



Test Your Knowledge of Constitutional History

1. Which of the original thirteen states did not ratify the Bill of Rights until the sesquicentennial in 1939?
2. The Constitution puts a limit on the size of our nation's capital (now Washington DC). How large may it be?
3. How many times does the word "democracy" appear in the U.S. Constitution?
4. How many United States Senators and Representatives were needed for a quorum of the very first Congress?
5. Who was the only delegate that attended every session of the Constitutional Convention?
6. Which state originally had the fewest members of the U.S. House of Representatives according to the Constitution?
7. Which state originally had the most members of the U.S. House of Representatives according to the Constitution?
8. What U.S. constitutional amendment took the shortest time to ratify?
9. What U.S. constitutional amendment took the longest time to ratify?
10. The Constitution (Article I, Sec. 8) grants Congress the authority to issue "letters of marque and reprisal." What are they?
11. Why did John Adams and Thomas Jefferson not sign the proposed U.S. Constitution?
12. What elected state delegate to the U.S. Constitutional Convention refused to attend because he "smelt a rat"?
13. Which of the original states refused to send any delegates to the U.S. Constitutional Convention?
14. What was the largest American city when the Constitution was written?
15. Of those who signed the U.S. Constitution, which ones subsequently became President of the United States?
16. Who "penned" the final version of the U.S. Constitution?
17. Name the three delegates to the Constitutional Convention who refused to sign the final document.
18. What state is misspelled in the Constitution?
19. Who is known as the "Father of the U.S. Constitution"?



20. Who served as President of the Constitutional Convention?
21. What is the longest period between amendments to the Constitution?
22. What delegate is credited with wording the Preamble and editing the final draft of the Constitution?
23. What is the only U.S. constitutional amendment to be repealed?
24. What is the only U.S. constitutional amendment that prohibits actions by private individuals (as opposed to government action)?
25. What U.S. constitutional amendment bars those who give “aid and comfort to the enemy” from holding public office in the United States?
26. According to the Constitution, how many Justices are on the U.S. Supreme Court?
27. Who was generally considered to be the wealthiest delegate at the Constitutional Convention?
28. How many amendments in the Bill of Rights completely protect persons against the unconstitutional actions of state (or local) governments?
29. What constitutional provision has generated the most proposed amendments?
30. What amendment extended suffrage to women?
31. What famous American humorist quipped, “Our Constitution protects aliens, drunks, and U.S. Senators.”?
32. Today, how many states would it take to call for another Constitutional Convention?

Answers: 1. Connecticut, Massachusetts and Georgia. 2. It may not exceed 10 miles square... See Article I, Section 8.17. 3. None. 4. According to Article I, Section 2.3, the very first Congress would have 65 Representatives, and Article I, Section 3.1 guarantees each state (then 13) two Senators. Hence, it took 33 Representatives and 14 Senators to constitute a quorum. 5. James Madison. 6. According to Article I, Section 2.3, both Delaware and Rhode Island were entitled to just one representative in the first Congress. 7. Virginia with 10, followed by Massachusetts and Pennsylvania with 8, then New York and Maryland with 6, etc. 8. The 26th Amendment, 4 months, ratified in 1971. 9. The 27th Amendment, 203 years, ratified in 1992. 10. Legal authorization of private persons to search, seize or destroy goods possessed by a foreign party that has committed an illegal act. For example, early on the U.S. government authorized letters of marque and reprisal to hunt down pirates on the high seas. U.S. treaties now prohibit such actions. 11. John Adams was serving as an ambassador to Great Britain and Thomas Jefferson was serving as an ambassador to France during the Constitutional Convention. 12. Patrick Henry from Virginia. 13. Rhode Island. 14. Philadelphia, population of roughly 40,000. 15. Just two, George Washington and James Madison. 16. Jacob Shallus, a clerk of the Pennsylvania State General Assembly, inked the final version of the Constitution for a fee of \$30. 17. George Mason of Virginia, Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, and Edmund Randolph of Virginia refused to sign, largely due to the fact there was no bill of rights. 18. “Pensylvania”. 19. James Madison. 20. George Washington. 21. 61 years, the period between the 12th Amendment (1804) and the 13th Amendment (1865). 22. Gouveneur Morris of Pennsylvania. 23. The 18th Amendment (Prohibition) was repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933. 24. The 13th Amendment (1865) proscribes slavery and involuntary servitude. 25. The 14th Amendment, adopted in 1868. 26. The Constitution delegates this to the Congress, the size has varied from 5 to 10, and has been set at 9 since 1869. 27. George Washington. 28. Just three—the 1st, 4th and 6th Amendments. The Bill of Rights was intended as a check on the national government, not the states. Supreme Court decisions applying the “due process clause” of the 14th Amendment have totally “incorporated” (absorbed) those three amendments and have partially absorbed the 5th and 8th. The remaining amendments in the Bill of Rights (2nd, 3rd, 7th, 9th, and 10th) only apply protections against the national government. 29. There have been over 500 proposed amendments to eliminate presidential electors (“Electoral College”). 30. The 19th Amendment, ratified in 1920. 31. Will Rogers. 32. Article V of the Constitution requires two-thirds of the states to call for another constitutional convention. Hence, it would necessitate 34 of the 50 states.