

Summaries of Constitutional Amendments

We the People of the United States, in order to secure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Amendment 1

Congress may not violate the rights of freedom of religion, speech, press, peaceable assembly, and petition.

Amendment 2

Each state has the right to maintain a militia. Individuals can own and use weapons.

Amendment 3

The government may not quarter, or house, soldiers in the people's homes during peacetime without the people's permission.

Amendment 4

The government may not search or take a person's property without a warrant.

Amendment 5

A person may not be tried twice for the same crime and does not have to testify against him/herself.

Amendment 6

A person charged with a crime has the right to a speedy trial, an impartial jury, and a lawyer.

Amendment 7

A person in a civil case is guaranteed a trial by jury.

Amendment 8

A person is protected from excessive or unreasonable fines or cruel and unusual punishment.

Amendment 9

The people have rights other than those mentioned in the Constitution.

Amendment 10

Any power not given to the Federal Government by the Constitution is a power of either the State or the people.

Amendment 11

Citizens of a State or foreign country may not sue another State in federal court.

Amendment 12

The Electoral College will vote separately for President and Vice President rather than together in one ballot.

Amendment 13

Slavery is outlawed in the United States.

Amendment 14

States shall not deprive persons of life, liberty, or property without due process. The Three-Fifths Compromise is repealed, and all persons are counted in the census.

Amendment 15

Citizens are guaranteed the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or status of former slave.

Amendment 16

Congress has the right to set up an income tax.

Amendment 17

U.S. Senators are elected directly by voters in each State.

Amendment 18

Making or selling alcohol is illegal.

Amendment 19

Citizens are guaranteed the right to vote, regardless of sex.

Amendment 20

The President takes office on January 20, and Congress's term begins January 3.

Amendment 21

This amendment repealed the 18th Amendment.

Amendment 22

No president can be elected to more than two terms.

Amendment 23

People living in Washington, D.C., may vote in presidential and vice presidential election. D.C. has three presidential electors.

Amendment 24

People may vote for President, Vice President, and Congress without paying a voting tax.

Amendment 25

The Vice President becomes the President if the President is disabled.

Amendment 26

Citizens who are at least 18 years of age are guaranteed the right to vote.

Amendment 27

Any pay raise the House of Representatives may approve for its members does not take effect until after the next congressional election.

Directions- After each statement, fill in the number of the amendment that is related to the particular right listed. Example: I can say whatever I want (# ____).

Once the Constitution was written, the Founding Fathers created a list of rights that the government could not violate. These are the first ten amendments, also called the Bill of Rights. Throughout the course of our country's history, other additions and changes have been made to the Constitution through various amendments. They cover everything from voting rights to taxes. They are all part of our nation's Constitution.

I love being an American for many reasons, but mostly because I have so much freedom! I have so many freedoms that allow me to speak my opinion openly (# ____) and follow whatever religion I want to (# ____). I have the right to own and carry a gun if I choose to (# ____). I have the right to protest against the government peacefully (# ____) and I can even sue (petition) the government if I don't agree with something that they are making me do (# ____)! I can publish my thoughts freely (# ____) and I am free to organize and participate in a state militia (# ____)! These are all rights that protect me from too much government power.

However, I also have lots of rights that explain government's responsibility to protect me! If I am accused of a criminal offense, I have the right to a speedy trial (# ____) as well as a trial by a jury of my peers (# ____). This limits the possibility of one corrupt person deciding my fate. I also have the right to know all the charges against me if I am charged with a crime (# ____) and I cannot be charged excessive fines or bail (# ____). I have the right to a lawyer (# ____) even if I can't afford one! If I am charged with a crime and brought to court, I don't have to testify if I might incriminate myself (# ____) and if I am found innocent and then new evidence is found afterwards, I can't be charged for that crime again (# ____) no matter what! If I am found guilty of a crime by a jury of my peers, I am still protected from any kind of cruel or unusual punishment (# ____). My life, liberty, and property cannot be taken away from me without going through the proper due process of law (# ____). Protection of property must have been really important to the founding fathers, because no one can search or seize me or my property without proper cause and a warrant (# ____).

My right to vote is arguably my most important right, because it means that I have a say in my government. Slavery was outlawed in the U.S. (# ____), but some states tried to limit former slaves' ability to vote, so that's why they had to clarify voting rights. I am guaranteed my right to vote regardless of my race, color, or former slave status (# ____). Both men and women can vote (# ____) at the age of 18 (# ____), and nobody has to pay any kind of tax in order to vote (# ____).

At one time, it was illegal to sell alcohol (# ____), but now when I turn 21 I can go party (# ____)!! I hope I have enough money to go party since the Federal government can tax my income (# ____). Thankfully, I can vote for which Senator I want to represent me (# ____). The Founding Fathers were smart enough to realize that they couldn't list every right, and they made sure that everyone knew that I have other rights that may not be mentioned in the Constitution (# ____). They did something similar for the states; making sure that any responsibility that is not directly given to the Federal government is given to the states or the people (# ____). My life would be very different if I didn't have so many freedoms!