

From Articles to Amendments: A study of the U.S. Constitution

Use the weblinks provided to answer the following questions:

The Preamble

What six reasons did the founding fathers give as the purpose for establishing the Constitution?

Article I...Legislative Branch

The United States has a bicameral (two-house) legislature. The two houses of Congress are the House of Representatives and the Senate .

1. How many members make up each house?
2. What is the basis for the membership number of each house?
3. What are the qualifications to be a U.S. Representative?
4. What is the term of this office?
5. What are the qualifications to be a U.S. Senator?
6. What is the term of this office?

7. What fraction of Senators are chosen every second year and why?

8. What is the main function of Congress?

9. What powers are delegated to Congress?

10. What powers are forbidden to Congress?

11. What duties are reserved for the House of Representatives?

12. What duties are reserved for the Senate?

13. What are two names given to Article I, Section 8, paragraph 18 ?

14. Why is this paragraph so important?
15. Describe *ex post facto* and why such a law is forbidden from being passed.
16. Describe the purpose of a *writ of habeas corpus* and give a time in our nation's history that the privilege was suspended.
17. The regular session of Congress begins on what day?
18. A majority of each house must be present in order to conduct business. What is this majority called?
19. How many members of each house does that represent?

Understand the process of a Bill becoming a Law .

1. Download and complete the flowchart showing how a bill becomes a law.
2. How many days does the President have to act on a bill?
3. What happens if the President has not signed a bill within that timeframe?
4. What is a "pocket veto"?
5. Where does a vetoed bill go first after the President vetoes it?
6. How large of a majority is need to override a presidential veto?
7. Participate in the Mock Congress activity available online.

Know your leaders.

1. Who are the current House majority leader and whip ?
2. Who are the current House minority leader and whip?
3. Who is the current Speaker of the House?
4. In what Congressional District do you live and who is your U.S. Representative?
5. Who is the President of the Senate ?
6. Who is the President *Pro Tempore* of the Senate ?
7. Who are the current Senate Majority leader and whip?
8. Who are the current Senate Minority leader and whip?
9. Who are your Senators ?

Article II...Executive Branch

The President is the head of the Executive Branch.

1. What are the qualifications for President of the United States?
2. What is the term of office?
3. According to Article II, Congress may determine the time of choosing Electors; when are federal elections held?

4. What is the purpose of the electoral college ?

5. List nine duties are given to the President.

6. Name the various ways a President can be removed from office.

Understand support and succession.

1. Who are the President's Cabinet members?

2. List the order of succession should a vacancy in the Presidency occur.

Article III...Judicial Branch

The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the country.

1. How many judges sit on the court?

2. How does one become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice?

3. How long is the term of office?
4. Who are the current U.S. Supreme Court Justices ?
5. Who is the Chief Justice?
6. What are the names of other federal courts inferior to the highest court?
7. List the kinds of cases heard by federal courts.

Understand the System of Checks and Balances.

1. Study the chart provided online and be able to list controls one branch of government may exert over another.
2. An quiz covering checks and balances is available online.

Article IV...States' Rights

1. Explain the "full faith and credit clause" of Section 1.
2. What right is granted to each citizen in Section 2, paragraph 1?
3. What is extradition?
4. What one exception has occurred to Section 3 and why?

Article V...Amendment Process

The Constitution provides two ways to propose an amendment.

1. How large of a majority is necessary in both houses of Congress to pass a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution?
2. How many members of each house does that represent?
3. How large of a majority of states are necessary to ratify an amendment?
4. How many states does that represent?

Article VI...Debts, Supremacy, Oaths

1. Paragraph 2 is very important because it establishes the Constitution as the "supreme law of the land." What does that mean?
2. What kind of test can never be required of a person in order to serve in any office or public trust under the United States?

Article VII...Ratification

1. How many states ratified the Constitution?
2. When did the Constitution go into effect?

Amendments

1. What are the first ten amendments commonly called?
2. Summarize each amendment on another sheet of paper.
3. A quiz covering the amendments is available online.