



CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

Constitution Day

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.



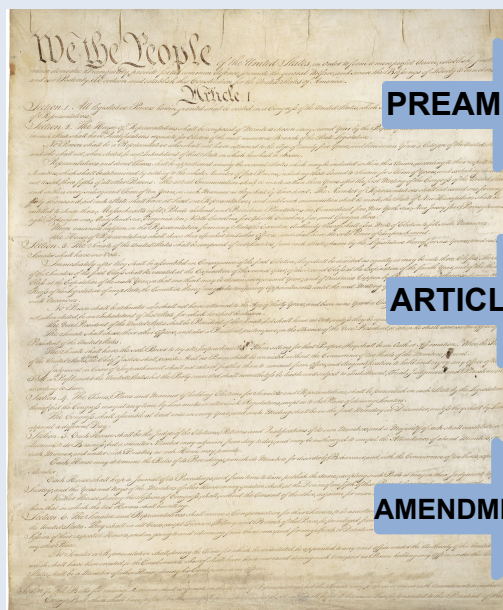
Every September 17th we pause to recognize the signing of the U.S. Constitution and all people who have become U.S. citizens through age or naturalization. It was on this day in 1787 that the U.S. Constitution was signed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by delegates from twelve of the original states.

These delegates, known as Framers arrived in Philadelphia all the way from northern states such as New Hampshire and Connecticut to as far south as South Carolina and Georgia. Many of these men had careers as lawyers and politicians and served in the military, but there were also educators, physicians, farmers and businessmen in attendance.

As we think about Constitution Day, it is important to explore the document itself.

What is actually in the United States Constitution?

The U.S. Constitution is a four page document, with three distinct parts, starting with the famous phrase: We the People....



PREAMBLE

The opening statement of the Constitution, known as the Preamble, outlines the goals and purposes of government.

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.

ARTICLES

The structure and function of our government is outlined in seven articles.

Article 1 – Legislative Branch	Article 5 – The Amendment Process
Article 2 – Executive Branch	Article 6 – The Supremacy Clause
Article 3 – Judicial Branch	Article 7 – Ratification
Article 4 – States	

AMENDMENTS

27 Amendments have been added to the Constitution.

The first 10 are known as the Bill of Rights and define individual freedoms, rights of the accused, define citizens’ protections from the federal government & extend powers to the states.

The other 17 amendments address important issues such as: the end of slavery, citizenship rights, the income tax, women’s suffrage, elimination of poll taxes, lowering the right to vote to 18 and congressional pay.

FUN FACTS

1. The U.S. Constitution is the oldest and shortest written constitution of any major government in the world.
2. In 1789, the first national “Thanksgiving Day” was originally created by George Washington as a way of “giving thanks” for the Constitution.
3. The oldest and youngest delegates were 81 and 26. Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania was the oldest and Jonathon Dayton of New Jersey was the youngest.
4. James Madison was the only delegate to attend every meeting. He took detailed notes of the various discussions and debates that took place during the convention. The journal that he kept during the Constitutional Convention was kept secret until after he died
5. Almost 12,000 amendments have been proposed to the Constitution, but only 27 have been ratified.

To Think and To Create! Grab your colored pencils, markers, crayons, finger-paints or watercolors and design a handmade poster showing how you and your family benefit from the freedoms embodied in the U.S. Constitution.

• Use an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper to create your design. Your poster can feature any aspect of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights & Amendments. Make it colorful! Be creative!

Consider submitting your poster to the [Constitution Day Poster Design Contest](#) from ConstitutionFacts.com

Learn MORE about Constitution Day. Free registration may be required.

- [The Preamble in Action](#), from The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
- [Constitution Day Resources](#), from National Constitution Center
- [Constitution Day Toolkit](#), from Civics Renewal Network



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