

U.S. Constitution Scavenger Hunt-KEY

From the U.S. Senate:

More than two centuries after its ratification, the United States Constitution remains a vital and living document, strengthened by amendments, serving as both guide and protector of U.S. citizens and their elected officials. It has survived civil war, economic depressions, assassinations, and even terrorist attacks, to remain a source of wisdom and inspiration.

The creation of the U.S. Constitution depended upon the knowledge, experience, and dedication of its framers, just as its endurance depends upon the knowledge and experience of each succeeding generation of Americans. For this reason, it is important for us to learn and understand the governing principles of our nation, set forth in the Constitution.



Overview Questions

1. How many Articles does the U.S. Constitution contain? What is the main topic of Articles I-III? **7; The three branches of government**
2. What are the first three words of the U.S. Constitution? **We the People**
3. How many amendments does the U.S. Constitution currently have? **27**
4. According to Article I, Section 2, how were slaves to be counted when determining the number of congressional districts per state? **"Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons."**
5. Article I contains limitations placed on the states. Name one. **Cannot conduct foreign affairs; Carry on on a war; Control interstate and foreign commerce; Pass laws the federal government is prohibited from passing; Levying duties(taxes) on imports and exports; Maintain an army or navy or go to war; Collect fees from foreign vessels; Cannot make treaties with other countries**
6. Which article defines the power of the President? **Article II**
7. Which branch(es) of the federal government are responsible for establishing lower courts? **Legislative; Congress**
8. What is the minimum age for a Senator? **30 years old**
9. What is the term of office for Supreme Court justices? **Serve for life but can be removed for bad behavior like treason**
10. Who has the power to admit new states according to Article IV? **Congress**
11. What qualification for holding any public office is forbidden according to Article VI? **Religious tests**
12. How many states had to ratify the Constitution for it to become law? **9**

Scenarios

1. Informal polling shows that a majority of U.S. Senators are opposed to a treaty the president wants to sign that would make Canada the 51st state. The president has announced that they will be signing the treaty anyway and it will go into effect immediately. **Can the president put a treaty into effect if the U.S. Senate is opposed to it? No; The president may form and negotiate the treaty but 2/3 of the Senate must vote to approve. Only then can the president ratify (checks and balances)**
2. An individual visiting from another country is studying our government. They know we are sometimes called “the land of freedom and opportunity”. However, they are confused because the Bill of Rights does not mention every single right that people have. **Must the government respect all of the rights of the people, even rights that are not listed in the constitution? Yes; the 9th Amendment states that all the rights not listed in the Constitution belong to the people and not the government (individual rights)**
3. Congress has decided to create four new lower federal courts. The federal judges serving on these courts will hold their offices for five-year terms. One of the new federal judges thinks that is unconstitutional. **Is it constitutional to limit a federal judge to a five-year term? No; while Congress has the constitutional authority/power to create inferior courts, they cannot create term limits for the constitutionally created inferior courts. This could change, but only with a constitutional amendment (checks and balances; separation of powers)**
4. You have been accused of robbery and arrested. You have been sitting in jail for nine years while waiting for a trial. You have struggled to make the \$50 million bail that has been set. Finally in front of a judge, your lawyer argues that two amendments in the U.S. Constitution have been violated. **Can you legally be jailed for nine years awaiting trial because you cannot pay the \$50 million bail? No; this is a violation of the 5th amendment and 8th amendment (due process)**
5. One year into his term, the vice president has been accused of the crime of tax evasion and money laundering. The president announced today that because of their position in government, and the fact that the spot can't be left vacant for 3 years, tax and money laws do not apply to the vice-president. There will be no trial. **Is the vice-president exempt from certain laws while in office? Does the president have the power to determine which laws apply to which individuals? No; No-one is above the law. The president only has pardon power after the fact (rule of law)**

Extra Credit:

1. Who is known as the “Father of the Constitution”? **James Madison**
2. What are the names of the essays written during the ratification process to convince either support or opposition to the new Constitution? **Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers**
3. Which were the last two states to ratify the Constitution (after the new government had already started functioning)? **North Carolina and Rhode Island**