

United States Constitution Questions

Instructions: Read the United States Constitution article. Then answer the following questions.

“Introduction” Section

1. What is the U.S. Constitution? _____

“History” Section

1. What are the Articles of Confederation, and when did they go into effect? _____

2. What was the problem with the Articles of Confederation? _____

3. How many original colonies were there? _____

4. What are the Federalist Papers? _____

5. When did the colonies approve the U.S. Constitution? _____

“Preamble” Section

1. What is the Preamble? _____

2. What is the Preamble’s main idea? _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Federal System” Section

1. What is a federal system? _____
2. How does the federal system work in the United States? _____

“Separation of Powers” Section

1. What are the three branches of government called? _____

“Check and Balances” Section

1. What is a system of checks and balances? _____

2. Who is the leader of the executive branch? _____
3. How can the Senate limit the president's power? _____

“Amendments” Section

1. What is an amendment? _____
2. What are the first 10 amendments called? _____
3. How easy or difficult is it to change the U.S. Constitution? _____
4. What are the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and why are they important? _____

5. What is the 19th Amendment, and why is it important? _____

United States Constitution Answer Key

“Introduction” Section

1. What is the U.S. Constitution? **The United States Constitution is the basic law of the United States.**

“History” Section

1. What are the Articles of Confederation, and when did they go into effect? **The Articles of Confederation served as the first constitution of the United States. They went into effect on March 1, 1781.**

2. What was the problem with the Articles of Confederation? **The Articles did not grant enough power to the central government, so the central government lacked authority over the affairs of each state.**

3. How many original colonies were there? **There were 13 original colonies.**

4. What are the Federalist Papers? **The Federalist Papers are essays written by Alexander Hamilton and others to explain the new constitution.**

5. When did the colonies approve the U.S. Constitution? **All 13 states approved it by 1790.**

“Preamble” Section

1. What is the Preamble? **The Preamble is a short explanation at the beginning of the U.S. Constitution that explains its purpose.**

2. What is the Preamble’s main idea? **The Preamble explains the purpose of the U.S. Constitution as a document to grant justice, peace, general well-being, and freedom to the people of the United States.**

“Federal System” Section

1. What is a federal system? **In a federal system, different levels of government share power.**
2. How does the federal system work in the United States? **In the United States, the national (or federal) government shares power with the governments of the states.**

“Separation of Powers” Section

1. What are the three branches of government called? The three branches of government are the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

“Check and Balances” Section

1. What is a system of checks and balances? **A system of checks and balances means that each branch of government has some power over the others.**
2. Who is the leader of the executive branch? **The president is the leader of the executive branch.**
3. How can the Senate limit the president’s power? **The Senate can limit the president’s power by rejecting the president’s choices.**

“Amendments” Section

1. What is an amendment? **An amendment is a change made to the U.S. Constitution.**
2. What are the first 10 amendments called? **The first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights.**
3. How easy or difficult is it to change the U.S. Constitution? **It is very difficult. Only 17 amendments have been added to the Constitution since 1791.**
4. What are the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and why are they important? **The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were approved after the American Civil War. These amendments abolished slavery, granted citizenship and equal legal rights to African Americans and formerly enslaved people, and gave Black men the right to vote.**
5. What is the 19th Amendment, and why is it important? **The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.**