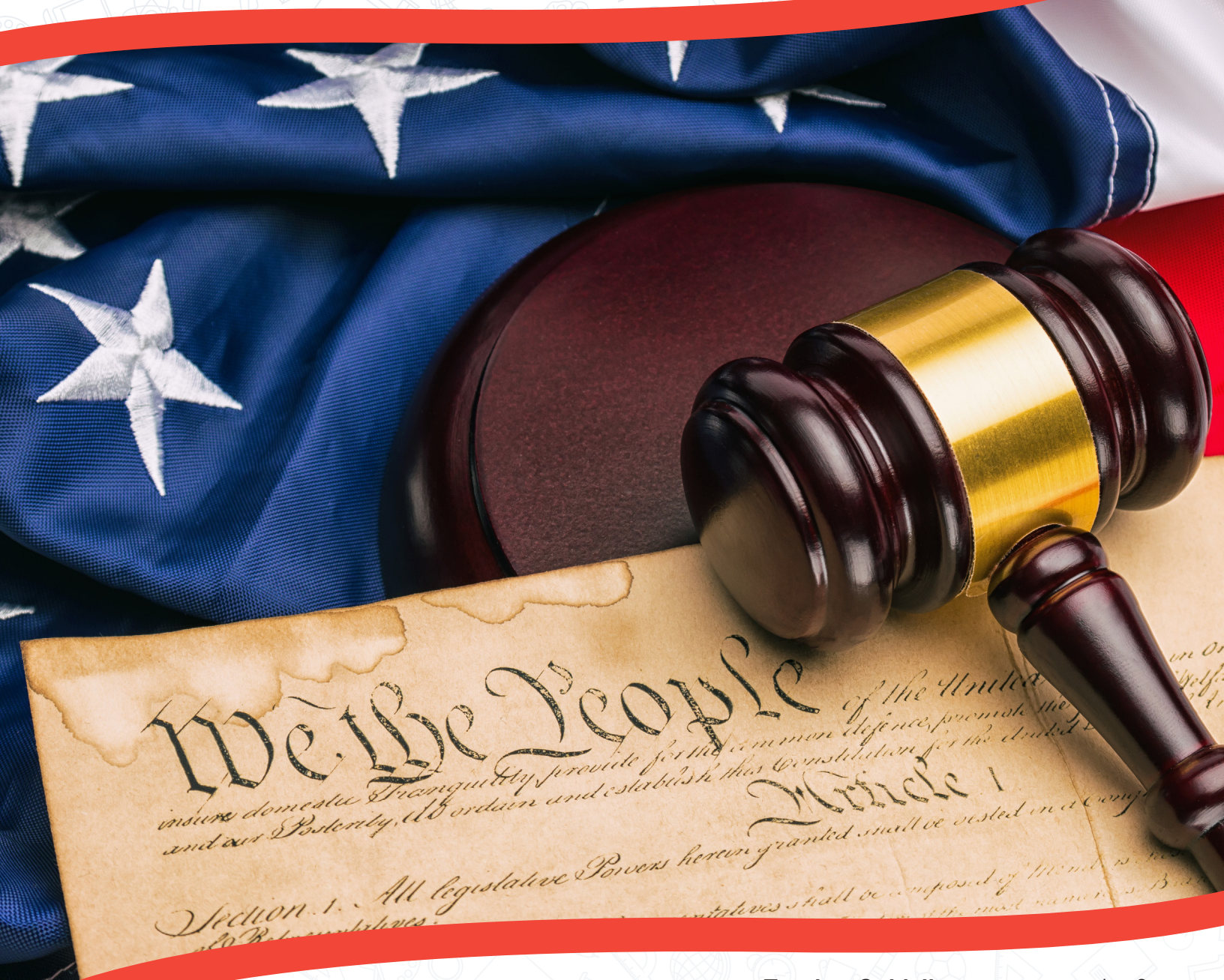


Learn
BRIGHT

CONSTITUTION



GRADE 4-6

Teacher Guidelines	▶	pages 1 – 2
Instructional Pages	▶	pages 3 – 6
Activity Page	▶	page 7
Practice Page	▶	page 8
Homework Page	▶	page 9
Answer Key	▶	page 10

Classroom Procedure:

1. Review the classroom rules with the students and tell them why the classroom rules exist. Ask students: Are there any other rules you follow in your life? Why were the rules created?
2. Allow for responses and discussion.
3. Distribute *The Constitution* content pages. Have students read aloud, and review the concepts of the amendments. Give examples so students will understand the Bill of Rights and the other amendments.
4. Distribute the Activity page and the pre-determined articles (cases) related to some of the controversies in the news related to the Constitution.
5. Review the instructions, appoint a recorder, and a leader for each group.
6. Once all groups had a chance to discuss the articles (cases), have a class discussion about the decisions they made. Review the Activity page results from each group.
7. Distribute the Practice page and review once completed.
8. Distribute the Homework page and discuss the students' responses the next day.
9. Close the lesson with the question: Which of the amendments do you think should be changed, or what should be added?
10. Allow for responses and discussion.

Approximate Grade Level: 4 – 6

Objectives: The students will be able to identify the Constitution, explain its meaning, and summarize some of the amendments, including the Bill of Rights.

State Educational Standards*

LB.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3
LB.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5
LB.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3
LB.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7
LB.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3
LB.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2
LB.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3
LB.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7
LB.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2
LB.ELA-Literacy.RH.6.4
LB.ELA-Literacy.RH.6.10

Class Sessions (45 minutes):

At least 2 class sessions

Teaching Materials/Worksheets:

The Constitution content pages (2), Activity page, Practice page, Homework page

Student Supplies: news articles, copy of the Bill of Rights, handouts

Prepare Ahead of Time: Find enough news articles (cases), related to the Bill of Rights, for students to discuss while working in groups of 3 or 5. Copies of the Bill of Rights. Copy handouts.

Options for Lesson: Students may work in larger groups as long as there are an odd number in each group. Assign the Homework for in-class work, and the Practice page for Homework. Have students create their own “cases” for the group activity. Assign a different amendment to each student to report on and present to the class.

*Lessons are aligned to meet the education objectives and goals of most states. For more information on your state objectives, contact your local Board of Education or Department of Education in your state.



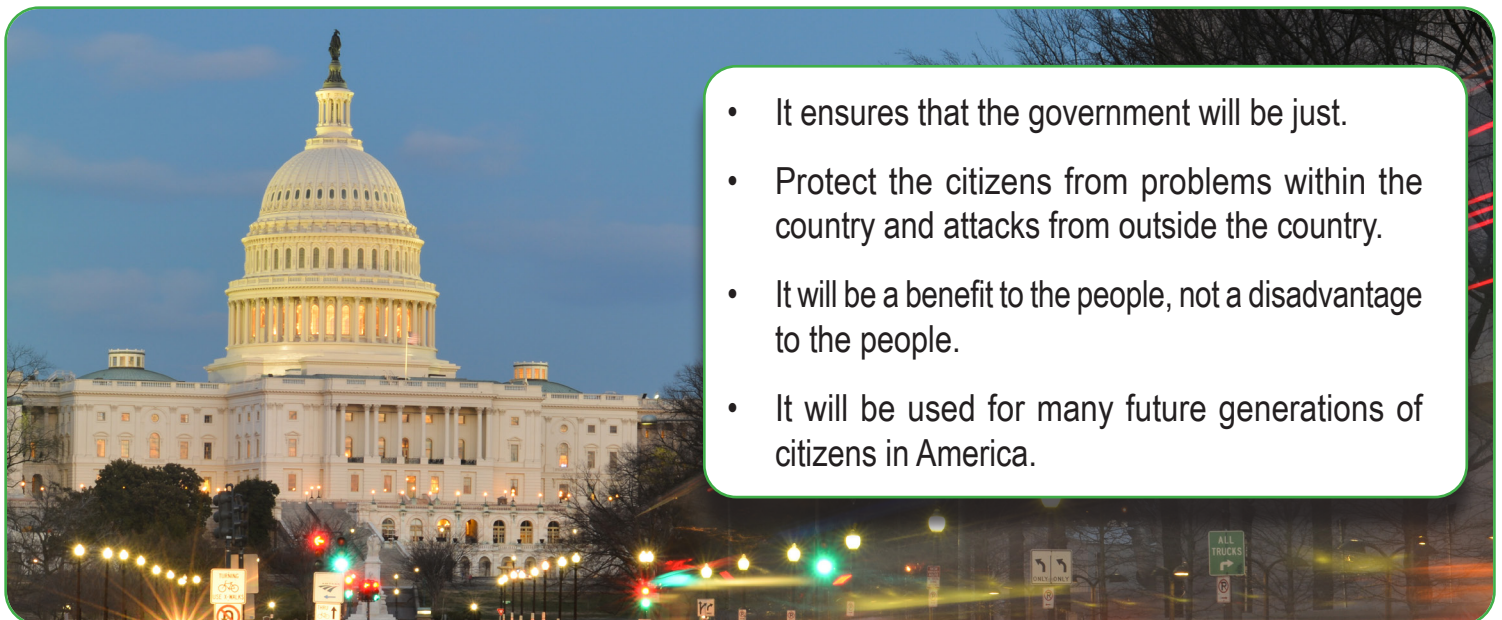
Teacher Notes

The lesson is an overview of the U.S. Constitution and some of the most used amendments, including the Bill of Rights. The lesson can be expanded depending on the level of the students. You may also include more details and examples of some of the amendments “in action.”

Constitution

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher usually has some rules that you and the rest of the class must follow. In addition, you know the reasons for following the different classroom rules. If you think about it, you could call the classroom rules the constitution for the students. In many ways, the **Constitution of the United States** works the same way.

The **preamble** to the constitution is not part of the law or the rules of the United States. The preamble tells the “Why?” of the Constitution. It tells the citizens of the U.S. the reasons for the Constitution:



- It ensures that the government will be just.
- Protect the citizens from problems within the country and attacks from outside the country.
- It will be a benefit to the people, not a disadvantage to the people.
- It will be used for many future generations of citizens in America.

The **Constitution** is made up of the rules or laws of the United States telling its people and government what it can and cannot do. It is the central law of the United States, written in 1787, agreed upon in 1788 by the states. The U.S. Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation, which was considered the first constitution of the original 13 states.

The U.S. Constitution contains seven articles and 27 amendments. The original seven articles took effect in 1789, but the 27 **amendments**, or adjustments or changes, were added between 1791 and 1992. The first ten amendments are called **The Bill of Rights** and were each added in 1791.

The first seven amendments basically explain how the U.S. government is organized. There is a House of Representatives and a Senate; the presidency; the court system and the Supreme Court; and it also says that each state must allow other states to have their own laws. Finally, the first seven amendments tell how the Constitution can be changed, and tells its citizens that the law of the land is the Constitution.

[illegible]

- The above is just a summary of the amendments referred to by many people, whether in the news, by citizens, or discussed by politicians.

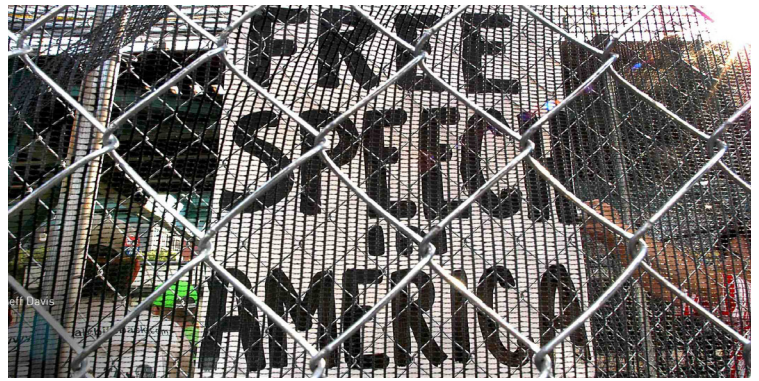
Here are some sample comments you may hear people say, and their meaning:

I can say that because of the 1st amendment.

A person in the United States can make a speech about anything as long as it does not bring harm to another person.

The newsperson can write about it because of the 1st amendment.

News people are permitted to write about whatever they want, and give their opinion, though the facts must be true.



I can practice any religion anytime.

This right is also part of the 1st amendment, which includes the freedom of religion. The government is not permitted to tell anyone what religion they can be or if they have to practice a religion.



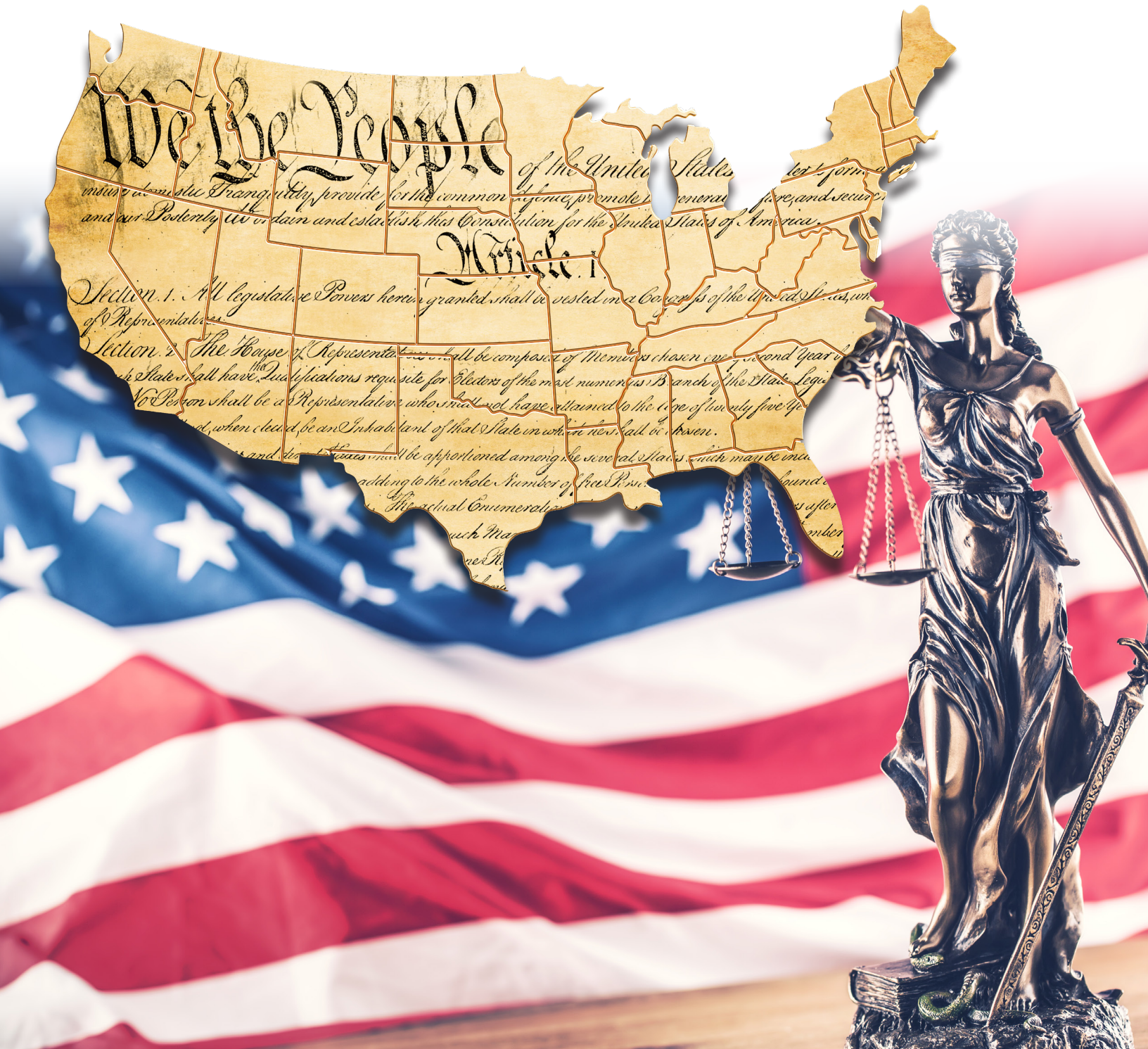
I plead the 5th!

If a person is arrested or testifying in court, they are not required to speak, or say anything, even when questioned. The person, whether they are guilty or not, may plead the 5th, which refers to the 5th amendment allowing them to remain silent.



If a citizen or the government wants to make a change to the Constitution, it involves a long process, and it is very difficult to change. There are several steps involved, including an agreement by 38 out of the 50 states wanting the change to be made.

The Constitution is one of the most important documents of the United States. There are many other countries in the world who do not give their citizens the same rights a person receives in America. Sometimes the Constitution is described as a “living document” because it was not only written for the people in 1787, but also for future generations.





Instructions

1. Each of you in the group are a temporary Supreme Court member.
2. One of you will read the article (case) aloud, while the rest of the “court” listens.
3. After the reading has been completed, the leader will clarify the decision that must be made.
4. The group will discuss the different options it has before deciding to vote.
5. Each “court” member may try to convince other members to vote the same way.
6. There is to be no loud arguing or talking, and everyone must respect each other’s opinion.
7. After a pre-determined time, the teacher will instruct you to take a final vote.
8. Each member of the court must then vote, and the recorder will tally the results below.
9. The “court” will receive a second “case” and repeat the above directions.
10. Be prepared to share your thoughts about the process, and what you learned about making decisions based on the U.S. Constitution with the rest of the class.

The recorder will write a summary and the vote total for each case:

CASE NUMBER ONE: _____

CASE NUMBER TWO: _____

CASE NUMBER THREE: _____

CASE NUMBER FOUR: _____



7 of the first 10 amendments are summarized. Match the related amendment to the correct scenario.

<u>1</u>	Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.
<u>2</u>	Right to keep and bear arms in order to maintain a well-regulated militia.
<u>3</u>	Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.
<u>4</u>	Right to due process of law, freedom from self-incrimination, double jeopardy.
<u>5</u>	Rights of accused persons, e.g., right to a speedy and public trial.
<u>6</u>	Right of trial by jury in civil cases.
<u>7</u>	Freedom from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishments.

1. ____ The family was sitting at home when a policeman knocked on the door and told them he needed to find someone. He asked the parents if he could search their home.
2. ____ A man in the car was in the courtroom and was about to testify. He decided not to speak.
3. ____ The employee took his boss to court and he wanted to have others decide the case instead of the judge.
4. ____ The woman stood on a box and began preaching about God to the people passing by her.
5. ____ The jail was refusing to feed the prisoners because they were talking too loud.
6. ____ The prisoner was in jail for nearly a year and still has not been in front of a judge.
7. ____ The owner of the house owned a gun, thinking it might keep him safe.
8. ____ The New York Times newspaper had a page dedicated to showing the local councilman was taking bribes from companies.
9. ____ A group of people approached their congressman and told them they would like to have a law changed.
10. ____ The man complained because he had already been found innocent of a crime, but he was arrested for the crime again.



Homework

Name _____ Date _____

Writing Your Own Constitution

You are deserted on an island with 24 other people. You find out you will be there for at least ten years. You want everyone to get along, so you must start a government. On the lines below, write your own Constitution for the 25 people on the island. Remember, you are also setting up a mini-government. List at least Ten amendments. Be clear, be neat, and be specific.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____



7 of the first 10 amendments are summarized. Write the related amendment matching the scenario.

<u>1</u>	Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.
<u>2</u>	Right to keep and bear arms in order to maintain a well-regulated militia.
<u>4</u>	Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.
<u>5</u>	Right to due process of law, freedom from self-incrimination, double jeopardy.
<u>6</u>	Rights of accused persons, e.g., right to a speedy and public trial.
<u>7</u>	Right of trial by jury in civil cases.
<u>8</u>	Freedom from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishments.

4 The family was sitting at home when a policeman knocked on the door and told them he needed to find someone. He asked the parents if he could search their home.

5 A man in the car was in the courtroom and was about to testify. He decided not to speak.

7 The employee took his boss to court and he wanted to have others decide the case instead of the judge.

1 The woman stood on a box and began preaching about God to the those passing her by.

8 The jail was refusing to feed the prisoners because they were talking too loud.

6 The prisoner was in jail for nearly a year and still has not been in front of a judge.

2 The owner of the house owned a gun, thinking it might keep him safe.

1 The New York Times newspaper had a page dedicated to showing the local councilman was taking bribes from companies.

1 A group of people approached their congressman and told them they would like to have a law changed.

5 The man complained because he had already been found innocent of a crime, but he was arrested for the crime again.