



- » The constitutional framers balanced two dangers: government that was too strong (the king of England) versus government that was too weak (the Articles of Confederation).
- » Debates focused on five central issues:
 1. Popular involvement in government. Most delegates believed in filtration, or indirect elections.
 2. National versus state power, which came down to a standoff between larger and smaller states. Led by Madison, the big states introduced the Virginia Plan. Small states countered with the New Jersey Plan. The Connecticut Compromise offered a solution: House members were elected on the basis of population, but every state had two Senate seats.
 3. The nature of the presidency.
 4. How best to separate powers, answered through a system of checks and balances. For the most part, these limits on concentrated authority would continue to develop long after ratification.
 5. Slavery: Compromise in the name of union overcame morality. Delegates took care not to use the word *slavery* in the Constitution, but several clauses enabling the institution to grow and expand would lead to the greatest conflict in the nation's future—and enshrine injustice that haunts the country still.

Executive

- The president
- Executive offices
- Cabinet departments
- Government agencies

Interpret laws and regulations
Declare presidential acts unconstitutional
Appoint judges
Make pardons

Control funding
Override vetoes with 2/3 vote
Impeach and remove officials
Sign legislation
Veto bills

Judicial

- Supreme Court
- Courts of appeal
- District courts

Declare laws unconstitutional
Interpret laws

Control funding
Approve federal judges
Constitutional amendments

Legislative

- House of Representatives
- Senate

Summarizing the Bill of Rights

1. Congress may not establish a religion or prohibit the free exercise of religion; it may not abridge freedom of speech or of the press or of the people's right to assemble and to petition government.

2. Citizens have the right to bear arms.

3. No soldier may be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner.

4. There must be no unreasonable search or seizures. Government authorities may not break into your house without a search warrant.

5. No one may be forced to testify against him- or herself (declining to do so is now known as "taking the Fifth"); no one may be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The government may not take private property (if, for example, it wants to build a highway) without just compensation.

6. Certain rights are guaranteed in criminal trials.

7. Accused persons are guaranteed the right to trial by jury.

8. The government may not force citizens to pay excessive bails, impose excessive fines, or impose cruel and unusual punishments.

9. Enumerating these rights does not diminish the other rights retained by the people.

10. Any powers not given to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people.

Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

AMENDMENT	DESCRIPTION	YEAR RATIFIED	RESULT
11	Required state consent for individuals suing a state in federal court	1795	Modified government operations
12	Separated votes within the Electoral College for president and vice president	1804	Shifted election rules
13	Prohibited slavery	1865	Expanded individual rights
14	Provided citizenship to former slaves and declared that states could not deny civil rights, civil liberties, or equal protection of the laws	1868	Expanded individual rights
15	Granted voting rights to members of all races	1870	Expanded individual rights
16	Permitted national income tax	1913	Expanded government powers over individuals
17	Provided for direct election of senators	1913	Shifted election rules
18	Prohibited alcohol	1919	Expanded government powers over individuals
19	Extended the vote to women	1920	Expanded individual rights
20	Changed Inauguration Day from March to January	1933	Modified government operations
21	Repealed Prohibition	1933	Adjusted government powers over individuals
22	Limited president to two terms	1951	Shifted election rules
23	Extended the vote for president to citizens in Washington, DC	1961	Expanded individual rights
24	Prohibited a poll tax [one way to keep Black people from voting]	1964	Expanded individual rights
25	Established succession plan in case of president's death or disability	1967	Modified government operations
26	Extended the vote to 18-year-olds	1971	Expanded individual rights
27	Established that congressional pay raise couldn't go into effect until the next election	1992	Modified government operations