

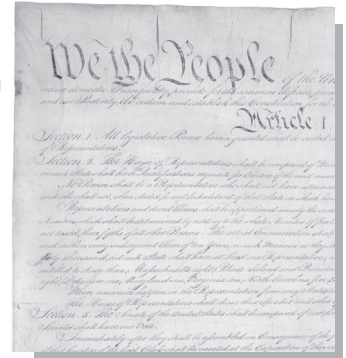
# Comparative Constitutions



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## If You've Seen One . . .

. . . you have not seen them all! State constitutions usually have many things in common with the United States Constitution, but there are many differences too. The U.S. Constitution begins with a **Preamble** that introduces the Constitution and explains its purpose. The Florida Constitution, for example, also has a preamble.

**Activity:** Compare the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution with the Preamble of the Florida Constitution. Box the parts that are *the same* in both documents.

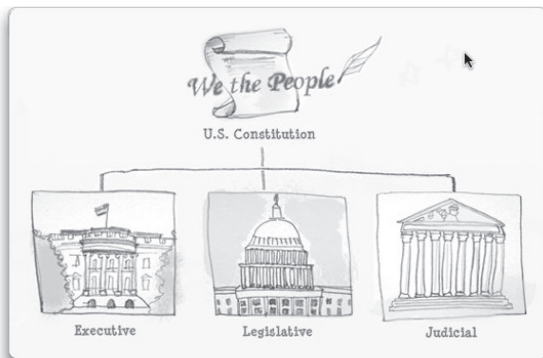




 U.S. CONSTITUTION	FLORIDA CONSTITUTION 
<p><u>We the People of the</u> United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.</p>	<p><u>We, the people of the</u> State of Florida, being grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty, in order to secure its benefits, perfect our government, insure domestic tranquility, maintain public order, and guarantee equal civil and political rights to all, do ordain and establish this constitution.</p>

## Government Rules!

Just as the U.S. Constitution gives the rules for how the U.S. government should run, state constitutions give rules for how a state government should run. Like the U.S. Constitution, state constitutions describe the branches of government that the state will have. Often these branches are very similar, but if you take a closer look you will find differences.

**Activity:** Compare how the government is set up in the U.S. Constitution with how the state government is set up by the Florida Constitution. This time, underline the parts that are *different*.



 U.S. CONSTITUTION	FLORIDA CONSTITUTION 
<p>The executive Power shall be vested in a <u>President of the United States of America</u>.</p> <p>The judicial Power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.</p>	<p>The <u>supreme</u> executive power shall be vested in a <u>governor</u>.</p> <p>The judicial power shall be vested in a supreme court, district courts of appeal, circuit courts and county courts.</p>

# Comparative Constitutions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## U.S. CONSTITUTION

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each State, chosen for six Years

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second year...

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives

Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it If any Bill shall not be returned within ten Days the Same shall be a Law...

[S]uch District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States . . ., become the Seat of Government of the United States...

## FLORIDA CONSTITUTION



The legislative power of the state shall be vested in a legislature of the State of Florida, consisting of a senate and a house of representatives...

Senators shall be elected for terms of four years ...

Members of the house of representatives shall be elected for terms of two years...

Any bill may originate in either house...

Every bill passed by the legislature shall be presented to the governor for approval and shall become a law if the governor approves and signs it, or fails to veto it within seven consecutive days after presentation.

The seat of government shall be the City of Tallahassee, in Leon County...

## Everybody's Got Rights

State constitutions also contain many of the same rights and guarantees you see in the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land and cannot be violated. That means state constitutions cannot give state citizens fewer rights than the U.S. Constitution gives. However, state constitutions can guarantee *more* rights than the U.S. Constitution does. For example, a state constitution might give more protection for a right that is also in the U.S. Constitution. A state constitution might also include additional rights that are not found in the U.S. Constitution. Finally, a state constitution might include rules about things that are unique to that state, such as how the state's natural resources should be preserved.

