



We the People ...

The United States Constitution consists of three main parts. The preamble introduces the Constitution and states its purpose. The seven **articles** outline how our government is organized. The **amendments** are changes in or additions to the original Constitution.

In the 200 years since the Constitution was written, 26 amendments have been added. The first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were adopted in 1791. The Bill of Rights was written to protect people's individual rights.

Read the preamble of our Constitution. Using the words in the scroll, write a synonym for each boldfaced word in the preamble.

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.

1. union
2. justice
3. tranquility
4. defense
5. promote
6. welfare
7. liberty
8. posterity
9. ordain
10. establish

A black and white line drawing of a scroll with a rolled-up end on the right side. The scroll is unrolled and contains a list of words.

fairness
create
safety
freedom
country
descendants
well-being
order
peace
further

Name _____

Skill: Reading comprehension
Using context clues



Creating Our Constitution



Use each word in the feather pen once to fill in the blanks.

When the United States declared its independence from ⁽¹⁾ _____ in 1776, each colony had its own government. It became important to have an agreement unifying all thirteen colonies. Under the first written agreement, called the Articles of Confederation, individual ⁽²⁾ _____ were more powerful than the nation as a whole.

Problems arose with the Articles and a meeting was called to change them. James Madison asked all ⁽³⁾ _____ states to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Once the meeting began, the delegates decided to write a new constitution.

Delegates debated for four ⁽⁴⁾ _____ about what rules should be included. After many compromises, most ⁽⁵⁾ _____ signed the Constitution on September 11, 1787.

The founding fathers wanted to make our government ⁽⁶⁾ _____. They agreed to give Congress, the law-making branch, more power than it had had under the previous form of government. Next they created the executive branch, headed by the ⁽⁷⁾ _____ of the United States, and made it responsible for enforcing the laws. Finally they designed a court system, known as the judicial branch, responsible for explaining the law.

These ⁽⁸⁾ _____ branches of our government work as a system of checks and balances. Power and responsibilities are divided so that no one ⁽⁹⁾ _____ totally controls our country.

The United States Constitution is the basic set of ⁽¹⁰⁾ _____ that governs our country. It is the supreme law of the land and guarantees to U.S. citizens certain liberties, or freedoms.

