



constitution (noun)

A document describing the organization, basic ideas, and laws of a nation, state, or other group

The United States has the **U.S. Constitution**, which created and organized the nation and its government.

Each of the states in the United States, including New Hampshire, have **state constitutions**, which created the state and its government.



Name _____

What Is a Constitution? Literature Connections

1. After the Revolutionary War and the Articles of Confederation, why was a new constitution needed?
2. Who were some of the delegates at the convention?
3. What are some of the issues the delegates argued about at the convention?
4. What was the most important compromise that made the U.S. Constitution possible?
5. When did our nation officially become "The United States of America"?
6. What is a constitution? What does it do?
7. What is the importance of Ben Franklin's idea of a rising sun on the back of George Washington's chair?



What Is a Constitution? Literature Connections

1. After the Revolutionary War and the Articles of Confederation, why was a new constitution needed?

They wanted to create a new government and needed a constitution to write down the rules and organization of the new government.

2. Who were some of the delegates at the convention?

Answers will vary depending upon literature read but should include George Washington, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin.

3. What are some of the issues the delegates argued about at the convention?

How much power the federal government would have; whether the number of representatives a state would have should be equal for all states or based on population size; how enslaved people would be counted in population counts; and whether new states would allow the institution of slavery.

4. What was the most important compromise that made the U.S. Constitution possible?

The Great Compromise created two houses of the legislature, one was based on population and one in which each state has one vote.

5. When did our nation officially become "The United States of America?"

On June 21, 1788, our nation became the United States of America when New Hampshire became the 9th of 13 states to ratify the Constitution.

6. What is a constitution? What does it do?

A constitution is a document that lays out the rules and organization of a government. It makes the government legal and creates the nation.

7. What is the importance of Ben Franklin's idea of a rising sun on the back of George Washington's chair?

He said he wasn't sure if the sun on the back of George Washington's chair was rising or setting. At the end of the convention, he decided it was rising, meaning that day was just dawning in America. The comment showed that he had a lot of hope in the new U.S. Constitution and the new United States.

Name _____

Timeline of the Constitutions

Create a timeline of the N.H. and U.S. Constitutions. The earliest date is 1775 and the latest date is 1795. Follow the directions below.

- Make a long line and draw five marks on it, evenly spaced. The first mark should be at the beginning of the line and the last mark at the end of the line.
- Label the marks with years, jumping by 5 years for each mark. Start with 1775, then 1780, and so on until the last mark says 1795.
- Plot the events on the line according to their years. If a date falls between two marks, estimate the spacing. Check dates off as you add them.
- You are including dates from both the N.H. Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. Use two different colors to compare the two sets of dates.
- Include a title for your timeline and answer the questions below!

U.S. Constitution Dates:

- 1775: Revolutionary War begins
- 1783: Revolutionary War ends
- 1787: U.S. Constitution written
- 1788: New Hampshire is 9th state to ratify U.S. Constitution
- 1789: U.S. Constitution becomes law
- 1791: Bill of Rights added (first 10 amendments)
- 1795: 11th amendment ratified

N.H. Constitution Dates:

- 1776: New Hampshire declares independence from England by creating state government
- 1781: New Hampshire has first constitutional convention to write state constitution
- 1784: New Hampshire state constitution becomes law
- 1792: New Hampshire Constitution amended for the first time

What surprised you about the timeline of constitutions?

There have continued to be changes to the constitutions. The 27th amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution in 1992. The NH Constitution was changed most recently in 1990. How could you amend your timeline to reflect these dates?

Timeline of the Constitutions

Create a timeline of the New Hampshire and U.S. Constitutions. The earliest date is 1775 and the latest date is 1795 so follow the directions below.

- Make a long line and draw five marks on it, evenly spaced. The first mark should be at the beginning of the line and the last mark at the end of the line.
- Label the marks with years, jumping by 5 years each mark. Start with 1775, then 1780, and so on until the last mark says 1795.
- Plot the events on the line according to their years. If a date falls between two marks, estimate the spacing. Check dates off as you add them.
- You are including dates from both the NH Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. Use two different colors to compare the two sets of dates.
- Include a title for your timeline and answer the questions below!

United States Constitution Dates:

- 1775: Revolutionary War begins
- 1783: Revolutionary War ends
- 1787: U.S. Constitution written
- 1788: New Hampshire is 9th state to ratify U.S. Constitution
- 1789: U.S. Constitution becomes law
- 1791: Bill of Rights added (first 10 amendments)
- 1795: 11th amendment ratified

New Hampshire Constitution Dates:

- 1776: New Hampshire declares independence from England by creating state government
- 1781: New Hampshire has first constitutional convention to write state constitution
- 1784: New Hampshire state constitution becomes law
- 1792: New Hampshire Constitution amended for the first time

What surprised you about the timeline of constitutions?

It surprised me the N.H. Constitution seemed to be ahead of the United States in being written and becoming law. But I was also surprised how much it all happened at similar times.

There have continued to be changes to the constitutions. The 27th amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution in 1992. The N.H. Constitution was changed most recently in 1990. How could you amend your timeline to reflect these dates?

I could extend the line to the modern day, although that would make it really long if I kept it to scale. I could make a break in it to show a time jump and then add in the modern-day dates.

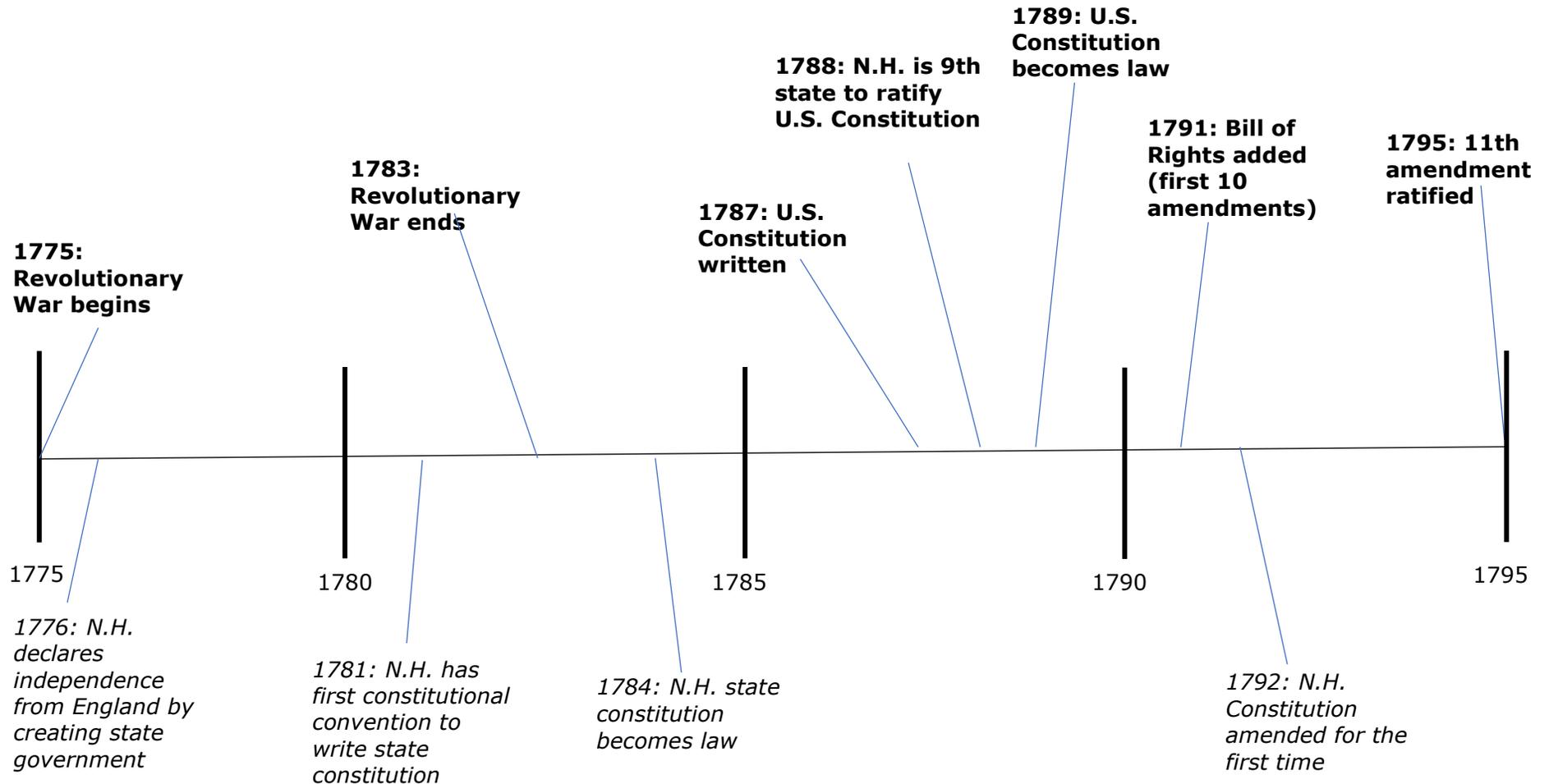


Lesson 6.1: Our Constitutions

U.S. Constitution dates above the line in BOLD.

N.H. Constitution dates below the line in ITALIC.

New Hampshire & U.S. Constitutions Timeline





THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States Constitution was written in 1787. Its purpose was to set up a form of government for the new country made up of the former British colonies. The document is made of three different parts.



Preamble

The Preamble is the introduction to the Constitution. It sets the goals and purposes of the government. It says:

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.

Seven Articles on Government Structure

Article 1:

The Legislative Branch makes the laws.

Article 2:

The Executive Branch carries out the laws.

Article 3:

The Judicial Branch decides the fairness of laws.

Article 4:

States come together equally to form the union.

Article 5:

Amending the Constitution is possible.

Article 6:

The Constitution is the highest law of the land.

Article 7:

There is a process to make the Constitution legal.

Amendments

There are two sets of amendments to the Constitution:

Amendments 1-10:

The first ten amendments are called the **Bill of Rights**. These list the rights of the people. These rights are guaranteed and need to be protected. They were all approved in 1791.

Amendments 11-27:

The rest of the amendments are **changes and additions** to the Constitution.

Article 5 explains how these changes can be made. The first of these was approved in 1795 and the most recent was approved in 1992.



Name _____

Anatomy of a Constitution

1. What is the introduction to the Constitution called?

2. There are seven articles about the structure of government in the Constitution. Say which of the articles would have a statement about:
 - a) How to change the Constitution _____
 - b) Whether state law or federal law is more important _____
 - c) Who should write and pass a law _____
 - d) How to vote on making the Constitution legal _____
 - e) How to decide if a law is reasonable _____
 - f) Whether a big state or small state is more important _____
 - g) Who should create a program to make a law happen _____

3. Making, carrying out, and deciding if laws are fair are the main purposes of the federal government. Read the actions about laws below, and write "executive," "legislative," or "judicial" to show which branch would do it.
 - a) Write a law about safety on the highways. _____
 - b) Make a program about the importance of wearing a seatbelt on highways. _____
 - c) Saying it is illegal to have speed limits over 70 mph on highways. _____
 - d) Decide that candy is legal in the U.S. _____
 - e) Pass a law saying candy is illegal in the U.S. _____
 - f) Go to stores and take all the candy from the shelves. _____
 - g) Have a "Take Your Pet to Work" week every year. _____
 - h) Say that it is legal to have more than 10 pets in a house. _____



Name _____ Answer Key _____

Anatomy of a Constitution

1. What is the introduction to the Constitution called?

The Preamble

2. There are seven articles about the structure of government in the Constitution. Say which of the articles would have a statement about:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a) How to change the Constitution | _____ Article 5 _____ |
| b) Whether state law or federal law is more important | _____ Article 6 _____ |
| c) Who should write and pass a law | _____ Article 1 _____ |
| d) How to vote on making the Constitution legal | _____ Article 7 _____ |
| e) How to decide if a law is reasonable | _____ Article 3 _____ |
| f) Whether a big state or small state is more important | _____ Article 4 _____ |
| g) Who should create a program to make a law happen | _____ Article 2 _____ |

3. Making, carrying out, and deciding if laws are fair are the main purposes of the federal government. Read the actions about laws below, and write "executive," "legislative," or "judicial" to show which branch would do it.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| a) Write a law about safety on the highways. | _____ Legislative _____ |
| b) Make a program about the importance of wearing a seatbelt on highways. | _____ Executive _____ |
| c) Saying it is illegal to have speed limits over 70 mph on highways. | _____ Judicial _____ |
| d) Decide that candy is legal in the U.S. | _____ Judicial _____ |
| e) Pass a law saying candy is illegal in the U.S. | _____ Legislative _____ |
| f) Go to stores and take all the candy from the shelves. | _____ Executive _____ |
| g) Have a "Take Your Pet to Work" week every year. | _____ Executive _____ |
| h) Say that it is legal to have more than 10 pets in a house. | _____ Judicial _____ |



Lesson 6.1: Our Constitutions

4. What are the first 10 amendments about? Why might people need protection from the government?

They are about the rights of the people. It says the government must guarantee them. I think that governments can be very powerful, and one person wouldn't be able to fight it if the government was doing something wrong. So these amendments make sure the people are protected.

5. The Constitution was written in 1787. What might you imagine some of the changes have been since then?

That's a long time ago! They might have added rules about technology since it was so different back then. Or they could have added rules they forgot, like how long someone could be president. I think they probably changed who was allowed to vote as well.



Lesson 6.1: Our Constitutions

Changes to Our Constitutions	
Examples of Amendments to the U.S. Constitution	Examples of Changes to N.H. Constitution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Amendment: Freedom of religion, of the press, of speech, of assembly, of petition • 7th Amendment: No cruel or unusual punishment for crimes (Amendments 1–10: Bill of Rights, passed 1791) • 13th Amendment: Slavery and involuntary servitude illegal in the United States, 1865 • 15th Amendment: All men have the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, 1870 • 19th Amendment: All men and women over the age of 21 have the right to vote, 1920 • 22nd Amendment: A person cannot be elected president more than two times, 1951 • 25th Amendment: If the president leaves office by resignation or death, the vice president becomes president • 26th Amendment: All people over the age of 18 have the right to vote 	<p>Part First, Bill of Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 2: Added a sentence to stop discrimination when protecting people’s rights (1974) • Article 11: Who can vote and how. Changed seven times, including changing age of voting, type of absentee voting, protecting disability access to polling places (1903–1984) • Article 15: Added that the state will provide lawyer if accused cannot pay for one (1966) • Article 22: Added freedom of speech (1968) <p>Part Second, Form of Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3: Changed four times to amend the schedule of the General Court (1877–1984) • Article 5-a: Added to organize the succession of power in the state in case of enemy attack if people are unable to carry out their duties (1942) • Article 6-a: Added to say all taxes related to cars and roads must be used to maintain highways in the state (1938) • Article 15: Changed five times to amend how much representatives and senators are paid • Article 41: Changed to say New Hampshire will not call its leader “President” but instead “Governor” (1792)



Name _____

Illustrating the Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

Draw a picture illustrating the result of these amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

<p>13th Amendment: Outlawed slavery</p>	
<p>15th Amendment: Gave all men the right to vote no matter their race or color or whether they had been enslaved</p>	
<p>19th Amendment: Gave women the right to vote</p>	



Lesson 6.1: Our Constitutions

<p>22nd Amendment: Limited a person from being president for more than two terms or 10 years</p>	
<p>26th Amendment: Gave the right to vote to all people over the age of 18</p>	
<p>If you could create an amendment, what would it be? Why?</p>	