

Constitution Day

On September 17, 1787, delegates signed the U.S. Constitution. To commemorate this historical event, federal law requires schools that receive federal funding and all federal agencies to hold programs about the Constitution on or near that date each year.

Below is a “best of” set of resources featured in past issues of *Justitia*, the Learning Center’s educator e-newsletter.



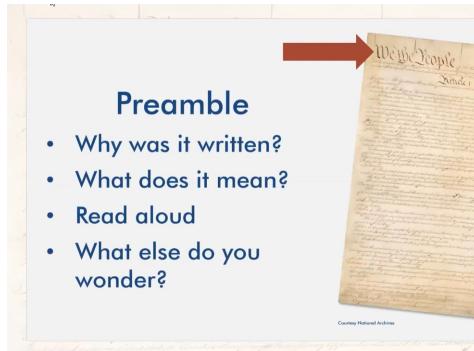
We the People

[Archived Webinar](#)

The Preamble is the part of the Constitution most people recognize. It begins “We the People.” The Preamble describes who we are, what we do, and why.

Program Outline

- Introduction to the Constitution
- Introduction to the Constitutional Convention in 1787
- Discussion of the purpose and meaning of the Preamble
- Reciting the Preamble
- Q&A with a Justice



Preamble

- Why was it written?
- What does it mean?
- Read aloud
- What else do you wonder?

We the People

Courtesy National Archives

Constitution Comparison

U.S. Constitution

- Signed September 17, 1787. World’s oldest written constitution still in effect
- Begins with “We the People”
- Defines the roles and powers of three branches of government
- Lists rights of the people in the Bill of Rights, amendments adopted in 1791

Michigan Constitution, 1963

- Written, 1961–62; adopted, 1963; supersedes state constitutions of 1835, 1850, and 1908
- Begins with “We the People”
- Defines the roles and powers of three branches of government
- Lists rights of the people in the Declaration of Rights in Article 1, directly following the Preamble

Constitutions Online

[America’s Founding Documents](#) National Archives

[Interactive Constitution \(U.S.\)](#) National Constitution Center

[Michigan Constitution \(Current and Historical\)](#) Michigan Legislature



Writing a Classroom Constitution

Students can hold a constitutional convention for their classroom that lists the responsibilities of students and the teacher and the rights that will be respected and protected.

The National Archives provides a template for display (see [The Constitution and Our Community](#), pages 25–26).



Visualizing Constitution Data

Word Clouds

When analyzing complex texts such as the U.S. Constitution, it can be helpful to create visual representations. Word clouds highlight words that appear frequently in source text (excluding common words). They can be used to identify ideas, themes, and key terms. In fact, scholars from the [Comparative Constitutions Project](#) use word clouds to visualize data when comparing constitutions from different countries.

Teachers and students can create and analyze their own word clouds by pasting [text from the U.S. Constitution](#) into online word cloud generators.

Charts, Tables, & Timelines

Below are links to additional graphic data about the U.S. Constitution and constitutions around the world. These sources were created by the Comparative Constitutions Project and their partners.

- [Historical Sources for the Bill of Rights](#), co-created with the National Constitution Center
- [Timeline of Constitutions](#)
- [Constitution Rankings](#), worldwide statistics about length, date enacted, branches of government, and number of rights



Preamble



Article III

Judicial Branch of Government