



U.S. Government: How It Works

THE CONSTITUTION AND FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Introduction

This Instructor's Guide provides information to help you get the most out of *The Constitution and Foundations of Government*, part of the six-part series *U.S. Government: How It Works*. The contents of the guide will allow you to prepare your students before using the program and to present follow-up activities to reinforce the program's key learning points.

While the complexities of the American political system have never been greater, the right visual aid can help students sift through them — and even develop a passion for the subject. The six-part series *U.S. Government: How It Works* is an ideal tool for introducing and exploring key aspects of U.S. government and public policy. Using a combination of eye-catching graphics, dynamic video footage, and interviews with legal and political scholars, each episode celebrates a particular dimension of American democracy while equipping students to candidly discuss political issues. The series includes:

- *The Legislative Branch*
- *The Executive Branch*
- *The Judicial Branch*
- *The Constitution and Foundations of Government*
- *Elections and Political Parties*
- *Citizenship and Civic Responsibilities*

Program Summary

Why do written documents figure so prominently in the early history of the United States? There are plenty of explanations, but they all boil down to the philosophical ideas that drove the American colonies to declare their independence — and a profound awareness that those ideas should be inseparable from the rule of law. This program explores the origins, outbreak, and outcome of the American Revolution, the major political texts which grew out of that struggle, and their ongoing significance today. Topics include the heavy British taxation that helped spark the Revolution; the spirit and structure of

the Declaration of Independence; the short-lived Articles of Confederation; the drafting and ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights; and their implications for U.S. government as we know it today.

Learning Objectives

After viewing the program, students will understand:

- The reasons for the Revolutionary War
- The purpose and events of the First and Second Continental Congress, including the writing of the Declaration of Independence
- The purpose and events of the Philadelphia Convention
- The Articles of Confederation and the Virginia Plan, and how they led to the writing of the Constitution
- The structure and contents of the Constitution
- The Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution

Main Topics

Section 1: Introduction

The program begins by providing a brief overview of how the Constitution came to be written.

Section 2: Founding of the U.S. Government

This section touches on the roots of the Revolutionary War and some reasons for the colonists' discontent, important battles, the Stamp Act, the Second Continental Congress, and the Declaration of Independence.

Section 3: The Philadelphia Convention

The important events of the Philadelphia Convention — the delegates' assessment of the Articles of Confederacy, proposal of the Virginia Plan, and the creation of the Constitution — are discussed in this section.

Section 4: The Constitution

The seven articles of the Constitution are summarized and explained here.

Section 5: The Bill of Rights

The program's final section discusses how and why the Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution, summarizing these and other key amendments.

Fast Facts

- The name “America” originally designated a portion of Brazil, and was used to honor the explorer Amerigo Vespucci. By the 16th century mapmakers were calling the entire western hemisphere “America.” In February 1776 Thomas Paine wrote of “Free and independent States of America.” The first known use of the name “United States of America” was five months later, in the Declaration of Independence.
- The Battles of Lexington and Concord were the first military engagements of the Revolutionary War, fought in 1775, near Boston. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a poem to commemorate those who died fighting at Concord, describing the first shot fired as the “shot heard ‘round the world.”
- The Daughters of Liberty was an association of colonial women dedicated to the boycott of British goods before and during the Revolutionary War. Members swore off English cloth, which they replaced with their own homespun fabric. The women devised substitutes for tea and sugar so that the colonists would not have to depend on the British for these. In 1774, the Daughters of Liberty helped influence a decision made by the Continental Congress to boycott all British goods, and they were part of the rebellion that finally ended the despised Stamp Act in 1766.
- It was at the Second Continental Congress in 1776 that the Declaration of Independence was written. Founding Father John Adams received this message from his wife Abigail while he served as a representative there: *“In the new Code of Laws ... I desire you would Remember the Ladies... we will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice ...”* Mrs. Adams also mused on slave-owning among the revolutionaries, remarking that *“I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be Equally Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs.”*
- The Philadelphia Convention in 1787 is viewed as one of the most important events in U.S. history. Among the delegates who drafted the Constitution there were Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin (then age 81!), and George Washington, who presided over the meeting. Although Thomas Jefferson was in France at this time, he still had an impact upon the creation and ratification of the Constitution — it took several years — through his strong support for the adoption of the Bill of Rights.
- The purpose of the Constitution is not to solve policy issues or make political decisions, but to give citizens the authority to decide issues for themselves. The men who wrote it were influenced in part by the writings of English philosopher John Locke, who in turn had been inspired by the French philosopher Montesquieu. The framers of the Constitution also drew from the ancient Greek historian Polybius, who suggested a “mixed government” of divided powers similar to the “separation of powers” later outlined in the Constitution.

- The Bill of Rights was conceived of mere days after the Constitution became the law of the land. The new Americans were uneasy about giving the federal government too much power, and wanted assurance that individual rights would be protected. Individual American states already had their own bills of rights. The Bill of Rights found in the Constitution was drafted primarily by James Madison, who used the Virginia Bill of Rights as a rough model.
- The passage of Amendment 24 in 1964 banning the unfair “poll tax” gave Native Americans and African-Americans the unrestricted right to vote in federal elections. The poll tax was a fee that had to be paid before voting, and it stopped many poor people of all races from participation in the election process. Poll taxes had been put in place following the Civil War specifically to keep people of color from voting. It took a Supreme Court ruling in 1966 for poll taxes, for both state *and* federal elections, to be officially declared unconstitutional.
- The United States Constitution is both the shortest and the oldest written constitution still in use today.

Vocabulary Terms

amendment: An alteration or addition to a bill or constitution. The United States Constitution has been amended twenty-seven times between 1791 and 1992; the first ten amendments are known as the Bill of Rights.

Articles of Confederation: The first national constitution of the 13 states, drafted and proposed by the Second Continental Congress in 1777 and adopted in 1781. The authors of the Articles saw the threat of too much government as more dangerous than too much liberty, and thus wrote the Articles to limit the powers of the national government. Under the Articles, there was no chief executive or judiciary, and the government could not collect taxes. The Articles of Confederation were replaced in 1789 by the Constitution of the United States.

Battle of Bunker Hill: Fought on June 17, 1775, in Boston, the Battle of Bunker Hill is often considered the first major battle of the Revolutionary War. Although ending in victory for the British, this battle demonstrated dramatically the colonists' willingness and ability to fight for independence.

Battles of Lexington and Concord: The first military engagements of the Revolutionary War, these battles were fought on April 19, 1775, near Boston. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a poem to commemorate those who lost their lives at Concord, describing the first shot they fired as the “shot heard ‘round the world.”

bicameral legislature: Consisting of two legislative branches, such as the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together make up the Congress.

Bill of Rights: The term given to the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. The Bill of Rights guarantees, among other things, the freedoms of speech, press, and religion. The Bill of Rights was drafted primarily by James Madison, who used the Virginia Bill of Rights as a rough model, in response to colonists' fears that the Constitution did not do enough to safeguard individual liberties.

Boston Massacre: The incident in which British soldiers shot and killed five colonists outside the Boston Custom House. Due to the unpopularity of the Townshend Acts, which levied a tax on certain goods imported into the colonies, the British government sent 700 troops to Boston to both enforce the tax and protect the tax collectors. The resulting tension ignited on March 5, 1770, when colonists taunting British soldiers were met with a hail of bullets in return. The incident helped spark sympathies for colonial independence.

Constitution of the United States: "The supreme law of the land," it is the document that embodies the fundamental laws and principles of the United States. Drafted at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and ratified by the required nine states in 1788, the document replaced the Articles of Confederation and went into effect on March 4, 1789. It consists of the preamble, seven articles, and 27 amendments (which were added later). It established a new federal republic, granting certain powers to the national government while reserving other powers to the states.

Constitutional Convention of 1787: Also known as the Philadelphia Convention and as the Constitutional Congress, the gathering in Philadelphia of delegates (including George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and Benjamin Franklin) from each of the former colonies (except Rhode Island) who met with the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation, and who ended by drafting an entirely new document: the Constitution.

Declaration of Independence: The document drafted by Thomas Jefferson at the Second Continental Congress by which the thirteen colonies proclaimed their independence from Great Britain. It was adopted in its final form on July 4, 1776. The goal of the document was to announce the independence of the colonies to the world and to list the reasons why the Revolution was legitimate.

executive branch: The branch of federal and state government responsible for implementing, supporting, and enforcing the laws made by the legislative branch and interpreted by the judicial branch.

First Continental Congress: The gathering in Philadelphia of delegates (including John Adams, Samuel Adams, Roger Sherman, John Jay, and George Washington) who met from September 5 to October 26, 1774, with the purpose of composing and sending a list of the colonies' grievances to the king of England. The Congress approved an economic boycott against Britain, and also called for another meeting in the event that their complaints were ignored by the Crown.

Founding Fathers: A general name for male American patriots during the Revolutionary War, especially the signers of the Declaration of Independence and those who drafted the Constitution. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington were all Founding Fathers.

French and Indian War: A series of military engagements between Britain and France in North America between 1754 and 1763 in which French forces and their Native American allies battled the British for control of North American land. The war resulted in victory for the British, along with a massive amount of debt. Over the next decade conflicts arose between the British and the American colonies as the British attempted to pay down their debt by heavily taxing the colonies, eventually leading to the Revolutionary War.

full faith and credit clause: The clause in Article IV of the Constitution that requires states to give full faith and credit to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of the other states. This means that each state must respect the laws of the others; for instance, if a crime is committed in one state and the person responsible for it is caught in another state, that person must be returned to the state where the crime took place for prosecution.

Great Compromise: An agreement between large and small states reached during the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 that in part defined the legislative structure and representation that each state would have under the new Constitution. The Compromise proposed a bicameral legislature, resulting in the current United States Senate and House of Representatives.

judicial branch: The court systems of local, state, and federal governments, responsible for interpreting the laws passed by the legislative branch and enforced by the executive branch.

legislative branch: The branch of federal and state government empowered to make the laws that are then enforced by the executive branch and interpreted by the judicial branch. The legislative branch consists of Congress and the fifty state legislatures.

Magna Carta: A list of rights and privileges that King John of England signed under pressure from English noblemen in 1215. It established the principles that the king could not levy taxes without consent of his legislature, and that no free man in England could be deprived of liberty or property except through a trial or other legal process.

Philadelphia Convention: See *Constitutional Convention of 1787*.

Preamble to the Constitution: Introduction to the Constitution. The Preamble declares the purposes of the Constitution to be “*to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty*” to the people of the nation.

ratify: To approve and give formal sanction to.

Revolutionary War: The war for American independence from Britain. The fighting began with the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775, and lasted through the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. General George Washington commanded the American forces, assisted by Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold, Horatio Gates, John Paul Jones, and others. The American cause was greatly aided by French ships and troops. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 officially ended the war.

Second Continental Congress: A series of congressional sessions with delegates from the thirteen colonies that met in Philadelphia from 1775 until 1781, and at which the Articles of Confederation and the Declaration of Independence were drafted. The Congress was held because the colonists had not received a response from King George to the resolutions sent from the first Continental Congress. The Congress was led at various times by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Hancock, and Thomas Jefferson. Other notable attendees include Samuel Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Richard Henry Lee, James Madison, Benjamin Rush, and George Washington. The Second Continental Congress was the congress of the United States during the Revolutionary War, and is the forerunner of today's Congress.

Stamp Act: A law passed by the British government in 1765 that required the payment of a tax to Britain on a variety of papers and documents that were produced in the American colonies. Special stamps were to be attached to the papers and documents as proof that the tax had been paid. The stamp tax was the first direct tax ever levied by Britain on the colonists, who rioted in opposition. The colonists petitioned King George III to repeal the act, which he did in 1766.

suffrage: The right to vote.

Townshend Acts: Acts of the British Parliament in 1767 that placed customs duties on tea, paper, lead, paint, and other items imported into the American colonies. The Acts aimed to raise revenue from the American colonies. This measure triggered a new wave of conflict between the colonies and Great Britain.

unicameral legislature: Consisting of a single legislative chamber.

Virginia Plan: Conceived of and proposed by Virginia delegate James Madison at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, it was a plan that allowed for a strong national government, and upon which the Constitution was based. Madison envisioned a government divided into separate branches in which the powers of each branch would provide checks and balances of the other branches. The plan was opposed by delegates from small states (because it made the number of representatives in the legislature proportional to population), which led to the Great Compromise.

Pre-Program Discussion Questions

1. What was the French and Indian War, and how did it relate to the War for Independence?
2. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
3. How is it that the Constitution — a document written over 200 years ago — is still relevant today?
4. Can you name two rights the Constitution ensures to every citizen of the United States?
5. Can you describe two amendments to the Constitution?

Post-Program Discussion Questions

1. What were the main events of the First Continental Congress? The Second? The Philadelphia (Constitutional) Convention?
2. Why were the Articles of Confederation eventually discarded by the Founding Fathers?
3. Under what circumstances was the Constitution written?
4. When the Constitution was written, why was it not immediately and unanimously ratified by all of the colonies? Were you surprised to learn of conflicts in the drafting and ratification of this important document?
5. What new amendment to the Constitution would you like to see added? (Are you sure that this right or issue is not already covered in the existing Amendments?)

Student Projects

- Working as a class, create an illustrated timeline of important events in early American history leading up to, including, and occurring for some time after the War for Independence. Include important events in other parts of the world that may have influenced, or been influenced by, happenings on American soil. Before creating the timeline, the class should discuss which events to include and why.
- Pick one of the amendments to the Constitution and write about what it means to you, how it has affected your life, and what the nation might be like today if this Amendment had not been passed.
- Working in groups, create a multimedia presentation to explain and illustrate the seven articles of the Constitution. Bring news items and current events into the presentation wherever possible (for instance, elections, nominations to the Supreme Court, etc.).

- Does the federal government still have too much control over the rights of individuals, or over states' rights? Conduct a classroom debate on this topic, making sure to conduct thorough research, using primary documents as well as current news sources.
- Just as the American colonists fought for independence and certain “inalienable rights,” there are still groups of people today who believe they should have independence, or at least autonomy, from the nation of which they are currently a part. Choose a current “independence movement” to research, addressing the following questions: What do they want? Are their concerns justified? Is independence (or sovereignty) for them realistic? Some regions to explore include Puerto Rico, East Turkestan, Quebec, and even the United States (the Alaskan Independence Party; the Texas secession movement; Cascadia, an independent state in the Pacific northwest proposed by environmentalists). Present your report to the class, and invite discussion and debate.

Assessment Questions

1. Which of the following contributed to the start of the Revolutionary War?

(Choose all that apply)

- a) The British had incurred massive debt due to their victory in the French and Indian War, and they looked to the colonies for revenue.
- b) The British had incurred massive debt due to their defeat in the French and Indian War, and they looked to the colonies for revenue.
- c) Although the colonists were British citizens, they were denied many of the legal rights of British citizens.
- d) British troops, who outnumbered the colonists, began seizing the colonists' property for private use.
- e) The British government began to impose heavy taxes on the colonists.

2. During the Philadelphia Convention _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

3. During the First Continental Congress _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

4. During the Second Continental Congress _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

5. The Articles of Confederation were eventually replaced by the Constitution because _____.

- a) they favored a strong federal government, to the detriment of states' rights
- b) they allowed for potentially excessive taxing of citizens — the new nation did not want to repeat the experience of tyranny
- c) they favored states' rights over a strong federal government — the new nation needed a stronger government and more unity than the Articles could provide for
- d) they contained a proposal for an unworkable three-part legislature

- 6. The Constitution was written _____.**
- a) in the months leading up to the Revolutionary War
 - b) during the Revolutionary War
 - c) a few years after the Revolutionary War ended
 - d) in 1776
- 7. The purpose of the Constitution is _____.**
- a) to solve policy issues among the states and territories, and as a nation
 - b) to enumerate specific governmental powers, but to ultimately give citizens the authority to decide issues for themselves
 - c) to act as a source book by outlining decisions for recurrent political issues
 - d) to enumerate an inalienable set of laws by which to govern a nation
- 8. The Constitution consists of a preamble, _____ original articles, and the Amendments.**
- a) 7
 - b) 13
 - c) 18
 - d) 27
- 9. Articles 1 through 3 of the Constitution delineate _____.**
- a) the departure of the new Constitution from English law
 - b) the structure and duties of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches
 - c) the requirements for ratification of the Constitution and of future similar documents
 - d) the relationship of states to each other and to the federal government
- 10. Article 6 of the Constitution establishes _____. (Choose all that apply)**
- a) the right of citizens to keep and bear arms
 - b) that the Constitution is “the supreme law of the land”
 - c) that cruel and unusual punishments not be inflicted on those accused of a crime
 - d) that no religious test shall be required as a qualification to public office, thus laying the groundwork for separation of church and state
- 11. The Bill of Rights is _____.**
- a) the preamble to the Constitution
 - b) the first ten amendments to the Constitution
 - c) another name for the amendments to the Constitution
 - d) a document first drafted in 1952 to address important issues left out of the Constitution

12. Native Americans and African-Americans were not given the unrestricted right to vote in federal elections until _____, when the last of the unfair “poll taxes” used to keep them from voting was banned with the passage of Amendment 24.
- a) the Reconstruction period after the Civil War
 - b) 1920 (when women won the right to vote)
 - c) 1958
 - d) 1964
13. What is the source of the following quotation? *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”*
- a) The Declaration of Independence
 - b) The Preamble to the Constitution
 - c) *The Letters of Thomas Jefferson*
 - d) The Bill of Rights
14. What is the source of the following quotation? *“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure 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.”*
- a) The Declaration of Independence
 - b) The Preamble to the Constitution
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Assessment Questions Answer Key

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- d) British troops, who outnumbered the colonists, began seizing the colonists' property for private use.
- e) The British government began to impose heavy taxes on the colonists.

A: (a) The British had incurred massive debt due to their victory in the French and Indian Wars, and they looked to the colonies for revenue.

(c) Although the colonists were British citizens, they were denied many of the legal rights of British citizens.

(e) The British government began to impose heavy taxes on the colonists.

2. During the Philadelphia Convention _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

A: (d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

3. During the First Continental Congress _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

A: (c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George

4. During the Second Continental Congress _____.

- a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written
- b) the Bill of Rights was drafted
- c) delegates met to compose and then send a list of grievances to King George
- d) delegates met to discuss the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Plan was proposed, and the Constitution was written

A: (a) the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation were written

5. The Articles of Confederation were eventually replaced by the Constitution because _____.

- a) they favored a strong federal government, to the detriment of states' rights
- b) they allowed for potentially excessive taxing of citizens — the new nation did not want to repeat the experience of tyranny
- c) they favored states' rights over a strong federal government — the new nation needed a stronger government and more unity than the Articles could provide for
- d) they contained a proposal for an unworkable three-part legislature

A: (c) they favored states' rights over a strong federal government — the new nation needed a stronger government and more unity than the Articles could provide for

6. The Constitution was written _____.

- a) in the months leading up to the Revolutionary War
- b) during the Revolutionary War
- c) a few years after the Revolutionary War ended
- d) in 1776

A: (c) a few years after the Revolutionary War ended (1787)

7. The purpose of the Constitution is _____.

- a) to solve policy issues among the states and territories, and as a nation
- b) to enumerate specific governmental powers, but to ultimately give citizens the authority to decide issues for themselves
- c) to act as a source book by outlining decisions for recurrent political issues
- d) to enumerate an inalienable set of laws by which to govern a nation

A: (b) to enumerate specific governmental powers, but to ultimately give citizens the authority to decide issues for themselves

8. The Constitution consists of a preamble, _____ original articles, and the Amendments.

- a) 7
- b) 13
- c) 18
- d) 27

A: (a) 7

9. Articles 1 through 3 of the Constitution delineate _____.

- a) the departure of the new Constitution from English law
- b) the structure and duties of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches
- c) the requirements for ratification of the Constitution and of future similar documents
- d) the relationship of states to each other and to the federal government

A: (b) the structure and duties of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches

10. Article 6 of the Constitution establishes _____. (Choose all that apply)

- a) the right of citizens to keep and bear arms
- b) that the Constitution is “the supreme law of the land”
- c) that cruel and unusual punishments not be inflicted on those accused of a crime
- d) that no religious test shall be required as a qualification to public office, thus laying the groundwork for separation of church and state

A: (b) that the Constitution is “the supreme law of the land”

(d) that no religious test shall be required as a qualification to public office, thus laying the groundwork for separation of church and state

11. The Bill of Rights is _____.

- a) the preamble to the Constitution
- b) the first ten amendments to the Constitution
- c) another name for the amendments to the Constitution
- d) a document first drafted in 1952 to address important issues left out of the Constitution

A: (b) the first ten amendments to the Constitution

12. Native Americans and African-Americans were not given the unrestricted right to vote in federal elections until _____, when the last of the unfair “poll taxes” used to keep them from voting was banned with the passage of Amendment 24.
- a) the Reconstruction period after the Civil War
 - b) 1920 (when women won the right to vote)
 - c) 1958
 - d) 1964

A: (d) 1964

13. What is the source of the following quotation? *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”*
- a) The Declaration of Independence
 - b) The Preamble to the Constitution
 - c) *The Letters of Thomas Jefferson*
 - d) The Bill of Rights

A: (a) *The Declaration of Independence*

14. What is the source of the following quotation? *“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure 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.”*
- a) The Declaration of Independence
 - b) The Preamble to the Constitution
 - c) *The Letters of Thomas Jefferson*
 - d) The Bill of Rights

A: (b) *The Preamble to the Constitution*

Additional Resources

The White House

www.whitehouse.gov

The U.S. Constitution Online

www.usconstitution.net

Government Resources

THOMAS (The Library of Congress)

<http://thomas.loc.gov/links>

The National Archives

America's Historical Documents

www.archives.gov/historical-docs

The Constitution of the United States: Questions and Answers

www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_q_and_a.html

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Moyers: Report from Philadelphia Video Clip Collection—Themes (DVD/VHS)

Filmed at Independence Hall and filled with historical images and passages from the diaries, letters, and records of the Framers themselves, this two-part set is an indispensable tool for teaching the Constitution. All 76 clips (2:35 each) are arranged into groupings that take a thematic approach to the doings and decisions of the momentous Constitutional Convention of 1787. A viewable/printable instructor's guide is available online. (2-part set, 104 minutes each) © 2007 (# 39942)

Branches of Government (DVD/VHS)

This series describes the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches of American government and how they interact in a system of checks and balances. A Cambridge Educational Production. The series includes *The Executive Branch of Government: A Study of Federal and State Government* | *How a Bill Becomes a Law* | *The Judicial Branch of Government*. (3-part series, 29-35 minutes each) © 1993-1995 (# 14442)

The Making of the Constitution (DVD/VHS)

Conforming to civics and history curriculums, this compelling program puts key events into historical perspective by examining the pressures faced by Loyalists, Patriots, and average colonists. Richly textured with historical art, video footage, and insightful commentary, it explores a fascinating mix of individuals, political philosophers, and social issues of the day. Dramatized sections provide insights into what actually went on at Independence Hall while the document was being written. (27 minutes) © 1997 (# 8096)

Evolution of the Congress (DVD/VHS)

The United States Congress is among the most influential political bodies in the world. While it adheres steadfastly to many procedures and traditions, Congress is nonetheless a markedly different institution today than might have been envisioned by our Founding Fathers. This program examines how the legislative branch of the government has evolved, exploring the intended purpose of Congress and what challenges it faces in trying to remain an essential part of our democracy. Experts featured in the program include Dick Baker, Senate Historian; Ray Smock, former Historian of the House; and Dr. Michael Gillette of the Center for Legislative Archives. (29 minutes) © 1995 (# 5939)

Amendments to the Constitution: Bill of Rights and Beyond (DVD/VHS)

This program is an indispensable tool for helping students to understand the constitutional amendment process and to see its importance in their own lives. It defines what an amendment is, explains why amendments have been needed down through the centuries, and describes the process for proposing and ratifying an amendment. Amendments used as illustrations of the process of changing the Constitution have been carefully selected for their interest value to today's students. A viewable/printable instructor's guide is available online. Correlates to National Standards for United States History Education. (18 minutes) © 2002 (# 29906)

Can the States Do It Better? (DVD/VHS)

This program explores the ongoing debate over the idea of shifting power and authority from the federal government to the states and individuals. The program goes back to the founding of the country and examines the split between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton over how much power the federal government should have, through the Civil War, to the rapid expansion of federal powers during the Great Depression and World War II, to the Great Society programs of Lyndon Johnson, to modern times. The program looks at the idea of "devolution" today, and examines in detail two of the most contentious aspects of it: welfare reform and school vouchers. The program draws on documentary footage and archival materials, and features numerous experts, including several governors and a wide range of leading academics. (56 minutes) © 1996 (# 6551)