

The United States Constitution

by Susan LaBella



The United States Constitution is the highest law in the nation. It is the set of rules that Americans live by.

In 1787, a group of Americans did not like how their new country's government worked. They sat down to write new rules for the government. Among those men were Ben Franklin and George Washington.

The men met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during a hot summer. Sometimes they had disagreements. They had to work hard to solve those disagreements. When they finished, they had written the country's Constitution. Next, the Constitution had to be approved by the states. After a few years, the states voted in favor of the Constitution. It was now the law of the land.

According to the Constitution, an election for president must be held every

four years. The Constitution also says that the United States must have a Congress and a Supreme Court. Congress makes laws. The Supreme Court decides if laws are correctly written and followed.

The Constitution promises important rights to the American people. These include the right to believe what you wish and the right to say what you believe. These promises are listed in the part of the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the United States Constitution?

- A. the set of rules that Americans live by
- B. a list of problems with the American government
- C. a list of promises about Americans' rights

2. Part of the text describes the sequence of events that ended with the Constitution becoming the law of the land. After men met at Independence Hall and wrote the Constitution, what happened next?

- A. The Constitution became the law of the land.
- B. The states voted to approve the Constitution.
- C. The men solved their disagreements.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The men met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during a hot summer. Sometimes they had disagreements. They had to work hard to solve those disagreements. When they finished, they had written the country's Constitution. Next, the Constitution had to be approved by the states. After a few years, the states voted in favor of the Constitution. It was now the law of the land."

What can you conclude based on this evidence?

- A. It took a lot of effort to create the new rules for the government and to put them in place.
- B. It was not very difficult for people to agree on the new rules for the government.
- C. The states liked the old government more than the new one described by the Constitution.

4. The states had to vote for the Constitution to become the law of the land. The Constitution says that people must vote for a president every four years.

What can you infer based on this evidence?

- A. The government that existed before the Constitution was based on voting.
- B. Most Americans at the time did not think voting was very useful.
- C. Americans at the time felt that voting was an important part of a good government.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. The U.S. Constitution is the law of the land, and it lays out rules for the government and rights for the American people.
- B. The U.S. Constitution says that the country must have a Congress, a Supreme Court, and a president.
- C. The U.S. Constitution was written by a group of men that included Ben Franklin and George Washington.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The Constitution promises important rights to the American people. These include the right to believe what you wish and the right to say what you believe. These promises are listed in the part of the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights."

What does the word "rights" mean in this paragraph?

- A. things that people should always be able to do
- B. things that people should never be allowed to do
- C. gifts for people who follow the rules

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The Constitution is the highest law in the nation, _____ Americans and the U.S. government have to live and work by its rules.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. What is the Bill of Rights?

9. Why did a group of Americans decide to write new rules for the government to follow?

10. Why might the people who wrote the Constitution have included a Bill of Rights for the American people? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
