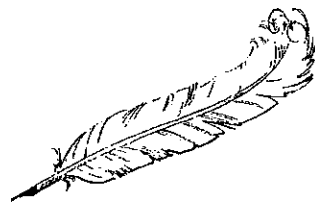


Birth of a Democracy



Timeline Leading to a Constitutional Government in the United States

Throughout the 1700s, the British ruler, King George III, demanded a lot of the North American colonists: collecting huge taxes, insisting British soldiers stay in colonists' homes, and allowing soldiers to be cruel and abusive to the people.

The last half of the century would divide American colonies further and further from the British, setting the stage for the Revolutionary War for independence and a new government for a nation that would become the United States of America, governed by the Constitution.

1770 — At the “Boston Massacre” five American civilians were killed by British troops, an event that helped spark the American Revolutionary War.

1773 — The Boston Tea Party was a protest by the American colonists against Great Britain during which they destroyed many crates of tea bricks on ships in Boston Harbor. The incident accelerated the march to a revolution.

1773–1774 — King George’s British Parliament passed a series of abusive and insulting laws in response to the Boston Tea Party. King George and the British government hoped that, by making an example of Boston, these spiteful measures would stop the colonies from wanting independence. American colonists called the series of laws “The Intolerable Acts.” The acts caused anger and conflict in the colonies and were important in the spread of the American Revolution.

1774 — Several states wanted a congress of all the colonies to resist King George. The colonies named delegates to the First Continental Congress. The First Continental Congress met briefly and then set up its successor, the Second Continental Congress, which would meet two years later and organize the American colonies into war against Britain.

1775 — The first battle of the American Revolution was at Lexington and Concord, near Boston. The battle began the open war between King George/Britain and its thirteen colonies in North America.

1775 — The Battle of Bunker Hill was a vicious battle eventually won by the British, who suffered more than 1,000 casualties. But it showed the British the Americans were ready for the war.

1776 — The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. John Hancock was elected president of the Congress, and George Washington was named com-

mander-in-chief of the Continental Army. The Continental Congress met until 1781. During the Revolutionary War, it acted as the U.S. national government by raising armies, picking diplomats, and making treaties with other countries.

1776 — On July 2, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence; on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was approved. Copies were sent throughout the colonies to be read publicly.

1776–1783 — The bloody and devastating revolutionary war for American independence lasted seven years.

1777 — The Continental Congress passed the Articles of Confederation, which gave power largely to the states, making a national government unworkable.

1783 — The Continental Congress declared the war with England over on April 15. The Treaty of Paris of 1783, signed on September 3, 1783, formally ended the American Revolutionary War.

1783–1787 — The young nation struggled to operate under the Articles of Confederation. They realized they cannot, so they convene a constitutional convention to come up with a new form of government.

1787 — September 17, the Continental Congress adopted the Constitution of the United States.

1787 — September 28, the Constitution went to the states for approval.

1787 — The states of Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey ratified the Constitution.

1788 — The states of Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia and New York ratified the Constitution.

1788 — On June 21, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the new Constitution, making its adoption official.

1788 — On July 2, the Continental Congress stepped aside for the new government. The U.S. Constitution began governing.

1789 — The first Congress of the United States was sworn in, as directed by Article I of the Constitution.

1789 — George Washington became the young nation's first President in accordance with Article II of the Constitution.

Fast Fact

The U.S. Constitution is the shortest, and the oldest, Constitution of any government in the world.



***Complete Text of the United
States Constitution
(1789)***

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, 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.

***Translation of the Complete
Text of the United States
Constitution***

We the People of the United States—so we can make a country, get along fairly, stay safe, defend ourselves, take care of each other and make sure we and our children stay free— join together to write the highest, most supreme law of the United States in this Constitution.



ARTICLE I

SECTION 1. 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.

SECTION 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

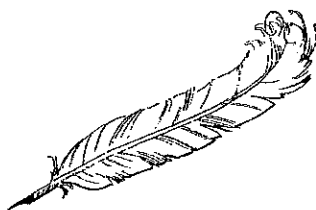
ARTICLE I

SECTION 1. Laws are made by Congress. Congress is made up of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

SECTION 2. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years. The people who are registered to vote are the same people who get to vote for members of the biggest house of the state legislature.

To get elected to the House, you must be twenty-five years old, be a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and live in the same state that elects you.

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 to 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. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey, four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.



When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

(Representatives and taxes were originally based on population; slaves and Indians did not count as full people. Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment changed how people are counted.)

Representatives in Congress, as well as taxes (this part about taxes was changed by the Sixteenth Amendment), are spread out over the country and are based on the number of people living in the places they represent.

People in the country are counted every ten years in a census, so we know how many people live in the United States. The census also helps us figure out how many people are represented in the House of Representatives and helps the government determine taxes. A certain number of people (originally thirty thousand; now over five-hundred thousand) have their own representative.

For the first Congress, with no census, the division of representatives in the House was: New Hampshire, three; Massachusetts, eight; Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, one; Connecticut, five; New York, six; New Jersey, four; Pennsylvania, eight; Delaware, one; Maryland, six; Virginia, ten; North Carolina, five; South Carolina, five; and Georgia, three.

If a representative leaves office or dies, the governor of that state sets up another election and a new representative is elected.

Representatives pick a Speaker and other officers to run the House of Representatives. Only the House of Representatives can vote to start the process for kicking somebody out of office (impeaching them).

SECTION 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

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.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirma-

SECTION 3. Originally, senators were chosen by the state legislatures, but the Seventeenth Amendment changed that, so the people in the states could vote directly for their senators.

The United States Senate has two senators from each state, elected every six years. Each senator has one vote in the Senate.

After the first election of senators in the U.S., they will divide themselves into three groups, each picking a term of two, four or six years for their first term so after that, one-third of the senators are elected every two years.

If a senator leaves office or dies in the middle of his or her term of office, the governor of that state can pick someone to temporarily be the senator until the next election is held.

To be a senator, you have to be thirty years old, be a citizen of the United States for at least nine years and live in the state that elects you.

The Vice President of the United States is the President of the Senate, but only gets to vote if there is a tie (the number of "yes" votes and the number of "no" votes are the same).

The Senate gets to pick another President of the Senate for the times when the Vice President cannot be there.

The Senate holds the trials for people the House of Representatives thinks should be impeached. If the Senate is trying to

tion. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgement in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States; but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgement and Punishment, according to Law.

SECTION 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

SECTION 5. Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

impeach someone (kick them out of office), everyone has to swear to tell the truth. If the President of the United States is being tried, the Chief Justice of the United States is in charge of the trial. But no one can get kicked out of office unless two-thirds of the senators present at the trial vote to kick them out.

Anyone impeached by Congress cannot be re-elected or appointed to another office. If someone is impeached, and then gets kicked out of office, that person can still be tried before a criminal or civil jury for any crimes committed, just like the law says.

SECTION 4. The state legislature picks the times and places for elections, but Congress can make laws to change the election times and places for senators and representatives. Originally, Congress could not change the rules about where senators were chosen, but the Seventeenth Amendment changed that.

The Congress will meet at least once every year, at a regular time unless they make a new law to change it to another day (originally, they were to meet on the first Monday in December, but Section 2 of the Twentieth Amendment changed that to noon on January 3).

SECTION 5. The House of Representatives and the Senate are each in charge of the elections and behavior of their members. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate need most of their members present in order to do business. They can make their members come to work, and if they do not come, they can punish them.

Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal.

Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

SECTION 6. The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been encreased during such time; and no Person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate make their own rules for doing business. They can punish members for misbehaving, and they can kick members out if two-thirds of them vote for it.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate write down what they say and do in a journal and print it so everybody can read it, unless it is really secret. Votes of individual representatives or senators must be written down if twenty percent of the members want that.

While Congress is meeting, the House of Representatives or the Senate cannot leave for more than three days, unless they both decide to leave.

SECTION 6. Senators and representatives will get paid by the government according to the law. Except for treason, stealing, or disturbing the peace, they cannot be arrested while they are at work, or on their way to work, in Congress.

Congress modified this a little bit in the Twenty-Seventh Amendment, making any change in pay for Congress apply to the next Congress, not the one that voted for it.

No senator or representative can be picked for another office in the U.S. government if that office was created, or if the office got a pay raise, while that senator or representative was in Congress. No one can serve in Congress and work somewhere else in the government at the same time.

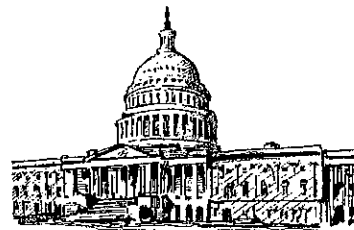
SECTION 7. All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being

SECTION 7. Any bill raising money (taxes) must begin in the House of Representatives, but the Senate must agree with it, just like any other bill.

When a bill passes both the House and the Senate, the bill goes to the President who must sign it to make it the law. If the President agrees with the bill, he or she signs it—but if the President does not agree with the bill within ten days, he or she writes down why and sends that letter and the bill back to the House of Representatives or the Senate, wherever the bill got started. When Congress gets the letter and the bill back from the President, the House of Representatives or the Senate puts it all in their journal. Then they talk about it some more and vote on it again. If two-thirds of the representatives and senators vote for the same bill again, it becomes law. The representatives and the senators must have their votes written down in their journal. If the President does not sign the bill, or does not send the bill back to Congress in ten days (not counting Sunday), then it becomes law, unless Congress officially leaves to go home (adjourns).



Each law passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate must be signed by the President. The laws the President does not agree with (those that get “vetoed”) must be passed by two-thirds of the House of Representatives and the Senate before they can become law.

disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

SECTION 8. The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

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;

SECTION 8. Congress has the job of raising and spending money to take care of the nation, but all taxes raised must be the same for all the states. Here are some of the other jobs Congress performs:

To borrow money using the credit of the United States.

To make rules for how people do business, including buying and selling things with people in other countries, among the states and with Native Americans.

To decide on fair rules for letting people become citizens—and rules for bankruptcies in all the states.

To print paper money and make coins, and figure out how much it will be worth, and how much the money from other countries will be worth, and decide on a system of weights and measures.

To punish people who copy money or bonds of the United States.

To build post offices and roads.

To promote science and the arts by giving copyrights to writers and inventors for things they write and discover.

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

To keep a system of courts around the country to support the Supreme Court.

To make laws about what people can and cannot do on the oceans.

To make war, allow private boats and vessels to catch and arrest enemy ships, and make rules about taking prisoners on the land and on the water.

To build an army and pay for it—but money for the army can only be given for, at the most, two years at a time.

To build a navy and pay for it.

To make all the rules for the government and the army and the navy.

To make rules for calling the states' National Guards to force people to obey the law, stop riots and to fight attackers.

To organize the states' National Guards and give them guns and equipment and be in charge of them if they are working for the United States. But the states get to be in charge of the training Congress wants, and the states each get to pick the officers of the National Guard in their state.

To be in charge of a place, no bigger than ten square miles, a place given by the states and accepted by Congress that will be the seat of the federal government. (This is present-day Washington, D.C.) Congress will be in charge of all the places bought and run by the government,
—AND—

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

SECTION 9. The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one

To make all the laws Congress needs to enforce the powers given to it by this Constitution.

SECTION 9. Congress cannot ban the international slave trade until at least 1808, but a tax of up to ten dollars can be put on imported slaves.

(Slavery was banned by the Thirteenth Amendment.)

People who are arrested and put in jail have the right to make the government tell them why they were put in jail. This right can be taken away only if there is a rebellion, or if the United States is invaded by a foreign power.

Congress cannot pass a law declaring someone guilty of a crime. Criminal laws passed by Congress can only be applied to crimes that are committed after the law is passed.

Congress must tax according to the number of citizens there are in the country based on the census.

(The Sixteenth Amendment changed this so Congress could charge and collect taxes any way they wanted.)

Congress cannot tax things sold from one state to another state.

Congress cannot show preference for one port over another port, and no ship from one state can get taxed for using another state's port.

State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

SECTION 10. No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.



No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Controul of the Congress.

No money can be spent without Congress passing a law for it, and they should publish a regular statement of the Treasury account from time to time.

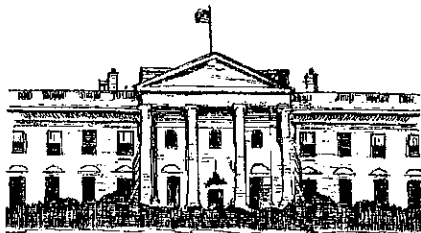
Congress cannot give anyone a title of nobility (king, queen, prince, lord, etc.); and, no officer of the United States can accept any title, office or payment of any kind from any other country.

SECTION 10. No state can ally (become a partner) with another country; make war; make their own money; allow private boats and vessels to catch and arrest enemy ships; or issue their own bills for credit. States can make only silver and gold to pay for things. States cannot pass any law to disgrace people accused of dishonor. States cannot pass a law that goes back in time. Laws can be applied only after they are passed. States cannot pass a law that messes up contracts already in force. States may not give people a title of nobility.

States must have the permission of Congress to charge money for buying and selling things that come into the country and things sold outside of the country. If states pass laws to charge money for things that come into and go out of the country, all the money collected will go to the United States Treasury. Congress can make laws to change or control these state laws.

No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.

States must have Congress' permission to keep armies or warships during peacetime. States will need Congress' permission to join forces with another state, or with a foreign power, or to make war, unless they are invaded and the United States' troops cannot get there in time to help them.



ARTICLE II

SECTION 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:

Each State shall appoint, in such 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.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate.

ARTICLE II

SECTION 1. The leader of the country will be the President of the United States. The President will be elected every four years, along with a Vice President, like this:

The legislature of each state decides how that state will name a number of people called "electors." The number of electors will equal the number of representatives and senators of that state—senators, representatives, or other government officers cannot be electors. (If a state has four representatives and two senators, it has six electors who are members of what is now known as the Electoral College.)

The electors meet in their states and vote for two people. At least one person for whom they vote cannot live in that elector's state. The electors make a list of all the people they voted for and how many votes each person got. Then, they sign and certify the list and send it to the President of the Senate in the seat of the United States government (Washington, D.C.). The President of the Senate opens all the

The President of the Senate shall, in the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal Number of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in chusing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two-thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall chuse from them by Ballot the Vice President.

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

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty-five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

states' certificates in front of the representatives and senators, and then the votes are counted. The person with the majority of electors' votes will be the President of the United States. If more than one person has the same number of electors' votes, the representatives will immediately choose one of the people by a vote. If nobody has a majority, then the representatives will choose a President from among the five people who got the most electors' votes. But if the representatives have to choose a President like this, the vote will be taken by states and each state has only one vote. At least two-thirds of the representatives must be present to choose a President in this way. If the President has to be chosen like this, the person with the next highest number of electors' votes will be the Vice President. If there is a tie, the senators vote for the Vice President.

(The Twelfth Amendment and the Twenty-Third Amendment changed this process.)

Congress picks the time for choosing electors, and the day they will vote. It will be the same day in all states.

The President must be born in the United States (or to U.S. citizens), be thirty-five years old, and have lived in the United States for at least fourteen years.



In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

SECTION 2. The President shall be the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any

If the President dies, leaves office, is kicked out, or is unable to do the job, the duties of President fall to the Vice President. If the Vice President dies, leaves office, gets kicked out, or is unable to do the job, then Congress figures out which officer will act as President if the elected President or Vice President is unable to do his or her job. Whoever is chosen to be President or Vice President will hold that office until the elected President or Vice President can do his or her job again, or until another Presidential election is held and a new President or Vice President is elected. (This got more specific with the Twenty-Fifth Amendment.)

The President will get paid for serving as President, and his or her pay cannot go up or down while he or she serves as President. The President cannot get paid anything but a salary from the United States while President. The President cannot get money from any state.

When the President takes office, this is the oath he or she will take: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

SECTION 2. The President is the Commander-in-Chief in charge of the army, navy and all the armed forces of the United States. The President is also in charge of the National Guard of the states when the National Guard is working for the United States. The President may get the officers of the executive departments to write

Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

SECTION 3. He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he

down their ideas about anything they are in charge of. The President can pardon people for crimes against the United States, except when those people get impeached by the House of Representatives and found guilty by the Senate.

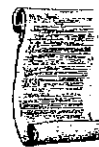
The President has the power to make treaties, with the advice and permission of two-thirds of the senators present. The President can also appoint, with the direction and permission of two-thirds of the senators, ambassadors (U.S. representatives in other countries), Supreme Court judges and other U.S. officers. Congress must approve the President's appointments in these matters with a two-thirds vote of senators present. Congress will decide how other appointments will be handled. Congress can let the President, the courts, or department heads appoint other officers as they see fit.

If Congress is not in session, the President can fill vacancies for positions whose terms end at the end of the next session of Congress.

SECTION 3. The President tells Congress how the country is doing in a "State of the Union" speech from time to time. The President also gives Congress ideas about how to get things done; and the President can meet with Congress anytime he or she thinks it is really important. If the Congress cannot agree on some of the issues before them when they are finished working for the year, the President can dismiss

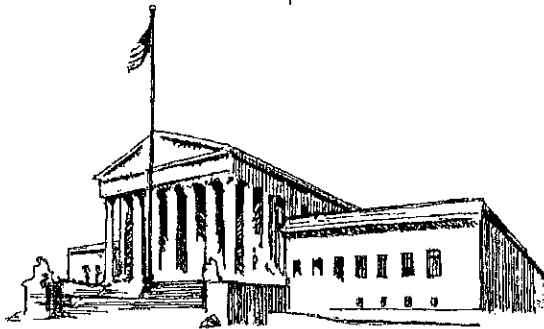
Fast Fact

The Constitutional Convention adjourned at four o'clock in the afternoon.



shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

SECTION 4. The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.



ARTICLE III

SECTION 1. 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 Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

SECTION 2. The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws

the Congress and then call them back into session at a time he or she thinks is fair. The President welcomes ambassadors or government representatives from other countries. The President is also in charge of making sure that the laws are carried out fairly; and, the President gives authority and legal power to all the officers of the United States.

SECTION 4. The President, the Vice President and other officers of the United States, can be kicked out of office (impeached) if they are found guilty of double-crossing (betraying) the country, offering people money, or getting money to do something dishonest, or any other really big crimes.

ARTICLE III

SECTION 1. All the judicial power of the United States, including the courts of law and justice, will be headed by one Supreme Court. Congress can set up other courts when we need them. The judges on the Supreme Court, and the other courts under them, can stay judges all their lives if they obey all the laws. The salary judges get paid for their service cannot be lowered during their time as a judge.

SECTION 2. The judges of the courts have the power to decide any case that involves or questions the Constitution, the laws of

of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;— between a State and Citizens of another State; —between Citizens of different States— between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment; shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have directed.

SECTION 3. Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason

the United States, or any treaty signed by the United States. The courts also decide cases that involve ambassadors or foreign ministers from other countries. The courts have the final say on cases that involve actions that take place on the oceans. They decide arguments that involve the United States, disputes between two or more states, or between a state and somebody from another country, cases between citizens of different states, or between citizens of the same state when different states give them the same land, and to all cases between a state, the citizens in that state and other countries and their citizens.

(This was all changed by the Eleventh Amendment.)

If an ambassador or minister from another country, or if a state is involved, the Supreme Court can hear the case first. In all the other cases, the smaller courts will hear the cases first, and the losers can then appeal their case. The Supreme Court is the final authority. It can look at both the law and the facts of each case with the rules Congress has passed.

Trial for all federal crimes, except kicking people out of government (impeaching them), will be in front of a jury. The trial will be held in the same state where the crime is committed. If the crime is not committed in a state (like on the ocean), Congress can decide by law where to hold the trial.

SECTION 3. Treason, or betraying the United States, is considered making war against the United States, or being loyal to an enemy of the United States, or giving that enemy help or comfort. Nobody can be

unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.



found guilty of treason unless two people describe the same obvious act of treason in open court, or unless the accused person says in open court that he or she did it.

Congress decides how to punish treason. If someone is guilty of treason, his or her family cannot be punished for the crimes that person commits. The disgrace of the traitor, and any fines he or she may owe, goes with him or her to their death, but not past that.

ARTICLE IV

SECTION 1. 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.

SECTION 2. The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.

A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice, and be found in another State, shall on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime.

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any

ARTICLE IV

SECTION 1. Each state will honor every other state's public acts, their records and their legal reports. The Congress will make laws to decide how to check on such acts, records and reports. Congress will decide how to test these records and how effective they are.

SECTION 2. Citizens of each state will have all the advantages and protection of citizens in the other states.

If somebody is charged with a crime in one state, then runs from the police to another state, the governor of the state in which the crime was committed can demand the return of that person, and the other state must obey.

A slave in one state, who escapes to a state where slavery is outlawed, will be returned to the slave owner upon their request.

Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

SECTION 3. New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States; or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

SECTION 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

ARTICLE V

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

(The Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery, making this part of the Constitution outdated.)

SECTION 3. Congress can let new states into the Union, but no states can be formed inside another state. States cannot be made of two or more states, or parts of states, unless both the state legislatures of those states and Congress agree to it.

Congress has the power to make rules and laws for lands and other property of the United States. Nothing in the Constitution can be used to influence any claims of the United States or any state.

SECTION 4. The United States guarantees every state a government elected by the citizens of that state; and, it will protect the states from attack. The United States will also protect the states from local fighting, or riots, if the state legislatures ask for it. The governor can ask for this protection if the legislature of that state is not meeting at the time the help is needed.

ARTICLE V

The Constitution can be amended in two ways. First, a two-thirds vote of Congress is needed, approving the wording of the proposed amendment, followed by three-fourths of the state legislatures approving the amendment. Or, legislatures of two-thirds of the states can call a big meeting called a Constitutional Convention.

of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or 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 it's equal Suffrage in the Senate.

At this meeting, the states can propose amendments to the Constitution. Either way, the amendments will become official part of the Constitution when three-fourths of the state legislatures approve them. Congress may suggest another way to approve them. No amendment made before the year 1808 can affect the slave trade or how taxes are figured.



ARTICLE VI

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.

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.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United

ARTICLE VI

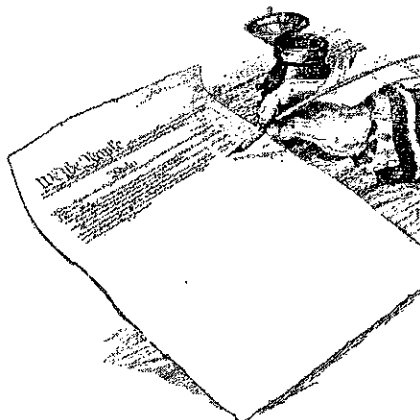
All debts and promises made by the United States before the approval of this Constitution will still be enforced under this Constitution.

This Constitution, the laws of the United States, and the treaties of the United States are the absolute law of the land—and all judges must honor them, despite anything different in state constitutions or state laws.

All senators, representatives, members of state legislatures, executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and in the states themselves, are bound by their

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.

word to support this Constitution. No religious test can ever be used in order to serve in public office.



ARTICLE VII

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same. [sic] done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth. IN WITNESS whereof We have hereunto subscribed our names,

ARTICLE VII

The approval of the constitutional meetings in nine states will be enough to approve the creation of this Constitution between the states.

This agreement is made unanimously by the states present on September 17, 1787; twelve years after becoming independent.

To witness this document, we now sign our names,

Fast Fact

The U.S. Constitution is the shortest, and the oldest, Constitution of any government in the world.

