

A More Perfect Union:
The USCIS Civics Test Guide to the Monuments
and Memorials on the National Mall



U.S. Citizenship
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Constitution Gardens

Welcome to the *Constitution Gardens* in Washington D.C.

Read the following information about the Constitution Gardens.

The words that are in **bold** will help you answer questions from the Civics part of the Naturalization Test.

The words that are underlined are vocabulary words from the Reading and Writing parts of the Naturalization Test.

Civics Test Questions are highlighted for quick reference.



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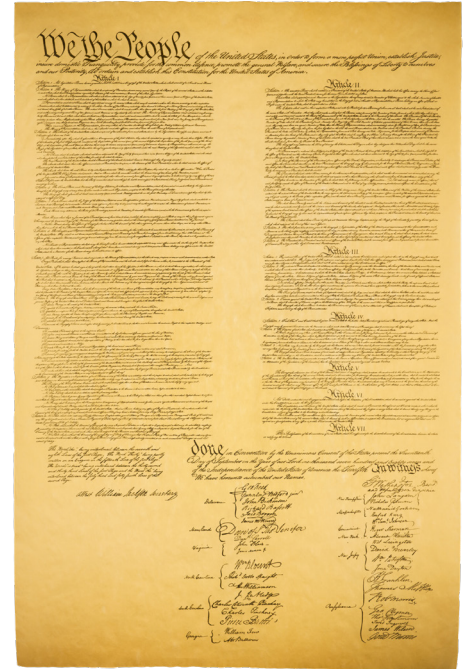


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The Constitution

Constitution Gardens was created to celebrate the U.S. Constitution.

The Constitution was written at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.



65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention? _____

66. When was the Constitution written? _____

The U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution in the world.

George Washington was chosen to lead the Constitutional Convention.

George Washington was also the first President of the United States. We call him the “father of our country.”

69. Who is the “Father of our Country?” _____

70. Who was the first President? _____

Benjamin Franklin is another famous American who was at the Constitutional Convention. **Benjamin Franklin was the oldest person at the Constitutional Convention.**

68. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for? _____

After the Constitution was written, it had to be approved by the states. Some people did not like the new Constitution. **In 1788, John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton published essays in newspapers called The Federalist Papers.**

The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution.

67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers. _____



Form of Government

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. This means that everyone must follow the Constitution.

1. *What is the supreme law of the land?* _____

In the United States we believe in the “rule of law.”

“The rule of law” means that everyone must follow the law.

12. *What is the rule of law?* _____

The Constitution also sets up the government.

2. *What does the Constitution do?* _____

In the Constitution, there are three branches or parts of government which are:

- **The Legislative Branch**
- **The Executive Branch**
- **The Judicial Branch**

13. *Name one branch or part of the government.* _____

The powers of government are divided among three branches or parts of government. **The separation of powers is what stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful.**

14. *What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?* _____

The government that the Constitution sets up is called self-government. This means that the people of the United States govern themselves.

The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. It starts with the words **“We the people...”**

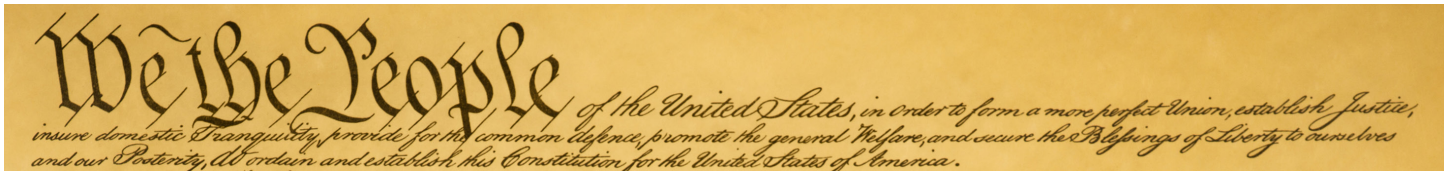
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3. *The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?* _____

This type of government is also known as a democracy.



Legislative Branch

Another name for the legislative branch is called Congress.

Congress makes federal laws.

16. *Who makes federal laws?* _____

The U.S. Congress has two parts:

- **The House of Representatives**
- **The Senate**

17. *What are two parts of the U.S. Congress?* _____

The Constitution says that the person in charge of the House of Representatives is called the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Nancy Pelosi is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now [as of August 2021].

47. *What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?*

Some states have more Representatives than other states because some states have more people.

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25. *Why do some states have more Representatives than others?* _____

A U.S. Senator represents all of people of the state.

24. *Who does a U.S. Senator represent?* _____

Executive Branch

The President of the United States is in charge of the executive branch.

15. *Who is in charge of the executive branch?*



The U.S. military is part of the executive branch. **The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. military.**

32. *Who is the Commander-in-Chief of the military?* _____

There are many departments in the executive branch. The parts of the executive branch are called departments.

Each department has many agencies and offices. The National Parks Service is in the Department of the Interior. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is in the Department of Homeland Security.

The heads of most of the departments are called secretaries. The head of the Department of Justice is called the Attorney General.

The secretaries of the all of the departments, the attorney general, and the vice president are part of the president's cabinet.

36. *What are two Cabinet-level positions?* _____

The President's cabinet advises the president.

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35. *What does the President's Cabinet do?* _____

The President also approves laws that Congress creates.

When Congress passes a law, it is sent to the President to sign or veto. Until the President signs a law it is called a "bill."

If the President approves it, **the President signs the bill into law.**

33. *Who signs bills to become laws?* _____

If the President does not approve it, **the President vetoes the bill.**

34. *Who vetoes bills?* _____

If the President can no longer serve, the Vice President becomes president.

30. *If the President can no longer serve, who becomes president?* _____

If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House of Representatives becomes the President.

31. *If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?* _____

Joe Biden is the name of the President of the United States now (as of August 2021).

28. *What is the name of the President of the United States now?* _____

Kamala Harris the name of the Vice President of the United States now (as of August 2021).

29. *What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?* _____



Judicial Branch

The judicial branch is made up of the federal court system.

The judicial branch reviews the laws that Congress writes and the President signs.

37. *What does the judicial branch do?*



The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.

38. *What is the highest court in the United States?*

The Chief Justice is the highest-ranking judge on the Supreme Court.

John Roberts is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court now.

39. *Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?* _____

Powers of Government

Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government and some powers belong to the state governments.

Powers that belong to the federal government are the power:

- to print money
- to declare war
- to create an army
- to make treaties

Powers that belong to the states are:

- provide schooling and education
- provide protection (police)
- provide safety (fire departments)
- give a driver's license
- approve zoning and land use

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41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government? _____

42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states? _____

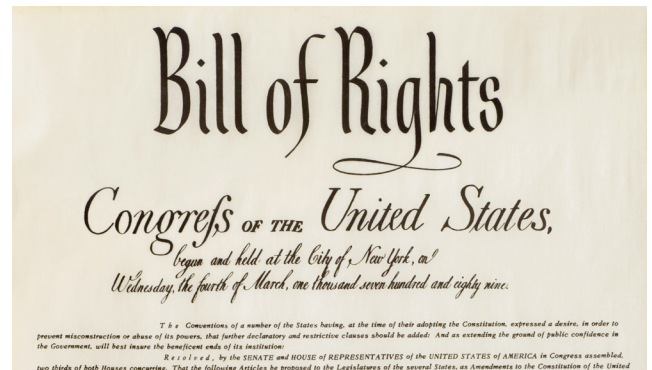
Amendments

The Constitution has only been amended 27 times since it was written in 1787. **An amendment is a change to the Constitution.**

4. What is an amendment?

The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the **Bill of Rights**.

5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution? _____



The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791. That is only 4 years after the Constitution was written.

There are **5 rights or freedoms in the First Amendment:**

- **speech**
- **religion**
- **assembly**
- **press**
- **petition the government**

6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment? _____



Civic Engagement

There are **many ways that Americans can participate in their democracy** by exercising the rights and freedoms in the First Amendment to the Constitution:

- **join a political party**
- **help with a campaign**
- **join a civic group**
- **join a community group**
- **give an elected official your opinion on an issue**
- **call Senators and Representatives**
- **publicly support or oppose an issue or policy**
- **run for office**
- **write to a newspaper**

55. *What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?*

Voting

Another way that Americans can participate in their democracy is to **vote**.

The right to vote in federal elections is a right that is only for **United States citizens**.

50. *Name one right only for United States citizens.* _____



Voting in federal elections is also a *responsibility* that is only for **United States citizens**.

49. *What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?* _____

The Constitution says that a citizen must be **eighteen years and older to vote for President**.

54. *How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?* _____

U.S. citizens vote to elect the President, representatives in the House of Representatives, and Senators.

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We vote for President in November.

27. *In what month do we vote for president?* _____

We elect a President for four (4) year terms.

26. *We elect a president for how many years?* _____

We elect a U.S. Representatives for two (2) year terms.

22. *We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?* _____

We elect a U.S. Senator for six (6) year terms.

19. *We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?* _____

There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote.

- The 26th Amendment says **citizens eighteen (18) and older can vote.**
- The 24th Amendment says **you don't have to a pay a poll tax to vote.**
- The 19th Amendment says **any citizen (women and men) can vote.**
- The 15th Amendment says **a male citizen of any race can vote.**

48. *There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.* _____



Vocabulary for the Reading and Writing Parts of the Naturalization Test

The table below contains the underlined words from the information you just read about the Constitution and the Constitution Gardens. They are some of the vocabulary words for the Reading and Writing parts of the Naturalization Test.

Vocabulary for the Reading Test	Vocabulary for Both the Reading and Writing Test	
Bill of Rights Country Government Many Name Pay U.S.	Citizen/Citizens Congress Elect Father of Our Country First George Washington/Washington Most One	People President Right Senators State/states United States Vote

To see a full list of the 100 questions on the Naturalization Civics Test, and a full list of the vocabulary on the Reading and Writing Test, please visit the USCIS Citizenship Resource Center: www.uscis.gov/citizenship.