

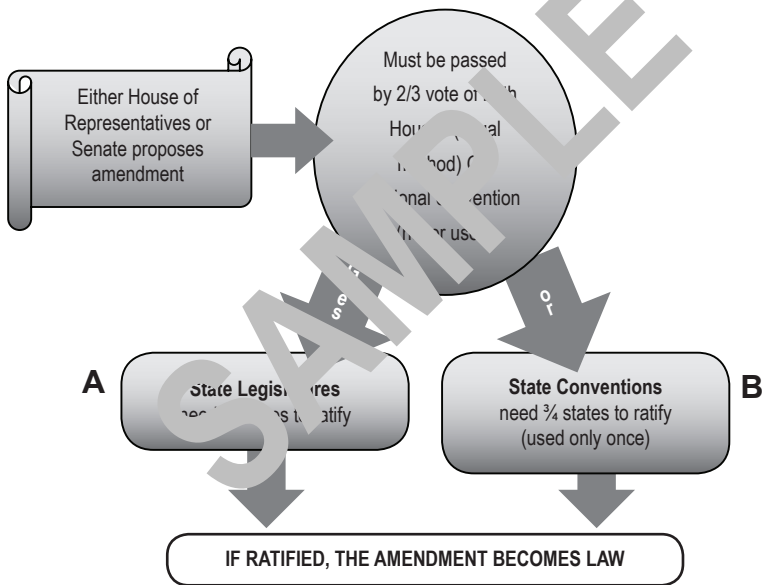
GRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Amending the Constitution

Use the text and the flowchart to answer the questions.

Changes to the Constitution are called amendments. At the first Federal Congress in 1789, James Madison proposed to amend, or change, the brand-new Constitution to better protect individual rights. His proposal was debated in both houses of Congress. In the end, both Houses voted and agreed to send twelve proposed amendments to the state legislatures for ratification. The states ratified ten of them. These are known as the Bill of Rights.

Process to Amend the U.S. Constitution



1. What is the first step in amending the Constitution?
2. In order for a proposed amendment to be passed on to the states for ratification, what must happen first?
3. Use evidence from the text and flowchart to determine where (either A or B) the Bill of Rights amendments were debated and ratified.
4. Cite evidence to support the statement, "Amending the Constitution is a difficult process."

The First Amendment

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees protection of five individual rights. It also limits the government from making laws that infringe upon those rights.

Read the texts and answer the questions.

The First Amendment

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Most Supreme Court justices have agreed that the First Amendment is not without limits. Although the First Amendment protects the right to free speech, it does not protect speech that is untruthful, false, or dangerous to the security of the government. To summarize, the First Amendment has limitations on writing and saying things that are harmful to others; these are known as libel and slander. In addition, the First Amendment does not protect violent or forceful assembly.

1. List the five rights protected by the First Amendment.
2. Using evidence from the text, define libel and slander. Give two examples that highlight the difference between the two words.
3. The First Amendment says that Congress cannot make laws that abridge, or limit, the freedom of speech. Does this mean that you can say anything you want any time you want? Write a short response, and use evidence from the text to support your argument.
4. What word in the First Amendment limits the people’s right to assemble?
5. List the First Amendment rights in order of importance to you. Compare your list with other students’ lists and discuss.

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

March on Washington

In the 1960s, many African Americans and white Americans urged President Kennedy and Congress to make a law that would guarantee equal rights and quality education for African Americans. In 1963, more than 250,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C., to assert their First Amendment rights and get Congress' attention! This March on Washington sent a clear message to Congress to vote "Yes!" on civil rights legislation.

Look at the photo from the March on Washington and answer the questions.



Courtesy of National Archives

1. What First Amendment rights did the March on Washington demonstrate?
2. How has the First Amendment been important to the Civil Rights Movement?
3. Is the right to free speech important today? Give an oral report predicting what would happen if the right to free speech were taken away.
4. Why did protesters choose to march on Washington, D.C., instead of another city?