



Civics in Action

A Citizenship Handbook

We the People

...domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, and secure to ourselves and our Posterity, all the Blessings and Advantages of Liberty.

Article I

[Faded background text of the Constitution follows]



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Guide to Reading

Main Idea

For more than 200 years, the Constitution has provided the framework for the United States government and has helped preserve the basic rights of American citizens.

Key Terms

preamble, domestic tranquility, popular sovereignty, republicanism, federalism, enumerated powers, reserved powers, concurrent powers, amendment, implied powers, judicial review

Read to Learn

- why the Constitution is the nation's most important document.
- the goals of the Constitution.
- the principles that form the basis of the Constitution.

Goals of the Constitution

The **Preamble**, or introduction, to the Constitution reflects the basic principle of American government—the right of the people to govern themselves. It also lists six goals for the United States government:

“ . . .to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [defense], promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

These goals guided the Constitution's Framers as they created the new government. They remain as important today as they were when the Constitution was written.

To Form a More Perfect Union Under the Articles of Confederation, the states functioned almost like independent nations. For the most part, they did not work together on important matters such as defense and finances. This lack of unity could have been dangerous for the nation during times of crisis. To form “a more perfect Union” the Framers believed the states needed to agree to operate as a single country and cooperate on major issues.

To Establish Justice For the Framers, treating each citizen equally was one of the fundamental principles on which to build the new nation.

The Constitution provides a national system of courts to protect the people's rights, and to hear cases involving violations of federal law and disputes between the states.

To Insure Domestic Tranquility Shays's Rebellion began in 1786 and shocked Americans. The United States had become a self-governing nation, yet a group of people had resorted to violence to express their anger over government policies. The Constitution provides a strong central government to “insure **domestic Tranquility**”—that is, to keep peace among the people.

To Provide for the Common Defense The Articles of Confederation required nine states to approve any decision by the Confederation Congress to build an army or navy. The Constitution gives the federal government the power to maintain armed forces to protect the country and its citizens from attack.

To Promote the General Welfare The Declaration of Independence states that the purpose of government is to promote “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” for the people of the nation. The Constitution includes ways to “promote the general Welfare”—or well-being—of the people by maintaining order, protecting individual liberties, regulating commerce and bankruptcies, and promoting science and technology by granting patents.

To Secure the Blessings of Liberty The American colonists fought the Revolutionary War to gain their liberty. The Framers believed that preserving liberty should also be a major goal of the Constitution. The Constitution guarantees that no American's basic rights will be taken away now or for posterity (generations not yet born).

Reading Check Analyzing What is the purpose of the Preamble?

Major Principles

The principles outlined in the Constitution were the Framers' solution to the problems of a representative government. The Constitution rests on seven major principles: (1) popular sovereignty, (2) republicanism, (3) limited govern-

ment, (4) federalism, (5) separation of powers, (6) checks and balances, and (7) individual rights.

Popular Sovereignty The Declaration of Independence states that governments derive their powers from "the consent of the governed." The opening words of the Constitution, "We the people," reinforce this idea of **popular sovereignty**—or "authority of the people."

Republicanism Under **republicanism**, voters hold sovereign power. The people elect representatives and give them the responsibility to make laws and conduct government. For most Americans today, the terms *republic* and *representative democracy* mean the same thing: a system of limited government where the people are the ultimate source of governmental power.

Limited Government The Framers saw both benefits and risks in creating a powerful national government. They agreed that the nation needed strong central authority but feared misuse of power. They wanted to prevent the government from using its power to give one

Voting is a basic political right of all citizens.

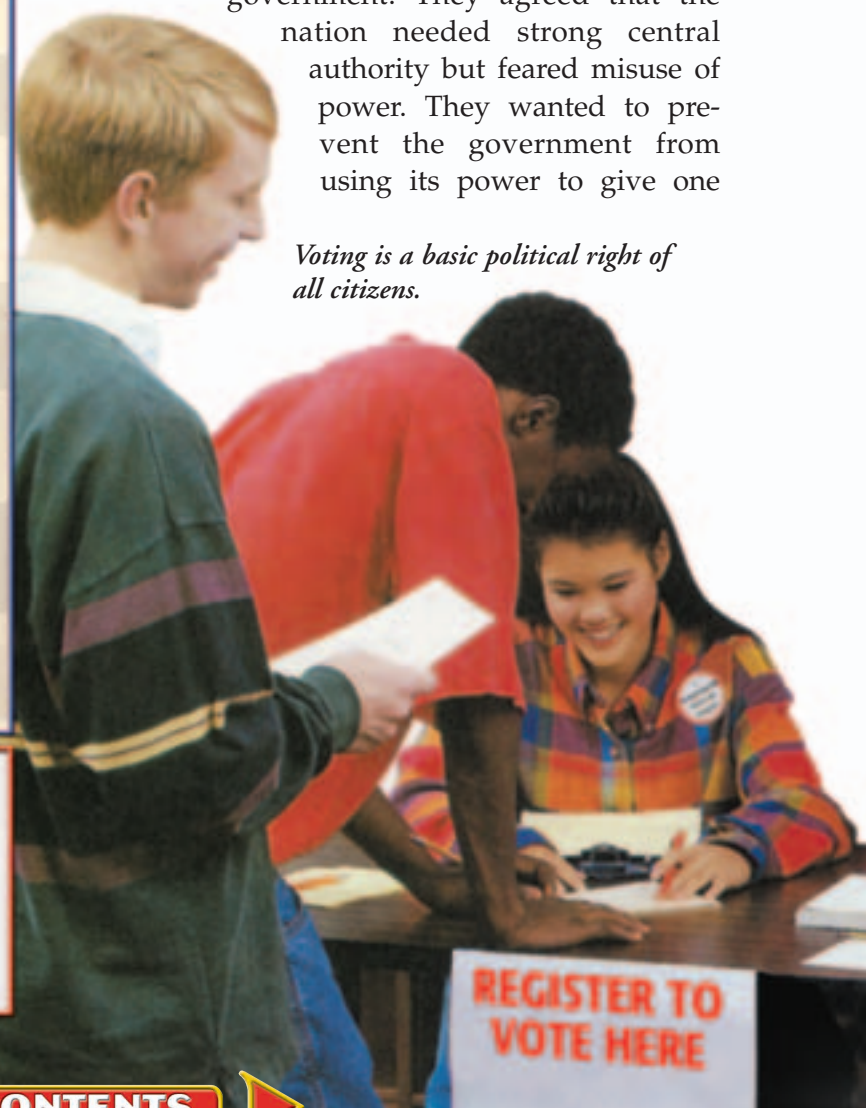
Major Principles of the Constitution

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Popular Sovereignty | People are the source of the government's power. |
| Republicanism | People elect their political representatives. |
| Limited Government | The Constitution limits the actions of government by specifically listing powers it does and does not have. |
| Federalism | In this government system, power is divided between national and state governments. |
| Separation of Powers | Each of the three branches of government has its own responsibilities. |
| Checks and Balances | Each branch of government holds some control over the other two branches. |
| Individual Rights | Basic liberties and rights of all citizens are guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. |

Chart Skills

The Principles outlined in the Constitution were the Framers' solution to the complex problems presented by a representative government.

Analyzing Information What is the relationship between checks and balances and separation of powers?



The Federal System



group special advantages or to deprive another group of its rights. By creating a limited government, they made certain the government would have only those powers granted by the people.

Article I of the Constitution states the powers that the government has and the powers that it does not have. Other limits on government appear in the Bill of Rights, which guarantees certain rights and liberties to the people.

Limited government can be described as the “rule of law.” No people or groups are above the law. Government officials must obey the law.

Federalism When the states banded together under the Constitution, they gave up some independence. States could no longer print their own money or tax items imported from other states. Nevertheless, each state governed itself much as it had in the past.

This system, in which the power to govern is shared between the national government and the states, is called the federal system, or **federalism**. Our federal system allows the people of each state to deal with their needs in their own way. At the same time, it lets the states act together to deal with matters that affect all Americans.

The Constitution defines three types of government powers. **Enumerated powers** belong only to the federal government. These include the power to coin money, regulate interstate and foreign trade, maintain the armed forces, and create federal courts (Article I, Section 8).

The second kind of powers are those retained by the states, known as **reserved powers**. They include such rights as the power to establish

schools, pass marriage and divorce laws, and regulate trade within a state. Although reserved powers are not listed specifically in the Constitution, the Tenth Amendment says that all powers not specifically granted to the federal government “are reserved to the States.”

The third set of powers defined by the Constitution are **concurrent powers**—powers shared by the state and federal governments. Among these powers are the right to raise taxes, borrow money, provide for public welfare, and administer criminal justice.

When conflicts arise between state law and federal law, the Constitution declares that the Constitution is “the supreme Law of the Land.” Conflicts between state law and federal law must be settled in a federal court.

Separation of Powers To prevent any single group or institution in government from gaining too much authority, the Framers divided the federal government into three branches: **legislative, executive, and judicial**. Each branch has its own functions and powers. The legislative branch, Congress, makes the laws. The executive branch, headed by the president, carries out the laws. The judicial branch, consisting of the Supreme Court and other federal courts, interprets and applies the laws.

Checks and Balances As an additional safeguard, the Framers established a system of **checks and balances** in which each branch of government can check, or limit, the power of the other branches. This system helps maintain a



How the Constitution is Amended

STEP 1: Amendment Proposed by:



A two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress

OR



A constitutional convention called by Congress on petition of two-thirds of the 50 states

STEP 2: Amendment Ratified by:



Three-fourths of the 50 state legislatures

OR



Three-fourths of special constitutional conventions called by the 50 states



**New
amendment
to the
Constitution**

Graphic Organizer → Skills

Amending the Constitution allows it to be able to adapt to changing times.

Analyzing Information What role do the states play in the amendment process?

balance in the power of the three branches. For example, Congress can pass a law. Then the president can reject the law by vetoing it. However, Congress can override, or reverse, the president's veto if two-thirds of the members of both houses vote again to approve the law.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has acquired the power to determine the meaning of the Constitution and to declare that a law or a government policy goes against the Constitution. In doing so, the Court provides a check on the powers of Congress and the president. Judicial decisions—those made by the courts—can be overruled by amending the Constitution. The president and the Senate provide a check on the judicial branch through their power to appoint and approve federal judges. Congress can also change a law so that it no longer conflicts with the Constitution, or it can amend the Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in 1866, overturned the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Dred Scott* decision, which had ruled that enslaved African Americans were not citizens.

Individual Rights The Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution in 1791. These first 10 amendments protect basic liberties and rights

that you may take for granted—including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and the right to a trial by jury.

The 17 amendments that follow the Bill of Rights expand the rights of Americans and adjust certain provisions of the Constitution. Included among them are amendments that abolish slavery, define citizenship, guarantee the right to vote to all citizens, authorize an income tax, and set a two-term limit on the presidency.

✓ Reading Check Explaining What is popular sovereignty?

A Living Constitution

Two years after the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Our Constitution is in actual operation; everything appears to promise that it will last; but in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes."

Despite Franklin’s uncertainty about the Constitution’s future, it is still very much alive today. The Constitution has survived because the Framers wrote a document that the nation could alter and adapt to meet changing needs. The result is a flexible document that can be interpreted in different ways in keeping with the conditions of a particular time. The Constitution’s flexibility allows the government to deal with matters the Framers never anticipated—such as regulating nuclear power plants or developing a space program. In addition the Constitution contains a provision for amending—changing or adding to—the document.

Amending the Constitution The Framers intentionally made the amendment process difficult to discourage minor or frequent changes being made. Although thousands of **amendments**—changes to the Constitution—have been proposed since 1788, only 27 of them have actually become part of the Constitution.

An amendment may be proposed in two ways: by the vote of two-thirds of both houses of Congress or by two-thirds of the state legislatures asking for a special convention on the amendment. The second method has never been used. Ratification of an amendment requires approval by three-fourths of the states. The Constitution can be ratified by the approval of state legislatures or by special state conventions.

Only the Twenty-first Amendment—which repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, banning the sale of alcoholic beverages—was ratified by state conventions. Voters in each state chose the delegates to the special conventions.

Interpreting the Constitution The Constitution includes two provisions that give Congress the power to act as needed to meet changing conditions. The first of these provisions is what is known as the “elastic clause” (Article I, Section 8). It directs Congress to “make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper” for executing all the powers of government. Congress has interpreted this clause to mean that it has certain **implied powers**, powers not specifically defined in the Constitution. Over the years,

Congress has drawn on its implied powers to pass laws to deal with the needs of society.

The second provision used to expand congressional authority, the “commerce clause” (Article I, Section 8), gives Congress the power to “regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States.” Congress has used this clause to expand its powers into a number of areas, such as regulation of the airline industry, radio and television, and nuclear energy.

Powers of the Presidency The Constitution describes the role and the powers of the president in general terms. This has allowed the executive branch to extend its powers. In 1803, for example, President Thomas Jefferson approved a treaty with France that enabled the United States to buy an enormous tract of land.

The Bill of Rights

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Guarantees freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and press, and the right of people to petition the government |
| 2 | Protects the rights of states to maintain a militia and of citizens to bear arms |
| 3 | Restricts quartering of troops in private homes |
| 4 | Protects against “unreasonable searches and seizures” |
| 5 | Assures the right not to be deprived of “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” |
| 6 | Guarantees the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury |
| 7 | Assures the right to a jury trial in cases involving the common law (the law established by previous court decisions) |
| 8 | Protects against excessive bail, or cruel and unusual punishment |
| 9 | Provides that people’s rights are not restricted to those specified in the first eight Amendments |
| 10 | Restates the Constitution’s principle of federalism by providing that powers not granted to the national government nor prohibited to the states are reserved to the states and to the people |



*“I have finally
been included in
‘We the people.’”*

—Barbara Jordan, U.S. representative
from Texas, 1972–1978

The Courts The role of the judicial branch has also grown as powers implied in the Constitution have been put into practice. In 1803 Chief Justice John Marshall expanded the powers of the Supreme Court by striking down an act of Congress in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*. In that decision the Court defined its right to determine whether a law violates the Constitution. Although not mentioned in the Constitution, **judicial review** has become a major power of the judicial branch.

The process of amending the Constitution and applying its principles in new areas helps

keep our government functioning well. In 1974 Barbara Jordan, an African American member of Congress and a constitutional scholar, spoke in ringing tones of her faith in the Constitution:

“I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision I have finally been included in ‘We the people.’”

Reading Check Explaining What are implied powers?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Key Terms** Write complete sentences using each group of terms below. Group 1: **republicanism, federalism**. Group 2: **enumerated powers, concurrent powers**. Group 3: **preamble, amendment**.
- Reviewing Facts** Explain the origin of judicial review.

Reviewing Themes

- Government and Democracy** What is the importance of federalism in the Constitution?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** Why was it so important for basic freedoms to be guaranteed in the Constitution?
- Comparing** Re-create the diagram below and describe how each branch of government has power over another branch.

| Branch | Power |
|-------------|-------|
| Legislative | |
| Executive | |
| Judicial | |

Analyzing Visuals

- Reading a Table** Refer to the table on page 218. How are popular sovereignty and republicanism related?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Civics The Bill of Rights guarantees certain basic rights to all Americans. Select one of the 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights (see page 221) and research its history. Present your findings in a one-page essay.



The Federal Government

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

The government of the United States has three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch.

Key Terms

appropriate, impeach, constituents

Read to Learn

- the goals of the three branches of the government.
- the powers of the three branches of the government.

The Legislative Branch

Congress, the legislative branch of the government, makes the nation's laws. It also has the power to "lay and collect taxes" and to declare war. Congress has two houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The House and Senate Today the House of Representatives has 435 voting members and five nonvoting delegates from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. The number of representatives from each state is determined by the state's population. Representatives, who must be at least 25 years old, serve two-year terms.

The Senate consists of 100 senators, two from each state. Senators, who must be at least 30 years old, serve six-year terms. The senators' terms are staggered, which means that one-third of the Senate seats come up for election every two years.

The Role of Congress Congress has two primary functions: to make the nation's laws and to control government spending. The government cannot spend any money unless Congress **appropriates**, or sets aside, funds. All tax and spending bills must originate in the House of

Representatives and gain approval in both the House and the Senate before moving on to the president for signature.

Congress also serves as a watchdog over the executive branch, monitoring its actions and investigating possible abuses of power. The House of Representatives can **impeach**, or bring formal charges against, any federal official it suspects of wrongdoing or misconduct. If an official is impeached, the Senate acts as a court and tries the accused official. Officials who are found guilty may be removed from office.

The Senate also holds certain special powers. Only the Senate can ratify treaties made by the president and confirm presidential appointments of federal officials, such as department heads, ambassadors, and federal judges.

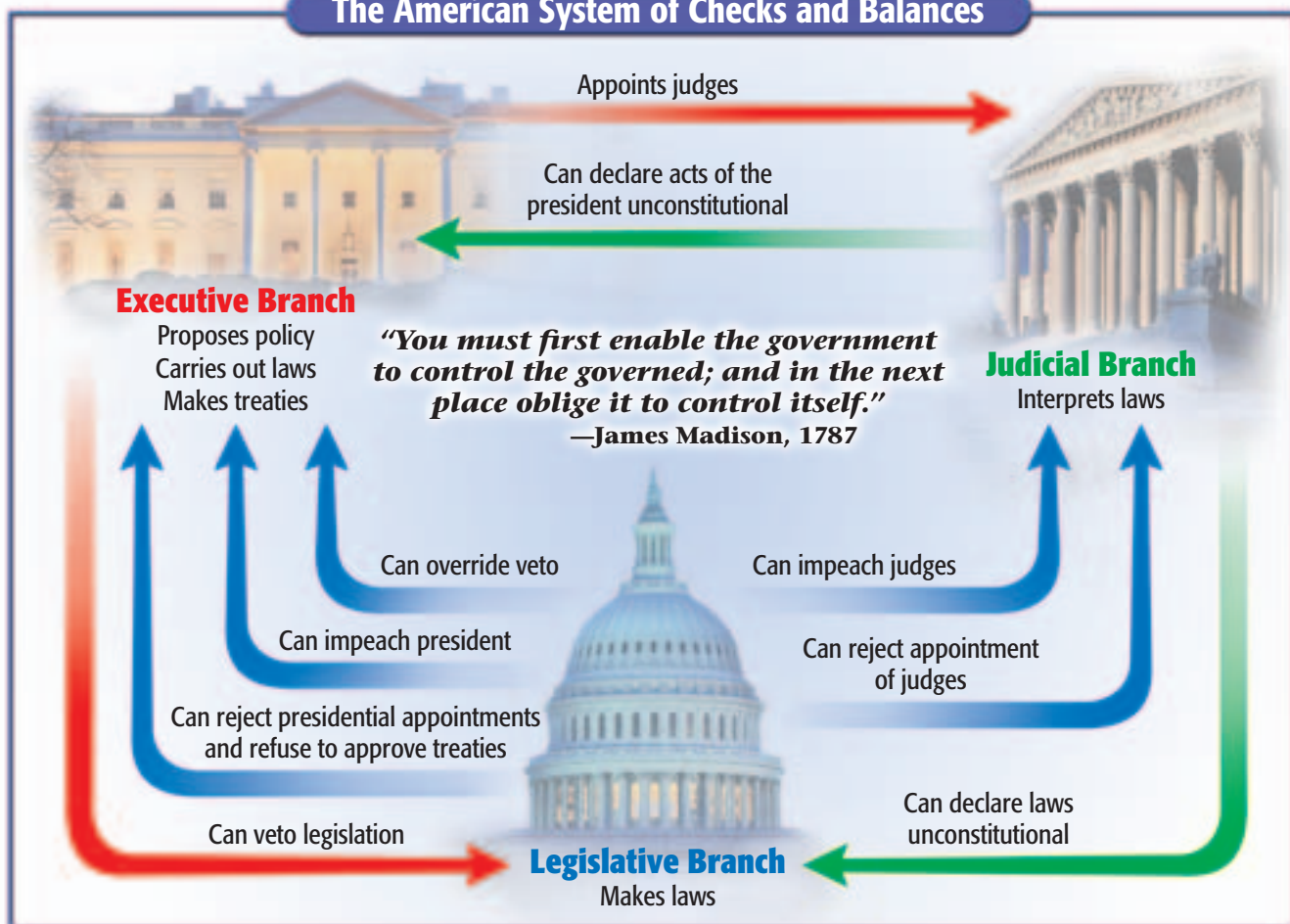
All members of Congress have the responsibility of representing their **constituents**, the people of their home states and districts. As a constituent you can expect your senators and representatives to promote and protect your state's interests as well as those of the nation.

Congress at Work Thousands of **bills**, or proposed laws, are introduced in Congress every year. Because individual members of Congress



*Seal of the
U.S. Congress*

The American System of Checks and Balances



cannot possibly study all these bills carefully, both houses use committees of selected members to evaluate proposed legislation.

Standing committees are permanent committees in both the House and the Senate that specialize in a particular topic, such as agriculture, commerce, or veterans' affairs. These committees usually are broken down into **subcommittees** that focus on a particular aspect of a problem or issue.

The House and the Senate sometimes form temporary **select committees** to deal with issues requiring special attention. These committees meet only until they complete their task.

Occasionally the House and the Senate form **joint committees** with members from both houses. These committees meet to consider specific issues, such as the system of federal taxation. One type of joint committee, a **conference committee**, has a special function. If the House

and the Senate pass different versions of the same bill, a conference committee tries to work out a compromise bill acceptable to both houses.

When it receives a bill, a committee can kill it by rejecting it outright, "pigeonhole" it by setting it aside without reviewing it, or prepare it for consideration by the full House or Senate. While preparing bills, committees hold public hearings at which citizens can present arguments and documents supporting or opposing the bills.

Once a bill is approved by a committee in either house of Congress, it is sent to the full Senate or House for debate. After debate the bill may be passed, rejected, or returned to committee for further changes.

When both houses pass a bill, the bill goes to the president. If the president approves the bill and signs it, it becomes law. If the president vetoes the bill, it does not become law,

unless Congress **overrides** (cancels) the presidential veto by a vote of two-thirds of the members in each house.

✓ Reading Check Sequencing List the basic steps of how a bill becomes a law.

The Executive Branch

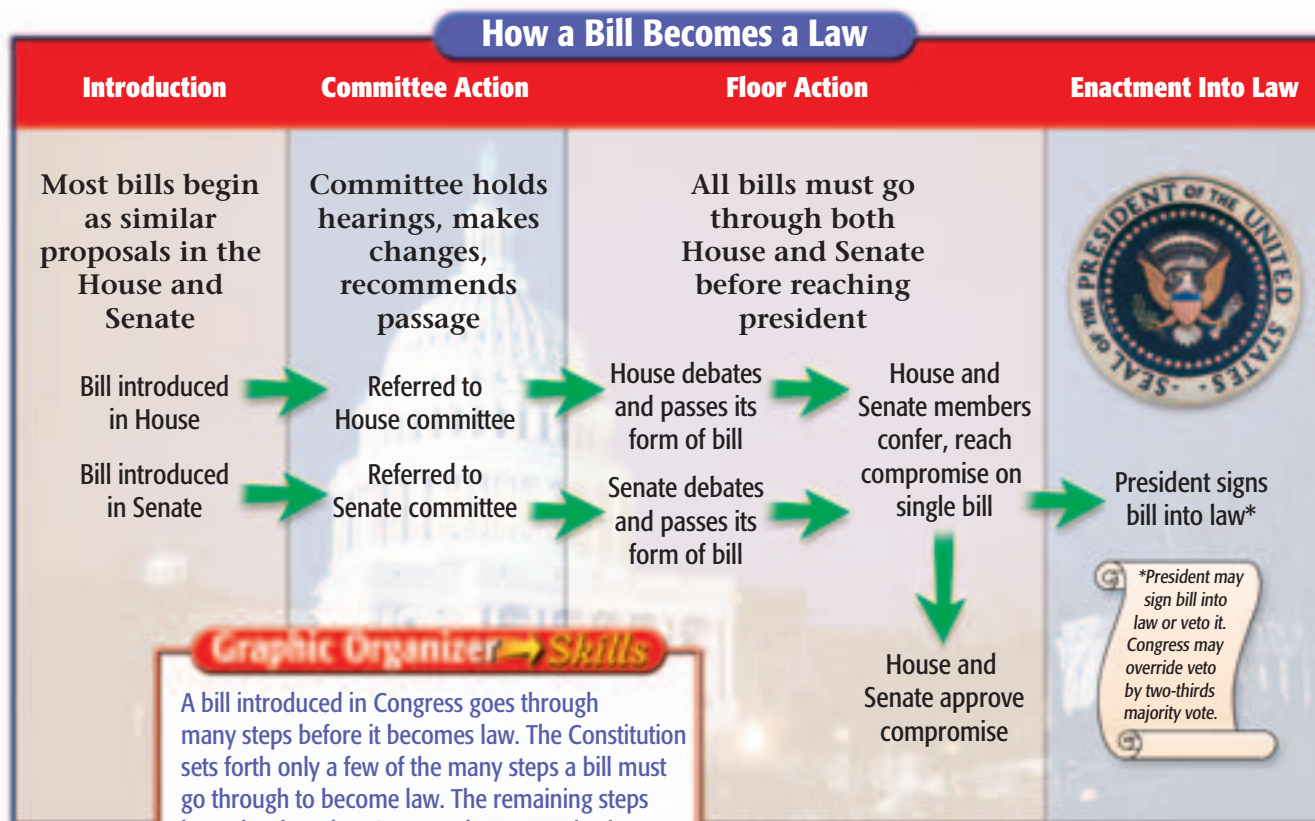
The executive branch of government includes the president, the vice president, and various executive offices, departments, and agencies. The executive branch carries out the laws that Congress passes.

Chief Executive The president plays a number of different roles in government, each of which has specific powers and responsibilities. These roles include the nation's chief executive, chief diplomat, commander in chief, chief of state, and legislative leader.

As chief executive, the president is responsible for carrying out the nation's laws. Many executive departments and agencies assist the president in this job.

Chief Diplomat As chief diplomat, the president directs foreign policy, appoints ambassadors, and negotiates treaties with other nations. Treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate before they go into effect.

Commander in Chief As commander in chief of the armed forces, the president can use the military to intervene or offer assistance in crises at home and around the world. The president cannot declare war; only Congress holds this power. The president can send troops to other parts of the world for up to 60 days but must notify Congress when doing so. The troops may remain longer only if Congress gives approval or declares war.



Chief of State As chief of state, the president serves a symbolic role as the representative of all Americans. The president fulfills this role when receiving foreign ambassadors or heads of state, visiting foreign nations, or bestowing honors on Americans.

Legislative Leader The president serves as a legislative leader by proposing laws to Congress and working to see that they are passed. In the annual State of the Union address, the president presents goals for legislation.

The Executive Branch at Work Many executive offices, departments, and independent agencies help the president carry out and enforce the nation's laws. The Executive Office of the President (EOP) is made up of individuals and agencies that directly assist the president. Presidents rely heavily on the EOP for advice and for gathering information.

The executive branch also includes 14 executive departments, each responsible for a different area of government. For example, the

Department of State plans and carries out foreign policy, and the Department of the Interior manages and protects the nation's public lands and natural resources. The heads, or secretaries, of these departments are members of the president's **cabinet**, a group that helps the president make decisions and set government policy.

The independent agencies manage federal programs in many fields. These include aeronautics and space, banking, communications, farm credit, and trade. Government corporations are government agencies that are run like privately owned businesses. One government corporation whose services you may often use is the United States Postal Service.

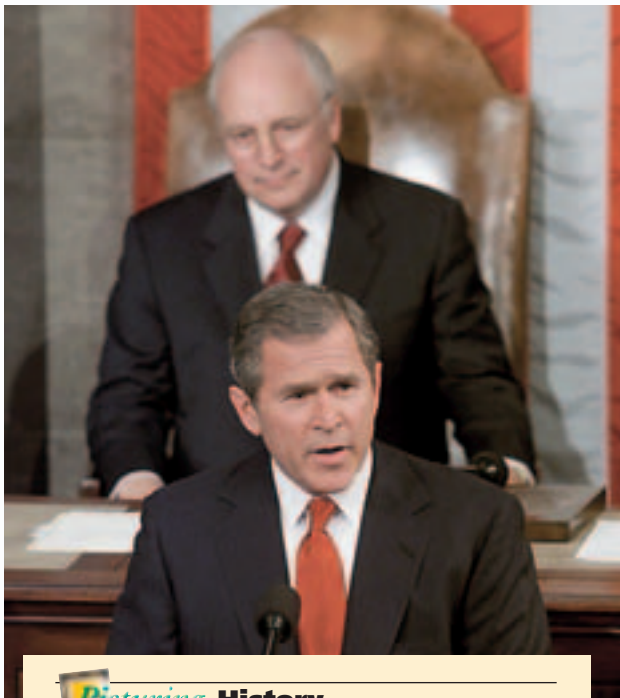
 **Reading Check** **Describing** What is the president's cabinet?

The Judicial Branch

Article III of the Constitution called for the creation of a Supreme Court and "such inferior [lower] courts as Congress may from time to time ordain and establish." In 1789 Congress passed a **Judiciary Act**, which added a series of district courts to the federal court system. Congress added appeals courts, sometimes called circuit courts, in 1891 to ease the workload of the Supreme Court.

Lower Federal Courts At the lowest level of the federal court system are the United States **district courts**. These courts consider criminal and civil cases that come under federal, rather than state, authority. The criminal cases include such offenses as kidnapping and federal tax evasion. Civil cases cover claims against the federal government and cases involving constitutional rights, such as free speech. There are 91 district courts in the nation, with at least one in every state.

The next level of federal courts, the **appeals courts**, reviews district court decisions in which the losing side has asked for a review of the verdict. If an appeals court disagrees with the lower court's decision, it can either overturn the verdict or order a retrial. There are 14 appeals courts in the United States.



Picturing History

President George W. Bush describes a legislative program in the annual State of the Union message to Congress. **What powers does the president hold in his role as commander in chief?**

The Supreme Court The Supreme Court stands at the top of the American legal system. Article III of the Constitution created the Supreme Court as one of three coequal branches of the national government, along with Congress and the president.

The Supreme Court is composed of nine justices: the chief justice of the United States and eight associate justices. Congress sets this number and has the power to change it. Over the years it has varied from 5 to 10, but it has been 9 since 1869.

The Constitution does not describe the duties of the justices. Instead, the duties have developed from laws, through tradition, and as the needs and circumstances of the nation have developed. The main duty of the justices is to hear and rule on cases. This duty involves them in three decision-making tasks: deciding which cases to hear from among the thousands appealed to the Court each year; deciding the case itself; and determining an explanation for the decision, called the Court's **opinion**.

Shaping Public Policy The Supreme Court is both a political and a legal institution. It is a legal institution because it is responsible for settling disputes and interpreting the meaning of laws. The Court is a political institution because when it applies the law to specific disputes, it

often determines what national policy will be. For example, when the Court rules that certain parts of the Social Security Act must apply to men and women equally, it is determining government policy.

Judicial Review As you have read, the Supreme Court's power to examine the laws and actions of local, state, and national governments and to cancel them if they violate the Constitution is called judicial review. The Supreme Court first assumed the power of judicial review in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* (1803). Since then, the Court has invalidated, or canceled, nearly 200 provisions of federal law.

The Supreme Court may also review presidential policies. In the case of *Ex parte Milligan* (1866), the Court ruled President Lincoln's suspension of certain civil rights during the Civil War was unconstitutional.

Judicial review of state laws and actions may have as much significance as the Court's activities at the federal level. In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the Court held that laws requiring or permitting racially segregated schools in four states were unconstitutional. The *Brown* decision cleared the way for the end of segregated schools throughout the nation.

✓ Reading Check **Describing** How was the court system set up?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

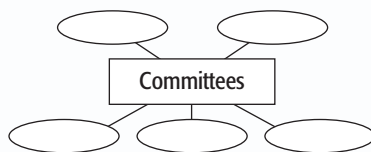
- 1. Key Terms** Use each of these terms in a complete sentence that helps explain its meaning: **appropriate, impeach, constituents.**
- 2. Reviewing Facts** List three responsibilities of the president.

Reviewing Themes

- 3. Government and Democracy** Why is Congress's power to appropriate money important?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Information** Which branch of government do you think is most powerful? Explain why you think so.
- 5. Analyzing Information** Re-create the diagram below and provide five different kinds of Congressional committees.



Analyzing Visuals

- 6. Reading a Flowchart** Refer to the flowchart on page 225. What do committees do to a bill?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Current Events Research in newspapers and news magazines about bills that are being debated in Congress. Find out what the bill will do if it is passed. Write a one-page paper about the bill and what has happened to it as it has gone through Congress.

Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

Citizens of the United States have both rights and responsibilities.

Key Terms

due process of law, citizen, naturalization

Read to Learn

- where the rights of citizens come from.
- the rights and responsibilities of United States citizens.

The Rights of American Citizens

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

These words from the Declaration of Independence continue to inspire Americans. They have encouraged Americans to pursue the ideals expressed in the Declaration and to create a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that protect these rights. The rights of Americans fall into three broad categories: the right to be protected from unfair actions of the government, to have equal treatment under the law, and to have basic freedoms.

Due Process The Fifth Amendment states that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” **Due process of law** means that the government must follow procedures established by law and guaranteed by the Constitution, treating all people according to these principles.

Equal Protection All Americans, regardless of race, religion, or political beliefs, have the right to be treated the same under the law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires every state to grant its citizens “equal protection of the laws.”

Basic Freedoms The basic freedoms involve the liberties outlined in the First Amendment—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition. In a democratic society, power exists in the hands of the people. Therefore, its citizens must be free to exchange ideas freely.

The First Amendment allows citizens to criticize the government, in speech or in the press, without fear of punishment. It also states that the government cannot endorse a religion, nor can it prohibit citizens from practicing a religion if they choose to do so. In addition, the Ninth Amendment states that the rights of Americans are not limited to those mentioned in the Constitution. This has allowed basic freedoms to expand over the years through the passage of other amendments and laws. The Twenty-sixth Amendment, for example, extends the right to vote to American citizens 18 years of age.

Limits on Rights Our rights are not unlimited. The government can establish laws or rules to restrict certain standards to protect the health, safety, security, and moral standards of a community. Moreover, rights may be limited to prevent one person’s rights from interfering with the rights of others. The restrictions of rights, however, must be reasonable and must apply to everyone equally.

Reading Check Summarizing What is due process of law?

Citizen Participation

A **citizen** is a person who owes loyalty to and is entitled to the protection of a state or nation. How do you become an American citizen? Generally, citizenship is granted to anyone born within the borders of the United States. Citizenship is also granted to anyone born outside the United States if one parent is a United States citizen. A person of foreign birth can also become a citizen through the process of **naturalization**.

To qualify, applicants must be at least 18 years old. They must have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence and have lived in the United States for at least five years. They must possess good moral character and accept the principles of the Constitution. Applicants must also understand English and demonstrate an understanding of the history and principles of the government of the United States. Before being admitted to citizenship, applicants must be willing to give up any foreign allegiance and must promise to obey the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

As citizens of the United States, we are expected to carry out certain duties and responsibilities. **Duties** are things we are required to do by law. **Responsibilities** are things we should do. Fulfilling both our duties and our responsibilities helps ensure that we have a good government and that we continue to enjoy our rights.

Duties One of the duties of all Americans is to obey the law. Laws serve three important functions. They help maintain order; they protect the health, safety, and property of all citizens; and they make it possible for people to live together peacefully. If you disobey laws, for example, you endanger others and interfere with the smooth functioning of society. If you believe a law needs to be changed, you can work through your elected representatives to improve it.

Americans also have a duty to pay taxes. The government uses tax money to defend the nation, provide health insurance for people over 65, and build roads and bridges. Americans benefit from services provided by the government.

Flag Etiquette

- ★ The flag should be raised and lowered by hand and displayed only from sunrise to sunset. On special occasions, it may be displayed at night.
- ★ The flag may be displayed on all days, weather permitting, particularly on national and state holidays and on historic and special occasions.
- ★ No flag should be flown above the American flag or to the right of it at the same height.
- ★ The flag may be flown at half-mast to mourn the death of public officials.
- ★ The flag should never touch the ground or floor beneath it.
- ★ The flag may be flown upside down only to signal distress.
- ★ When the flag becomes old and tattered, it should be destroyed by burning. According to an approved custom, the Union (the white stars on the blue field) is first cut from the flag; then the two pieces, which no longer form a flag, are burned.

Another duty of citizens is to defend the nation. All males aged 18 and older must register with the government in case they are needed for military service. The nation no longer has a **draft**, or required military service, but a war could make the draft necessary again.

The Constitution guarantees all Americans the right to a trial by a jury of their peers (equals). For this reason you should be prepared to serve on a jury when you become eligible at the age of 18. Having a large group of jurors on hand is necessary to guarantee the right to a fair and speedy trial. You also have a duty to serve as a witness at a trial if called to do so.

Responsibilities The responsibilities of citizens are not as clear-cut as their duties. Because responsibilities are voluntary, people are not arrested or punished if they do not fulfill these obligations. The quality of our government and of our lives will diminish, however, if our responsibilities are not carried out.

Keep in mind that government exists to serve you. Therefore, one of your responsibilities as a citizen is to know what the government is doing and to voice your opinion when you feel strongly about something the government has done or has failed to do. When the government learns that most people favor or oppose an action, it usually follows their wishes.

You also need to be informed about your rights and to exercise them when necessary. Knowing your rights helps preserve them. Other responsibilities include respecting diversity, accepting responsibility for your actions, and supporting your family.

Vote, Vote, Vote! Perhaps your most important responsibility as an American citizen will be to vote when you reach the age of 18. Voting allows you to participate in government and guide its direction. When you vote for people to represent you in government, you will be exercising your right of self-government. If you disapprove of the job your representatives are doing, it will be your responsibility to help elect other people in the next election. You can also let your representatives know how you feel about issues through letters, telephone calls, and petitions.

While not everyone holds public office, everyone can participate in government in other ways. Working on a political campaign, volunteering



Citizens taking part in a town meeting

to help in a hospital or a library, and participating in a local park cleanup are all ways to take responsibility and to make a contribution to good government and a well-run community.

Respecting Others' Rights To enjoy your rights to the fullest, you must be prepared to respect the rights of others. Respecting the rights of others also means respecting the rights of people with whom you disagree. Respecting and accepting others regardless of race, religion, beliefs, or other differences is essential in a democracy. All Americans are entitled to the same respect and good treatment.

Reading Check Identifying What is naturalization?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

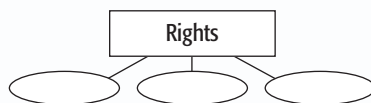
- Key Terms** Use each of these terms in a complete sentence that helps explain its meaning: **due process of law, citizen, naturalization.**
- Reviewing Facts** Why are personal responsibilities important?

Reviewing Themes

- Government and Democracy** Summarize three of the freedoms granted in the First Amendment.

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** The Fifth Amendment states that people have the right of "due process of law." Why is this phrase important?
- Analyzing Information** Re-create the diagram below and provide the three categories of American rights.



Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing a Chart** Refer to the chart on page 229. For what reason may the flag be flown at half-mast?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Civics One responsibility of being an American citizen is to become involved in the democratic system. Make a poster showing how students can get involved in their community's democracy. Display your poster in a prominent place in school.

Handbook Assessment

✓ Reviewing Key Terms

Write the key term that completes each sentence. Then write a sentence for each term not chosen.

- a. popular sovereignty
- b. enumerated powers
- c. reserved powers
- d. amendment
- e. implied powers
- f. judicial review

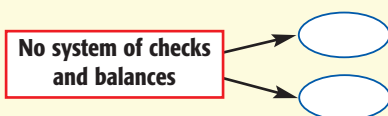
1. A(n) _____ is a change to the Constitution.
2. Those powers that are suggested but not directly stated in the Constitution are called _____.
3. _____ is the Supreme Court's power to review all congressional acts and executive actions.
4. Those powers mentioned specifically in the Constitution are called _____.

✓ Reviewing Key Facts

5. List the six goals of government stated in the Preamble.
6. How does one become a naturalized citizen?
7. Explain why the amendment process is so difficult.
8. Explain why responsible citizenship is important. Provide examples of responsible citizenship.
9. How does the Constitution protect individual rights?
10. Summarize the basic freedoms outlined in the First Amendment.

✓ Critical Thinking

11. **Analyzing Information** Analyze how limited government, republicanism, and popular sovereignty are important parts of the Constitution.
12. **Identifying Options** Describe five possible ways a person can fulfill his or her responsibilities in society and at home.
13. **Comparing** Some people argue that there should be a limit on the number of terms a senator or representative can serve. What are some of the advantages of the present system, which does not limit these terms? What are some of the disadvantages?
14. **Predicting Consequences** Re-create the diagram below and predict what might have happened to the U.S. if the Framers had not provided for a system of checks and balances.



✓ Citizenship Cooperative Activity

15. **Examining Citizens' Rights** Working with a partner, choose one of the following rights and trace its historical development in the United States from the time the Constitution was ratified to the present:

suffrage freedom of speech
freedom of religion equal protection of law

16. **Civic Planning** Constitutions provide a plan for organizing and operating governments. What plan provides the rules for your local government? Contact a local government official to find out about the basic plan of your city or town. Share your findings with the class.

✓ Alternative Assessment

17. **Portfolio Writing Activity** Part of your responsibility as an American citizen is to be informed about what the government is doing and to voice your opinion about its actions. Compose a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. In your letter, express your opinion about an issue in your community.



Standardized Test Practice

Directions: Choose the *best* answer to the following question.

Under the Constitution, the president chooses judges to serve on the Supreme Court, but each choice must be approved by the Senate. This is an example of what principle of government?

- A Checks and balances
- B Federalism
- C Separation of powers
- D Judicial Review

Test-Taking Tip:

What do you think would happen if the president could choose all judges without anyone else's approval? The writers of the Constitution wanted to make sure that none of the three branches of government became too powerful. Which answer shows this idea?