

The Constitution

- Article I Establishes the Legislative Branch
The **Congress** is divided into two chambers: The **House** and **Senate**. The powers of Congress, such as to raise taxes, coin money, and declare war, are **enumerated** (listed) in Article I Section 8.
- Article II Establishes the Executive Branch
The Executive Branch includes the **President**, the **Vice President**, and members of the President's **Cabinet**. The Executive branch also includes the **Executive Office of the President** that includes other officials, such as the Press Secretary and National Security Advisor.
- Article III Establishes the Judicial Branch
The Constitution establishes the **Supreme Court** and grants Congress the power to establish lesser courts. The federal court system currently has three tiers: **District Courts** for trials, **Circuit Courts** for appeals, and the Supreme Court.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution are known as the **Bill of Rights**

The First Amendment protects the rights of free speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition.

The Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms.

The Third Amendment protects against the quartering of troops in private homes without consent.

The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches and seizures

The Fifth Amendment protects against double-jeopardy (being tried for the same crime twice), self-incrimination, and the taking of private property without compensation.

The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a speedy trial, a trial by jury, an attorney, and the right to confront witnesses

The Eighth Amendment protects against cruel and unusual punishment, excessive bail, and excessive fines.

The Tenth Amendment states that "powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Constitutional Amendments

In addition to the Bill of Rights, the Constitution has been amended 17 times for a total of twenty-seven amendments. The most noteworthy among these are:

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude.

The Fourteenth Amendment stipulates that no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The Fifteenth Amendment stipulates that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The U.S. income tax was established by the Sixteenth Amendment.

The direct election of United States Senators by the people was established by the Seventeenth Amendment.

Prohibition, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor, was established by the Eighteenth Amendment.

The end of Prohibition, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor, was mandated by the Twenty-First Amendment.

A women's right to vote was guaranteed by the Nineteenth Amendment.

The Twenty-Second Amendment stipulated that the President of the United States could not serve more than two terms.

According to the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, the right to vote shall not be denied by reason of the failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

The right of eighteen year olds to vote was guaranteed by the Twenty-Sixth Amendment.