

THE BIRTH OF THE CONSTITUTION

Organization of the Constitution

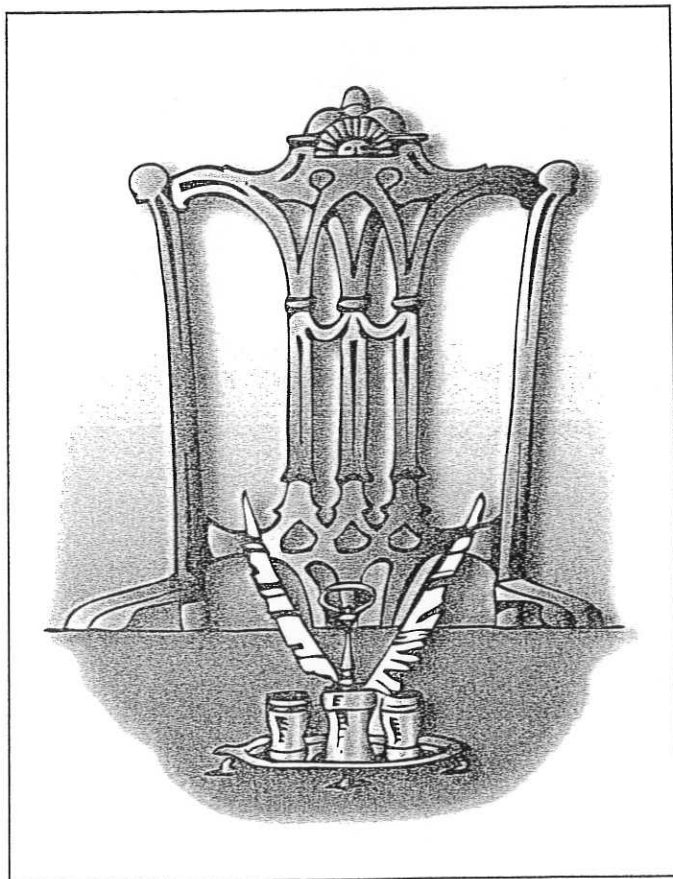
On September 17, 1787, the Constitutional Convention approved the Constitution of the United States. The document was then sent out to the states to be *ratified*, or approved, through a specific procedure set up in the Constitution. On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution, and the necessary three-fourths majority was achieved. The United States began to function under a new form of government.

The Constitution is divided into several parts. It starts with the *Preamble*, or introduction. The main body of the document consists of seven *Articles*. The final section of the Constitution contains the *Amendments*, or changes to the Constitution. There are presently 27 Amendments.

The first three Articles deal with the three separate branches of government. The last four Articles discuss the powers of the states and the procedures for ratifying and amending the Constitution. Each Article is further subdivided into Sections and then into Clauses.

On your copy of the Constitution you will notice that some phrases or sections are printed in *italics*. This indicates that these parts are no longer in effect due to the passage of time or changes made by the Amendments.

On the next page is a chart of the organization of the Constitution.



Throughout the convention Ben Franklin had noticed the back of George Washington's chair. There was a sun carved into it. "I have often and often in the course of this session looked at that behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun," Franklin observed.

Organization of the Constitution

PREAMBLE	Introduction
ARTICLE I	Legislative Branch
ARTICLE II	Executive Branch
ARTICLE III	Judicial Branch
ARTICLE IV	Relationships Among States
ARTICLE V	Amending the Constitution
ARTICLE VI	Supreme Law of the Land
ARTICLE VII	Ratifying the Constitution

AMENDMENTS:

I	Freedom of religion, press, speech, assembly, petition
II	Right to bear arms
III	Quartering of soldiers
IV	Searches and seizures
V	Life, liberty, and property
VI	Rights of the accused
VII	Right to trial by jury
VIII	Bail and punishment
IX	Rights of the people
X	Rights of the states
XI	Suits against states
XII	Election of the President
XIII	Abolition of slavery
XIV	Civil rights in the states
XV	Black suffrage
XVI	Income tax
XVII	Direct election of senators
XVIII	Prohibition
XIX	Women's suffrage
XX	"Lame duck" period
XXI	Repeal of Prohibition
XXII	Presidential term of office
XXIII	Voting in the District of Columbia
XXIV	Abolition of poll taxes
XXV	Presidential disability and succession
XXVI	Eighteen-year-old vote
XXVII	Congressional pay raises

Date _____ Name _____

THE BIRTH OF THE CONSTITUTION

Organization of the Constitution **≈ Challenges ≈**

1. Define:

Ratify: _____

Amend: _____

Article: _____

2. When was the Constitution approved by the Convention? _____

3. What date was the Constitution approved by the states? _____

4. What do you think the sun represents in Franklin's quotation? _____

5. What is the purpose of the Preamble? _____

6. How many Articles are in the Constitution? _____

7. What is Article I about? _____

... Article II? _____

... Article III? _____

8. How many Amendments have been added to the Constitution? _____

9. Why have certain phrases or sections been italicized? _____

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The Preamble

(See the Preamble)

The Preamble lists the major goals to be accomplished by the United States government under the Constitution. The importance of the Preamble and the Constitution are expressed in the first three words, "We the people . . ." The Constitution was created by the people, not by some king, dictator, or absolute ruler.

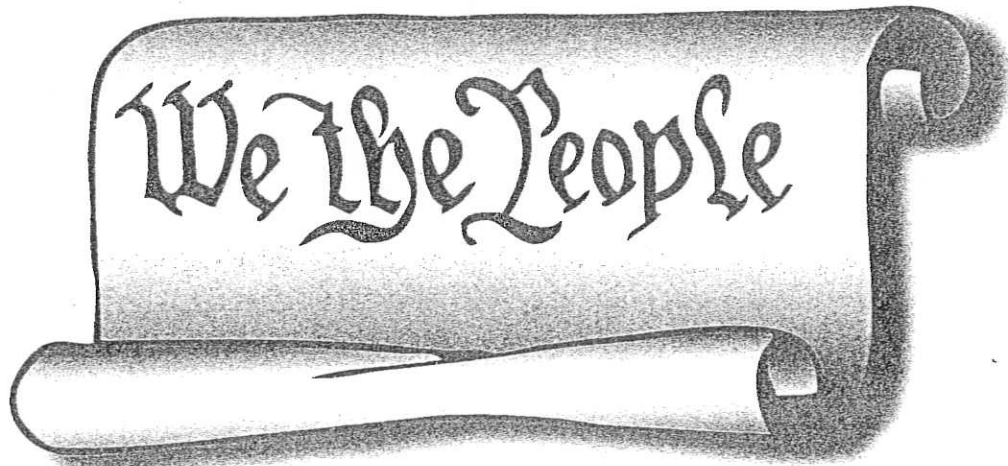
The founding fathers had six goals in mind when they set out to create the Constitution. They are:

- (1) to form a more perfect union
(set up a stronger government than they had under the Articles of Confederation)
- (2) establish justice
(improve the court system)
- (3) ensure domestic tranquility
(have peace in all states)
- (4) provide for the common defense
(protect the country from enemies)
- (5) promote the general welfare
(have good living conditions)
- (6) secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.
(have freedom for themselves and future Americans)

The Preamble expresses the hopes of the people for a good and honest government for themselves and their children.

PREAMBLE TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, Establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defense, 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.



THE BIRTH OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Preamble ≈ **Challenges** ≈

1. By whose power was the Constitution written? _____

2. Fill in the blanks:

GOALS OF THE CONSTITUTION:

(Actual words of the Constitution)

(Your own words)

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| a. | _____ | _____ |
| b. | _____ | _____ |
| c. | _____ | _____ |
| d. | _____ | _____ |
| e. | _____ | _____ |
| f. | _____ | _____ |

3. Rewrite the Preamble in your own words.

PROJECTS:

- 1. The Preamble is short, only 52 words. Memorize and recite it to the class. (Extra: do it in only one breath!)*
- 2. Bring a copy of a student organization constitution to class. How is it similar to or different from the U. S. Constitution?*