

**A More Perfect Union:**  
The USCIS Civics Test Guide to the Monuments  
and Memorials on the National Mall



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Constitution Gardens

Welcome to the *Constitution Gardens* in Washington D.C.

Read the following information about the Constitution Gardens.

The words that are in **bold** will help you answer questions from the Civics part of the Naturalization Test.

The words that are underlined are vocabulary words from the Reading and Writing parts of the Naturalization Test.

Civics Test Questions are highlighted for quick reference.



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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## The Constitution

Constitution Gardens was created to celebrate the U.S. Constitution.

### The Constitution was written at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

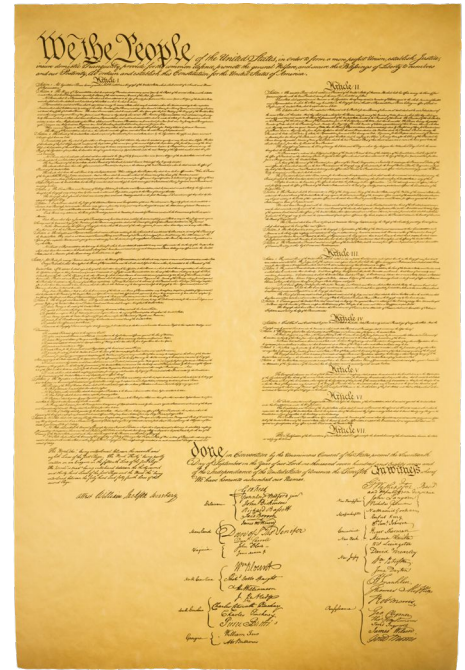
65. *What happened at the Constitutional Convention?*

66. *When was the Constitution written?*

The U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution in the world.

George Washington was chosen to lead the Constitutional Convention.

**George Washington was also the first President of the United States. We call him the “father of our country.”**



69. *Who is the “Father of our Country?”*

70. *Who was the first President?*

Benjamin Franklin is another famous American who was at the Constitutional Convention.  
**Benjamin Franklin was the oldest person at the Constitutional Convention.**

68. *What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?*

After the Constitution was written, it had to be approved by the states. Some people did not like the new Constitution. **In 1788, John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton published essays in newspapers called The Federalist Papers.**

**The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution.**

67. *The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.*

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and Immigration  
Services

## Form of Government

**The Constitution is the supreme law of the land.** This means that everyone must follow the Constitution.

*1. What is the supreme law of the land?*

In the United States we believe in the “rule of law.”

**“The rule of law” means that everyone must follow the law.**

*12. What is the rule of law?*

**The Constitution also sets up the government.**

*2. What does the Constitution do?*

**In the Constitution, there are three branches or parts of government which are:**

- **The Legislative Branch**
- **The Executive Branch**
- **The Judicial Branch**

*13. Name one branch or part of the government.*

The powers of government are divided among three branches or parts of government. **The separation of powers is what stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful.**

*14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?*

The government that the Constitution sets up is called self-government. This means that the people of the United States govern themselves.

**The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution.** It starts with the words **“We the people...”**

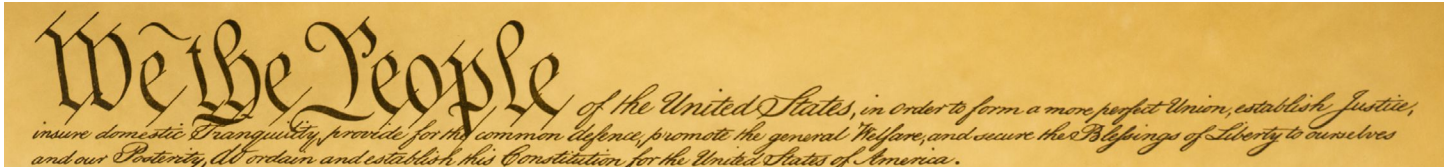
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and Immigration  
Services

3. *The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?*

This type of government is also known as a democracy.



### Legislative Branch

Another name for the legislative branch is called Congress.

**Congress makes federal laws.**

16. *Who makes federal laws?*

**The U.S. Congress has two parts:**

- **The House of Representatives**
- **The Senate**

17. *What are two parts of the U.S. Congress?*

The Constitution says that the person in charge of the House of Representatives is called the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

**Nancy Pelosi is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now [as of August 2021].**

47. *What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?*

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and Immigration  
Services

**Some states have more Representatives than other states because some states have more people.**

*25. Why do some states have more Representatives than others?*

**A U.S. Senator represents all of people of the state.**

*24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?*

## Executive Branch

**The President of the United States is in charge of the executive branch.**

*15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?*



The U.S. military is part of the executive branch. **The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. military.**

*32. Who is the Commander-in-Chief of the military?*

There are many departments in the executive branch. The parts of the executive branch are called departments.

Each department has many agencies and offices. The National Parks Service is in the Department of the Interior. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is in the Department of Homeland Security.

The heads of most of the departments are called secretaries. The head of the Department of Justice is called the Attorney General.

**The secretaries of the all of the departments, the attorney general, and the vice president are part of the president's cabinet.**

*36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?*

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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

#### **The President's cabinet advises the president.**

*35. What does the President's Cabinet do?*

The President also approves laws that Congress creates.

When Congress passes a law, it is sent to the President to sign or veto. Until the President signs a law it is called a "bill."

If the President approves it, **the President signs the bill into law.**

*33. Who signs bills to become laws?*

If the President does not approve it, **the President vetoes the bill.**

*34. Who vetoes bills?*

If the President can no longer serve, the Vice President becomes president.

*30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes president?*

**If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House of Representatives becomes the President.**

*31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?*

**Joe Biden is the name of the President of the United States now (as of August 2021).**

*28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?*

**Kamala Harris the name of the Vice President of the United States now (as of August 2021).**

*29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?*

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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Judicial Branch

The judicial branch is made up of the federal court system.

**The judicial branch reviews the laws** that Congress writes and the President signs.

37. *What does the judicial branch do?*

**The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.**

38. *What is the highest court in the United States?*



The Chief Justice is the highest-ranking judge on the Supreme Court.

**John Roberts is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court now.**

39. *Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?*

## Powers of Government

**Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government and some powers belong to the state governments.**

**Powers that belong to the federal government are the power:**

- to print money
- to declare war
- to create an army
- to make treaties

**Powers that belong to the states are:**

- provide schooling and education
- provide protection (police)
- provide safety (fire departments)
- give a driver's license
- approve zoning and land use

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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?

42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?

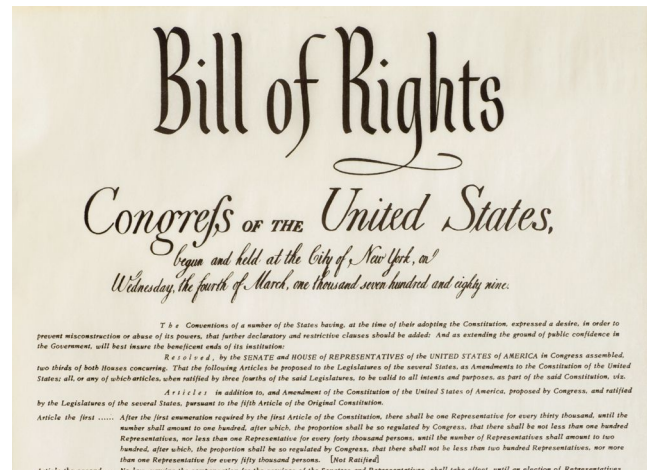
### Amendments

The Constitution has only been amended 27 times since it was written in 1787. **An amendment is a change to the Constitution.**

4. What is an amendment?

The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights.

5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?



The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791. That is only 4 years after the Constitution was written.

There are 5 rights or freedoms in the First Amendment:

- speech
- religion
- assembly
- press
- petition the government

6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?

## A More Perfect Union:

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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Civic Engagement

There are **many ways that Americans can participate in their democracy** by exercising the rights and freedoms in the First Amendment to the Constitution:

- **join a political party**
- **help with a campaign**
- **join a civic group**
- **join a community group**
- **give an elected official your opinion on an issue**
- **call Senators and Representatives**
- **publicly support or oppose an issue or policy**
- **run for office**
- **write to a newspaper**

*55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?*

## Voting

**Another way that Americans can participate in their democracy is to vote.**

**The right to vote in federal elections is a right that is only for United States citizens.**

*50. Name one right only for United States citizens.*



**Voting in federal elections is also a responsibility that is only for United States citizens.**

*49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?*

**The Constitution says that a citizen must be eighteen years and older to vote for President.**

*54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?*

U.S. citizens vote to elect the President, representatives in the House of Representatives, and Senators.

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and Immigration  
Services

#### **We vote for President in November.**

*27. In what month do we vote for president?*

#### **We elect a President for four (4) year terms.**

*26. We elect a president for how many years?*

#### **We elect a U.S. Representatives for two (2) year terms.**

*22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?*

#### **We elect a U.S. Senator for six (6) year terms.**

*19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?*

#### **There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote.**

- The 26th Amendment says **citizens eighteen (18) and older can vote.**
- The 24th Amendment says **you don't have to a pay a poll tax to vote.**
- The 19th Amendment says **any citizen (women and men) can vote.**
- The 15th Amendment says **a male citizen of any race can vote.**

*48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.*



## Vocabulary for the Reading and Writing Parts of the Naturalization Test

The table below contains the underlined words from the information you just read about the Constitution and the Constitution Gardens. They are some of the vocabulary words for the Reading and Writing parts of the Naturalization Test.

Vocabulary for the Reading Test	Vocabulary for Both the Reading and Writing Test	
Bill of Rights Country Government Many Name Pay U.S.	Citizen/Citizens Congress Elect Father of Our Country First George Washington/Washington Most One	People President Right Senators State/states United States Vote

To see a full list of the 100 questions on the Naturalization Civics Test, and a full list of the vocabulary on the Reading and Writing Test, please visit the USCIS Citizenship Resource Center: [www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship).