, or representative, type of government.

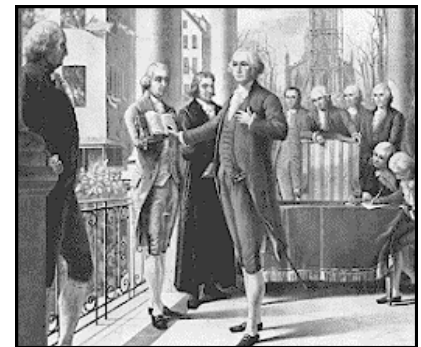


Amending the Constitution: Article V

This article describes what has to be done to amend the Constitution. You will read more about this process on the next page...

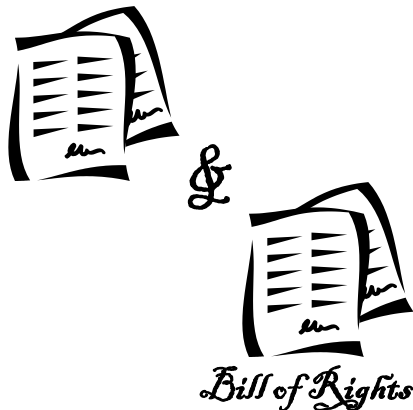
Supreme Law of the Land: Article VI

Federalism is the idea that the national government shares power with the state governments. But what happens if a state law disagrees with a national or federal law? Article Six states that the laws and treaties of the U.S. government are "the supreme law of the land." If a state law disagrees with a federal law, federal law wins. This article also requires officials working in the state and federal governments to take an oath to support the Constitution no matter what.



George Washington taking the oath of office for President of the U.S.

The Constitution



Ratification: Article VII

Once most of the Constitution was written, the Framers had to decide the best way to get the American people to support it. Article Seven calls for at least nine of the thirteen states to ratify, or approve, the Constitution. Each state had to hold a constitutional convention to discuss and vote on the new government plan. The biggest debate was over the need for a Bill of Rights that would list specific rights not already mentioned in the Constitution. Eventually, the Bill of Rights was added as the first ten amendments to the Constitution, and the Constitution became the law of the land in March of 1789!

Anatomy of the Constitution

Name: _____

Amending the Constitution



Article V describes how an amendment is added to the Constitution. There are only two steps necessary. First, the amendment needs to be *proposed*, or introduced. Then it needs to be *ratified*, or passed. Sound easy? Well, it isn't! Hundreds of amendment proposals are introduced in Congress each year. Only 33 have gotten enough votes to actually be proposed. Of those, 27 have become amendments to the Constitution.

The process to add an amendment can take years. There are four different ways an amendment can be added to the Constitution. But in all cases, an amendment has to be approved at the state and national levels

Step 1: Propose

Either Congress or the States can propose an amendment to the Constitution. Both Houses of Congress must propose the amendment with a two-thirds vote. This is how all current amendments have been offered. The other option is to have two-thirds of the state legislatures call on Congress to hold a Constitutional Convention. So far, no amendments have been proposed in this way.

Step 2: Ratify

Regardless of how the amendment is proposed, it must be ratified by the states. Three-fourths of the state legislatures must approve of the amendment proposed by Congress. The alternative is to have three-fourths of the states approve the amendment by holding conventions to vote on it. The state convention method has only been used once, to approve the 21st Amendment repealing Prohibition in 1933.

