

Tonica Grade School
Learning Lesson
Packet 1

Grade:
8th Social Studies

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8th Grade Social Studies

1. Students have been given several pages from our Federal Constitution booklets. They can read through these pages and complete the review questions. We will discuss each page when we return and continue to move through the “blue book”.
2. We will be preparing for the Constitution Exam the remainder of the school year. The exam will be the last week of school.
3. There are many websites that have great info and games concerning civics, geography and history (just search for them). Here are a couple good ones...
4. www.icivics.org
5. www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

The early colonists came to America to find freedom, but had to face many dangers. They became very independent and self-sufficient. At first, England paid little attention to the colonists in America, and the colonists were not strictly controlled by English law and government.

However, after the colonies grew and became important centers of trade, the British imposed restrictions and trade regulations on them. Some of these restrictions put England in a favorable position concerning trade with the colonies. The colonies objected vigorously.

The colonists also objected to the quartering of soldiers, taxation without representation in Parliament and lack of true self-government, among other issues.

People soon banded together and, at the urging of patriotic groups like the *Sons of Liberty*, refused to buy English goods.

Incidents like the *Boston Tea Party* in 1773 added fuel to the revolution. The Boston Tea Party occurred when patriots, disguised as Indians, threw tons of tea into Boston Harbor, because the colonists did not like tax policies of the British. When the British punished the Bostonians, all the colonists were inflamed. Conditions grew worse and, a year after the Boston Tea Party, Patrick Henry shouted:



Patrick Henry

"The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

Henry's speech became one of the best-known pre-revolutionary speeches.

First Continental Congress

Colonial leaders decided to call a meeting to discuss how to win their rights. They were more interested in fair treatment than in independence. The *First Continental Congress* met at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1774, with delegates from 12 of the 13 colonies. Georgia did not send representatives but agreed to support any plans made at the meeting. The delegates sent their complaints to the king, but British colonial policy did not change. Although they wanted their rights,



Carpenters' Hall

delegates did not dream they would soon have the responsibility of conducting a war. The colonial leaders also imposed an *embargo* (agreement prohibiting trade) on British trade and goods.

Second Continental Congress

The First Continental Congress adjourned in late October 1774, but agreed to convene the following May. By then the *American Revolution* had begun. In the spring of 1775, British soldiers were sent to Lexington, Massachusetts, to seize the guns and ammunition of the colonists and arrest colonial leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock. It was Paul Revere who warned the Minutemen to meet British soldiers at Lexington, where, an unidentified shot started the war.

The *Second Continental Congress* met a few weeks later in May 1775, again in Philadelphia. Many of the same 56 delegates who attended the first meeting were in attendance, including one from each of the 13 colonies. These delegates had first come hoping for peace, but soon, more and more leaders called for complete separation from Great Britain.

Many critical actions were discussed and decided. The Second Continental Congress assumed the powers of a central government. An army and a navy were organized, and money was issued. General George Washington was chosen to lead the army. The Second Continental Congress became the nation's first government and continued to meet until the Articles of Confederation took effect in 1781.

Six years after the fighting began in Lexington, the British surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown, Virginia. The Americans had won their fight for independence.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The only objection the colonists had toward British rule concerned trade regulations.
- ___ 2. When the First Continental Congress met, the members wanted to declare war against England.
- ___ 3. Patrick Henry did not want to see the war begin.
- ___ 4. The Sons of Liberty supported the colonists' cause.
- ___ 5. The English colonists were closely governed from the time of the earliest settlements.
- ___ 6. The Boston Tea Party occurred because of a tax dispute.
- ___ 7. Samuel Adams and John Hancock were colonial leaders.
- ___ 8. Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"
- ___ 9. The First Continental Congress met in 1774.
- ___ 10. Each of the 13 colonies had a representative at the Second Continental Congress.
- ___ 11. George Washington led the American Army in the Revolution.
- ___ 12. The British won the American Revolution.

From Revolution to Independence

On June 7, 1776, more than a year after the Revolution began, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced this resolution to the Second Continental Congress:

"That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

The resolution proposed independence for the American colonies. Following a spirited debate, the delegates agreed to the *Lee Resolution* on July 2. A couple of days later on July 4, 1776, the *Declaration of Independence* was signed. It gave various reasons why the colonists wanted to separate from England and announced the existence of a new nation.

The Declaration was written by Thomas Jefferson and a committee from the Second Continental Congress. While the words were mostly Thomas Jefferson's, the ideas were centuries old. The Declaration can be divided into three parts: a statement of principle concerning the rights of a man and why a revolution was necessary, a list of specific grievances against England's King George III, and a formal claim of independence. The most important part of the Declaration comes in its second paragraph:

"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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The Declaration is Read

On July 8, 1776, the *Liberty Bell* was rung in Philadelphia to call the people to the first public reading of the Declaration. For the safety of the signers, their names were not made public for six months. When they were revealed, many were seized by the British and thrown into prison, and their homes were burned. This small group had risked their lives for liberty.

Today, in Philadelphia, there stands a tablet that marks the place where Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration. After Congress had adopted the Declaration, John Dunlap printed copies of it. These prints are now called *Dunlap Broad-sides*. Twenty-four copies are known to exist, two of which are in the Library of Congress. The original copy was exhibited for many years until light and air threatened its existence. In 1921, it was transferred to the care of the Library of Congress, and in 1952, it was placed in the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. You may see it there, and you also may visit the meeting place of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

The important fact is not that the Americans had declared themselves independent, but that they had set down certain principles and beliefs that were new to governments: all men are created equal; all men have rights; and governments are subject to the will of the people.

The Declaration of Independence is not a constitution or form of government. It served to set up principles for a new government. Such principles were used in writing the United States Constitution.

Historical Note: When the Declaration of Independence was written, Jefferson wrote of "unalienable rights." Today, it is more common to use the word "inalienable" to mean the same thing. This important word is defined as rights that are unable to be taken away from you.

QUESTIONS

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- Which of the following is NOT an unalienable right of the Declaration?
 - life
 - liberty
 - education
 - pursuit of happiness
- The Declaration was written by:
 - Jefferson
 - Washington
 - Hamilton
 - Adams
- The Declaration was authorized by the:
 - Second Continental Congress
 - First Continental Congress
 - British King
 - New England Confederation
- The Declaration was signed and adopted in:
 - 1727
 - 1775
 - 1776
 - 1876
- The Declaration of Independence included:
 - statements concerning the rights of individuals
 - a list of specific grievances against England
 - a formal claim of independence from England
 - all of the above

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- The Declaration was written to start the American Revolution.
- The Second Continental Congress had the task of carrying out the American Revolution.
- The Declaration of Independence is not a constitution.
- The Declaration was written in Washington, D.C.
- The principles of the Declaration of Independence were used in writing the U.S. Constitution.
- The Declaration of Independence was signed after the U.S. Constitution was written.
- Richard Henry Lee wrote a resolution that would allow England more authority over the colonists.
- A delegate is a person that represents others, speaking and acting on their behalf.

In the months after the Declaration of Independence was signed, Congress wanted to continue to unite the former colonies. The first attempt at a national or federal government came in the form of the *Articles of Confederation*. The Articles, adopted by the Second Continental Congress in 1777, were not ratified by all the states until 1781.

The Articles of Confederation acted as the first constitution of the United States. The Articles were in use until the Constitution was signed in 1787. The Articles were weak because the colonists were reluctant to give much power to a central government. The colonies feared that a new central government might be no better than the English king had been. The states themselves had governments at this time, most with state constitutions.

When it became necessary to have a national or federal government for conducting the Revolutionary War, the states made the government weak. The Articles were so weak that the government could not even pay its bills. It did have limited powers to make war or peace, but other powers were lacking. Robert Morris stated that getting money from the states was like "preaching to the dead." To raise money, the central government could only ask the states for funds; it could not tax.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, the American government was in serious financial trouble. Soldiers who had served without pay were granted western land certificates instead of money, but most had to sell their certificates for money to live on. Farmers with large debts rebelled against the courts that were taking away their farms. An example of such a rebellion was the *Shays' Rebellion* by farmers in Massachusetts. Jails were crowded with debtors. States were taxing each other harmfully and arguing about land claims to the West. Tariff laws were needed for business and industry. Prices soared and credit disappeared. It became increasingly evident that the only solution was a stronger central government.

Weaknesses of the Articles

Listed below are weaknesses identified by the colonists:

- No national courts, only state courts.
- No power to tax.
- No real power to regulate commerce.
- All changes in the Articles had to be approved by all of the states.
- All important laws had to be approved by nine states.
- No real president, only a president of Congress who was like a chairman.

Civil Rights & the Articles of Confederation

Civil rights are those rights that are considered to be unquestionable; deserved by all people under all circumstances, especially without regard to race, creed, color or gender. These personal rights are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution.

The fight for civil rights didn't wait until the 1950s to happen. Some started as early as the Articles of Confederation! Paul Cuffee was a free black from Massachusetts. When he discovered he did not have the same property rights as whites, he refused to pay his taxes and was jailed. Cuffee later became a successful trader with his own fleet of ships and continued to fight for equal rights throughout his lifetime.

QUESTIONS

MATCH THE STATEMENT IN SECTION A WITH THE TERM IN SECTION B.

A

- ___ 1. Started by farmers in Massachusetts who were losing their farms.
- ___ 2. Form of government during the American Revolution.
- ___ 3. Had to approve important acts under the Articles.
- ___ 4. Fear of this was in the minds of many American colonists in the 1780s.
- ___ 5. This power was lacking in the Articles of Confederation.

B

- a. states
- b. Shays' Rebellion
- c. taxation
- d. strong central government
- e. Articles of Confederation

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a T or F in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The Articles of Confederation acted as the first U.S. Constitution.
- ___ 2. The Articles were weak because of the fear of a strong central government.
- ___ 3. Shays' Rebellion was carried out to support a weak central government.
- ___ 4. The Declaration of Independence was signed before the Articles of Confederation were written.
- ___ 5. The Articles were drawn up by the Second Continental Congress.
- ___ 6. Freedom from discrimination is considered an example of a civil right.

SHORT ANSWER

Explain what Morris meant by his statement "preaching to the dead." _____

In 1786, at Annapolis, Maryland, a meeting was held to discuss commerce problems. Five states attended. During the discussions, a future meeting was proposed. The hope was expressed that all states would attend. This future meeting, or convention, would be held in Philadelphia for the purpose of correcting faults in the Articles of Confederation. As we will learn, the outcome was much larger. They created the *Constitution of the United States*.

The Delegates

The convention began its work in May 1787 and finished in September of the same year. More than 70 men had been chosen as *delegates* by the various states, but only 55 attended in Philadelphia. A delegate is a person sent to a meeting or conference to represent the interests of the state. Average attendance each day was approximately 30 members. Rhode Island, distrustful of a powerful federal government, was the only one of the 13 original states to refuse to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

The men who attended the convention were of remarkable ability. From Virginia came George Washington, Edmond Randolph, and James Madison. New York sent Alexander Hamilton. Pennsylvania sent Benjamin Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, and James Wilson. From New Jersey were William Livingston and William Peterson. Other important delegates were: Elbridge Gerry and Rufus King, Massachusetts; Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman, Connecticut; John Dickinson, Delaware; and John Rutledge and Charles C. Pickney from South Carolina.

The delegates were men of wealth and prestige. Many of them had served in the Revolutionary War and the First and Second Continental Congresses. Many had served in their own state governments. Eight had been signers of the Declaration of Independence. Two would become presidents of the United States, and one would become vice president. Eighteen would become senators, and eight would become representatives.

The average age of the men attending the convention was 42, yet many were in their 30s. Ben Franklin was the oldest at 81. Not all of the leaders of the colonies consented to attend, however. Patrick Henry "smelt a rat" and would not attend. Later, he would become a bitter foe of the Constitution, accepting it only after the addition of the Bill of Rights. Samuel Adams and John Hancock also refused to attend, and Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine were in Europe.

The Convention at Work

The delegates met in Philadelphia in Independence Hall. Dirt had been spread on the cobblestone street outside the hall so noise from passing carriages would not disturb the meeting. George Washington was selected as president of the convention. Although the official purpose of the convention was to improve the Articles of Confederation, a decision was quickly reached

to replace the Articles with a new constitution. The delegates agreed on an early resolution:

"Resolved...that a national government ought to be established consisting of a Supreme, Legislative, Judiciary, and Executive."

The delegates often disagreed on proposals. However, they all agreed that the new government had to be strong enough to rule the entire nation. Lessons learned under the Articles were put into practice, and this new and improved constitution would:

1. make the Constitution the highest authority in the land;
2. provide for an effective central government;
3. protect the rights of the people by setting limits on governmental authority.

The third objective was the most difficult — creating a constitution that would achieve a balance between liberty and authority.

Slavery and the Constitution

How could a country like the United States, so interested in freedom, not outlaw slavery in 1781? Many northern states had outlawed slavery. But the delegates at the Constitutional Convention knew southern states would never accept the Constitution if it interfered with slavery. So to create the new government, the delegates did not outlaw slavery. Instead, they left the problem for another day and another war. Unfortunately, even with the other freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, slavery was not outlawed, but slavery's days were numbered.

Who was missing from the Convention?

Who was missing from the Constitutional Convention? No women, blacks, Indians or whites of modest or poor means attended the Constitutional Convention. This was not surprising since most of the above groups could not even vote at that time.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The Constitutional Convention was held in Philadelphia in 1787.
- ___ 2. The Annapolis Convention did not aid in the process of getting a new constitution written.
- ___ 3. There were 13 delegates to the convention.
- ___ 4. George Washington was the president of the Constitutional Convention.
- ___ 5. The official purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to write the Bill of Rights.
- ___ 6. The convention at Annapolis came before the Constitutional Convention.
- ___ 7. The building where the convention met is called Independence Hall.

Problems and Compromises

The first major difficulty that the convention had to face was the struggle for power between the small states and the large states. The *Virginia Plan*, submitted by James Madison, proposed two houses of Congress based on population. In that way, the large states would control the government. Also, these houses would appoint other important government officers, and, therefore, the large states would be in control of the entire government.

On the other hand, the small states proposed the *New Jersey Plan*, which would have made one house of Congress. This was also known as the *Small State Plan* and was presented at the Philadelphia Convention by William Paterson. All the states would be represented equally regardless of size. Other provisions would have made the new Constitution much like the Articles of Confederation.

A compromise was reached (sometimes referred to as the *Great or Connecticut Compromise*). The new government would have two houses of Congress. In the House of Representatives, each state would be represented according to population, satisfying the large states. In the Senate, each state would be represented equally, satisfying the small states.

Other compromises regarded slave trade, the term of the president, voting qualifications, and whether or not to count slaves as people when deciding how many representatives the state would get in the House of Representatives. The *Three-Fifths Compromise* decided that three-fifths of the slaves would count toward representation.

Delegate Distrust of the People

We can see that the delegates distrusted the people in a number of ways. For example, they decided that the president should be elected by *electors* from the states and not by the people as a whole. This was the *Electoral College*, which assigned electors to each state. Each state received as many electors as its total of senators and representatives in Congress. Later in U.S. history, these electors in the Electoral College would be required to vote for the presidential candidate that won the popular vote in their state. You will learn more about the Electoral College on Page 33.

What is the *popular vote*? It simply means the vote of the people. So when a candidate in your state wins the popular vote in your state, he or she simply won more votes of the people than his or her opponent. A vote by only certain people (like a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, for example) is not a direct vote of the people, and therefore, not the popular vote.

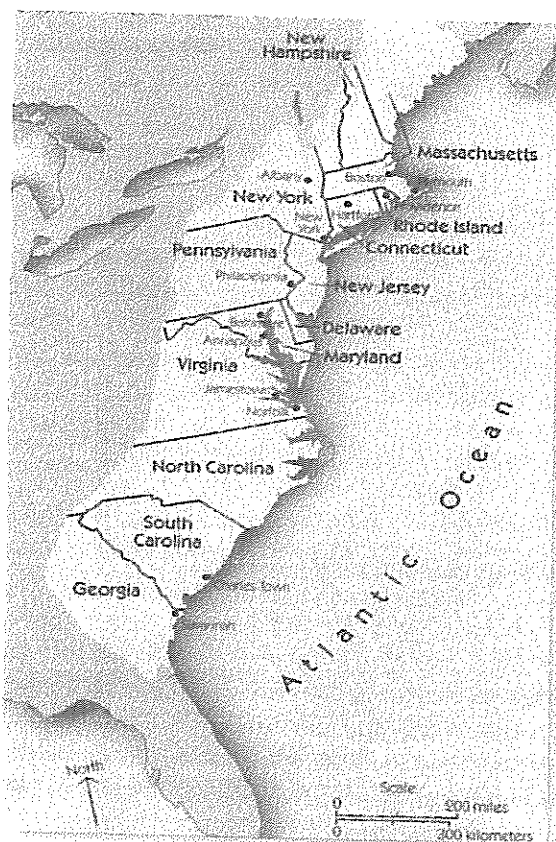
Another distrust of the people can be seen in the election of United States senators. The Constitutional Convention decided that senators would be elected by

state legislators, not the people themselves. However, later, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution changed that. The people in the states now elect their senators.

The lack of trust of the common people was due partly to there being very few representatives of the common man at the Constitutional Convention. Forty of the 55 delegates were wealthy enough to have loaned money to the government, 15 were slaveholders, and 14 held western land. None were small farmers or working men. And the champions of the common man, including Jefferson and Henry, were not present.

Many of the democratic features we know in our government today are features that have evolved since the Constitutional Convention. The writers of the Constitution may have had some distrust of democracy. However, they wrote a document that was flexible enough to provide the basis for orderly change. Most of these changes have made our country more democratic as the years have passed. If you need some examples of this additional democracy, think of how many more people today can vote, run for office, obtain an education, and exercise individual rights.

This is also the time for students to have a definition of *democracy*. Democracy is simply government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives.



These 13 colonies won their freedom in the Revolutionary War; however, they needed the Constitution to unite the states as one nation.

Ratification

It was decided that as soon as nine states approved the Constitution, it would go into effect. The convention adjourned September 17, 1787, and the fight for ratification began. The fight was a bitter one. The Constitution was supported by the *Federalists*. Leading Federalists Hamilton, Jay, and Madison published the *Federalist Papers*. These papers were very important in convincing people that the Constitution was of value. The *Anti-Federalists* fought against the Constitution, but were not successful.

On June 21, 1788, the Constitution took effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it. The remaining four states joined by 1790. The Federalists and Anti-Federalists continued their battle over the Constitution and became two separate political forces under the new government.

On January 7, 1789, the United States, having recently adopted its Constitution, held its first presidential election. Only white men who owned property voted. They choose electors who in turn voted for the candidates. As it did in 1789, the United States still uses the Electoral College system established by the U.S. Constitution.

Our First President

As expected, George Washington won the election and was sworn into office on April 30, 1789, as the first president of the United States and the "Father of Our Country." Washington was a Virginia landowner who had led the patriotic forces in the war against the British. His popularity was matched by his accomplishments. Washington was a delegate to both Continental Congresses. He was unanimously named both as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and as president of the Constitutional Convention that drafted the Constitution.

Washington finished first with 69 votes, followed by his fellow Federalist John Adams of Massachusetts, whose 34 votes propelled him into the vice presidency. (Prior to the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804, the candidate who received the most electoral votes became president while the runner-up became vice president.)

Citizenship and Becoming President

The members of the Constitutional Convention envisioned a president born in the good, old United States of America. In Article 2, Section 1, they wrote that "No person except a natural-born citizen... shall be eligible to the office of president." The convention delegates apparently did not want to take the chance of a foreign country sending someone to run for our highest political office. Immigrants can become citizens, thus becoming *naturalized* citizens. But naturalized citizens cannot become president; only natural-born citizens are eligible.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. Six states had to approve the Constitution before it was effective.
- ___ 2. The Federalists were against the Constitution.
- ___ 3. The authors of the Constitution wrote a document that was easily adapted to change.
- ___ 4. The small states wanted each state to have the same number of representatives.
- ___ 5. The Constitutional Convention adopted the Virginia Plan.
- ___ 6. Fortunately, the Constitution outlawed slavery.
- ___ 7. The Electoral College showed that the Constitutional Convention trusted the people.
- ___ 8. The New Jersey Plan suggested only one house of Congress.
- ___ 9. The New Jersey Plan favored the small states and the Virginia Plan favored the large states.
- ___ 10. Each state gets the same number of votes in the Electoral College.
- ___ 11. Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution includes a provision that only "natural-born" citizens are eligible to become president.
- ___ 12. Immigrants can become citizens.

MATCH THE PERSON. Write the number from the person's description in *Section A* in the space that matches the person in *Section B*.

A**B**

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1. First Vice President | ___ | a. Benjamin Franklin |
| 2. Submitted Virginia Plan | ___ | b. John Adams |
| 3. NY Delegate & Federalist | ___ | c. William Paterson |
| 4. Gave Small States Plan | ___ | d. Alexander Hamilton |
| 5. "Smelt a Rat" | ___ | e. James Madison |
| 6. Oldest Delegate at Convention | ___ | f. Patrick Henry |

SHORT ANSWER

1. Write a definition of *democracy*. _____

2. Number of the amendment that changed the way we elect U.S. senators. _____
3. Name three of the original 13 colonies. _____

4. The Constitutional Convention adjourned on what date? _____
5. How many states had to ratify the Constitution before it went into effect? _____

"I will tell you now what I do not like. (There is no) bill of rights, providing . . . what the people are entitled to against every government on earth." – Thomas Jefferson

The authors of the Constitution trusted Congress would make good and just laws, and the court system would see that every person was treated fairly. However, many people feared the new government would be too strong and, perhaps, take away individual freedom, just as the British government had done.

Therefore, during the fight to ratify the Constitution, the Federalists were obliged to propose a *bill of rights* that would safeguard the rights of the people. The Federalists promised this bill of rights would be added to the Constitution as soon as the new Congress met.

As the delegates gathered in May 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation, a Virginia delegate, George Mason, voiced his disappointment with the new constitutional proposals because "... there is no declaration of individual rights." Mason had earlier written the *Virginia Declaration of Rights*, and that declaration had influenced Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the first part of the Declaration of Independence. Ultimately, Mason's views were accepted by James Madison. Madison would come to be called the "Father of the Constitution" because of his negotiating power and suggestions of compromise.

In 1789, the new Congress took action when Madison proposed 15 amendments. In 1791, 10 of them were approved. They make up what we call the *Bill of Rights*, or the first 10 amendments.

These amendments provide certain guarantees that had not been written into the Constitution. Their purpose was to protect the rights of the people against any misuse of governmental powers. These amendments protect our rights in four general areas. The First Amendment guarantees personal freedom of expression and religion. The next three protect the security and privacy of every individual. Amendments five through eight are concerned with fair and equal treatment under the law. The last two make general statements guaranteeing that the national government will not take more power than the Constitution grants.

More specifically these first 10 amendments guaranteed fundamental freedoms, including:

- *freedom of religion, speech, and the press*
- *the right to assemble and petition the government*
- *the right to keep and bear arms*
- *freedom from unreasonable search and seizure*
- *that no person be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law*
- *the right to a fair and speedy trial*
- *the right to a trial by jury*
- *protection against excessive bail or unusual punishment*

These were the rights the colonists had fought for against the English king, and they did not intend to give them up.

People are guaranteed these freedoms as long as they do not take away the freedom of others. Even today these important freedoms can be threatened. Controversial subjects are under the protection of the Bill of Rights, such as religion, unpopular ideas, censorship, membership, and activity in unpopular organizations, and expressions of minority opinions. It is the job of the courts to interpret the Constitution and decide the rights of individuals.

It is human nature to believe strongly in one's beliefs and think those holding opposing views must be wrong. Many of us find opinions expressed by others offensive and distressing. We often wish others' opinions could be suppressed. However, we must remember, freedom to express only popular opinions is no freedom at all.

Especially in times of emergency, it is easy to believe that measures infringing upon individual rights can or should be taken "for the good of the country." But this attitude is dangerous to our country since it strikes at the very foundation of our democratic system. More and more rights could be taken away under the justification that it is "for the good of the country."

Before you decide "it doesn't matter" if the rights of someone you do not agree with are violated, stop to consider whether you are willing to risk the loss of your rights because other people disagree with you.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The first 10 amendments were adopted a month after the Constitution was approved.
- ___ 2. The first 10 amendments make up the Bill of Rights.
- ___ 3. Jefferson supported the idea of a bill of rights.
- ___ 4. The Bill of Rights applies to all levels of government.
- ___ 5. The Bill of Rights was proposed in an attempt to defeat the Constitution.
- ___ 6. The Bill of Rights does not give a person the right to criticize a government official.
- ___ 7. The Bill of Rights protects freedom of speech, even if the speech is unpopular.
- ___ 8. The right to a trial by jury is in the Bill of Rights.
- ___ 9. George Mason wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights.
- ___ 10. There are times when the courts must interpret the Constitution affecting someone's rights.
- ___ 11. Congress could choose one religion for the whole country.

Listed below is a sampling of the important events that led up to America's independence and the adoption of a new constitution. You will find the year and the significant event that happened during that time.

1763-1765 England decides on a program of taxation and control of the colonies. The American colonists begin organized protests against British rule. Patriotic groups such as the *Sons of Liberty* are formed. Laws such as the *Quartering Act*, *Stamp Act*, and *Sugar Act* anger the colonists, who are forced to pay unjust taxes and provide supplies to British troops.

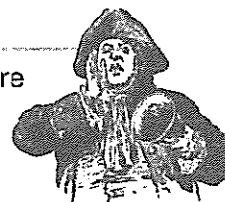
1770 Colonists reduce their boycott of British goods when they withdraw all of the *Townshend Act*, except the tax on tea. *Boston Massacre* occurs when an angry crowd of citizens surround a group of soldiers causing them to open fire.



1773 With the American colonists and merchants still angry over British tax policies, an uprising called the *Boston Tea Party* occurs.

1774 In response to the Boston Tea Party, the Parliament passes several acts to punish Massachusetts. Twelve of the 13 colonies name delegates to a congress, The First Continental Congress. On September 5th, they meet mainly to deal with Britain's actions.

1775 When the Americans learn the British plan to seize their guns and ammunition, Paul Revere is sent to alert the countryside and gather the *Minutemen*. An unidentified shot triggers the *Battle at Lexington*. This starts the American Revolution and also leads to another famous battle, *Bunker Hill*.



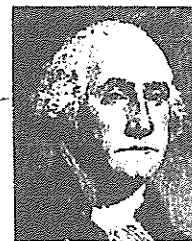
1776 On July 4th, The Second Continental Congress adopts the *Declaration of Independence* (written by Thomas Jefferson and a committee). A few days later the *Liberty Bell* is rung in Philadelphia to call the people to the first public reading of the Declaration.

1781 The *Articles of Confederation* are adopted by the states.

1787 On May 14th, The Constitutional Convention meets in Philadelphia and lasts until September 17th. Here the delegates reviewed and approved the Constitution.

1788 Nine states ratify the Constitution, and it is put into effect (the remaining four states will ratify by 1790). America prepares to operate under this new document.

1789 On March 4th, the new federal government is inaugurated in New York. In April, the first House of Representatives is organized. George Washington is elected the first president on April 6th. He is inaugurated on April 30th. On September 25th, the first 10 amendments (*Bill of Rights*) are adopted by Congress.



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The Minutemen helped the British at the Battle of Lexington.
- ___ 2. The Boston Tea Party occurred in 1773.
- ___ 3. The colonists especially liked the British Quartering Act and the Sugar Act.
- ___ 4. The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress.
- ___ 5. The Bill of Rights was adopted by Congress in 1789.

PUT THE EVENTS IN ORDER. Select the correct chronological order for the following events, with the first event being the oldest.

- 1. a. Boston Massacre b. Declaration of Independence
c. Washington becomes president ___
- 2. a. Articles of Confederation b. Boston Tea Party
c. The Constitution ratified by nine states ___
- 3. a. England decides on a program of taxation and control of the colonies b. Constitutional Convention
c. Battle of Bunker Hill ___
- 4. a. Paul Revere alerts colonists b. Stamp Act c. First House of Representatives organized ___
- 5. a. Bill of Rights adopted b. First Continental Congress is held c. Liberty Bell is rung ___

The authors of the Constitution could not have imagined that, in 200 years, people would be exploring outer space or going from coast to coast in a few hours. Nor could they have imagined all the changes in daily living that would occur. Today, we claim the protection of the Constitution, written when there were only a few million people in the United States. The Constitution now protects more than 320 million Americans. Almost everything about the United States has changed, except the Constitution. It is truly an outstanding document that has withstood the test of time.

Yet, the Constitution changes in some very important ways. In upcoming units, you will see how the Constitution is officially amended. Officials, who operate the government under the rules of the Constitution, constantly interpret its meaning. The Constitution allows a great deal of freedom to do this (and is referred to as a *living* document). It's a basic guide for government and safeguards our freedom. It's flexible and brief enough to allow for adjustments. For example, the Constitution sets up strict rules for making laws to ensure they are just and democratic. But, the Constitution also gives Congress the power to make laws. This provides our Congress with the ability to make laws in areas that did not even exist when the Constitution was written. Space exploration and the internet are two examples. Can you think of others?

Quotes on the Constitution

Two centuries of growth and unrivaled prosperity have proven the foresight of the 55 men who worked through the summer of 1787 to lay the foundation of American government. In the words of Archibald Cox, former solicitor general of the United States, "The original Constitution still serves us well despite the tremendous changes in every aspect of American life because the framers had the genius to say enough but not too much.... As the plan outlined in the Constitutional Convention succeeded, as the country grew and prospered both materially and in the realization of its ideals, the Constitution gained majesty and authority far greater than that of any individual or body of men."

Quotes from the Founding Father's give insight into the attitude and mindset of the time:

"Let our government be like that of the solar system. Let the general government be like the sun and the states the planets, repelled yet attracted, and the whole moving regularly and harmoniously in several orbits."
— John Dickinson

"The happy Union of these States is a wonder; their Constitution a miracle; their example of Liberty throughout the world."
— James Madison

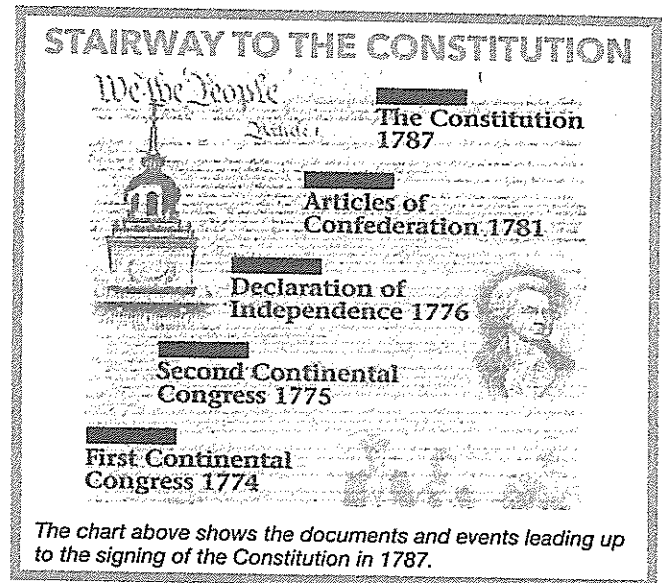
"Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."
— Ben Franklin

"The Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon."
— George Washington

Within the framework of the Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, we are governed by laws, treaties, and customs. Later, you will study judicial review and the amending process, helping you better understand how the Constitution is changed.

The Constitution has lasted because it:

- provides for a government by the people;
- provides for a government that can act when in danger;
- provides for a federal union where people retain certain rights and powers in their states;
- guarantees individual rights even when the individual's views are unpopular or in the minority;
- has preserved the Union;
- provides the leaders of our government an opportunity to interpret the Constitution and apply it to changing times;
- has provisions for orderly changes.



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a T or F in the space provided.

- ___ 1. Changing the interpretation of the Constitution is what makes our Constitution weak.
- ___ 2. The Constitution allows laws to be made for subjects that did not exist in 1787.
- ___ 3. The Constitution can be changed only through rebellion and revolution.
- ___ 4. The Articles of Confederation were written after the Declaration of Independence.
- ___ 5. Over 500 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention and signed the Constitution.

DISCUSSION OR REPORT TOPICS

1. Should a person be allowed to pass out notices on a street corner in your town if the notices are very unpopular with the people in your town? Why?
2. Should a person be allowed to give a street-corner speech in your town if he/she desires? Why?