The Constitution

Goals of the Constitution

The Preamble, or introduction, to the Constitution reflects the basic principle of American government—the right of the people to govern themselves. It also lists six goals for the United States government:

“. . .to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [defense], promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

These goals guided the Constitution’s Framers as they created the new government. They remain as important today as they were when the Constitution was written.

To Form a More Perfect Union Under the Articles of Confederation, the states functioned almost like independent nations. For the most part, they did not work together on important matters such as defense and finances. This lack of unity could have been dangerous for the nation during times of crisis. To form “a more perfect Union” the Framers believed the states needed to agree to operate as a single country and cooperate on major issues.

To Establish Justice For the Framers, treating each citizen equally was one of the fundamental principles on which to build the new nation.

To Insure Domestic Tranquility Shays’s Rebellion began in 1786 and shocked Americans. The United States had become a self-governing nation, yet a group of people had resorted to violence to express their anger over government policies. The Constitution provides a strong central government to “insure domestic Tranquility”—that is, to keep peace among the people.

To Provide for the Common Defense The Articles of Confederation required nine states to approve any decision by the Confederation Congress to build an army or navy. The Constitution gives the federal government the power to maintain armed forces to protect the country and its citizens from attack.

To Promote the General Welfare The Declaration of Independence states that the purpose of government is to promote “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” for the people of the nation. The Constitution includes ways to “promote the general Welfare”—or well-being—of the people by maintaining order, protecting individual liberties, regulating commerce and bankruptcies, and promoting science and technology by granting patents.
To Secure the Blessings of Liberty  The American colonists fought the Revolutionary War to gain their liberty. The Framers believed that preserving liberty should also be a major goal of the Constitution. The Constitution guarantees that no American’s basic rights will be taken away now or for posterity (generations not yet born).

Analyzing What is the purpose of the Preamble?

Major Principles

The principles outlined in the Constitution were the Framers’ solution to the problems of a representative government. The Constitution rests on seven major principles: (1) popular sovereignty, (2) republicanism, (3) limited government, (4) federalism, (5) separation of powers, (6) checks and balances, and (7) individual rights.

Popular Sovereignty  The Declaration of Independence states that governments derive their powers from “the consent of the governed.” The opening words of the Constitution, “We the people,” reinforce this idea of popular sovereignty—or “authority of the people.”

Republicanism  Under republicanism, voters hold sovereign power. The people elect representatives and give them the responsibility to make laws and conduct government. For most Americans today, the terms republic and representative democracy mean the same thing: a system of limited government where the people are the ultimate source of governmental power.

Limited Government  The Framers saw both benefits and risks in creating a powerful national government. They agreed that the nation needed strong central authority but feared misuse of power. They wanted to prevent the government from using its power to give one

Voting is a basic political right of all citizens.
group special advantages or to deprive another
group of its rights. By creating a limited govern-
ment, they made certain the government would
have only those powers granted by the people.

Article I of the Constitution states the powers
that the government has and the powers that it
does not have. Other limits on government
appear in the Bill of Rights, which guarantees
certain rights and liberties to the people.

Limited government can be described as the
“rule of law.” No people or groups are above the
law. Government officials must obey the law.

Federalism When the states banded together
under the Constitution, they gave up some
independence. States could no longer print their
own money or tax items imported from other
states. Nevertheless, each state governed itself
much as it had in the past.

This system, in which the power to govern is
shared between the national government and the
states, is called the federal system, or federalism.
Our federal system allows the people of each
state to deal with their needs in their own way. At
the same time, it lets the states act together to
deal with matters that affect all Americans.

The Constitution defines three types of gov-
ernment powers. Enumerated powers belong
only to the federal government. These include
the power to coin money, regulate interstate and
foreign trade, maintain the armed forces, and
create federal courts (Article I, Section 8).

The second kind of powers are those retained
by the states, known as reserved powers. They
include such rights as the power to establish

schools, pass marriage and divorce laws, and
regulate trade within a state. Although reserved
powers are not listed specifically in the Con-
stitution, the Tenth Amendment says that all
powers not specifically granted to the federal
government “are reserved to the States.”

The third set of powers defined by the
Constitution are concurrent powers—powers
shared by the state and federal governments.
Among these powers are the right to raise taxes,
borrow money, provide for public welfare, and
administer criminal justice.

When conflicts arise between state law and
federal law, the Constitution declares that the
Constitution is “the supreme Law of the Land.”
Conflicts between state law and federal law
must be settled in a federal court.

Separation of Powers To prevent any single
group or institution in government from gain-
ing too much authority, the Framers divided the
federal government into three branches: legisla-
tive, executive, and judicial. Each branch has its
own functions and powers. The legislative
branch, Congress, makes the laws. The execu-
tive branch, headed by the president, carries out
the laws. The judicial branch, consisting of the
Supreme Court and other federal courts, inter-
prets and applies the laws.

Checks and Balances As an additional safe-
guard, the Framers established a system of
checks and balances in which each branch of
government can check, or limit, the power of the
other branches. This system helps maintain a
balance in the power of the three branches. For example, Congress can pass a law. Then the president can reject the law by vetoing it. However, Congress can override, or reverse, the president’s veto if two-thirds of the members of both houses vote again to approve the law.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has acquired the power to determine the meaning of the Constitution and to declare that a law or a government policy goes against the Constitution. In doing so, the Court provides a check on the powers of Congress and the president. Judicial decisions—those made by the courts—can be overruled by amending the Constitution. The president and the Senate provide a check on the judicial branch through their power to appoint and approve federal judges. Congress can also change a law so that it no longer conflicts with the Constitution, or it can amend the Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in 1866, overturned the Supreme Court’s ruling in the *Dred Scott* decision, which had ruled that enslaved African Americans were not citizens.

**Individual Rights** The Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution in 1791. These first 10 amendments protect basic liberties and rights that you may take for granted—including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and the right to a trial by jury.

The 17 amendments that follow the Bill of Rights expand the rights of Americans and adjust certain provisions of the Constitution. Included among them are amendments that abolish slavery, define citizenship, guarantee the right to vote to all citizens, authorize an income tax, and set a two-term limit on the presidency.

**A Living Constitution**

Two years after the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin wrote, “Our Constitution is in actual operation; everything appears to promise that it will last; but in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.”
Despite Franklin’s uncertainty about the Constitution’s future, it is still very much alive today. The Constitution has survived because the Framers wrote a document that the nation could alter and adapt to meet changing needs. The result is a flexible document that can be interpreted in different ways in keeping with the conditions of a particular time. The Constitution’s flexibility allows the government to deal with matters the Framers never anticipated—such as regulating nuclear power plants or developing a space program. In addition the Constitution contains a provision for amending—changing or adding to—the document.

**Amending the Constitution** The Framers intentionally made the amendment process difficult to discourage minor or frequent changes being made. Although thousands of amendments—changes to the Constitution—have been proposed since 1788, only 27 of them have actually become part of the Constitution.

An amendment may be proposed in two ways: by the vote of two-thirds of both houses of Congress or by two-thirds of the state legislatures asking for a special convention on the amendment. The second method has never been used. Ratification of an amendment requires approval by three-fourths of the states. The Constitution can be ratified by the approval of state legislatures or by special state conventions.

Only the Twenty-first Amendment—which repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, banning the sale of alcoholic beverages—was ratified by state conventions. Voters in each state chose the delegates to the special conventions.

**Interpreting the Constitution** The Constitution includes two provisions that give Congress the power to act as needed to meet changing conditions. The first of these provisions is what is known as the “elastic clause” (Article I, Section 8). It directs Congress to “make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper” for executing all the powers of government. Congress has interpreted this clause to mean that it has certain implied powers, powers not specifically defined in the Constitution. Over the years, Congress has drawn on its implied powers to pass laws to deal with the needs of society.

The second provision used to expand congressional authority, the “commerce clause” (Article I, Section 8), gives Congress the power to “regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States.” Congress has used this clause to expand its powers into a number of areas, such as regulation of the airline industry, radio and television, and nuclear energy.

**Powers of the Presidency** The Constitution describes the role and the powers of the president in general terms. This has allowed the executive branch to extend its powers. In 1803, for example, President Thomas Jefferson approved a treaty with France that enabled the United States to buy an enormous tract of land.
The Courts  The role of the judicial branch has also grown as powers implied in the Constitution have been put into practice. In 1803 Chief Justice John Marshall expanded the powers of the Supreme Court by striking down an act of Congress in the case of Marbury v. Madison. In that decision the Court defined its right to determine whether a law violates the Constitution. Although not mentioned in the Constitution, judicial review has become a major power of the judicial branch.

The process of amending the Constitution and applying its principles in new areas helps keep our government functioning well. In 1974 Barbara Jordan, an African American member of Congress and a constitutional scholar, spoke in ringing tones of her faith in the Constitution:

“I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision I have finally been included in ‘We the people.’”

Explaining  What are implied powers?

Civics  The Bill of Rights guarantees certain basic rights to all Americans. Select one of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights (see page 221) and research its history. Present your findings in a one-page essay.
The Federal Government

Guide to Reading

Main Idea
The government of the United States has three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch.

Key Terms
appropriate, impeach, constituents

Read to Learn
• the goals of the three branches of the government.
• the powers of the three branches of the government.

The Legislative Branch

Congress, the legislative branch of the government, makes the nation’s laws. It also has the power to “lay and collect taxes” and to declare war. Congress has two houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The House and Senate
Today the House of Representatives has 435 voting members and five nonvoting delegates from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. The number of representatives from each state is determined by the state’s population. Representatives, who must be at least 25 years old, serve two-year terms.

The Senate consists of 100 senators, two from each state. Senators, who must be at least 30 years old, serve six-year terms. The senators’ terms are staggered, which means that one-third of the Senate seats come up for election every two years.

The Role of Congress
Congress has two primary functions: to make the nation’s laws and to control government spending. The government cannot spend any money unless Congress appropriates, or sets aside, funds. All tax and spending bills must originate in the House of Representatives and gain approval in both the House and the Senate before moving on to the president for signature.

Congress also serves as a watchdog over the executive branch, monitoring its actions and investigating possible abuses of power. The House of Representatives can impeach, or bring formal charges against, any federal official it suspects of wrongdoing or misconduct. If an official is impeached, the Senate acts as a court and tries the accused official. Officials who are found guilty may be removed from office.

The Senate also holds certain special powers. Only the Senate can ratify treaties made by the president and confirm presidential appointments of federal officials, such as department heads, ambassadors, and federal judges.

All members of Congress have the responsibility of representing their constituents, the people of their home states and districts. As a constituent you can expect your senators and representatives to promote and protect your state’s interests as well as those of the nation.

Congress at Work
Thousands of bills, or proposed laws, are introduced in Congress every year. Because individual members of Congress
The American System of Checks and Balances

**Executive Branch**
- Proposes policy
- Carries out laws
-Makes treaties
- Can appoint judges
- Can declare acts of the president unconstitutional
- Can impeach judges
- Can reject appointment of judges
- Can veto legislation
- Can override veto
- Can impeach president
- Can reject presidential appointments and refuse to approve treaties
- Can veto legislation

**Judicial Branch**
- Interprets laws
- Can declare laws unconstitutional
- Can impeach judges
- Can reject appointment of judges

**Legislative Branch**
- Makes laws
- Can declare laws unconstitutional

"You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."
—James Madison, 1787

 cannot possibly study all these bills carefully, both houses use committees of selected members to evaluate proposed legislation.

**Standing committees** are permanent committees in both the House and the Senate that specialize in a particular topic, such as agriculture, commerce, or veterans’ affairs. These committees usually are broken down into **sub-committees** that focus on a particular aspect of a problem or issue.

The House and the Senate sometimes form temporary **select committees** to deal with issues requiring special attention. These committees meet only until they complete their task.

Occasionally the House and the Senate form **joint committees** with members from both houses. These committees meet to consider specific issues, such as the system of federal taxation. One type of joint committee, a **conference committee**, has a special function. If the House and the Senate pass different versions of the same bill, a conference committee tries to work out a compromise bill acceptable to both houses.

When it receives a bill, a committee can kill it by rejecting it outright, “pigeonhole” it by setting it aside without reviewing it, or prepare it for consideration by the full House or Senate. While preparing bills, committees hold public hearings at which citizens can present arguments and documents supporting or opposing the bills.

Once a bill is approved by a committee in either house of Congress, it is sent to the full Senate or House for debate. After debate the bill may be passed, rejected, or returned to committee for further changes.

When both houses pass a bill, the bill goes to the president. If the president approves the bill and signs it, it becomes law. If the president vetoes the bill, it does not become law,
unless Congress overrides (cancels) the presidential veto by a vote of two-thirds of the members in each house.

**Reading Check  Sequencing** List the basic steps of how a bill becomes a law.

## The Executive Branch

The executive branch of government includes the president, the vice president, and various executive offices, departments, and agencies. The executive branch carries out the laws that Congress passes.

**Chief Executive** The president plays a number of different roles in government, each of which has specific powers and responsibilities. These roles include the nation’s chief executive, chief diplomat, commander in chief, chief of state, and legislative leader.

As chief executive, the president is responsible for carrying out the nation’s laws. Many executive departments and agencies assist the president in this job.

**Chief Diplomat** As chief diplomat, the president directs foreign policy, appoints ambassadors, and negotiates treaties with other nations. Treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate before they go into effect.

**Commander in Chief** As commander in chief of the armed forces, the president can use the military to intervene or offer assistance in crises at home and around the world. The president cannot declare war; only Congress holds this power. The president can send troops to other parts of the world for up to 60 days but must notify Congress when doing so. The troops may remain longer only if Congress gives approval or declares war.
Chief of State  As chief of state, the president serves a symbolic role as the representative of all Americans. The president fulfills this role when receiving foreign ambassadors or heads of state, visiting foreign nations, or bestowing honors on Americans.

Legislative Leader  The president serves as a legislative leader by proposing laws to Congress and working to see that they are passed. In the annual State of the Union address, the president presents goals for legislation.

The Executive Branch at Work  Many executive offices, departments, and independent agencies help the president carry out and enforce the nation’s laws. The Executive Office of the President (EOP) is made up of individuals and agencies that directly assist the president. Presidents rely heavily on the EOP for advice and for gathering information.

The executive branch also includes 14 executive departments, each responsible for a different area of government. For example, the Department of State plans and carries out foreign policy, and the Department of the Interior manages and protects the nation’s public lands and natural resources. The heads, or secretaries, of these departments are members of the president’s cabinet, a group that helps the president make decisions and set government policy.

The independent agencies manage federal programs in many fields. These include aeronautics and space, banking, communications, farm credit, and trade. Government corporations are government agencies that are run like privately owned businesses. One government corporation whose services you may often use is the United States Postal Service.

Reading Check  Describing  What is the president’s cabinet?

The Judicial Branch

Article III of the Constitution called for the creation of a Supreme Court and “such inferior [lower] courts as Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” In 1789 Congress passed a Judiciary Act, which added a series of district courts to the federal court system. Congress added appeals courts, sometimes called circuit courts, in 1891 to ease the workload of the Supreme Court.

Lower Federal Courts  At the lowest level of the federal court system are the United States district courts. These courts consider criminal and civil cases that come under federal, rather than state, authority. The criminal cases include such offenses as kidnapping and federal tax evasion. Civil cases cover claims against the federal government and cases involving constitutional rights, such as free speech. There are 91 district courts in the nation, with at least one in every state.

The next level of federal courts, the appeals courts, reviews district court decisions in which the losing side has asked for a review of the verdict. If an appeals court disagrees with the lower court’s decision, it can either overturn the verdict or order a retrial. There are 14 appeals courts in the United States.
The Supreme Court stands at the top of the American legal system. Article III of the Constitution created the Supreme Court as one of three coequal branches of the national government, along with Congress and the president.

The Supreme Court is composed of nine justices: the chief justice of the United States and eight associate justices. Congress sets this number and has the power to change it. Over the years it has varied from 5 to 10, but it has been 9 since 1869.

The Constitution does not describe the duties of the justices. Instead, the duties have developed from laws, through tradition, and as the needs and circumstances of the nation have developed. The main duty of the justices is to hear and rule on cases. This duty involves them in three decision-making tasks: deciding which cases to hear from among the thousands appealed to the Court each year; deciding the case itself; and determining an explanation for the decision, called the Court’s opinion.

Shaping Public Policy The Supreme Court is both a political and a legal institution. It is a legal institution because it is responsible for settling disputes and interpreting the meaning of laws. The Court is a political institution because when it applies the law to specific disputes, it often determines what national policy will be. For example, when the Court rules that certain parts of the Social Security Act must apply to men and women equally, it is determining government policy.

Judicial Review As you have read, the Supreme Court’s power to examine the laws and actions of local, state, and national governments and to cancel them if they violate the Constitution is called judicial review. The Supreme Court first assumed the power of judicial review in the case of Marbury v. Madison (1803). Since then, the Court has invalidated, or canceled, nearly 200 provisions of federal law.

The Supreme Court may also review presidential policies. In the case of Ex parte Milligan (1866), the Court ruled President Lincoln’s suspension of certain civil rights during the Civil War was unconstitutional.

Judicial review of state laws and actions may have as much significance as the Court’s activities at the federal level. In Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), the Court held that laws requiring or permitting racially segregated schools in four states were unconstitutional. The Brown decision cleared the way for the end of segregated schools throughout the nation.

Describing How was the court system set up?

Checking for Understanding
1. Key Terms Use each of these terms in a complete sentence that helps explain its meaning: appropriate, impeach, constituents.
2. Reviewing Facts List three responsibilities of the president.
3. Government and Democracy Why is Congress’s power to appropriate money important?

Critical Thinking
4. Analyzing Information Which branch of government do you think is most powerful? Explain why you think so.
5. Analyzing Information Re-create the diagram below and provide five different kinds of Congressional committees.

Analyzing Visuals
6. Reading a Flowchart Refer to the flowchart on page 225. What do committees do to a bill?

Interdisciplinary Activity
Current Events Research in newspapers and news magazines about bills that are being debated in Congress. Find out what the bill will do if it is passed. Write a one-page paper about the bill and what has happened to it as it has gone through Congress.
Main Idea
Citizens of the United States have both rights and responsibilities.

Key Terms
due process of law, citizen, naturalization

Read to Learn
• where the rights of citizens come from.
• the rights and responsibilities of United States citizens.

The Rights of American Citizens

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

These words from the Declaration of Independence continue to inspire Americans. They have encouraged Americans to pursue the ideals expressed in the Declaration and to create a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that protect these rights. The rights of Americans fall into three broad categories: the right to be protected from unfair actions of the government, to have equal treatment under the law, and to have basic freedoms.

Due Process The Fifth Amendment states that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Due process of law means that the government must follow procedures established by law and guaranteed by the Constitution, treating all people according to these principles.

Equal Protection All Americans, regardless of race, religion, or political beliefs, have the right to be treated the same under the law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires every state to grant its citizens “equal protection of the laws.”

Basic Freedoms The basic freedoms involve the liberties outlined in the First Amendment—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition. In a democratic society, power exists in the hands of the people. Therefore, its citizens must be free to exchange ideas freely.

The First Amendment allows citizens to criticize the government, in speech or in the press, without fear of punishment. It also states that the government cannot endorse a religion, nor can it prohibit citizens from practicing a religion if they choose to do so. In addition, the Ninth Amendment states that the rights of Americans are not limited to those mentioned in the Constitution. This has allowed basic freedoms to expand over the years through the passage of other amendments and laws. The Twenty-sixth Amendment, for example, extends the right to vote to American citizens 18 years of age.

Limits on Rights Our rights are not unlimited. The government can establish laws or rules to restrict certain standards to protect the health, safety, security, and moral standards of a community. Moreover, rights may be limited to prevent one person’s rights from interfering with the rights of others. The restrictions of rights, however, must be reasonable and must apply to everyone equally.

What is due process of law?
Citizen Participation

A citizen is a person who owes loyalty to and is entitled to the protection of a state or nation. How do you become an American citizen? Generally, citizenship is granted to anyone born within the borders of the United States. Citizenship is also granted to anyone born outside the United States if one parent is a United States citizen. A person of foreign birth can also become a citizen through the process of naturalization.

To qualify, applicants must be at least 18 years old. They must have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence and have lived in the United States for at least five years. They must possess good moral character and accept the principles of the Constitution. Applicants must also understand English and demonstrate an understanding of the history and principles of the government of the United States. Before being admitted to citizenship, applicants must be willing to give up any foreign allegiance and must promise to obey the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

As citizens of the United States, we are expected to carry out certain duties and responsibilities. Duties are things we are required to do by law. Responsibilities are things we should do. Fulfilling both our duties and our responsibilities helps ensure that we have a good government and that we continue to enjoy our rights.

Duties One of the duties of all Americans is to obey the law. Laws serve three important functions. They help maintain order; they protect the health, safety, and property of all citizens; and they make it possible for people to live together peacefully. If you disobey laws, for example, you endanger others and interfere with the smooth functioning of society. If you believe a law needs to be changed, you can work through your elected representatives to improve it.

Americans also have a duty to pay taxes. The government uses tax money to defend the nation, provide health insurance for people over 65, and build roads and bridges. Americans benefit from services provided by the government.

Another duty of citizens is to defend the nation. All males aged 18 and older must register with the government in case they are needed for military service. The nation no longer has a draft, or required military service, but a war could make the draft necessary again.

The Constitution guarantees all Americans the right to a trial by a jury of their peers (equals). For this reason you should be prepared to serve on a jury when you become eligible at the age of 18. Having a large group of jurors on hand is necessary to guarantee the right to a fair and speedy trial. You also have a duty to serve as a witness at a trial if called to do so.

Responsibilities The responsibilities of citizens are not as clear-cut as their duties. Because responsibilities are voluntary, people are not arrested or punished if they do not fulfill these obligations. The quality of our government and of our lives will diminish, however, if our responsibilities are not carried out.

Flag Etiquette

- The flag should be raised and lowered by hand and displayed only from sunrise to sunset. On special occasions, it may be displayed at night.
- The flag may be displayed on all days, weather permitting, particularly on national and state holidays and on historic and special occasions.
- No flag should be flown above the American flag or to the right of it at the same height.
- The flag may be flown at half-mast to mourn the death of public officials.
- The flag should never touch the ground or floor beneath it.
- The flag may be flown upside down only to signal distress.
- When the flag becomes old and tattered, it should be destroyed by burning. According to an approved custom, the Union (the white stars on the blue field) is first cut from the flag; then the two pieces, which no longer form a flag, are burned.
Keep in mind that government exists to serve you. Therefore, one of your responsibilities as a citizen is to know what the government is doing and to voice your opinion when you feel strongly about something the government has done or has failed to do. When the government learns that most people favor or oppose an action, it usually follows their wishes.

You also need to be informed about your rights and to exercise them when necessary. Knowing your rights helps preserve them. Other responsibilities include respecting diversity, accepting responsibility for your actions, and supporting your family.

**Vote, Vote, Vote!** Perhaps your most important responsibility as an American citizen will be to vote when you reach the age of 18. Voting allows you to participate in government and guide its direction. When you vote for people to represent you in government, you will be exercising your right of self-government. If you disapprove of the job your representatives are doing, it will be your responsibility to help elect other people in the next election. You can also let your representatives know how you feel about issues through letters, telephone calls, and petitions.

While not everyone holds public office, everyone can participate in government in other ways. Working on a political campaign, volunteering to help in a hospital or a library, and participating in a local park cleanup are all ways to take responsibility and to make a contribution to good government and a well-run community.

**Respecting Others’ Rights** To enjoy your rights to the fullest, you must be prepared to respect the rights of others. Respecting the rights of others also means respecting the rights of people with whom you disagree. Respecting and accepting others regardless of race, religion, beliefs, or other differences is essential in a democracy. All Americans are entitled to the same respect and good treatment.

**Identifying** What is naturalization?
Reviewing Key Terms

Write the key term that completes each sentence. Then write a sentence for each term not chosen.

1. A(n)_________ is a change to the Constitution.
2. Those powers that are suggested but not directly stated in the Constitution are called ______________.
3. ______________ is the Supreme Court’s power to review all congressional acts and executive actions.
4. Those powers mentioned specifically in the Constitution are called ______________.

Reviewing Key Facts

5. List the six goals of government stated in the Preamble.
6. How does one become a naturalized citizen?
7. Explain why the amendment process is so difficult.
8. Explain why responsible citizenship is important. Provide examples of responsible citizenship.
9. How does the Constitution protect individual rights?
10. Summarize the basic freedoms outlined in the First Amendment.

Critical Thinking

11. Analyzing Information Analyze how limited government, republicanism, and popular sovereignty are important parts of the Constitution.
12. Identifying Options Describe five possible ways a person can fulfill his or her responsibilities in society and at home.
13. Comparing Some people argue that there should be a limit on the number of terms a senator or representative can serve. What are some of the advantages of the present system, which does not limit these terms? What are some of the disadvantages?
14. Predicting Consequences Re-create the diagram below and predict what might have happened to the U.S. if the Framers had not provided for a system of checks and balances.

No system of checks and balances

Citizenship Cooperative Activity

15. Examining Citizens’ Rights Working with a partner, choose one of the following rights and trace its historical development in the United States from the time the Constitution was ratified to the present:
   - suffrage
   - freedom of speech
   - freedom of religion
   - equal protection of law

16. Civic Planning Constitutions provide a plan for organizing and operating governments. What plan provides the rules for your local government? Contact a local government official to find out about the basic plan of your city or town. Share your findings with the class.

Alternative Assessment

17. Portfolio Writing Activity Part of your responsibility as an American citizen is to be informed about what the government is doing and to voice your opinion about its actions. Compose a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. In your letter, express your opinion about an issue in your community.

Standardized Test Practice

Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.

Under the Constitution, the president chooses judges to serve on the Supreme Court, but each choice must be approved by the Senate. This is an example of what principle of government?

A Checks and balances
B Federalism
C Separation of powers
D Judicial Review

Test-Taking Tip:

What do you think would happen if the president could choose all judges without anyone else’s approval? The writers of the Constitution wanted to make sure that none of the three branches of government became too powerful. Which answer shows this idea?