America’s Legacy

THE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM

PRESENTED BY THE STUDENT GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM
Dear SGAP Students:

On behalf of the Student Governmental Affairs Program (SGAP), I am proud to introduce our updated edition of “America’s Legacy: Foundation of Freedom.”

This book includes some of our country’s most important founding documents and speeches, along with the keys to being a good American citizen. “America’s Legacy” was created for students like you in all 50 states.

The infographics in this book were originally designed for our partner Discovery Education, for whom SGAP provides civics education content.

In creating this book, it is our desire that readers would be better informed about our country’s heritage and the sacrifices made by its founders. We hope you enjoy learning from this book as much as we enjoyed compiling it.

Sincerely,

RANDEL D. FORD
President
Student Governmental Affairs Program (SGAP)
Land of Liberty

1: the quality or state of being free:
   a. freedom from arbitrary or despotic control
   b. the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges

The Pledge of Allegiance is a statement of loyalty to our country, the United States of America. Members of Congress say it together before congressional sessions begin and it’s often recited for governance around the world.

Heirs of Our American Heritage

Although Americans enjoy many freedoms, with these rights comes great responsibility.

If “We the People” expect to retain these rights, we must pay attention to what is going on in our country. And we must do our civic duty by voting, serving jury duty and obeying our laws.

If you want to make sure that our freedoms continue to exist, you must learn what our country’s founders thought about the meaning of liberty.

This experiment in democracy was the first of its kind at the time. Today, more than 240 years later, our country is viewed as the land of liberty by nations and peoples of the world.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President (1933-1945)

The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

The Founders on Freedom

Patrick Henry

“I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

Thomas Jefferson

“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned that (the) people preserve the spirit of resistance?”

Alexander Hamilton

“Real liberty is neither found in despotism or the extremes of democracy, but in moderate governments.”

George Washington

“Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.”

Benjamin Franklin

“They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

This is America’s legacy.

The U.S. Constitution is the oldest and shortest written constitution of any major government in the world. Its principles — including the rule of law, separation of powers and recognition of individual rights — serve as a model for governance around the world.
How to Be a Good American Citizen

Whether you are a natural-born or naturalized American citizen, you are living under a system of government based on fairness and freedom. It is based on the oldest written constitution in the world still in force.

The Freedoms Americans Enjoy	today were hard-won and must not be taken for granted. We must work for freedom and democracy to keep them working for us. By actively participating in your government at the national, state and local levels, you will help safeguard these freedoms.

Are you a true citizen of the United States, or just a fortunate resident of this great nation? Along with the rights and privileges that we enjoy come responsibilities.

Here are some of the ways you can be a good American citizen.

Voice Your Opinions

Stay informed on national and local news as well as issues in your own state. Decide where you stand on issues and voice your opinion to those in leadership positions. Contact your elected officials when there are issues that matter to you.

Even if you’re too young to vote, you represent the generation of the future; thus, your views matter. You can also write letters to your members of Congress and to the editors of your local newspapers.

To find contact information for federal, state and local elected officials and government agencies, visit usa.gov/agencies.

Serve Jury Duty

Being selected to serve on a jury is the other side of the right of trial by jury, one of our most powerful freedoms.

The framers of the Constitution were so concerned about unjust persecution and being convicted of crimes without due process that they addressed the right of trial by jury in the Constitution and in the Bill of Rights’ Sixth Amendment.

This is why it’s so important to go to jury duty if you receive a notice. Citizens who dodge this responsibility erode the foundation we have against injustice.

Vote in All Elections

The right to vote for our leadership is one of the greatest privileges granted to Americans by the Constitution.

It is grounded in the faith that the collective judgment of “We the People” will enable us to choose the candidates that reflect our will.

Our laws are made by members of Congress who are chosen by American voters. No one has more power than anyone else at the polls. Every vote counts.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment. It gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on issues that matter to you. Don’t assume that it won’t matter if you don’t vote. Elections are often won by slim margins.

Make your voice, and the voice of your generation, heard by voting in all elections. Visit vote.gov to get started.

As young Americans, you have an important responsibility, which is to become good citizens.

George W. Bush, President (2001-2009)

In addition to rights and benefits, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services emphasizes the responsibilities we have as citizens:

- Support and defend the Constitution
- Stay informed of the issues affecting your community
- Participate in the democratic process
- Respect and obey federal, state & local laws
- Respect the rights, beliefs & opinions of others
- Participate in your local community
- Pay income/other taxes honestly & on time
- Serve on a jury when called upon
- Defend the country if the need should arise

Think it Through

1. What rights do you think are most important?
2. Are there other rights that should be guaranteed to citizens?
3. Should all citizens have the same rights? If yes, why? If no, why not?
4. What actions do you take to be a responsible citizen of the United States?
Obey Our Laws
Our system of self-government protects people’s rights through the rule of law, which restricts the arbitrary use of power by limiting it to established laws. If you were ever accused of a crime, you would still have the right to a speedy trial by jury because of the Sixth Amendment. Thus, laws are put in place to ensure everyone is treated fairly and society functions as a whole. No one in this country is so important that they are above the law, or so unimportant that they can’t depend on the law for protection.

Support Education and Schools
A Massachusetts law enacted in 1647 founded the first system of public education in the American colonies. Today, every state has a compulsory education law and publicly controlled schools that are free and open to everyone.

Learning does not stop with any graduation or degree, but is a lifelong pursuit. Thus, education is now more important than ever. Our nation’s future depends on educated citizens who will commit to learning the skills that will lead us into the future.

Give Back
As citizens, each of us has an obligation to make our community a better place. Giving back means giving of your time and abilities; it means helping to paint an elderly person’s home, cleaning trash from a lake, coaching a local sports team or answering phones at a hotline number.

Honor the Past
The United States was founded by visionary leaders who created a great nation through their words and actions. With this in mind, on the pages that follow are some of the documents and speeches that have shaped who we are as a nation and which provide the blueprint for who we have the potential to become.

ELEME NTS OF CITIZENSHIP

Pay Taxes
It’s human nature to resent the government, even when it’s your elected government, taking its share of your income. But it’s also human nature to demand the conveniences, improvements and protections that our taxes fund.

Taxes pay for highways, police and fire protection, military forces, clear water and safe food. They make possible the public schools, libraries and parks.

Taxes represent the cost of our government doing business. They are determined by the people we elect to office, whom we give the right to allocate our money where it is needed.

Serve in the Military
Probably the greatest of all governmental powers is the power to declare war. Every American’s deepest hope is that we will never have to fight another war. But, if military conflicts arise, the military will keep us safe. Serve in the military and support our troops.

Respect Other People
The United States was founded by immigrants from other lands who were bound by shared American values. We do not have one particular culture, religion or heritage, but rather many that have been brought to our shores by immigrants from around the world.

Tolerance is not “putting up” with other people who are different from us. It’s the spirit of trying to understand them. Respect the dignity of every person you encounter, even if their views differ from yours.

Good Citizen Checklist
- Read the U.S. founding documents
- Register to vote, and vote in all elections
- Stay informed on national and local issues
- Voice your opinions to your elected officials
- Respect police officers and firefighters
- Volunteer for charitable causes
- Join the military or service organizations (e.g. Peace Corps)
- Protect the environment by recycling and conserving energy
- Be a good neighbor and respect diverse opinions

IMMIGRATION NATION

What is the U.S. Citizenship Test?
Tests an applicant’s ability to read, write and speak English.
Tests an applicant’s knowledge of U.S. History and U.S. Government.
Applicants have two attempts to pass the test.

The U.S. Citizenship Test is one of the final steps for Green Card holders to become naturalized U.S. citizens.
Composed of two main sections, the English test and the Civics test, perhaps the most well-known part of the naturalization process.

Origins of the Naturalization Civics Test
Naturalization exams from the 19th and early 20th centuries are nearly impossible to locate and varied widely.

Prior to 1906, naturalization was under the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts. In 1906, the Federal Bureau of Naturalization began to oversee/standardize naturalization proceedings.
Exams seem to have been random, with the degree of questioning depending on the applicants’ answers. Judges asked the questions in open court and candidates responded orally.

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The Melting Pot

The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants from around the world and adopting many of their customs and cuisines.

This fusion of nationalities, cultures and ethnicities has formed what it means to be American today. This is why the United States has been called a “melting pot.” The term is used to describe the United States’ integration of immigrants in the fabric of American culture.

All people in the United States were immigrants originally. Our country was founded by people who were foreign-born and immigrated to America as adults.

You have ancestors in your family tree who immigrated to the United States at some point, whether they traveled to America on the Mayflower in 1620, arrived by ship at New York City’s Ellis Island in the early 1900s, or just recently immigrated here. People immigrate to the United States for a variety of reasons. They may be driven by the desire for religious freedom or seek economic opportunities. Families may want to escape poverty or oppression, or create a better life for themselves. Immigrants benefit our country economically, politically and socially. Over time, these immigrants have merged into the “melting pot,” adopting American lifestyles while simultaneously contributing new customs, traditions and practices.

Today’s American culture is the result of the merging of diverse ethnicities and cultures over many years. Each new generation of immigrants helps shape what it means to be American.

Certificates of Citizenship and Naturalization

Both serve as proof of U.S. citizenship, but the eligibility requirements differ. A Certificate of Citizenship is available to people who were born abroad and derived U.S. citizenship through birth or adoption by a U.S. citizen parent while a Certificate of Naturalization is given to a lawful permanent resident.

Freedom Fact

If you’re a naturalized citizen, you chose to become one by going through the legal process and taking a test. If you’re a natural born citizen, you were either born in the U.S. or your parents were American citizens.

Immigration Speech

GIVEN ON NOV. 20, 2014 BY PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA (2009-2017)

“...My fellow Americans, we are and always will be a nation of immigrants. We were strangers once, too. And whether our forebears were strangers who crossed the Atlantic, or the Pacific, or the Rio Grande, we are here only because this country welcomed them in, and taught them that to be an American is about something more than what we look like, or what our last names are, or how we worship.

“What makes us Americans is our shared commitment to an ideal that all of us are created equal, and all of us have the chance to make of our lives what we will.

“That’s the country our parents and grandparents and generations before them built for us. That’s the tradition we must uphold. That’s the legacy we must leave for those who are yet to come.”

Immigration Nation

A History of Immigration in America

America has a rich tradition of immigration. This chart represents immigrants as a percentage of the US population through history. Let’s take a look at the trends, major influences, and pivotal decisions that helped shape our country’s demographics.

Think it Through

1. Why do you think Mexico has the highest rate of immigration to America?
2. What is the most surprising statistic you see on this graphic? Why?
3. How does the number of family visas compare to the number of worker visas each year? Why do you think some policy experts might disagree about this balance?
The separation of powers the founders built into the Constitution was purely an American invention. It was even achieved symbolically in the Constitution by describing each branch in a separate article of the document.

Three Branches of Government

The framers of the Constitution gave more space to the legislative, or lawmaking, branch of the government than to the other two branches combined because they expected the greater power to lie with Congress.

Article I of the Constitution specifies the two separate legislative bodies that make up Congress — the House of Representatives and the Senate.

How the House and Senate Differ

Although they are considered equal, the two chambers differ in a number of ways, including size and rules, terms of office, base of representation, requirements of office and special powers under the Constitution.

The House of Representatives has 435 members, or one elected from each congressional district. The Senate has 100 members, or two elected from each state.

The House is presided over by the Speaker of the House, who is nominated by the majority political party in that chamber. The vice president of the United States presides over the Senate. Because of its larger size, the House has stricter rules than the Senate.

Members of the House are elected to two-year terms of office. Since representatives must seek reelection much more frequently than senators, they pay especially close attention to the opinions of their constituents or the people in the districts they represent.

Senators are elected to six-year terms, and the Constitution requires one-third of the Senate to be elected every two years.

The Senate has special responsibility for the approval of treaties with foreign countries. This gives the Senate more influence in foreign policy matters. Candidates nominated by the president for the cabinet and federal judges require approval by the Senate.

However, all bills for raising revenue must originate in the House. Further, the House has the sole power of impeachment.

How Congress Checks Power

Congress can check the president by:

• Refusing to pass a bill the president wants
• Passing a law over the president’s veto
• Using impeachment powers to remove the president from office
• Refusing to approve a presidential appointment (Senate only)
• Refusing to ratify a treaty the president has signed (Senate only)

Congress can check the federal courts by:

• Changing the number and jurisdiction of the lower courts
• Using impeachment powers to remove a judge from office
• Refusing to approve a person nominated to be a judge

Committee Consideration of Bills

Except for bills concerning revenue, bills may be introduced in either chamber. They are then referred to a committee, where much of the important work of the Congress occurs. Each committee has its own specialty such as agriculture, health, taxation, energy or education.

The committees distribute bills to even more specialized subcommittees. Since committees have limited time, only a small percentage of bills referred to them are addressed. Many bills simply die in committee.

If a bill is of particular importance, the committee will usually schedule hearings to gather information about it and listen to the opinions of those who favor or oppose it.

Only if the committee votes to report (approve) the bill will it be scheduled for consideration by the chamber’s full membership.

Floor Consideration of Bills

On the floor of the chamber, a bill is subject to debate, and amendments to it may be made or it may be returned to the committee. If passed in one chamber, the bill must then be sent to the other chamber, where the entire process begins again.

Because a bill will rarely pass both chambers of Congress in the same form, a conference committee is selected to work out differences between the Senate and House versions. Only then can the legislation be sent to the president, who must sign it into law or it can become law.

If the president vetoes (disapproves) a bill, it requires a two-thirds majority vote of members present in both the House and Senate for passage.

Our Government of ‘We the People’ by the Numbers

**535**
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (Legislative Branch)
100 serve in the U.S. Senate and 435 serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

**1**
PRESIDENT (Executive Branch)
The Cabinet includes the vice president and the heads of 15 executive departments.

**9**
SUPREME COURT JUSTICES (Judicial Branch)
The Supreme Court comprises 9 judges called justices; this branch also includes the lower court federal judges.

THE U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING IS THE HOME OF CONGRESS and the seat of the legislative branch. It sits atop Capitol Hill at the eastern end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Capitol forms the origin point for the District’s street-numbering system and four quadrants.

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In establishing the office of President of the United States, the founders had no precise models to follow. The earliest American executive, the colonial governor, had come to be regarded as the enemy of liberty, and the reigning British monarch, King George III, as a symbol of tyranny.

In developing the role of a new national executive, the founders were influenced by political writers such as John Locke, Montesquieu and Sir William Blackstone. All three theorists advocated a system with separate executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. Montesquieu also advocated for permitting each branch to exert “checks and balances” against the others.

The president is the chief executive of the United States. He develops federal policies, prepares national budgets, enforces federal laws, appoints officials and manages the executive branch. He also holds the title of chief of state, which means he is the country’s foremost representative. In this capacity, the president performs ceremonial duties and meets with leaders of foreign nations.

The president may also veto or reject legislation that he feels should not become law. His powers include nominating candidates for positions in his cabinet, Supreme Court justices, federal court justices and U.S. district attorneys. He also may pardon criminals.

Two of the most visible elements of the executive branch are the White House office staff and the president’s cabinet, which originated in the administration of George Washington. The millions of civilians and military personnel who work in the executive branch are called the president’s administration.

The presidency has proved adaptive to the changing needs of society. It is the president who has been the symbol of our nation — its hopes, fears, aspirations, disappointments and victories.

**Powers Of The President:**

- **Executive Branch**
  - Carries out laws
  - Heads of cabinet, Supreme Court justices
  - Managing the executive branch

- **Legislative Branch**
  - Makes laws
  - Congress: 100 senators, 435 representatives

- **Judicial Branch**
  - Evaluates laws
  - Supreme Court: 9 justices

**Role of the President**

- **Head of the President**
  - Head of government of the United States of America
  - Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces
  - Head of state — Represents the people and stands for the highest values and ideals of the country
  - Appoints the heads of more than 50 independent federal commissions
  - Holds the power either to sign legislation into law or to veto bills enacted by Congress
  - Execution and enforcement of the laws created by Congress
  - Unlimited power to extend pardons and clemencies for federal crimes, except in cases of impeachment
  - Inherent powers: powers inferred from the Constitution
  - Legislative powers: outlines the administration’s legislative agenda
  - Appointment powers: selects many people to serve the government
  - Treaty power: negotiates treaties with other nations

**Think it Through**

1. What do you think might happen if checks and balances within our government didn’t exist?
2. What would happen if the President was the only person in power?
3. How would you change the U.S. government’s structure of the three branches of government?
The Judicial Branch

Congress established the federal court system in the Judiciary Act of 1789. Article III of the Constitution says little more than that the nation’s judicial power should be in the hands of a Supreme Court and any such lower courts Congress may create. Details of the court’s organization and work are left largely to Congress.

The highest court in the nation is the United States Supreme Court. Its basic duty is to determine whether federal, state and local governments are acting according to the Constitution.

The Supreme Court does its job by deciding specific legal cases on the basis of established legal rules. Much of its work involves rules that are laid down in the Constitution. These rules are stated in general terms, and the Supreme Court must determine their meaning and apply them to the cases it decides.

Membership in the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has nine members—a chief justice and eight associate justices. The number is set by the U.S. Congress and has changed through the years.

The Constitution sets no qualifications for justices but says they shall be appointed by the president, with the advice and consent of the Senate. All justices have legal experience, and most have been prominent judges, lawyers, law professors or government officials.

Once appointed, justices may remain in office for life. A justice can only be removed through impeachment for corruption or other abuses of office, but that has never occurred.

There are many traditions observed by the justices. For example, they wear black robes when they are in court, and white quill pens are still placed on counsel tables each day that the court is in session.

The annual term of the court begins the first Monday in October and usually ends in June.

The justices also have a special way of greeting each other called a “conference handshake.” When they first come into the court, each justice shakes hands with each of the other eight members.

Justices are given seats in the court according to how long they have served. The chief justice sits in the center chair. The senior associate justice sits to his right, the second senior associate to his left and so on according to seniority.

A Lifetime of Law: The Process of Supreme Court Appointments

Article III of the Constitution establishes the Judicial Branch of our government, represented by the Supreme Court. The structure of the court is left to Congress — there have been as few as six members, but since 1869 we’ve held to the standard of nine justices, including a chief justice. All justices are nominated by the president, confirmed by a majority vote in the Senate, and hold their offices for life.

The Process of Supreme Court Appointments

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How the Courts Check Power

- Check Congress by declaring a law unconstitutional
- Check the president by declaring his or her subordinates’ actions to be unconstitutional or not authorized by law

A moderate interpretation of a constitutional text? Halfway between what it says and what we’d like it to say?

JUDGE ANTONIN SCALIA

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE (1986-2016)

One of the most important powers the Supreme Court has is the ability to declare laws unconstitutional, or invalid. This is known as the power of judicial review and it allows the Supreme Court to check the power of the other two branches of the federal government as well as that of the states’ governments.

A Supreme Court decision has great importance. Once it decides a constitutional question, all other courts throughout the United States are required to follow the decision in similar cases. In this way, the Supreme Court helps guarantee equal legal justice to all Americans.

Authority of the Supreme Court

The Constitution gives the Supreme Court two types of authority: original jurisdiction in cases affecting ambassadors or other representatives of foreign countries and in cases in which a state is one of the parties.

Most of the work of the Supreme Court comes from its appellate jurisdiction, which is its authority to confirm or reverse lower court decisions.

Supreme Court cases come from the federal courts of appeals and the highest state courts. Federal district court decisions are normally reviewed first by the courts of appeals, but in a few cases, the Supreme Court reviews the decisions of federal district courts. Cases are decided by majority vote. If a tie occurs, the lower court decision is left standing. The parties have no further appeal.

FREEDOM FACT

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On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was unanimously approved and officially adopted by representatives of the 13 colonies to the Continental Congress.

A MONTH EARLIER, in the third session of the Second Continental Congress, Richard Henry Lee proposed and John Adams seconded a resolution declaring the United Colonies free and independent states. A committee was appointed to draft a statement to the world presenting the colonists’ case for independence from Great Britain. The committee consisted of John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston and Thomas Jefferson. Except for minor alterations by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, this significant piece of our history was drafted initially by Thomas Jefferson.

Original Text of Declaration of Independence:

Founding Fathers

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.

- He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.
- He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.
- He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislature.
- He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to civil power.
- He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:
- For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
- For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:
- For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:
- For imposing taxes on us without our consent:
- For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:
- For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:
- For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:
- For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:
- For suspending our own legislature, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
- He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.
- He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
- He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.
- He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.
- He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an unquenchable destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

The painting “Declaration Of Independence,” by John Trumbull, depicts the five-man drafting committee of the Declaration of Independence presenting their work to the Congress. (L to R) pictured are: John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.
In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

**FOUNDERING FATHERS**

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the most humble terms: Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT

New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

Massachusetts: John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island: Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

Connecticut: Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

New York: William Floyd, Philips Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

New Jersey: Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

Pennsylvania: Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

Delaware: Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

Maryland: Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton


North Carolina: William Hooper, Joseph Hawnas, John Penn

South Carolina: Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

United States’ Independence Timeline

- **1775**: Revolutionary War begins (the 13 colonies revolt against King George/Great Britain)
- **1776**: Declaration of Independence is written and approved by the Continental Congress
- **1781**: Revolutionary War ends and the Continental Congress writes the Articles of Confederation
- **1783**: Britain recognizes the independence of the United States of America with the Treaty of Paris
- **1787**: Constitution is written at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia
- **1788**: Constitution is ratified by nine states and becomes the supreme law of the land
- **1789**: George Washington is elected as first president and first Congress meets in New York City (then the nation’s capital)
- **1791**: Bill of Rights (first 10 amendments) added to the Constitution
Before the Constitution was written in 1787, the 13 states that formed the United States were not truly united because our country was following the principles of the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union.

The Articles of Confederation formed a confederation of states with an extremely limited and weak central government. In a confederation, the vast majority of political power rests with the local governments, and the central government has very little power.

A guiding principle of the Articles was to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the states. This was nice in theory but in practice it was unworkable because each state thought of itself as its own little country. The federal government did not have much power.

Sovereignty of the States

Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government was essentially a "lame duck" government that had very little power or control. The federal government owed $42 million (more than $47 billion today) after the Revolutionary War but Congress did not have the authority to ask states to help pay the country's debts or tax the country's citizens.

Congress could declare war, but the states could refuse to send soldiers. The country did not have a common currency, nor did it have a chief executive (such as a president) to lead the way.

The Articles of Confederation's greatest weakness was that it had no direct origin in the people themselves; it recognized only state sovereignty. Therefore, each state had to collect its own taxes, issue currency and provide for its own militia.

Looking back, the Articles of Confederation was the nation's "baby step" toward adopting a more robust Constitution now in place. It would have been very difficult for our country to have created a stronger second constitution without learning from the mistakes of the first.

1. Visit goo.gl/U4VL99 to read the full test of the Articles of Confederation. Do you think the United States could have survived as a nation under this governing document? Why or why not?
2. What are two problems in the Articles of Confederation that made it a poor governing document?
3. Article 9 of the Articles of Confederation reads: "The United States in Congress assembled shall never engage in a war ... nor enter into any treaties or alliances, nor coin money, nor regulate the value thereof ... nor borrow money on the credit of the United States, nor appropriate money ... nor appoint a commander in chief of the army or navy, unless nine States assent [agree]." Why would it be difficult to have an effective government under this article?
4. Under the Articles of Confederation, the state governments were stronger than the national government. Do you think this would make governing difficult for the federal government? Why or why not?
George Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention. After a long struggle and many compromises, the resulting document was what we now know today as the United States Constitution.

At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention, it is said that Benjamin Franklin saw the symbol of a half sun on George Washington’s chair and said, “I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun.”

The Constitution was then referred to several states on Sept. 28, 1787 for ratification (approved). By June 21, 1788, the required nine out of the 13 states had ratified it. The new federal government was established at New York City, which was the nation’s capital before it became Washington, D.C., on April 30, 1789. On this day, George Washington delivered his first inaugural address to a joint session of Congress.

The newly elected president delivered the speech in a deep, low voice that revealed what one observer called “manifest embarrassment.” Washington had not sought the office of president and was humbled by the request to serve.

The framers of the Constitution wanted to come up with something to replace the Articles of Confederation, which did not provide needed powers for a central government.

Also, under the Articles of Confederation, the congress was a unicameral legislature with only one branch comprising congressmen appointed by state legislatures rather than elected by the people.

Because the Articles of Confederation did not establish a federal (national) government, the separate states were arguing amongst themselves. All this squabbling resulted in the decision to call together a meeting, which became known as the Constitutional Convention.

If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT (1789-1797)

Think it Through

1. Why do you think there was resistance to the U.S. Constitution?
2. The first three Articles of the Constitution are guidelines for the three branches of government to perform harmoniously. How would these three branches function without these guidelines?
3. Describe the role of the Framers. Where do you see this sort of organization in any clubs, teams or schools you are involved in?
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

The Constitution

PREAMBLE

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, Insure 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.

ARTICLE I

Section 1

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

Section 2

The House of Representatives shall consist of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty-five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Section 3

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote. Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one-third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies. No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen. The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided. The Senate shall choose their President, and also a President pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States. The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two-thirds of the Members present. Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States; but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

Section 4

The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

Section 5

Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a small Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide. Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member. Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal. Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section 6

The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place. No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such Time; and no Person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

FREEDOM FACT

The U.S. Constitution contains multiple spelling errors. However, the most glaring error is the spelling of “Pensylvania.” A delegate from that state left out one of the n’s when he signed. It’s even misspelled on the Liberty Bell.

FREEDOM FACT

The word democracy does not appear once in the Constitution. The United States is not a true democracy; it’s a republic. In a pure democracy, the people make decisions directly. In a republic, the people make decisions indirectly, via representatives.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

A bill is introduced in either the Senate or House.

The bill is referred to a Senate or House committee. If approved in committee, the bill is voted on by the entire chamber (Senate or House).

If the bill is approved by one chamber, it is then sent to the other chamber.

If approved by both chambers, the bill goes to the president. If the president vetoes the bill, it goes back to Congress.

Both chambers then have 3 choices:
1. Modify the bill to the president’s liking
2. Abandon the bill
3. Vote to override the president’s veto
Then & Now: Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution

In Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, clauses 14-16 establish that Congress is in charge of declaring war and providing training for the army and militia.

The word militia refers to an organized body of citizens enrolled for the Defense of the State, and with the Objections of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Section 8

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect T axes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States; To borrow Money on the credit of the United States; To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of such Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress; To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards and other needful Buildings; And to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years; To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces; To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officer, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress; To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards and other needful Buildings; And to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

Section 9

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person. The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it. No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken. No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State. No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another; nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time. No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

Section 10

No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attendant or ex post facto Law, or impair the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection Laws; and the net Produce of all duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Control of the Congress. No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Tax or Duty on Trotting Horses or Mules; keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 2

Section 1

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector. The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them. Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Section 2

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment. He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: But the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officer, as they think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them. Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Article 3 establishes the judicial branch (the courts) of the government.

ARTICLE 3

Section 1

The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them. Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Section 2

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them. Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Section 3

The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority; to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls; to all Case of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction; to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party; to Controversies between two or more States; between a State and Citizens of another State; in all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them. Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Section 4

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.
**UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION**

**Think It Through**

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

1. The United States Constitution is often called a "living document" because it was designed to be adapted by future generations through constitutional amendments. What are some other examples of how the founders built adaptability into the Constitution?

2. Some of the key concepts in the Constitution include limited government, checks and balances, federalism, and separation of powers. Analyze the Constitution to find examples of how each of these guiding themes and describe how they affect Americans today.

3. Why do you think the framers of the Constitution chose "We the People" as the first three words and deliberately wrote them in large lettering? What does this symbolize?

4. Do you think the separation of powers and system of checks and balances are effectively limiting the federal government today, as the framers originally intended? Why or why not?

5. What do you think were the main reasons the framers created the Constitution? What did they hope to accomplish? Were their goals met?

6. How do you think the framers of the Constitution and the framers of the Constitution today would influence our nation’s current political climate? Why or why not?

7. What are some ways in which the Constitution has changed over time? Why do you think these changes occurred? What impact did they have on the nation?

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**FREEDOM FACT**

The United States Constitution is the shortest governing document of any nation today, and contains only 7 articles and 27 amendments. It is also the oldest: Norway’s comes in second and was codified in 1814.

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**ARTICLE 4**

**Section 1**

Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State: And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

**Section 2**

The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States. A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice, and be found in another State, shall, on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime. No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered upon Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

**Section 3**

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress. The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

**Section 4**

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

**ARTICLE 5**

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

**ARTICLE 6**

All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation. This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, Any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

**ARTICLE 7**

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same. Done in Convention by the Unanimous Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States; and nothing in this Constitution Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

**ARTICLE 8**

The Congress shall have Power...
The Federalist Papers

The Federalist papers were a series of 85 essays urging the citizens of New York to ratify the new United States Constitution and explaining particular provisions of the Constitution in detail.

WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON, James Madison and John Jay, the Federalist essays originally appeared anonymously in New York newspapers in 1787 and 1788 under the pen name “Publius.” They were influential in getting the new United States Constitution ratified by all the states.

FREEDOM FACT
Of the three authors of the Federalist papers, John Jay contributed the least to the essays because he became very ill shortly after penning Nos. 2 through 5. He was only able to write one additional essay, Federalist No. 64.

The Federalist essays originally written to encourage people in the state of New York to support ratification of the U.S. Constitution, leaders in many states used the arguments developed in the essays to support ratification of the Constitution.

Visit goo.gl/ZVfQ0h to view all of the Federalist papers.

Insights into the Framers’ Intentions
Because Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were members of the Constitutional Convention, the Federalist papers are used to help understand the intentions of the Framers who drafted the Constitution.

Although the Federalist papers were originally written to encourage people in the state of New York to support ratification of the U.S. Constitution, leaders in many states used the arguments developed in the essays to support ratification of the Constitution.

Excerpts from Federalist No. 51

The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments

“Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself…”

“It is of great importance in a republic not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part…”

“Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit. In a society under the forms of which the stronger faction can readily unite and oppress the weaker, anarchy may as truly be said to reign as in a state of nature, where the weaker individual is not secured against the violence of the stronger; and as, in the latter state, even the stronger individuals are prompted, by the uncertainty of their condition, to submit to a government which may protect the weak as well as themselves…”

Critical-Thinking Questions

1. In Federalist No. 51, James Madison states, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.” What does this statement imply when it comes to creating a government? What words does the author use to answer this question? Now put those thoughts into your own words.

2. The authors of the Federalist papers — Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay — were nationalists who favored a strong central government with authority over the state governments. Yet Anti-Federalists feared the Constitution would encroach upon individual rights and liberty. If you were alive during the time before the Constitution was ratified, would you be a Federalist or Anti-Federalist? Why?

3. In Federalist No. 47, James Madison wrote, “The accumulation of all powers legislative, executive and judiciary in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.” Why do you think Madison believed a separation of powers was so necessary?
The Bill of Rights

During September 1789, the First Congress offered 12 constitutional amendments that protected individual rights and liberties. Ten of the 12 were quickly ratified (approved) by three-fourths of the states in 1791. These first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights.

First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Second Amendment
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.

The Second Amendment guarantees the right to “bear arms” or own guns.

Fourth Amendment
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The Fourth Amendment protects people from unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.

Third Amendment
No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

The Bill of Rights At a Glance: Amendments 1-10

- **First Amendment**: Freedom of religion, speech, press, petition and assembly.
- **Second Amendment**: The right to keep and bear arms (guns and other means of self-defense).
- **Third Amendment**: Prohibits soldiers from temporarily residing in private homes during peacetime without the permission of the owner.
- **Fourth Amendment**: Rights to due process of law and freedom from self-incrimination; prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.
- **Fifth Amendment**: Right to privacy, the Supreme Court has found that the Constitution implicitly grants a right to privacy against governmental intrusion from the First Amendment, Third Amendment, Fourth Amendment and Fifth Amendment.
- **Sixth Amendment**: In criminal cases, the right to a speedy trial with legal counsel; right to confront witnesses; right to know nature and cause of accusation.
- **Seventh Amendment**: In civil cases, right to a trial by jury.
- **Eighth Amendment**: Prohibits excessive bail, fines, and cruel and unusual punishment.
- **Ninth Amendment**: People have other rights, even if they are not all listed here in the Bill of Rights.
- **Tenth Amendment**: Powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved to the states.

Where Is the Right to Privacy in the Bill of Rights?

Although the Constitution does not explicitly include the right to privacy, the Supreme Court has found that the Constitution implicitly grants a right to privacy against governmental intrusion from the First Amendment, Third Amendment, Fourth Amendment and Fifth Amendment.

For example, the First Amendment allows the privacy of beliefs, the Third Amendment protects privacy of the home against any demands to be used to house soldiers, the Fourth Amendment protects the privacy of a person and his or her possessions from unreasonable searches, and the Fifth Amendment protects privacy of personal information through preventing self-incrimination.

Further, the Ninth Amendment says that the enumeration of certain rights as found in the Bill of Rights cannot deny other rights of the people. And the Fourteenth Amendment asserts that no state shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”
Fifth Amendment

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Sixth Amendment

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence.

Seventh Amendment

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Eighth Amendment

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Ninth Amendment

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Tenth Amendment

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse. 

THOMAS JEFFERSON, PRESIDENT (1801-1809)

THINK IT THROUGH

Critical-Thinking Questions

1. Three of the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights were a result of the English monarch's infringement on the colonists' basic rights. List and describe two of these amendments, and explain why the American colonists felt these amendments were necessary to be included in the Bill of Rights.

2. Choose two of the five freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment and describe the impact these freedoms have made on your personal life. Include specific examples to support your answer.

3. Read the sidebar (“Where is the Right to Privacy in the Bill of Rights?”) on the previous page. Though the Bill of Rights was penned in the eighteenth century, some believe we should interpret it to mean that citizens' digital privacy should be protected today. Do you agree? Why or why not?

4. Which amendments guarantee rights to people in criminal cases? Name each amendment and list the rights they are granted. Why do you think the founders made sure that those accused of a crime would be protected in the newly formed United States of America?

The Ninth Amendment says the rights of the people are not limited to just those rights listed in the Constitution.

Landmark Supreme Court Decisions

Freedom of Speech and of the Press

1919 SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES
The government can restrict freedom of speech if the speech creates a “clear and present danger” of violence or some other evil that the government has a right to prevent. 1989 TEXAS V. JOHNSON
The government cannot punish a person for burning the flag of the United States as part of a peaceful protest.

Rights of People Accused of Crime

1966 MIRANDA V. ARIZONA
An accused person must be informed of his or her constitutional rights, including rights to remain silent and to have the assistance of a lawyer before being questioned.

Rights of Women and Minority Groups

1857 DRED SCOTT V. SANDFORD
Blacks could not be U.S. citizens, and Congress could not prohibit slavery in the U.S. territories. The first part of this ruling was overturned in 1868 by the 14th Amendment. The second part was changed in 1865 by the 13th Amendment.

1954 BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA
Separate but equal facilities for blacks in public schools do not meet the constitutional requirement for equal protection under the law.

1973 ROE V. WADE
The states may not prohibit a woman’s right to have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy and may do so only under certain conditions in the second three months. The states may prohibit the abortion of a fetus that is capable of living outside the mother’s body.

1986 Meritor Savings Bank V. Vinson
Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or comments from a person in a position of power.
Eleventh Amendment  
Set judical limits
Passed by Congress March 4, 1794. Ratified February 7, 1795. Note: Article III, section 2, of the Constitution was modified by the Eleventh Amendment.

The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State.

Twelfth Amendment  
Established method for choosing President and Vice President
Passed by Congress December 9, 1803. Ratified June 15, 1804. Note: A portion of Article II, section 1 of the Constitution was superseded by the Twelfth Amendment.

The Electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate: —the President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; —The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. (And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President.)* The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

*Superseded by section 3 of the Twentieth Amendment.

Freedom Fact
Both the Fifth Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment contain a due process clause, which safeguards citizens from arbitrary denial of life, liberty or property by the government, outside the authorization of law.

Seventeenth Amendment  
Passed by Congress May 7, 1913. Ratified November 17, 1913. Note: Article V, section 2 of the Constitution was modified by section 3 of the Seventeenth Amendment.

Twenty-fifth Amendment  

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

*Changed by section 1 of the Twenty-sixth Amendment.

Fifteenth Amendment  
Cannot deny the right to vote based on race

Section 1. 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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Landmark Constitutional Amendments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Abolished slavery</td>
<td>Made men born in the U.S. citizens and gave them all the protections of the Constitution, regardless of color</td>
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The Fourteenth Amendment was the first time the word “male” was added to the Constitution, causing outrage in the women’s suffrage movement.

The Thirteenth Amendment was an 1870 print celebrating the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in February 1865, and the advancements that African-Americans had made as a result of the Civil War.
Eighteenth Amendment
Declared the production, transport and sale of alcohol illegal (Prohibition)

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Nineteenth Amendment
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. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Twentieth Amendment
New terms of office for president and Congress
Passed by Congress March 2, 1932. Ratified Jan. 23, 1933. Note: Article 1, section 4, of the Constitution was modified by section 2 of this amendment. In addition, a portion of the Twentieth Amendment was superseded by section 3.

Section 1. The terms of the President and the Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon at the 3rd day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified, and the terms of their successors shall then begin.
Section 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3rd day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President elect shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

Section 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved by the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5. Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

Twenty-first Amendment
Section 1. The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.
Section 2. The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or Possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.
Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Twenty-second Amendment
Section 1. No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as 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. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term during which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.
Section 2. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

Twenty-third Amendment
Section 1. The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall have in such manner as Congress may direct: A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The Twenty-fourth Amendment prohibits both Congress and the states from requiring that citizens pay a poll tax in order to vote.

Twenty-fourth Amendment
Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State by reason of failure to pay any tax, or other tax.
Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Twenty-fifth Amendment
Passed by Congress July 6, 1965. Ratified Feb. 10, 1967. Note: Article II, section 1, of the Constitution was affected by the Twenty-fifth Amendment.
Section 1. In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.
Section 2. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.
Section 3. Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.
Section 4. Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Therefore Congress may decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

Twenty-sixth Amendment
Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.
Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Twenty-seventh Amendment
Section 1. The right to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex.
Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.
Great American Speeches

For more than 200 years, exceptional people have led the United States from its humble beginnings to the country it is today.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES include excerpts from some of the greatest speeches in U.S. history. SGAP invites you to travel through time and take a tour of some of our country’s greatest speeches.

Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death!” Speech | March 23, 1775 | Richmond, Virginia

On March 23, 1775, shortly before the Revolutionary War began, Patrick Henry made an impassioned plea for a call to arms against the British Empire. For decades, Britain’s King George III had put in place many oppressive policies on the American colonists, who sought freedom from tyranny.

In his speech, made at the Second Virginia Convention in Richmond, Henry urged colonists to form militias to defend themselves from the British. Henry’s speech persuaded the Convention in his favor, and his words galvanized the march to war against Great Britain.

Note: Visit goo.gl/f9m0Gc to read the full text of the speech.

Excerpts from Patrick Henry’s Speech

“... I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past.

“... Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? ... Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are intended for us; they can be meant for no other.

“... Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne ... We must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us!

“... The war is actually begun! 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!”

George Washington’s Farewell Address Sept. 17, 1796 | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In his Farewell Address, George Washington announced that he would not seek a third term as president. Originally published in the “American Daily Advertiser” on Sept. 19, 1796, Washington’s remarks provide insight into the mind of our nation’s first president.

Because Washington was a strong believer in nonpartisanship and affiliated with no political party, he warns against excessive identification with any one party. He believed this would distract the nation’s government from its true purpose — which is to serve the people.

In foreign affairs, he advised Americans to be wary of forming long-term relationships with foreign nations, lest those nations exert undue influence on our country.

Note: Visit goo.gl/8gM2Fk to read the full text of Washington’s Farewell Address.

“WASHINGTON AT VERPLANCK’S POINT” is a full-length oil painting of George Washington at Verplanck’s Point on the North River in New York during the American Revolutionary War. It was painted in 1790 by the American artist John Trumbull.

Excerpts from Washington’s Farewell Address

“... I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.

“... The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. ... The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual.

“... Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. ... The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.

“... The nation which indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.”

Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” Nov. 19, 1863 | Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

President Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” is one of the best-known speeches in American history. Lincoln delivered the short yet deeply meaningful speech on Nov. 19, 1863, at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, during the Civil War. Beginning with the now-iconic phrase, “Four score and seven years ago” — referring to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 — Lincoln examined the founding principles of the United States as stated in the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln also memorialized the sacrifices of those who gave their lives during the Civil War and reminded listeners to ensure that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

In just two minutes and with perfect elocution, Lincoln delivered one of the greatest and most influential statements of national purpose in American history.

Full Text of Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

“It is rather for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

“FREEDOM FACT

At the event where Abraham Lincoln gave his now-famous address, Edward Everett also spoke. Everett’s speech lasted two hours while Lincoln’s lasted only minutes.
"I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

"... I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis — broad executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe."

**FDR's Inaugural Address**

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**Excerpts from FDR's Inaugural Address**

"... Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.

"... A host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence, and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment. Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.

"... The only thing we have to fear is fear itself, nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.

"... We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage — and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

"... Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

"... And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.

"... Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking his blessing and his help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."

**JFK's Inaugural Address**

"... Behind me stands a wall that encloses the free sectors of this city, part of a vast system of barriers that divides the entire continent of Europe. Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German, separated from his fellow men. Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar ... As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind.

"... General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate.

"Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

**Excerpts from Reagan's " Tear Down This Wall" Speech**

"... And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

**MLK's "I Have a Dream" Speech**

"... Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

"... We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage — and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

"... Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

"... And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

"... Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking his blessing and his help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

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