

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION: FACT SHEETS

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See two lists below

The Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments)

Amendment 1	Freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly and petition. Protects the people's right to practice religion, to speak freely, to assemble (meet), to address the government and of the press to publish.
Amendment 2	right to bear arms. Protects the right to own guns.
Amendment 3	citizens do not have to house soldiers. Guarantees that the army cannot force homeowners to give them room and board.
Amendment 4	no unreasonable search or arrest. Protects the people from the government improperly taking property, papers, or people, without a valid warrant based on probably cause (good reason).
Amendment 5	no double jeopardy or no witness against yourself. Protects people from being held for committing a crime unless they are properly indicted, that they may not be tried twice for the same crime, and that you need not be forced to testify against yourself. It also contains due process guarantees.
Amendment 6	rights of accused in criminal cases. Guarantees a speedy trial, an impartial jury, and that the accused can confront witnesses against them, and that the accused must be allowed to have a lawyer.
Amendment 7	trial by jury. Guarantees a jury trial in federal civil court cases. This type of case is normally no longer heard in federal court.
Amendment 8	no excessive bail or cruel punishment. Guarantees that punishments will be fair, and not cruel, and that extraordinarily large fines will not be set.
Amendment 9	people get rights not listed in Constitution. Simply a statement that other rights aside from those listed may exist, and just because they are not listed doesn't mean they can be violated.

Amendment 10	any rights not given to federal government are given to the states and people. Says that any power not granted to the federal government belongs to the states.
Amendments passed once the Constitution was adopted.	
Amendment 11	individual can not sue a state in federal court. Says how someone from one state can sue another state.
Amendment 12	separate ballots for President and Vice-President. Redefines how the President and Vice-President are chosen by the Electoral College.
Amendment 13	abolish slavery. Abolished slavery in the entire United States.
Amendment 14	if you are born or naturalized in the U.S. then you are a citizen of the U.S.. People had rights on the federal level and on the state level, too. Dealt with civil war items.
Amendment 15	you can not prevent a person from voting because of race, color or creed. Ensured that a person's race could not be used as criteria for voting.
Amendment 16	income tax. Authorizes the United States to collect income taxes – taxes on money people make in their jobs.
Amendment 17	popular election of U.S. Senators. Shifted the choosing of Senators from the state legislatures to the people of the states. Senators used to be elected by their state legislatures, but now they would be elected by the people in their states at elections.
Amendment 18	Prohibition. Abolished the sale or manufacture of alcohol in the United States.
Amendment 19	women get the right to vote
Amendment 20	President takes office on January 20 instead of March 4. Set new start dates for the terms of the Congress and the President.
Amendment 21	repeal prohibition. Repealed the 18th Amendment. Alcohol could now be made and sold in the US.
Amendment 22	President can only serve 2 terms. Set a limit on the number of times a President could be elected - two four-year terms.
Amendment 23	Washington D.C. residents can vote for President. Grants the Washington D.C. the right to three electors in Presidential elections.
Amendment	anti-poll tax. Ensured that no tax could be charged to vote for any candidate.

24	
Amendment 25	how President turns duties over to Vice-President due to illness. Establishes rules for a President who becomes unable to perform his duties while in office.
Amendment 26	18 year olds get to vote. Ensures that any person 18 or over may vote.
Amendment 27	Congress can not accept a pay raise until the next term Any law that increased the pay of legislators may not take effect until after an election.

Amendments and the Year Adopted

Since 1787, Congress has written 33 amendments to change the Constitution, but the states have ratified only 27 of them.

The first ten amendments are called the [Bill of Rights](#). They were made in 1791. All of these changes limited the power of the federal government. They were:

Number	Year	Description
1st	1791	Congress must protect the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition, and freedom of religion. Congress cannot promote any one religion more than others.
2nd	1791	"A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." - <i>People have the right to have weapons, for example guns.</i>
3rd	1791	The government cannot send soldiers to live in private homes without the permission of the owners.

4th	1791	The government cannot get a warrant to arrest a person or search their property unless there is "probable cause" to believe a crime has been committed.
5th	1791	The government cannot put a person on trial for a crime until a grand jury has written an indictment. That a person cannot be put on trial twice for the same crime. The government must follow due process of law before punishing a person or taking their property. A person on trial for a crime does not have to testify against himself in court.
6th	1791	Any person who is accused of a crime should get a speedy trial by a jury. That person can have a lawyer during the trial. They must be told what they are charged with. The person can question the witnesses against them, and can get their own witnesses to testify.
7th	1791	A jury trial is needed for civil cases.
8th	1791	The government cannot require excessive bail or fines, or any cruel and unusual punishment.
9th	1791	The listing of individual rights in the Constitution and Bill of Rights does not include all of the rights of the people and the states.
10th	1791	Anything that the Constitution doesn't say that Congress can do should be left up to the states, or to the people.

After the Bill of Rights, there are 17 more changes to the Constitution that were made at different times.

Number	Year	Description
11th	1795	Citizens cannot sue states in federal courts. There are some exceptions.
12th	1804	Changed the way the President and Vice President are elected.
13th	1865	Ended slavery in the United States.
14th	1868	Every person born in the United States is a citizen. States must follow due process of law before taking away any citizen's rights or property.
15th	1870	A citizen's right to vote cannot be taken away because of race or the color of their skin.
16th	1913	Congress can put a tax on income.
17th	1913	The people will elect Senators. Before this, Senators were elected by state legislatures.
18th	1919	Made a law against drinking alcohol, called Prohibition.
19th	1920	Gave women the right to vote.
20th	1933	Changed the days for meetings of Congress and for the start of the President's term of office.

21st	1933	Ended the Prohibition law of the Eighteenth Amendment. States can make laws about how alcohol is used in each state.
22nd	1951	A person may not be elected President more than two times.
23rd	1961	Gave the people in the District of Columbia the right to vote for President.
24th	1964	Made it illegal to make anyone pay a tax to have the right to vote.
25th	1967	Changes what happens if a President dies, resigns, or is not able to do the job. Says what happens if a Vice President dies or resigns.
26th	1971	Makes 18 years old the minimum age for people to be allowed to vote
27th	1992	Limits how Congress can increase how much its members are paid.

Simplified Constitution of the United States

Article 1 – Creates the two parts of Congress.

Section 2

- A. Defines the House of Representatives, known as the lower house of Congress.
- B. Must be 25 years old, will serve for two years each. Must be a citizen 7 years.
- C. Each state gets Representatives based on state population.
- D. Has a leader called the Speaker of the House.

Section 3

- A. Defines the Senate, known as the upper house of the Congress.
- B. Must be 30 years old, will serve for six years each. Must be a citizen 9 years.
- C. Each state gets two Senators.
- D. Vice-President breaks tie votes.

Section 4

- A. Says that each state may establish its own methods for electing members of the Congress.
- B. Requires, that Congress must meet at least once per year.

Section 5

- A. Says that Congress must have a minimum number of members present in order to meet.
- B. Fines for members who do not show up. It says that members may be expelled.
- C. Each house must keep a journal to record proceedings and votes.
- D. Neither house can adjourn without the permission of the other.

Section 6

- A. Establishes that members of Congress will be paid.
- B. They cannot be detained while traveling to and from Congress.
- C. That they cannot hold any other office in the government while in the Congress.

Section 7

- A. Say how bills become law.
- B. All bills must pass both houses of Congress in the exact same form.
- C. Bills that pass both houses are sent to the President.
- D. He can either sign the bill, in which case it becomes law, or he can veto it.
- E. If he vetoes a bill, it is sent back to Congress, and if both houses pass it by a two-thirds majority, the bill becomes law over the President's veto. This is known as overriding a veto.

Section 8

- A. Gives Congress the power to establish and maintain an army and navy.
- B. To establish post offices, to create courts, to regulate commerce between the states, to declare war, and to raise money.

Section 9

- A. Can't suspend right to remain silent laws.
- B. Can pass laws that make things illegal starting yesterday or last week, etc.
- C. No law can give preference to one state over another
- D. Can't spend money without permission.

Section 10

- A. States can't make their own money, or declare war, or tax goods from other states.

Article 2 – Creates the job of President, called the Executive.

Section 1

- A. Establishes the office of the President and the Vice-President.
- B. Both serve for four years.

- C. Presidents are elected by the Electoral.
- D. Must be 35 years old. Must be born in the USA.
- E. Their pay cannot change, up or down, as long as they are in office.

Section 2

- A. President leads the armed forces.
- B. He has a Cabinet to aid him, and can pardon criminals.
- C. He makes treaties with other nations.
- D. Picks many of the judges and other members of the government.

Section 3

- A. President must give a yearly speech to the nation.
- B. Give suggestions to Congress.
- C. Meet with Ambassadors and other heads of state from other nations.
- D. Ensure the laws of the United States are carried out.

Section 4

- A. Explains how to kick the president from office, called impeachment.

Article 3 – Establishes Judges, called the Judiciary.

Section 1

- A. Establishes the Supreme Court, the highest court in the United States.
- B. Judge serve for life, or until they want to retire.

Section 2

- A. Says what cases the Supreme Court must decide.
- B. It also guarantees trial by jury in criminal court.

Section 3

- A. Defines, without any question, what the crime of treason is.

Article 4 – States Rights.

Section 1

- A. All states will honor the laws of all other states.

Section 2

- A. Citizens of one state are treated equally and fairly like all citizens of another.

- B. It also says that if a person accused of a crime in one state flees to another will be returned to the state that person fled from.

Section 3

- A. How new states come into the Nation.
- B. Control of federal lands.

Section 4

- A. Ensures a “Power by the People” government.
 - B. Guarantees that the federal government will protect the states against.
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Article 5 – How to change the Constitution.

- A. Representatives must vote on the change.
 - B. Senators must vote on the change.
 - C. 2/3 of the States must vote for the change.
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Article 6 - Concerns the United States.

- A. Guarantees that the Constitution and all laws and treaties of the United States to be the supreme law of the country.
 - B. Requires all officers of the United States and of the states to swear an oath of allegiance to the United States and the Constitution when taking office.
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Article 7 – Explained how the Constitution was agreed to.

- A. Of the original 13 states in the United States, nine had to accept the Constitution before it would officially go into effect.

http://www.atlcomputing.com/aaron/info/easy_constitution.htm

http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution

