

PROBLEM-SOLUTION-RESULTS

The Preamble

The Preamble to the Constitution was carefully worded by the delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention. The Preamble reveals the determination of the framers of the Constitution to avoid the same problems the states encountered under the Articles of Confederation.

Read the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. Write each underlined phrase in the Preamble next to the problem it addresses.

Preamble

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

1. _____ Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government had no power to defend U.S. citizens from attack or to protect its borders.
2. _____ Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government could not prevent problems between states, such as states placing taxes on goods "exported" to other states.
3. _____ Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government could do little to protect the freedom the country had fought so hard for. Freedom for future generations was at stake.
4. _____ Article IV of the Articles of Confederation provided for an ineffective system of settling disputes between states because there was no national court system to interpret the laws.
5. _____ Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government had no enforceable system of taxation to raise money to provide services to its citizens.

A Living Constitution

Read the text and answer the questions.

Article V of the Constitution allows the Constitution to be amended (changed) if necessary. Since the inclusion of the Bill of Rights, the amendment process has allowed the United States to continually change and improve citizen's rights under the government. For many reasons, the Constitution is often called a "living document."

Excerpts from Amendments

13th Amendment (1865)

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude... shall exist with the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

15th Amendment (1870)

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

16th Amendment (1913)

"The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on income, from whatever source derived..."

19th Amendment (1920)

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

1. What common theme is shared by the 13th and 15th Amendments?
2. Explain the significance of the 13th Amendment. How did it change United States history?
3. What power did the 16th Amendment give to Congress? How does this amendment affect the United States today?
4. Explain the relationship between the 15th and 19th Amendments. What group of people does each amendment affect?
5. In your own words, use the amendments to explain why the Constitution is considered a "living document."