

U.S. Constitution

Introduction

The U.S. Constitution is the highest law in the United States. It sets up the rules for how the government works. It creates the Presidency, the Congress, and the Supreme Court.

Every state has their own constitution that set up the rules for the state governments. But unlike the Articles of Confederation, when a state law comes into conflict with the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Constitution wins out.

Task

Read the following excerpts from the U.S. Constitution. Use the excerpts to answer the questions on your Walk Around Passport and complete the extension activity.

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 defence, 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.

Article 1, Sections 1

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives...

Article 1, Section 8

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes... but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;... To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;... To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof... To establish Post Offices and Post Roads;... To raise and support Armies...

Article 2, Section 1

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years...

Article 2, Section 2

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States;... He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court...

Article 3, Section 1

The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.

Article 3, Section 2

The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;... to Controversies between two or more States...