



THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)
THE CONSTITUTION (1787)
THE BILL OF RIGHTS (1791)



Graeme Shaw		Sally Berry
Bob Kinney		Phil Johnson
Pam Coffield		Edie Croake
Susan Van Zant		Buddy Bates
Fran Blaskopf		Betsy Denison
Betsy Granse		Denise Griffiths
Karl White		Bill Blaskopf
Kirsten McLeod		Dick Granse
Peter Groschner		Patty Manras
Jill Englert		Alan Pearson
Carpinteria Community Church		

Jill Englert	Bob Jordan	Amherst Friends
Don Vyhnalek	Bev White	Rob Younge
Peggy Johnson		
Milken Friends		
Becca Truett		
Cate School Friends		Neighborhood Friends
		Gretchen Davis
		Cheryl Powers
		Pat Wilson
Family Members	Harry Manuras	Milken Friends
Roy Sioberg	Joy Taylor	Kent Englert

Rena VanKirk	Ruth Rudd	Scott McLeod
David Frick	SBCC Friends	Sue Westegaard
Kathie Groschner		Amy Orozco
Bill Wilson		Jill Carroll
Harry Manuras		Donna Jordan
Peter Groschner		Lucie Refsland
Ginger Bebee		Judy Goodbody
Ruth Rudd		Sandy Salmela
Steve Shepherd		Dick Dilloway
Lamarr Smith		Ronald Russo
Carolyn Kulik		Ralph Iisman

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY:



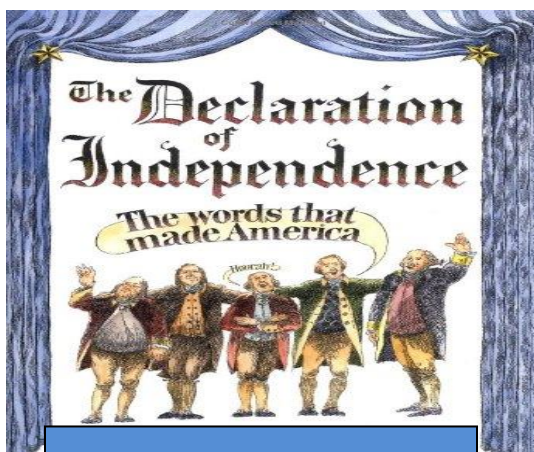
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THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)













The **Declaration of Independence** was not a legal document. Rather, it was designed to justify breaking away from the government of Great Britain and the rule of King George III. Thomas Jefferson was the principal drafter of the **Declaration**. There was no legal requirement to sign the document, but it was signed by representatives of the of the 13 *independent sovereign states*: New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

THE FIRST 13 STATES (as they exist today)	THE FIRST 13 STATES (1776) (The present state of Maine was part of Massachusetts)

The Declaration of Independence has 3 parts.

<p>1.</p> <p>A preamble: This became the most famous part of the document since it contains the statement displayed below. This has become a well-known statement on human rights</p> <p><i>"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."</i></p>	
	<p>2.</p> <p>A listing of 27 colonial grievances (indictments) against King George III. The three main grievances themes in the listings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individual rights; -Representation; -Taxation.
<p>3.</p> <p>A declaration of independence from Great Britain concluding that all political connections between the British Crown and the "Free and Independent States" of America should be totally dissolved.</p>	

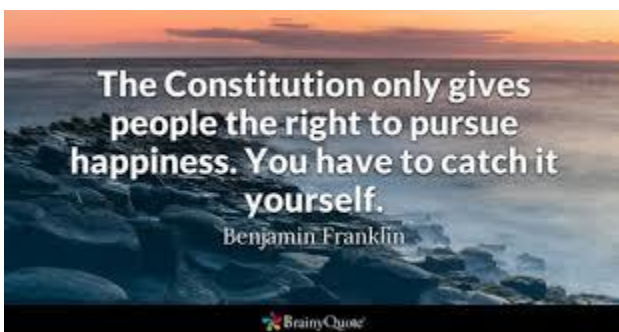
People instrumental in the creation of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

				
Thomas Jefferson	Roger Sherman	Benjamin Franklin	Robert Livingston	John Adams
There were 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence . (July 4, 1776)				

THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION (1787)



The **Constitution of the United States** is the supreme law of the United States. It is the source of all government powers but provides important limitations on the government that protect the fundamental rights of U.S. citizens.



The **Declaration of Independence** was designed to justify *breaking away* from a government.

The **Constitution** was designed to *establish* a government.

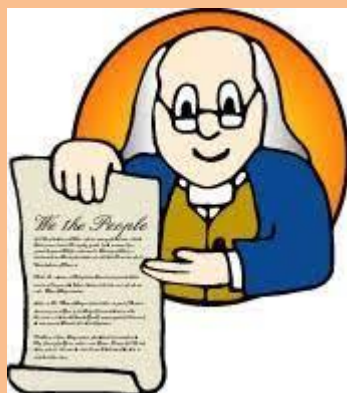


The **Constitution** was put into effect in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by representatives of the people of the first 13 states. When the document was ratified by these representatives it created a **union** of **sovereign states** and a **federal government** for that union.



In 1787, the Constitution had a **preamble** and seven main parts, called **articles**. The **Preamble** established no laws. Its purpose was to provide the reasons for creating the **Constitution**.

The Preamble:



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Seven Articles of the Constitution



ARTICLE ONE

Legislative power: Laws will be made by **Congress**. There are two parts to **Congress**: The **SENATE** and the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**. Each state has 2 members (senators) in the **SENATE**. The number of representatives in the **HOUSE** is determined by the population of the state.



In 2021:

California has 53 representatives and 2 senators.
Texas has 33 representatives and 2 senators.

Oklahoma has 5 representatives and 2 senators

Maine has 2 representatives and 2 senators.

Wyoming has 1 representative and 2 senators.

Alaska has 1 representative and 2 senators.

ARTICLE TWO

Executive power: The **President**, **Vice President** and executive officers will carry our laws made by Congress. The President is the **Commander-in-Chief** in charge of the U.S. military. The **President** can make treaties and appoint judges, ambassadors and other officers that must be approved by the Senate. The **President** can veto bills, but Congress can override the veto. The **Vice President** takes over as **President** if certain conditions arise.



ARTICLE THREE

Judicial power: There will be a federal court system in which the **Supreme Court** is the highest powered court in the United States. Congress determines the kinds of cases these courts can decide. It defines the crime of treason.



SIDE NOTE:

Articles one, two and three define the three branches of the U.S. Federal Government. Each branch has its own powers, including the responsibility of working with the other branches to protect the rights of citizens.



ARTICLE SIX

Federal power: The **Constitution** and the laws and treaties of the United States take preference over any other laws. Federal and state officers must swear to support the **Constitution**.

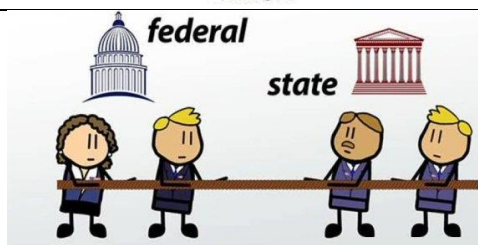


SEPARATION OF POWER State and Local Government



SIDE NOTE:

The United States has two major levels of government, national and state. This system, where more than one layer of government has jurisdiction over the same country, is called **federalism**. While often categorized as a **democracy**, the U.S. is more accurately defined as a **constitutional federal republic**. The **Constitution** is the supreme law. States can make laws on topics not specifically addressed in the **Constitution**. For instance, states can have differing laws relating to wills, inheritances and estates. The states cannot negotiate treaties with foreign countries. The federalist system emerged in the U.S. because the original 13 colonies had diverse populations with different needs.



ARTICLE SEVEN

Ratification: The Constitution shall become the official law of the existing 13 states when at least 9 states ratified the document.



On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the 9th state to ratify the Constitution and make it the official law of the United States.



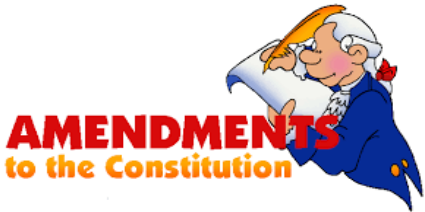
Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
September 17, 1787

Delegates from 12 of the 13 states signed the **Declaration of Independence**: **Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia.** (Rhode Island sent no delegates).

A total of 39 delegates signed the historical document, including the following:

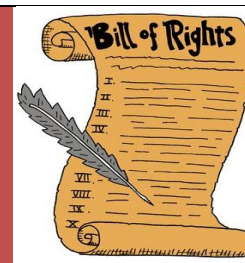
			
Roger Sherman	Alexander Hamilton	William Harrison	Benjamin Franklin
			
James Wilson	John Rutledge	James Madison	George Washington

The 27 Constitutional Amendments

	<p>When officially ratified in 1787, the Constitution had two parts, the Preamble and the Articles. Since then there have been 27 Amendments (additions) to the document. Hence, the three parts of the Constitution are now:</p> <p>(1) Preamble (2) Articles (3) Amendments.</p>
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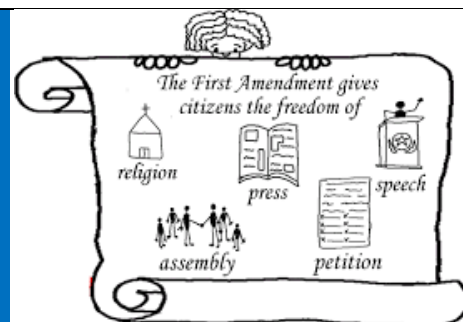
Since 1787, Congress has written 33 Amendments, but the states have ratified only 27 of them.


The first ten Amendments are called the **Bill of Rights**



THE FIRST AMENDMENT (1791)

Congress must protect freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition, and freedom of religion.



	<h2>THE SECOND AMENDMENT (1791)</h2> <p><i>“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”</i></p>
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THE THIRD AMENDMENT (1791)

The government cannot send soldiers to live in private homes without the permission of the owners.



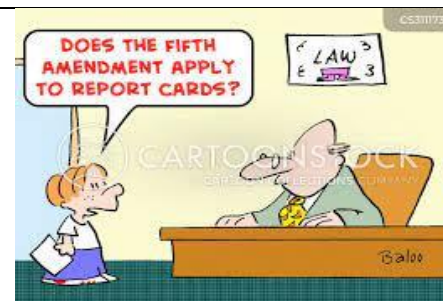
THE FOURTH AMENDMENT (1791)

Protects citizens from unreasonable search and seizure. The government cannot conduct searches without a warrant issued by a judge.



THE FIFTH AMENDMENT (1791)

Citizens cannot be subject to criminal and punishment without due process. A person found not guilty in a trial may not be put on trial again for the same crime. A person does not have to testify against himself in court.





THE SIXTH AMENDMENT (1791)

A person accused of a crime has a right to a speedy trial by a jury. Such a person has a right to legal representation and to question the witnesses against him.



THE SEVENTH AMENDMENT (1791)

Civil cases or lawsuits based on disagreement between people or business, have a right to be tried by a jury.

Seventh Amendment



• "People who have a disagreement about something worth more than \$20 have the right to a trial by a jury." (Viola 335)





THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT (1791)

The government cannot require excessive bail or fines, or any cruel and unusual punishments.



THE NINTH AMENDMENT (1791)

Acknowledges that the collection of rights listed in the **Constitution** is not exhaustive. People retain all rights not enumerated.



THE TENTH AMENDMENT (1791)

All powers not specified in the **Constitution** should be left up to the states or to the people.

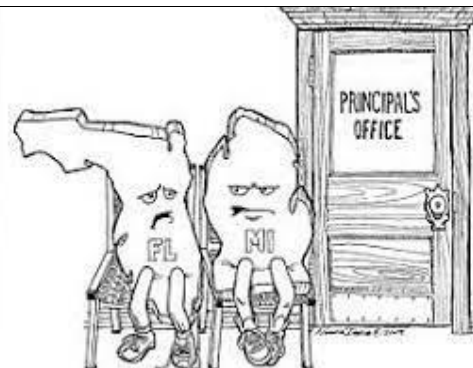
The first ten Amendments to the **Constitution**, all ratified in 1791, are known as the **BILL OF RIGHTS**.

Note: All ten Amendments limit the power of the federal government.



THE ELEVENTH AMENDMENT (1795)

Prohibits federal courts from hearing certain lawsuits against states. The Amendment has been interpreted to mean that certain suits based on federal law do not have to be heard by state courts.



12TH AMENDMENT

• Election of President and Vice President (1804)

Electors vote for President and Vice President on separate ballots.



THE TWELFTH AMENDMENT (1804)

Provided for separate Electoral College votes for the offices of President and Vice President.



THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT (1865)

Abolished slavery and involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime.



- Amendment 14 gives the rights of citizenship to all people born in the USA or naturalized.



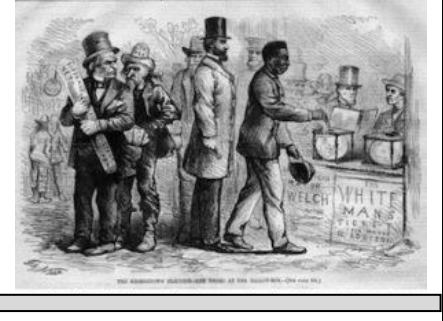
THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT (1868)

Every person born in the United States is a citizen. States must follow due process of the law before taking away the rights and property of any citizen.



THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT (1870)

A citizen's right to vote cannot be taken away because of race, color or previous condition of servitude.



THE SIXTEENTH AMENDMENT (1913)

Gives Congress the power to place and collect taxes on income to allow the federal government to support an army, enforce laws, build roads and bridges and carry out other important functions.



THE SEVENTEENTH AMENDMENT (1913)

This modified Article 1, Section 3 of the **Constitution** and provides for the election of senators by replacing the phrase “*chosen by the legislature*” with “*elected by the people.*” Basically, the people will elect senators. They won't be selected by state legislatures.

AMENDMENT XVII (Seventeenth-17)

DIRECT ELECTION OF SENATORS by the People





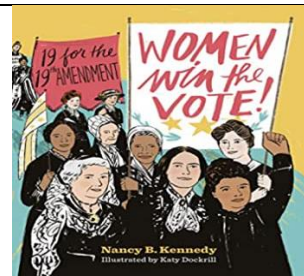
THE EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT (1919)


Prohibition: It is illegal to sell or manufacture alcoholic drinks in the United States. It did not prohibit the purchase or consumption of alcohol.




THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT (1920)


Gave women the right to vote. *“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”*




	<p>THE TWENTIETH AMENDMENT (1933)</p> <p>Moved the beginning and ending of the terms of the President and Vice President from March 4 to January 20 and of members of Congress from March 4 to January 3.</p>
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SIDE NOTE:

	<p>Sometimes referenced as the Lame Duck Amendment, the 20th reduced the “lame duck” period by which in which federal officials remain in office after an election.</p>
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<p>THE TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT (1933)</p> <p>This was a repeal of the 18th Amendment, beginning to an end the era of national prohibition in the United States.</p>	
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SIDE NOTE:

<p>The 21st is the only Constitutional Amendment that repealed a previous Amendment.</p>	
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	<p>THE TWENTY-SECOND AMENDMENT (1951)</p> <p>A person cannot be elected to the office of President more than two times. No person who has held the office of President for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of President more than once.</p>
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THE TWENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT (1961)

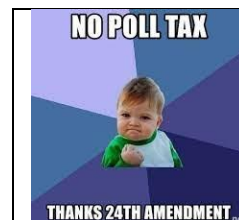
Gave United States citizens residing in the District of Columbia the right to vote for President and Vice President of the United States.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT (1964)

It is illegal to make anyone pay a tax to have the right to vote.

SIDE NOTE:



Prior to 1964, citizens in some states had to pay a fee, called a **poll tax**, to vote in a national election.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH AMENDMENT (1967)

Clarifies what happens if a President dies, resigns, or is not able to continue in the position of president. It also specifies what happens if a Vice President dies or resigns.



JFK



LBJ



26th Amendment:
18 year old citizens can vote.



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THE TWENTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT (1971)

States cannot discriminate among voters based on age. Citizens who are 18 years of age or older, are allowed to vote.

**THE TWENTY-SEVENTH AMENDMENT (1992)**

Prevents members of Congress from granting themselves pay raises during a current session. This means that another election would have to occur before any pay increases can take effect.



THE BILL OF RIGHTS (1791)

The **Bill of Rights** is the first ten Amendments to the **Constitution of the United States**. The fundamental freedoms of the American people were *alluded* to in the **Declaration of Independence**, *implicit* in the **Constitution**, and *enumerated* in the **Bill of Rights**.



The first 10 Amendments guarantee essential rights and civil liberties (freedom of religion, right to free speech, right to bear arms, trial by jury, and more).

They were not specifically included in the original **Constitution**.


Several states ratified the **Constitution** on the condition that a **bill of rights** would be swiftly added.

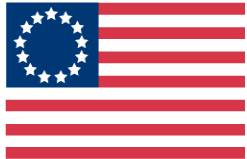
The first 10 Amendments were ratified in 1791.

A BRIEF SUMMARY

The **Declaration of Independence**, the **Constitution** and the **Bill of Rights** are remarkable documents. The **Declaration** and the **Bill of Rights** were designed to set limitations on government. The **Constitution** was designed to create an energetic government and also to constrain it. The documents are not perfect, nor were the people who created them. But in a brief span of about 250 years, they created the foundations for the greatest country in the world.



	<p>Americans should cherish these documents and our educational system should insure that our children learn about them.</p>
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“Americans are far more remarkable than we give ourselves credit for. We’ve been so busy damning ourselves for years. We’ve done it all, and yet we don’t take credit for it

If we opened the floodgate tomorrow, the whole world would pour in here. Now, if we’re as bad as we say we are, why are they coming here? To be corrupted, to be dumb, to be brutes – the way we describe ourselves to others?

No, they’re coming here because we’re excellent, because we offer freedom, because we offer opportunities.”

Ray Bradbury (1920-2012)

