

United States Constitution

(4 to 1 - Pocket Abbreviation)

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 defence, 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 1. Legislative Branch.



Sec 1 – All Legislative Powers herein granted are vested in a **Congress**, made up of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Sec 2 – **House**: Representatives will be elected every 2 years and must be 25 years or older. Number of Representatives per state is **determined by census**, every 10 years. The House shall have the sole power of impeachment.

14th
Amendment

435 Representatives
(States represented
by population)



Sec 3 – **Senate**: There will be 2 Senators per state elected to a 6-year term, with one-third of the Senators **up for election** every two years. Senators must be 30 years or older. The Vice-President of the United States will serve as the president of the Senate and may only cast a vote to break a tie. The Senate tries impeachments, with the Chief Justice of the U.S. presiding.

17th
Amendment

100 Senators
(2 per State)



(Article 1 Legislative Branch...)



Sec 4 – Elections/Meetings. Congress begins on Jan 3 each year and the president is inaugurated on January 20th.

20th
Amendment

President Reagan takes oath of office in 1985



Sec 5 – Membership/Rules: A quorum is a majority of members present. Each chamber makes its own rules to qualify its members and can expel a member with 2/3 vote. Each house must keep a journal.

Sec 6 – Compensation: Members are paid out of the treasury, but raises may only take effect for the next elected Congress. Members cannot be appointed to a civil position while also serving as a Senator or Representative.

27th
Amendment

Sec 7 – Legislative Process.

- Revenue bills must originate in the House.
- Senate may initiate other types of bills
- When approved by both houses, president may sign a bill into law
- If president doesn't sign, the bill becomes law in 10 days
- If president vetoes, a 2/3 vote of both houses is required to override it

Sec 8 – Powers of Congress:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tax• Pay debts• Provide Defense & General Welfare• Borrow money• Regulate commerce (nations, states, tribes)• Naturalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bankruptcy• Coin money• Post Office• Copyrights• Lower Courts• Punish Piracy• Declare War• Capture of Enemies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise/Support Army• Support Navy• Rules for Militia (National Guard)• Military Justice• District of Columbia• Forts, arsenals, docks• Make laws for above
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(Article 1. Legislative Branch...)

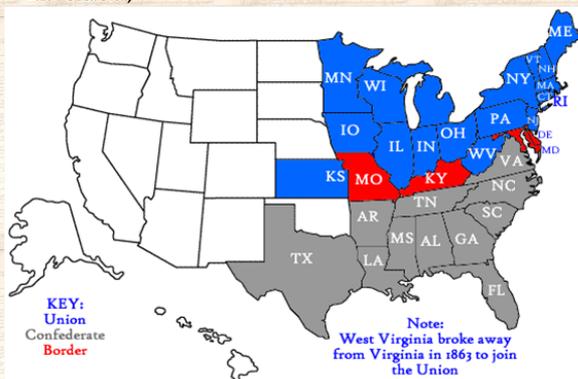
Sec 9 – Limits on Congress.

- Cannot prohibit importation of persons [slaves] prior to 1808*.
- Cannot suspend “Writ of Habeas Corpus”
- No “Bill of Attainder” or “ex post facto” (after the fact) law shall be passed
- **No Income Taxes [reversed by 16th Amendment to allow income tax]**
- No export taxes
- No preference of one state over another
- No funds taken from treasury except by appropriation of law
- No titles of nobility

16th
Amend-
ment

Sec 10 – Powers prohibited to States.

- No treaty, alliance, confederation, or letters of Marque.
- Cannot coin money or create other legal tender
- No bills of attainder, ex-post facto laws, impair contracts or grant nobility
- No tax/duties on imports or exports except by control of Congress
- Cannot enter into agreement or pact with another State
- Cannot keep troops or ships of war, or engage in war (unless actually invaded)



American Civil
War
(1861-1865)

*Sec 9 - This provision did not apply to States. By 1808 all States except South Carolina had enacted laws prohibiting slave trade. On March 2, 1807, Congress enacted, and President Thomas Jefferson signed into law, an act to prohibit importation of slaves, effective Jan 1, 1808.

Article II. Executive Branch



Sec 1 – **President.** The president shall execute the laws of the United States. He, & his vice-president shall be elected to a term of 4 years by “electoral college”. The president must be a natural born citizen, aged 35 years or older. Pay will not increase or decrease during his term & he shall take an oath of office:

12th
Amendment

To 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.”



22th
Amendment

President shall not serve more than two terms of office (8 years). If president dies or is removed, the vice-president shall preside, and if he should die, the Speaker of the House (or further succession which is also described) becomes president.

8 Presidents have died in office, 4 by assassination

25th
Amendment

Sec 2 – Civilian Control of Military and Presidential Duties.

- Commander in Chief of the military services
- Executive Department heads make up his “Cabinet”
- Power to grant pardons
- Power to make treaties if 2/3 of Senate concurs
- Appoints ambassadors, judges, other offices as established by Congress with consent of Senate (or without consent of Senate if the appointment is made during Senate recess).

Sec 3 – **State of the Union.** President shall give Congress information on the State of the Union, recommend laws, may convene one or both houses of Congress, and if they disagree, may adjourn Congress. He is to faithfully execute the laws of the U.S.

Sec 4 – **Disqualification.** 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.

Article III. Judicial Branch



Sec 1 – Judicial Powers. Judicial power is in the Supreme Court. Judges of both the supreme and inferior courts shall hold office during good behavior and their pay may not be reduced while in office.

Nine Judges make up the Supreme Court



Sec 2 – Trial by Jury.

- Judicial power extends to all cases under the constitution, Laws of the U.S., Treaties, and between States, (**Limitations in 11th Amendment**),
- Supreme Court tries cases affecting Ambassadors or States.
- All other cases may be appealed to the Supreme Court
- Crimes (except impeachment) shall be by Jury in the State where the crime was committed

11th
Amendment

Sec 3 – Treason. Treason consists of waging war against the U.S., siding with enemies, or giving them Aid and Comfort. Conviction is only on the testimony of two witnesses, or confession in open court.

Article IV. The States



Sec 1 – Each State to honor all others.

Full faith and credit shall be given by each State to the public acts, records and judicial decisions of every other State.

Sec 2 – State Citizens/Extradition.

- Citizens of each State are entitled to all privileges/immunities of the other States.
- A person charged with a crime who flees to another State is to be returned to the original State.
- Slavery is abolished

13th
Amend-
ment

Sec 3 – New States. New States may be admitted by Congress..



Manifest Destiny

- In the 19th Century, the U.S. spread from coast to coast.
- Alaska and Hawaii were the last States admitted to the Union.

Sec 4 – Republican Government. The United States shall :

- guarantee to every State a Republican form of government,
- shall protect each State against invasion, and
- against domestic violence.

Article V. Amendment.

Amend-
ments

Amendments may be proposed by $\frac{2}{3}$ of both Houses, or by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the States, and amendments shall be included in the Constitution by approval of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the States legislatures (or State conventions).

Article VI. Debts, Supremacy, Oaths



Debts. All debts contracted before adoption of the Constitution remain valid.

Supreme Law. The Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and all Treaties shall be the Supreme Law, binding every Judge in every State.

Oaths. U.S. and State Senators, Representatives, judges, and officers shall be bound by oath (or affirmation) to support this Constitution, but no religious test shall ever be required.

Article VII. Ratification

Ratified
1787

Ratification by nine States is sufficient to establish this Constitution between the ratifying States.

Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth. In Witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names.:

Virginia
New Hampshire
Massachusetts
Connecticut
New York
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
Delaware
Maryland Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia

KEY: *Actual Text*; *Paraphrase*; **Amendments**; **Information**;

Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

Bill of Rights (Dec 15, 1791)

Amendment 1 - Freedom of Religion, Press, Expression. - 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.

Amendment 2 - Right to Bear Arms. 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.

Amendment 3 - Quartering of Soldiers. 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.

Amendment 4 - Search and Seizure. 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.

Amendment 5 - Trial and Punishment, Compensation for Takings. 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 offense 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.

Amendment 6 - Right to Speedy Trial, Confrontation of Witnesses. 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.

Amendment 7 - Trial by Jury in Civil Cases. 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 reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment 8 - Cruel and Unusual Punishment. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment 9 - Construction of Constitution. The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment 10 - Powers of the States and People. 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.

- Continued -

Amendment 11 - Judicial Limits. Ratified 2/7/1795

Amendment 12 - Choosing the President, Vice-President. Ratified 6/15/1804



**American Civil War
(1861-1865)**

Amendment 13 - Slavery Abolished. Ratified 12/6/1865

Amendment 14 - Citizenship Rights. Ratified 7/9/1868.

- 1) Citizenship shall not be denied anyone born or naturalized in the U.S.
- 2) Representatives shall be proportionate to population but if any are denied right to vote, population shall be reduced by same amount
- 3) No one who rebelled in the Civil War may hold office, unless permitted by 2/3 vote of Congress
- 4) War debts of the South are not honored, nor claims of loss for emancipation of slaves
- 5) Congress has the power to enforce this amendment.

Amendment 15 - Race No Bar to Vote. Ratified 2/3/1870

Amendment 16 - Status of Income Tax Clarified. Ratified 2/3/1913

Amendment 17 - Senators Elected by Popular Vote. Ratified 4/8/1913

Amendment 18 - Liquor Abolished. Ratified 1/16/1919. (Repealed by Amendment 21)



Amendment 19 - Women's Suffrage. Ratified 8/18/1920

Amendment 20 - Presidential, Congressional Terms. Ratified 1/23/1933

Amendment 21 - Amendment 18 Repealed. Ratified 12/5/1933



Amendment 22 - Presidential Term Limits. Ratified 2/27/1951

Amendment 23 - Presidential Vote for District of Columbia. Ratified 3/29/1961

Amendment 24 - Poll Tax Barred. Ratified 1/23/1964

Amendment 25 - Presidential Disability and Succession. Ratified 2/10/1967

Amendment 26 - Voting Age Set to 18 Years. Ratified 7/1/1971

Amendment 27 - Limiting Congressional Pay Increases. Ratified 5/7/1992

Some other things to know about the Constitution.



The Shot Heard 'round the World (April 18, 1775). The first shots of the American Revolution were fired in Concord Massachusetts at the old North Bridge, when colonists (minute men) first fought back against British troops. Colonies only had local militia (citizens prepared to fight) so the First Continental Congress convened to create an Army (June 1775), fight the war, and declare independence. A second Continental Congress was convened to produce a governmental structure – the Articles of Confederation which was sent to the 13 States for ratification in 1777, and finally ratified by all States in 1781 when the British surrendered to the U.S. at Yorktown.

Articles of Confederation (1777 – 1788). During the War of Independence, when the Colonies declared independence on July 4, 1776, and for twelve years, until the Constitutional Convention produced the current U.S. Constitution, the United States of America operated under the Articles of Confederation. Each State got one vote, and the confederation could declare war, negotiate treaties, and resolve issues regarding western territories that were not States at that time but could only resolve issues between the States by unanimous consent. It also stipulated that the new Union would be a perpetual Union. This “confederation” had no power to tax, and was too weak to be a truly functioning central government. “Federalists” argued for a stronger government, and one that gave more power to the larger States, besides “one vote” per state.

The Constitutional Convention (May-Sep 1787). This convention was called to strengthen the Articles of Confederation, but ended in writing a new Constitution for the U.S. Rhode Island, fearing a loss of power as a small State, refused to attend.



Benjamin Franklin, introduced daily prayer at a critical impasse in the Constitutional Convention (June 28, 1787).

“I have lived, Sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth -- that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?”

The Great Compromise.- In the Constitutional Convention, the large states argued for representatives to be apportioned by population, because that would give more power to populous States. The small States argued for two representatives per state, so they would have equal standing with the large populous states. The great compromise was to split the representation of the two Houses: a Senate with two senators per state and a House of Representatives based on population, thus giving advantage to both large and small States.

Slaves. – Southern States argued for representation based on population, to include their slaves who made up 40% of the population of the South. Northern States, where there were few, if any slaves, argued that slaves should only be counted for taxation purposes. The compromise was to count slaves as 3/5ths of a person for both taxation and representation. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments replaced this formula by freeing slaves and giving them full citizenship, including the right to vote.

Declaration of Independence

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When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, ... they should declare the causes which impel them to separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. When a government is destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to abolish it. The history of the present King of Great Britain is an absolute tyranny. Let the facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws unless the people relinquish the right of representation

He has dissolved representative houses,

He has obstructed the laws for naturalization of foreigners;

He has obstructed justice, and made judges dependent on his will alone,

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies

He has subjected us to pretended legislation:

For quartering armed troops among us:

For protecting them from punishment for any murders

For cutting off our trade:

For imposing taxes without our consent:

For depriving us of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free system of English laws

For taking away our charters, suspending our own legislatures,

He wages war against us - plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries

He has constrained our fellow citizens to bear arms against their country.

He has excited domestic insurrections, by the merciless Indian savages.

Our repeated humble petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. Our British brethren, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice. We hold them, as the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, representatives of the united States of America, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world, solemnly declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; absolved from allegiance to the British Crown, and all political connection with Great Britain; with full power to:

levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce,
and do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may do.

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 **John Hancock**, President of the Continental congress, & **55 members**

**United States Constitution
and Declaration of Independence
(4 to 1 ~ Pocket Abbreviation)**

January 2010, April 2011, January 2012

Roland Biser

Disclaimer: The “4 to 1 Pocket Abbreviation” is not meant to substitute for the original text of the U. S. Constitution or Declaration of Independence.

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