

The First 10 Amendments

An **amendment** is a change or addition. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are called the **Bill of Rights**. They were added in 1791 to limit the power of the national government over the people. Many of the men who wrote the Constitution felt that a bill of rights was not needed because these rights were already protected by state constitutions.

Others argued that the Constitution says that all powers not given to the government go to the people. They thought that making a list of people’s rights was not a good idea because they might leave one out.

The Bill of Rights

James Madison, then a representative from Virginia, realized that a bill of rights had to be added if the Constitution was to be accepted by the states. Some had agreed to sign only if this was done. Madison presented 17 amendments to Congress. These were cut down to 12.

On Oct. 2, 1789, President George Washington sent the states a copy of these amendments for their approval. By Dec. 15, 1791, enough states had approved 10 of the amendments, and the Bill of Rights was adopted.

This week, we’ll learn about the first five amendments in the Bill of Rights. We’ll finish the last five in an upcoming issue.

The First Amendment

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

- **Freedom of religion** means that Congress cannot pass a law setting up a religion that everyone must follow. You are free to worship as you please.

- **Freedom of speech** means that you are free to speak out and give your side of things. Others are free to listen. However, there are some limits. You can’t shout “fire” in a crowded room when there is no fire.

- **Freedom of the press** means that members of the press do not have to get what they are planning to print or say approved by the government beforehand. They are free to print what they wish as long as it is not a deliberate lie.

- **Freedom of assembly** means that you are free to meet peacefully.

- **Freedom of petition** means that you are free to ask the government to correct things that you think are wrong.



photo by Thomas Elliott

Mini Fact:

The Bill of Rights is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The Second Amendment

- Guarantees the right to bear (carry) arms (weapons). Congress cannot prevent people from owning guns for their own protection. However, states and local governments can make laws about who may own them and how they are carried.



The Third Amendment

- The government cannot force citizens to keep soldiers in their homes. In Colonial times, citizens were forced to allow British soldiers into their homes.

The Fourth Amendment

- Limits searches and seizures. This amendment says that before police officers can enter your home, they must have a **warrant**, or legal paper from a judge, giving permission for a search or arrest.

The Fifth Amendment

Grants the following rights:

- A person cannot be brought to trial for a serious crime until a grand jury has studied the charges.
- If you have been tried for a crime, you cannot be tried again for the same crime.
- A person accused of a crime cannot be forced to say anything against himself.
- The government cannot take away your life or property, or put you in prison, without “due process of law.”
- If the government has a good reason to take away your property for public use, it must pay you a fair price for that property.

In 2005, Betty Debnam, creator of The Mini Page, worked closely with the National Archives in Washington, D.C., to create a nine-part series of issues about our U.S. Constitution. This is the eighth issue in the series, which will continue once a month until Election Day 2020.

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of the Bill of Rights are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

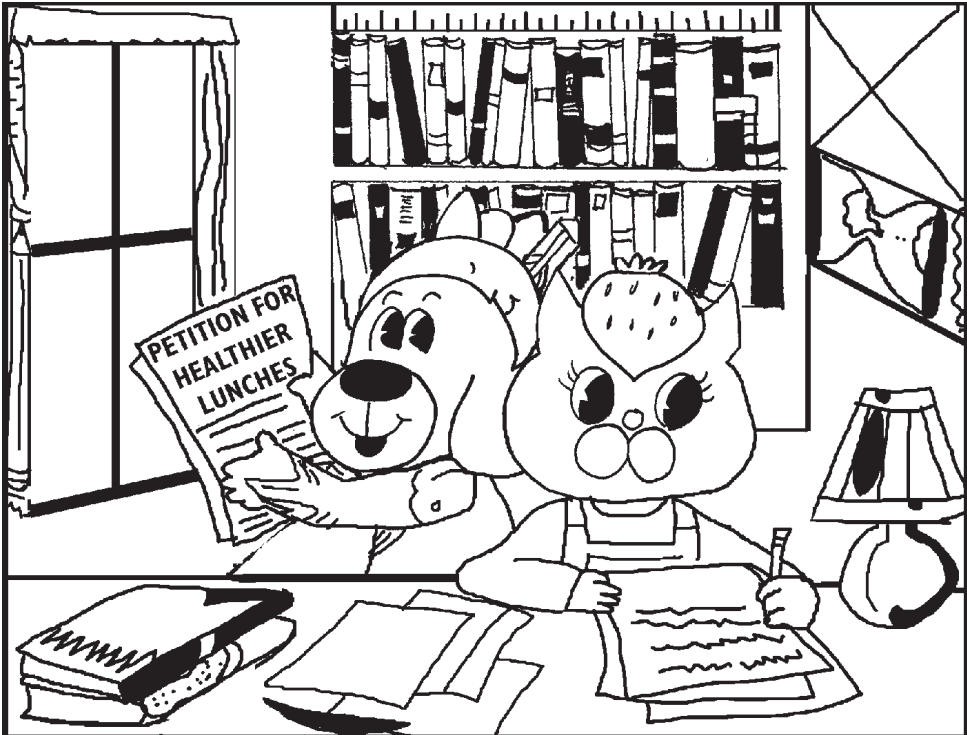


AMENDMENT,
ARMS, ASSEMBLY,
BILL, CONGRESS,
CONSTITUTION,
MADISON, PETITION,
POWER, PRESS,
PROCESS, RELIGION,
RIGHTS, SPEECH, STATES,
TEN, TRIAL, WARRANT,
WASHINGTON.

J S P E T I T I O N L L I B N
C O N S T I T U T I O N Q D O
P L A I R T W I P R O C E S S
R T N E M D N E M A G Q K H I
E S E J F C O N G R E S S C D
S T N O T G N I H S A W R E A
S H E X R E L I G I O N E E M
A G S A S S E M B L Y Q W P F
H I B S E T A T S T E N O S K
A R M S W A R R A N T X P R O

Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and Basset Brown are writing a petition for healthier school lunches. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month

Based on materials originally produced and/or created by Betty Debnam.

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- man in the moon
 - peanut
 - strawberry
 - number 7
- exclamation mark
 - kite
 - hourglass
 - carrot
- ruler
 - question mark
 - pencil
 - fish
- sailboat
 - arrow
 - number 8
 - letter I

Mini Jokes



Cal: What’s it called when a group of criminals fall into the ocean?
Carrie: A crime wave!

Eco Note



Are you back in your classroom, or learning at home? The Centers for Disease Control wants to make sure you know how to use a mask properly to protect others and yourself. Wear a mask that covers your **nose and mouth** in case you’re infected with COVID-19 but don’t have symptoms. Wear a mask **in public** when around people who don’t live in your household, especially when it may be difficult for you to stay 6 feet apart.

adapted from CDC.gov

For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about our constitutional rights.

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