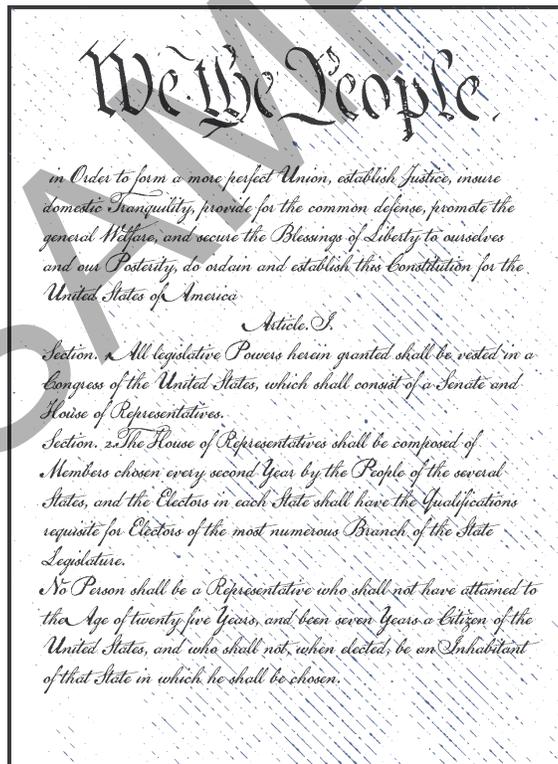


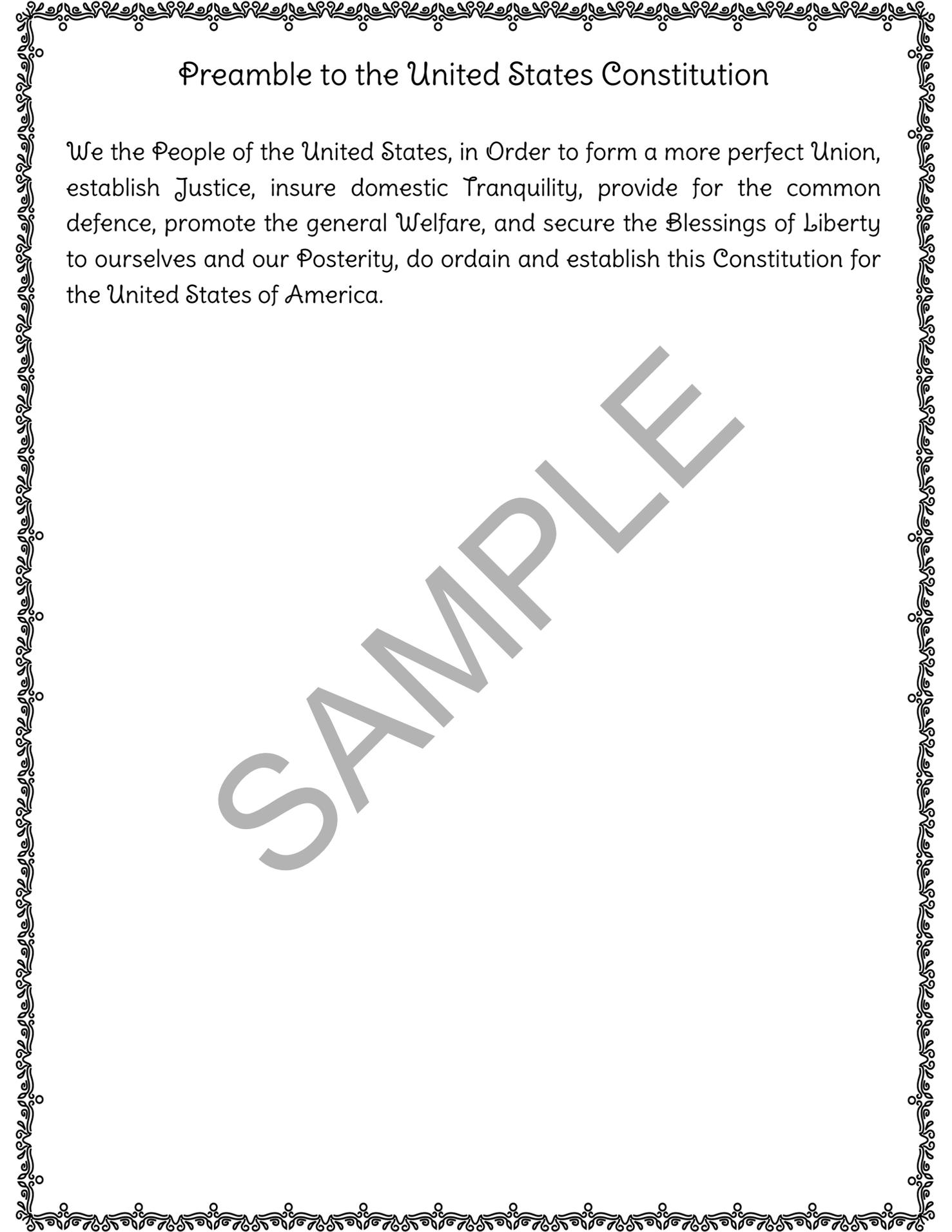
Getting Started

The U.S. Constitution is one of the most important documents in the nation's history. It brought the separate states into a united country under a single set of laws. It clearly separated the branches of the government and set limits on the power each one holds. It also set the guidelines for making future changes or amendments.

This unit looks at the entire text of the U.S. Constitution, one part at a time. For each set of questions, read the text that precedes them and then answer the questions. Many of the answers can be found in the text itself; others will require a little bit of research.

As you read the text, please keep in mind that some of the provisions have been changed with amendments. You'll also notice some of the spelling and punctuation is different than what you're used to today. Like most things, language changes over time. You may also notice references to people groups that may seem offensive. Keep in mind that just as language changes, so does what is considered acceptable or offensive to say also changes.





Preamble to the United States Constitution

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.

SAMPLE

Article I, Sections 1 and 2

Section 1

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.

Section 2

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

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. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one,

Article I, Sections 1 and 2 (continued)

Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

SAMPLE

Article I, Sections 1 and 2

What are "legislative powers"?

How often are representatives elected?

What are the requirements to be a representative?

How often is an enumeration (census) made to determine the number of representatives from each state?

What power is given only to the House of Representatives?

Article I, Section 3

Section 3

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When

Article I, Section 3 (continued)

sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

SAMPLE

Article I, Section 3

How many senators are elected from each state?

How long is a senator's term?

How are elections for senators staggered?

Who is president of the Senate?

Does the president of the Senate have a vote? Explain.

Article I, Section 3

What office is elected in the Senate for cases when the president of the Senate is not available?

What power is given only to the Senate?

Who presides in the Senate if the President is tried?

What fraction of members who are present needs to concur to convict someone?

What is the punishment for impeachment if found guilty by the Senate?