



Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.

The opening paragraph of the U.S. Constitution is called **the Preamble**. It states:

"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." [spelling in the original]

There is strength in the words, “**We the People**...” as they convey the source of power granted to the United States government under the **U.S. Constitution**. The words that follow “We the People” are equally important, as they outline what the government will do for the people it represents. These are the goals and purposes of government. The public’s awareness of these goals and purposes is increased when there is a national crisis because the people turn to the government for guidance and assistance.

To Do and To Think: Find a current events story. To which of the goals and purposes of government does the story connect? Write the subject of the story in the column provided.

Phrase of the Preamble	What This Phrase Means	Subject of Current Event Story
We the People of the United States...	Government by consent of the people because it is the people who give government its power	
In order to form a more perfect union...	To improve the country	
Establish justice...	Laws are enforced and all are equal under the law	
Insure domestic tranquility...	Preserve a peaceful society	
Provide for the common defence...	Prevent foreign powers from harming the U.S.	
Promote the general welfare...	Promote prosperity and a good life for all	
Secure blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity...	Insure freedom from tyranny and arbitrary power for all generations	
Do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.	We establish a government as described in this Constitution	

Learn MORE about the Preamble. Free registration may be required.

- [The Preamble and the Constitution](#), From Civics360
- [Students Reflect on Promises of the Preamble](#), from U.S. Courts
- [The Purpose and effect of the Preamble](#), from Cornell law School’s Legal Information Institute

