

US Constitution Facts

The actual United States Constitution was adopted on September 17th, 1787, in Philadelphia at the National Convention. The father of the Constitution was James Madison, who later became a U.S. president.

A group of men, called the Framers, met to write the Constitution. They felt a set of rules were needed to govern the country. Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington and James Madison were some of the more well-known framers of the Constitution. The Framers (members of Congress) met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. After much debate and a great deal of hard work, they finally agreed to the words in the Constitution. After the Constitution was written, the states had to approve it. It took some time for that to happen, but all of the states finally did.

The Constitution describes the different powers given to each of the branches of government and talks about how they are supposed to function and work together. The Constitution made sure that no single branch of the government could have too much power. This is called a system of “Checks and Balances”.

The Constitution also outlines the procedures for going to war. It states that the President becomes the commander-in-chief of the country’s armies in a time of war.

When the Constitution was written, the Framers knew that future generations would want to make changes. They wanted to make it possible to change the Constitution without needing to resort to revolution. They wanted to be sure the process wasn’t too difficult or too easy. To address this issue, the Framers added an amendment process. An amendment to the Constitution is a change that can add to the Constitution or change an older part of it. An amendment can even overturn a previous amendment, as the 21st did to the 18th. There are a few methods to amend the Constitution, but the most common is to pass an amendment through Congress on a two-thirds vote. After that, the amendment goes to the states and if three-quarters of the states pass the amendment, it is considered a part of the Constitution and has been ratified. There have been 27 amendments to the constitution.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. These 10 amendments guarantee that the citizens of the United States have their rights protected.

Here is a list of the Bill of Rights:

Amendment 1 – Freedom of Religion, Press, Speech
Amendment 2 – Right to Bear Arm
Amendment 3 – Quartering of Soldiers
Amendment 4 – Search and Seizure
Amendment 5 – Trial and Punishment, Compensation for Taking Property
Amendment 6 – Right to Speedy Trial, Confrontation of Witnesses
Amendment 7 – Trial by Jury in Civil Cases
Amendment 8 – Cruel and Unusual Punishment
Amendment 9 – Construction of Constitution
Amendment 10 – Powers of the States and People

The original Constitution actually had a clause stating that slavery would be abolished in twenty years after its signing. The fact that this issue was not quickly resolved might have led to the civil war.

The first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791. The last amendment was added in 1992. Some of the most famous and important amendments say that all black men can vote. Another says that all women can vote. Another says that the president can only be elected twice.

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Answer the questions

1. When was United State's Constitution adopted?
2. Who was the father of the US Constitution?
3. Who had to approve the Constitution?

4. What is the Constitution?
5. What does the Constitution describe?
6. What is the system of “Checks and Balances”?
7. What is an amendment?
8. What is the ‘way’ of the amendment?
9. What is the Bill of Rights?