

# Constitution Day

Constitution Day is celebrated on September 17, and it commemorates the day the United States Constitution was signed by all 39 delegates of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia —September 17, 1787.

## Interesting Facts about the United States Constitution

- **Not all states wanted a single federal government.** Rhode Island boycotted the Constitutional Convention and it was the last state to ratify the Constitution.
- **Some big names were absent from the Constitutional Convention.** Thomas Jefferson was in Paris and John Adams was in Great Britain. Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and Patrick Henry turned down invitations because they thought the United States was headed toward a monarchy.
- **We the People was a late change.** In the original drafts, the document began by listing all of the states — We the people of the state of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, etc.
- **The man who handwrote the Constitution was not a delegate.** Jacob Shallus was an assistant clerk of the Pennsylvania State Assembly who was paid \$30 and given two days to write the document's 4,543 words on four sheets of parchment.

## Essential Vocabulary

**The Constitution of the United States** – this document outlines all the rules and laws for our country. The Constitution is made up of three parts

**Articles of the Constitution** – the main body of the Constitution is made up of seven articles. The Articles explain how the government works and carefully describes many rules for the United States.

**Bill of Rights** – the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The purpose of the Bill of Rights is to provide specific freedoms to citizens and limit the powers of government.

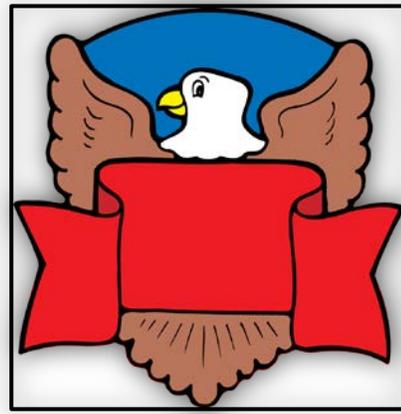
**Amendments** – an amendment is a change that revises or improves an original document.

**Framers** – the Framers were the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention that helped write the United States Constitution in 1787.

## Lesson Starters

### Classroom Constitution

Write a document that outlines the rules and laws for your classroom. Name the students in your room as the *Framers* who will be charged with writing this important document. Display the class Constitution for all to see and refer to during the year.



### Online Scavenger Hunt

Visit [Constitutioncenter.org](http://Constitutioncenter.org) and use the information to write a list of 10 questions about the Constitution. Print the questions or display on the board. Invite your students to visit the same site to search for the answers. Students can work with partners, in groups or alone to search for the answers to this web quest.

## Resource Connection

### Teaching Resources

[Constitution Day: Everything You Need](#)

### Grolier Encyclopedia Article

[The U.S. Constitution: An Overview](#)

### Non-fiction Articles

- [Timeline: Creating the US Constitution](#)
- [We the People: The Preamble](#)
- [Defining Citizenship](#)

### Lesson Plans

- [Constitution Day Lesson Plans: Use these five lessons and printables with your students.](#)
- [U.S. Constitution Roll Call:](#) In this group project, students pose as reporter and founding fathers and take turns interviewing each other for a newspaper article.

### Video

[Shh! We're Writing the Constitution](#)

### Student Activities

- [Listen and Read: It's Constitution Day](#)
- [Online Activity: Celebrate the Constitution Game](#)
- [Make Your Case:](#) give your students a deeper understanding of the 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment with this trial simulation.

### Printables

- [Essential Questions for Social Studies](#)
- [Antique Scroll Template](#)

### Web Link

[National Constitution Center](#)