



Lesson Plan: The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means

Grade Level: 5th

Context of the Unit: This is a fifth grade social studies unit focusing on how the original thirteen colonies transitioned from independent states to a united nation. Through a series of readings and activities students will first learn about what life was like during and immediately following the American Revolution. They will then participate in further readings and hands-on activities aimed at increasing their understanding of the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Context of the Lesson: Through participation in this lesson students will learn what the Constitution says, what it means, and its importance. Students will be able to identify how the Constitution addressed the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation, how our government derives its power from the people, and how our government is composed of three branches of government.

Prior to this lesson, students will have studied how life was different during 1787. They will have analyzed the Articles of Confederation and will understand the problems and weaknesses of this document. Through the core literature book SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz, a power point presentation, and the creation of a flip book, students will understand the challenges surrounding the creation of the Constitution, what the Constitution says, and what it actually means. From here, students will go on to examine the significance of the Bill of Rights, and ultimately, at the conclusion of this unit, they will understand how our government was created by the people, for the people, and that as citizens of the United States they have a responsibility to protect the rights established in the Constitution through active participation in government.



Standards Addressed:

History Social Studies Standards:

5.7 Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution’s significance as the foundation of the American republic.

5.7 – 1 List the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation as set forth by their critics.

5.7 – 2 Explain the significance of the new Constitution of 1787 including the struggles over its Ratification and the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.

5.7 –3 Understand the fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy, including how the government derives its power from the people and the primacy of individual liberty.

5.7 –4 Understand how the Constitution is designed to secure our liberty by both empowering And limiting central government and compare the powers granted to the citizens, Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court with those reserved for the states.

English/Language Arts Standards:

Reading:

Main idea and details

Analyze text

Draw inferences and conclusions

Writing:

2.3 Write a persuasive letter or composition:

2.a State a clear position in support of a proposal

2.b Support a position with relevant evidence

Common Core State Standards for ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects K-5

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing K-5



Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Objectives:

Students will:

- 🇺🇸 be able to identify why the Articles of Confederation gave the central government limited powers.
- 🇺🇸 Be able to list the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.
- 🇺🇸 **Identify those individuals who were instrumental in creating the United States.**
- 🇺🇸 **Identify the Federalist and Anti-Federalist points of view regarding the new Constitution.**
- 🇺🇸 **Know the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.**
- 🇺🇸 Know the first 10 Amendments and the rights they protect.
- 🇺🇸 **Understand how the United States government derives its power from the people.**
- 🇺🇸 **Be able to identify the three branches of government and the roles and duties of each branch.**
- 🇺🇸 **Be able to identify the role the citizen plays within the three branches of government.**
- 🇺🇸 Understand the judicial system and the responsibilities of the American citizen within this system.
- 🇺🇸 Understand how the judicial system calls on citizens to safeguard the individual liberties of individual Americans.



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Big Ideas:

Power, Authority, and Governance

Understanding the historical developments of structures, power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary US society, as well as in other parts of the world, is essential for developing civic competence.

Civic Ideals and Practices

An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. All people have a stake in examining civic ideals and practices across time and diverse societies, as well as at home, and in determining how to close the gap between present practices and the ideals upon which our democratic republic is based.

Essential Questions:

What are the duties and responsibilities of an American citizen?

What is the significance of the United States Constitution?

Higher Order Thinking Questions:

Do you think the delegates at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were right to create a brand new document (the Constitution) or do you think they should have reworked the Articles of Confederation?

After analyzing the United States Constitution, what do you think is the most significant article of the document (including the preamble) and why?

In your opinion, which document – The Articles of Confederation, The United States Constitution, or the Bill of Rights – has had the biggest impact our nation and why?



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Assessment:

Throughout this unit students will be evaluated both formally and informally through the use of student participation, teacher observation, social studies journals, quick writes, persuasive writing assignment, projects, and a multiple choice test.

Students will create a social studies journal which will be turned in for a formal grade based on a point system. The social studies journal will be divided into three sections labeled accordingly: The United States Constitution, Vocabulary, and Daily Warm-Ups.

Students will also write a persuasive essay in which they will state whether or not the American citizen should ratify the Constitution or not. This will also be graded on a rubric.

Students will also be given a multiple choice pre and post test. All students should improve on the post test and the post test will be graded by percent.

Quality Criteria:

Persuasive Essay – Graded using a rubric that evaluates the following components: Social Studies content, writing strategies, writing applications, and conventions.

Social Studies Journal – Graded using a rubric that evaluates the following components: Social Studies content, neatness, and creativity.

Formal Assessment – Multiple choice test graded on a 100 percent scale.

Assessment:

Informal assessment can be made from the entry journals from the days specifically linked to the lesson “The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means” can be used to assess student learning on a daily basis.



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Student summarizing from their foldable book can be used to assess student understanding of what the Constitution says and means.

The final page of the student foldable booklet where students compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution can be used as a formal assessment to student understanding of the two documents.



Persuasive Writing Rubric:

	Social Studies	Applications (Genre)	Writing Strategies (Traits)	Conventions
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Clearly and effectively states their position for or against ratification of the Constitution *Supporting details are logical to the position taken *Clearly and effectively is able to compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution through their position. *Student addresses the concerns of the opposing view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Establishes a clear, well-crafted position for the decision to ratify or oppose the Constitution. *Supports the position convincingly and logically with arguments and relevant and pertinent evidence and details for each argument *Organization is clear, follows a simple organizational pattern and uses key points to make the argument *The opposing view's concerns about ratification are distinctly and directly addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writes a multiple-paragraph position paper that clearly establishes the position and the important supporting ideas, in a convincing, logical sequence *Clearly supports the focus with carefully chosen details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a well-planned logical order *Concluding paragraph summarizes important details and provides closure to the arguments and clearly restates the position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contains few, if any errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling and sentence structure.) *Errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *States a position for or against the ratification of the United States Constitution. *Supporting details are logical to the position taken * Is able to compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution through their position. *Student attempts to address the concerns of the opposing view, however may simply list the reasons previously stated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *States a clear position for the decision to ratify or oppose the Constitution. *Supports the position logically with arguments and relevant evidence and details for each argument *Organization is clear and follows a simple organizational pattern *The opposing view's concerns about ratification are addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writes a multiple-paragraph position paper that establishes a topic and the important supporting ideas, in a logical sequence *Supports the focus with details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a logical order *Concluding paragraph summarizes important ideas and restates the position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure.) *Errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing



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<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *May or may not clearly state their position for or against the ratification of the United States Constitution. *Supporting details do not appear to be logical *May or may not compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution through their position. *Student does not address the concerns of the opposing view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *States a vague position for the decision to ratify or oppose the Constitution. *Supports the position with weak arguments and evidence or details that may be irrelevant or inconclusive *Organization is loosely followed and may simply be a listing of items. *The opposing view's concerns about ratification may be acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writes a limited multiple-paragraph position paper that alludes to a to a position and includes some supporting ideas in a loose sequence *Generally supports the position with details and transitional expressions that may be vague and may not clearly link paragraphs together *Concluding paragraph may merely restate the position or summarize a previous idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contains several errors in the conventions of the English language (Grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure.) *Errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Position for or against the ratification of the United States Constitution is omitted. *Supporting details are weak or omitted *Is unable to include a comparison to the Articles of Confederation. *Student does not address the concerns of the opposing view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Position may or may not be stated for the decision to ratify or oppose the Constitution. *Position may or may not be supported by any arguments, evidence, or details *Organization is lacking and may be a mere listing of items *The opposing view's concerns about ratification are not addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writes a single paragraph position paper that may or may not address the topic and/or supporting details in no discernable order *Few details are provided and no transitional expressions are used to link paragraphs *May include an introduction but ends abruptly with no summary of the main ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contains numerous errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure.) *Errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing



Lesson Plan: The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means

Timeframe:

This entire unit, assuming you teach Social Studies for approximately 1 hour per day, 5 days per week, will take between 4 – 6 weeks. This particular lesson, which includes the reading of the book SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution, (allotting for 1 hour per day, 5 days a week) will take approximately 5 to 6 days.

Hook:

- *Pass out the Anticipation Guide regarding the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the framing of the United States Constitution. Give the students between 5 – 7 minutes to answer the questions.
- *Read the questions out loud to the class and ask the students to share their responses.
- *Have students place the Anticipation Guide in their journal so they can revisit it at the conclusion of the lesson.

Into:

- *Pass out student books, SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution!, and allow students between 2 – 4 minutes to browse through the book examining the illustrations so students can make predictions.
- *Ask students to share their predictions with the class. The teacher can chart these predictions to revisit at the end of the story.
- *Read the story TO the class. (This part of the lesson should take approximately 3 days. Each day before you begin reading you can have the students respond to a journal prompt regarding the book and the previous days reading.)
- *Journal Prompts to Consider:
 - *Name some of the “Founding Fathers” and explain their role at the Constitutional Convention.
 - *Who was Edmund Randolph and what was the Virginia Plan?
 - *What prevented many states from immediately adopting the Constitution?
 - *How did the Constitution fix the shortcomings found in the Articles of Confederation?
 - *What is the system of checks and balances?



Through:

- *Pass out Flip Books and power point handouts to students.
- *Have students place the title on their flip books and label each tab.
- *Have students cut and paste each Article under the appropriate tab.
- *Once all students have completed the above steps begin the power point presentation. The power point presentation should be directly taught. Use the “What it says” slides to discuss such things as spelling, why the Founding Fathers capitalized certain words, and ask the students what THEY think each article means before actually moving to the “What it means” slides.
- *Students should paraphrase or summarize the “what it means” slide into their own words.
- *At the completion of the power point, students should be given time to color and illustrate their flip books.

Beyond:

There are actually TWO beyond activities that can be completed with this assignment.

- *Have students create a Double Bubble Map where they compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with The Constitution.
- *Pass out Persuasive Writing Prompt and have students complete the essay on whether or not they think their state should ratify the constitution or not.

Special Needs of Students Considered in this Lesson:

1. For those English Language Learners and students not yet reading at grade level a series of vocabulary lessons prior to the lessons on the Articles of Confederation, **The Constitution**, and the Bill of Rights, are conducted to help make the material more accessible.
2. For those English Language Learners and students not reading at grade level the story SHHH! We're Writing the Constitution should be read TO the class.
3. Sentence starters can also be posted on the wall for student use when responding to the journal prompts.
4. Illustrations referencing the material in the Constitution also can make the material more accessible for the English Language Learners.



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5. For GATE students, students can be expected to fill in the “What it Means Section” without teacher guidance and then share out to class.
6. GATE students can also be expected to complete the writing assessment with minimal teacher guidance.
7. Multiple lessons throughout this unit rely heavily on Thinking Maps and Foldable books making information more accessible to different learning modalities.

Extension Ideas:

1. Students can write a class or school constitution.
2. Students can research and present an oral/visual report on one of the Founding Fathers.
3. Students can research and present Constitutions from other countries.
4. Students can compare and contrast the Federal Constitution with the Constitution from their state.



Lesson Plan: The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means

Materials:

- 🗨️ Student copies of [Shhh! We're Writing the Constitution!](#)
- 🗨️ Power Point "What the Constitution Says and What it Means"
- 🗨️ Handouts on "What the Constitution Says"
- 🗨️ Student Flap Booklets

References:

- [Our Constitution](#) by Donald A. Richie & Justice Learning.org
- [Our Living Constitution Then and Now](#) by Jerry Aten
- [Shh! We're Writing the Constitution](#) by Jean Fritz



Lesson Plan: The Constitution: What it Says and What it Means

Forming the United States Government

Persuasive Writing Document

You have just returned to your state following the Constitutional Convention of 1787. You must now persuade your state representatives and citizens on whether or not they should vote in favor of ratification or not. Write a persuasive essay in which you state whether you think your state should ratify the new constitution or not. Give supporting details to back up your decision. Don't forget to address the concerns of the opposing view.

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Article I

What it says:

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

Article II

What it says:

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the Term of four years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected as follows:

Article II

What it says:

Each state shall appoint, in such a Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

Article II

What it says:

The Congress may determine the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

Article III

What it says:

The Judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such Inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the Supreme and Inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behavior, and shall at states Times, receive for their Services a Compensation which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

Article IV

What it says:

Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other state. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records, and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

Article V

What it says:

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses, shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several states

Article V

What it says (continued):

Of by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

Article VI

What it says:

1. All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as the Confederation.

Article VI

What it says (continued):

2. This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Article IV

What it says (continued):

3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and Judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

Article VII

What it says:

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

The Preamble

What it says:

We the people of the United States in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, Insure 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 United States Constitution



What It Says
And
What It Means



The Preamble

What it says:

We the people of the United States in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure 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 Preamble

What it means:

The preamble expresses the PURPOSE of the United States Constitution.

*The federal government gains its power from the people – not the states.

*The role of the government is to: maintain peace at home, provide national defense, promote the well-being of the people, and protect their liberties.



All individual rights and federal powers are set out in the articles and amendments that follow the preamble.



Article I

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.



Article I

What it means:

*The framers of the Constitution separated the powers of government into three branches –

1. Congress

*which has legislative power (the power to pass laws)

2. The President

*which has executive power (the power to administer the laws)

3. The Courts

*which has judicial power (the power to interpret laws and decide legal disputes)

Article I

What it also means:

This separation of powers ensures that no one person or group could create, administer, and interpret the laws at the same time, and that each branch would serve as a check on the power of the other two branches.



Article I



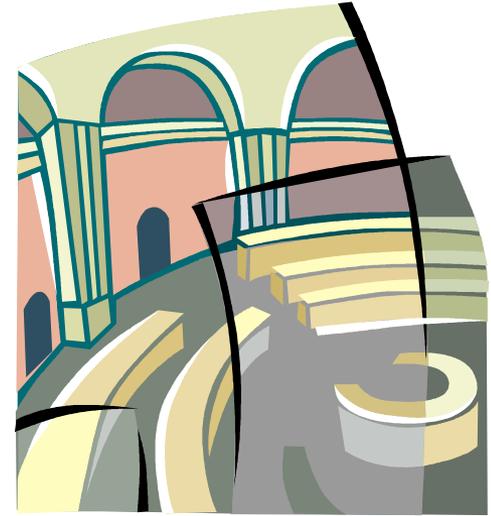
It also means that:

The Congress of the United States shall be bicameral, or divided into two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The creation of two legislative bodies reflected a compromise between the power of the states and the people.

Article I

Section 2



What it says:

Clauses 1 & 2

1. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of several States.
2. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States.

Article I

Section 2



What it means:

Clauses 1&2

The House of Representatives is composed of members chosen every two years by the voters of each state.

There are only 3 qualifications:

1. Must be at least 25 years old.
2. Must have been a US citizen for at least 7 years.
3. Must live in the state from which they are chosen.

Article I

Section 2

What it says:

Clauses 3, 4 & 5

3. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other Persons.

Article I

Section 2

What it says:

Clauses 3, 4, &5

4. When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such vacancies.
5. The House of Representatives shall choose their Speakers and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Article 1

Section 2

What it means:

Clauses 3,4, &5

3. Set the number of members of the first House of Representatives from each of the original 13 colonies, declared the amount of taxes would depend on the number of citizens in each state.
4. The governor of the state can call for a special election to fill any vacancy if a member dies or resigns midterm.
5. Authorized the House to elect its own Speaker.

The House holds the power of impeachment.

Article I

Section 3

What it says:

Clauses 1, 2, &3

1. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of 2 Senators from each state.
2. Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes.
3. No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of Thirty Years, and been nine years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

Article I

Section 3

What it means:

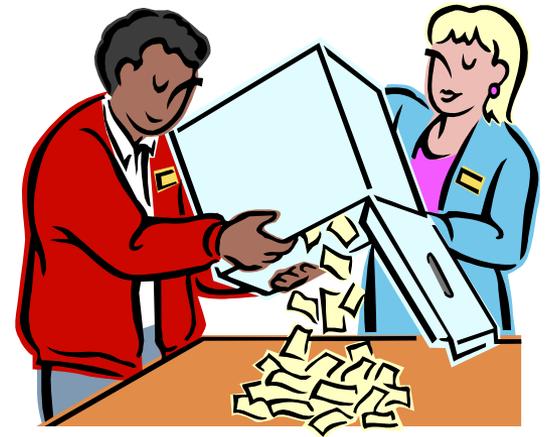
Clauses 1,2, &3

1. The Senate has two senators from each state.
2. The Senate is divided into 3 classes and elections are held on a staggered basis so that one class, or $1/3$ of the senators, stands for election every 2 years.
3. Senators must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the U.S. for at least 9 years, and live in the state they represent.

What else did Article I do?

Section 3; Clauses 4 – 7:

*Established that the Vice President was to be the president of the Senate and only votes in the case of a tie.



What else did Article I do?

Section 4 – Clauses 1&2

- *The Constitution gives the state legislatures the task of determining how congressional elections are held.
- *As a general rule, Congress sets its own schedule for how frequently it meets. But, the Constitution provides only that it must meet once a year.

More Article I!

Section 5 – Clauses 1,2,3, &4:

1. The House of Representatives and the Senate are in charge of determining whether an election of one of its own member is legitimate.
2. Both the House and Senate need a majority of its members present in order to do business.
3. Both bodies must keep and publish a journal of their proceedings, including how members voted.
4. To close down for three days, consent from the other chamber must be given.

AND STILL MORE!

Article I

Section 6

Clauses 1 & 2



1. Members of Congress are entitled to be paid for their service from the US Treasury.
2. The Constitution protects legislators from arrests in civil lawsuits, but they may be arrested in criminal matters.



Article I

Section 7

Clauses 1,2, &3

When it comes to raising and spending money, the House of Representatives must begin the process.



Article I

Section 8

Clauses 1 – 18

The 18 clauses of Article 1, Section 8 specify the powers of Congress in great detail.

1. Congress has the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.
2. To borrow Money on the credit of the US.
3. To regulate Commerce with foreign nations
4. To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout US.
5. To coin money.
6. To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting.

7. To establish Post Offices and post Roads
8. To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.
9. To constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court.
10. To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations.
11. To declare war.
12. To raise and support Armies.

13. To provide and maintain a Navy.
14. To make Rule for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.
15. To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the Laws of the Union
16. To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia.
17. Establish the District of Columbia as the Seat of the United States Government.
18. To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers.

Article II

What it says:

1. The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four years, and, together with the Vice-President, chosen for the same Term, be elected as follows:



Article II

What it says:

Each state shall appoint, in such a Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

Article II

What it says:

The Congress may determine the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.



Article II



What it means:

- *The Constitution establishes that the President of the United States has the power to run the executive branch of the government.
- *The President and Vice President are elected at the same time and serve the same 4 year term.
- *Rather than being elected directly by the people, the President is elected by members of the Electoral College.

Article III

What it says:

The judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behavior, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services a Compensation which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

Article III



What it means:

Article III establishes the federal court system!

- *The first section creates the U.S. Supreme Court as the federal system's highest court.
- *It establishes that judges will serve for life – as long as they do not violate their oath.
- *The Supreme Court has 9 members appointed by the President with the consent of the majority of the Senate.
- *Congress has the power to create and organize the lower federal courts which operate in every state.

Article IV

What it says:

Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.



Article IV



What it means:

Each state must respect and honor the state laws and court orders of the other states, even when its own laws are different.

Congress also has the power to determine how the states honor each other's acts, records, and court decisions.

Article V

What it says:

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

Article V



What it says – continued:

The several States, of by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

Article V

What it means:

The framers of the Constitution realized that over time the nation would want to make changes to the Constitution and Article V simply establishes a process to allow this to happen.



Article VI

What it says:

1. All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.



Article VI

What it says (cont.):

2. This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.



Article VI

What it says (cont.):

3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

Article VI



What it means:

1. The new Constitution recognized that the debts of the previous government under the Articles of Confederation were still valid.
2. If a state law is in conflict with a federal law, federal law must prevail.
3. All federal and state officials must take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. And, public officials cannot be required to practice or pledge allegiance to any particular religion in order to hold office.



Article VII

What it says:

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.



Article VII

What it means:

Unlike the Articles of Confederation, which needed the unanimous consent of the thirteen states to make changes in the structure of government, the Constitution required ratification by only nine of the states for the new government to go into effect.

