



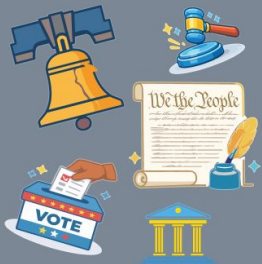
Student Workbook

Course 3

Grades 6–8

The U.S.
Constitution:
Road Map for
Freedom





The U.S. Constitution

Road Map for Freedom



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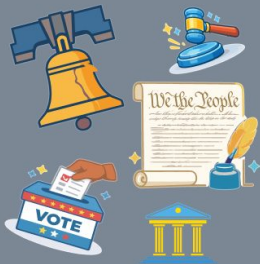
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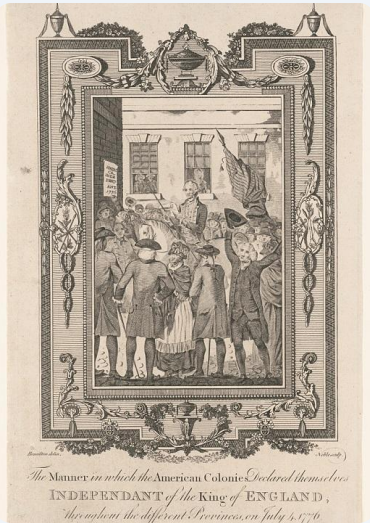
The U.S. Constitution

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Jump In

What Comes Next? Building a New Nation

The colonists declared independence, but winning freedom was only the first step.



July 4th, 1776: American colonies win independence from England

Your Challenge: Where Would You Begin?

The American colonies have declared their independence. Now they need to create a new national government. There are many important tasks, but they can't do everything at once.

If you were one of the nation's leaders, what would you do first? Choose the option you think is the most important first step.

- Write a plan for how the government will work.
- Protect the rights and freedoms of the people.
- Create laws for the new country.
- Elect national leaders.
- Establish courts to interpret the laws.

In the response box below, write what step you'd take first and explain your choice. Why do you think this should happen before the other steps?

Does the Preamble Deliver on Its Promise?

After declaring independence, the next challenge was creating a government that would actually work. The Preamble was written as the introduction to the Constitution—it explains the goals of the new government and what it is meant to do for the people.

In this activity, you'll evaluate how well the Preamble delivers on that promise.

Directions:

1. Watch the video **Schoolhouse Rock: The Preamble**
2. Listen carefully for the goals of government and think about how they connect to what you've learned about limiting power, protecting rights, and the role of each government branch.
3. Complete the two tasks below using complete sentences and specific evidence.

TASK 1 – RATE THE PREAMBLE Use this scale to decide your rating. Think about how clearly the Preamble explains the purpose of government and connects to what you've learned about power, rights, and responsibility. Then, circle your rating.

5	4	3	2	1
				
5 – Very Accurate	4 – Mostly Accurate	3 – Somewhat Accurate	2 – Slightly Accurate	1 – Not Accurate
The Preamble clearly explains the goals of government and strongly connects to protecting rights, limiting power, and serving the people.	The Preamble explains the main goals of government, but some ideas could be clearer or more detailed.	The Preamble includes a few important ideas, but it is missing key details or connections to how government actually works.	The Preamble mentions goals, but they are unclear or do not fully explain the purpose of government.	The Preamble does not clearly explain the purpose of government or connect to protecting rights or limiting power.

TASK 2 – DEFEND YOUR RATING

Now that you have chosen a rating, your job is to explain and prove why it is correct. Review response expectations (goals and success checklist) and tips (sentence starters & push your thinking). Use the next page to write your response.

Your Goals

- Explain what the Preamble means in your own words.
- Include a specific quote from the Preamble (like "establish justice" or "insure domestic tranquility").
- Connect the Preamble to real government actions (like making, enforcing, or interpreting laws).

Success Checklist

- ☐ Clearly restate your rating
- ☐ Explain what the Preamble is saying in your own words
- ☐ Connect those ideas to how government actually works
- ☐ Show whether the Preamble fully, partially, or weakly explains its purpose

Sentence Starters (Use if Needed)

- I rated the Preamble a ____ because...
- One example from the Preamble is "____," which shows...
- This connects to government because the ____ branch...
- This proves the Preamble is (accurate/not fully accurate) because...

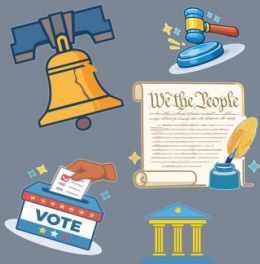
Push Your Own Thinking (For a Higher Rating)

- Does the Preamble fully explain the government's purpose, or just introduce it?
- What might be missing?
- Does it match what you saw in how the branches actually work?

Example Response:

I rated the Preamble a 4 because it clearly lists the goals of the new nation, though it serves more as an introduction than a detailed manual. In my own words, the Preamble is a mission statement explaining that the government exists to keep the peace, protect citizens, and ensure fairness for everyone. One example from the Preamble is "establish justice," which shows the commitment to creating a fair legal system for all people. This connects to government because the judicial branch interprets laws to make sure they are applied fairly, while the legislative branch creates laws that aim to protect these rights. This proves the Preamble is accurate because it sets the specific expectations that the three branches of government must actually carry out through their daily work.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue dashed lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the entire width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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Wrap Up

We the People – Write a Preamble

The Preamble explains the goals and values of a government. Now, think about the communities you belong to every day. Write a 5-7 sentence Preamble for your family or a group of friends. Explain the values that matter most, how people should treat one another, and why your "Constitution" exists.

Read the examples below before writing your own on the next page



Example 1: Family Constitution Preamble



We, the members of the Garcia Family, establish this Constitution to help us live together with respect, kindness, and responsibility. We value honesty, hard work, and supporting one another during both good times and challenges. We celebrate our culture by gathering for family meals, speaking both English and Spanish, and honoring family traditions passed down through generations. We believe everyone deserves to be heard and treated fairly. This Constitution will help us make decisions, solve problems peacefully, and strengthen our relationships. Together, we work to create a safe, caring, and joyful home for all family members.



Example 2: Friend Group Constitution Preamble



We, the members of the Friday Crew, create this Constitution to guide how we treat one another and work through challenges. We believe friendship should be built on trust, inclusion, and respect. We value listening to different opinions, supporting each other's goals, and making sure no one feels left out. Whether we are playing sports, hanging out after school, or working on group projects, we agree to communicate honestly and resolve conflicts fairly. This Constitution exists to help us stay united and protect the friendships we have built. Together, we will create a positive community where everyone belongs and can be themselves.



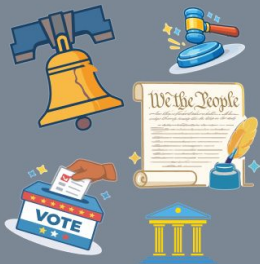


Wrap Up

We the People – Write a Preamble

- Explain why the group exists.
- Describe at least two values or goals.
- Show how members should treat one another.
- Explain how the group will work together.

Remember, your Preamble will need to describe the main goals of how your friendship group or family operates and engages with each other. Your preamble will also need to include an explanation for the purpose of the constitution.



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Jump In

Who Makes the Rules—and Who Limits Their Power?

Power shapes your life every day. It affects who makes decisions, who must follow them, and how people can challenge rules they believe are unfair.

Before learning how the Constitution divides and limits government power, think about a rule or decision that affects your daily life.

Choose one example to focus on:

- A school rule
- A team decision
- A family rule
- An online community rule
- A classroom procedure

Class Rules

1. Work as a **TEAM**
2. Be **RESPONSIBLE**
3. **LISTEN** to others
4. Be **RESPECTFUL** to everyone
5. Be **KIND** and **HELPFUL**
6. Do your **BEST**

Share Your Thinking — *Your turn! Share your answer below.*

- Who made the rule or decision?
- Who must follow it?
- Who makes sure the rule is followed?
- Can anyone question, change, or overturn it? How?
- What might happen if one person had complete power over the rule?

Keep in mind: Think back to the Get Ready question — *what happens when one person controls everything?* Consider why the framers believed government power should be divided and limited.

Power Under Pressure

When Power Gets Tested

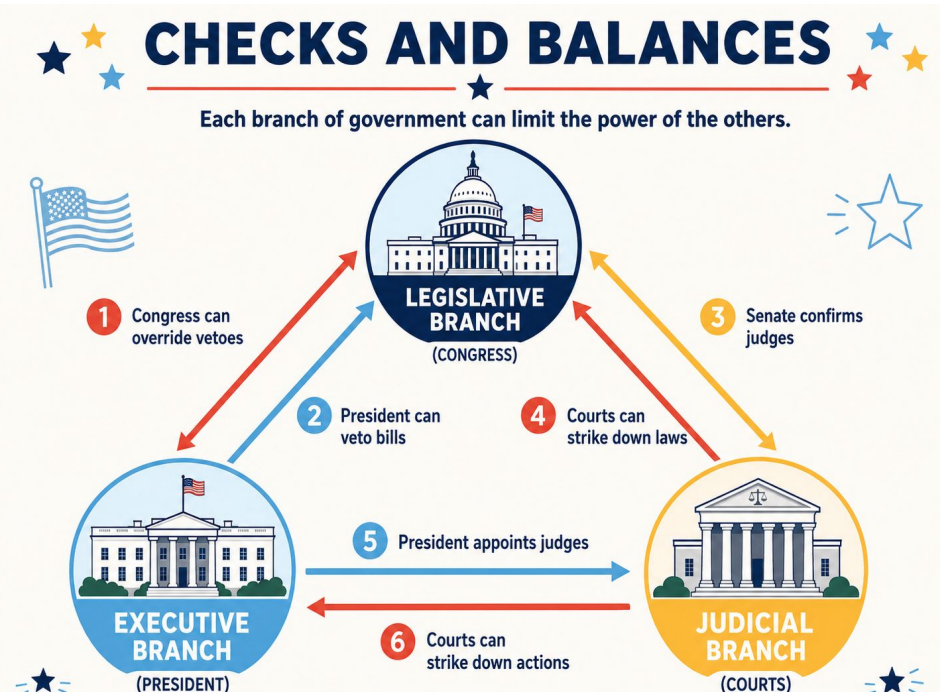
The Constitution was designed to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

But what happens when power is tested during difficult moments?

In this activity, you'll step into the role of a constitutional advisor. Instead of simply identifying the problem, your job is to analyze how the system of **checks and balances** should respond when freedom, fairness, or the rule of law may be at risk.

Directions:

1. Read each **Moment of Tension** on the next page and select two to analyze
2. Act as a **constitutional advisor**: In the response boxes on page 3, write the title of your selected **Moments of Tension** and answer each of the questions using evidence and writing in full sentences.
3. Self-assess: Use the rubric on page 4 to review and revise your work.



Select two **Moments of Tension** to analyze, then answer the questions on the next page

Moment of Tension #1

Following the Law

Congress spends months debating and passing a law that changes safety requirements for public buildings. After the bill becomes law, the president announces that they disagree with it and instructs federal agencies not to carry it out.

People begin debating whether a president should be able to ignore a law simply because they disagree with it. Some believe the president should have that choice, while others worry it gives the executive branch too much power.

Moment of Tension #2

Majority Rules vs. Rights

A school adopts a rule that prevents one student club from meeting after school because most students disagree with the club's activities. Members of the club argue the rule is unfair and violates their rights. The case eventually reaches the Supreme Court, which rules that the policy conflicts with constitutional protections and must be changed.

The decision sparks debate. Some people believe the Court protected important rights, while others believe decisions made by the majority should have been respected.

Moment of Tension #3

Safety vs. Freedom

After several accidents at crowded community festivals, Congress passes a law limiting the size of public gatherings in certain locations. Supporters believe the law will help keep people safe, while others argue it places unnecessary limits on activities that people have long been free to enjoy.

The new law leads to an important question: When, if ever, should the government be allowed to limit individual freedoms in order to protect public safety?

Moment of Tension #4

Emergency Power Expands

Following a devastating natural disaster, the president declares a national emergency so resources and aid can move quickly. At first, many citizens agree the emergency powers are necessary. Years later, however, the emergency declaration is still active, allowing the executive branch to continue making major decisions without approval from Congress.

Some people argue the powers are still needed, while others worry the balance of power is beginning to disappear and that citizens have fewer ways to challenge decisions being made.

Constitutional Advisor

To analyze the **Moments of Tension**, you'll answer 3 questions in the space provided on the next page. A strong response will:

- Identify which branch has the greatest influence in the situation.
- Explain how power could become unbalanced.
- Describe how checks and balances could respond.
- Use constitutional vocabulary correctly.

Now, as the **Constitutional Advisor**, answer the following questions.

Moment of Tension:

- 1. Which branch currently holds the most power?** Executive Judicial or Legislative
- 2. In 2-3 sentences, explain why the situation could become dangerous or unfair?**

- 3. In 2-3 sentences, describe how another branch could limit, challenge, or balance that power.**

Moment of Tension:

- 1. Which branch currently holds the most power?** Executive Judicial or Legislative
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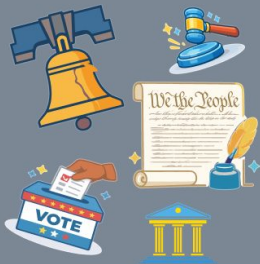
- 3. In 2-3 sentences, describe how another branch could limit, challenge, or balance that power.**

Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Constitutional Scholar 3 pts	Thoughtful Historian 2 pts	Developing Historian 1 pt
Understanding of Power & Branches	Correctly identifies branches of government and clearly explains how checks and balances work in the situation.	Identifies most branches correctly, but explanations of checks and balances may need more detail or clarity.	Shows limited understanding of branches of government or how power is balanced.
Analysis of Fairness & Rights	Thoughtfully explains why the situation could become unfair or dangerous and strongly connects it to rights, freedoms, or the rule of law.	Explains some concerns about fairness or rights, but analysis may be incomplete or general.	Limited explanation of fairness, rights, or why the situation matters.
Reasoning & Constitutional Thinking	Uses strong reasoning and clear constitutional thinking to explain how another branch could respond or restore balance.	Provides reasonable ideas for balancing power, but reasoning may need more support or explanation.	Response is unclear, incomplete, or lacks constitutional reasoning.
Total Points _____ / 9			

Score Guide

- 8–9 Points → Constitutional Scholar**
 You demonstrate strong historical thinking, constitutional understanding, and thoughtful civic reasoning.
- 5–7 Points → Thoughtful Historian**
 You show good understanding and analysis, with opportunities to deepen your explanations and connections.
- 3–4 Points → Developing Historian**
 You are beginning to build your understanding of constitutional thinking and checks and balances.



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Wrap Up

From Ideas to Action: Solving Problems Through Government

Think about a problem in your school, neighborhood, city, or community that you would like to improve.

Answer the questions in the space below:

- What is the problem? *Describe the issue in one or two sentences.*
- What rule, policy, or law would you propose to help solve this problem?
- Which branch of government would you go to first? *Explain why.*
- *Bonus:* What might happen if another branch disagreed with your proposed law? *How could checks and balances test your solution before it becomes final?*

EXAMPLE



PROBLEM:

There are not enough safe places for kids to play after school.



PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Create a law that funds more community recreation programs and improves neighborhood parks.



BRANCH:

Legislative.

Lawmakers can propose and vote on new laws that address community needs.

Problem:

Proposed Solution:

Branch:

Bonus - *Possible Checks & Balances:*
