

Six Big Ideas in the Constitution

Handout 1: Outlining the Text

Count the words in each article and calculate the percentage of the whole it represents to determine how much of the text was dedicated to each structure or power.

Section of the Constitution	Number of Words	Percentage (of 4447 words)	Main Subject, Structure, or Power Addressed in Article
Preamble			
Article I			
Article II			
Article III			
Article IV			
Article V			
Article VI			
Article VII			

Mapping the Constitution

Represent the percentages from the table above in a visual form. Using different colors for each of the Articles and the Preamble, color in the squares to represent the percentage of the whole Constitution that is dedicated to each article. Each square represents 1% of the document (round up or down as necessary).

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
31.	32.	33.	34.	35.	36.	37.	38.	39.	40.
41.	42.	43.	44.	45.	46.	47.	48.	49.	50.
51.	52.	53.	54.	55.	56.	57.	58.	59.	60.
61.	62.	63.	64.	65.	66.	67.	68.	69.	70.
71.	72.	73.	74.	75.	76.	77.	78.	79.	80.
81.	82.	83.	84.	85.	86.	87.	88.	89.	90.
91.	92.	93.	94.	95.	96.	97.	98.	99.	100.

Six Big Ideas in the Constitution

Handout 3: Outlining the Constitution's Six Big Ideas

	Article	Section	Clause	Quote	Rephrase in your own words
Limited Government					
Republicanism					
Checks and Balances					
Federalism					
Separation of Powers					
Popular Sovereignty					

Summer Assignment # 1 – The United States Constitution Packet

THE US CONSTITUTION

Available at: www.constitutioncenter.org or through the packet I gave you.

Directions: Read the US Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout. We will discuss the constitution the first two weeks of class and you will be responsible for this information on the first test.

PART I - THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one sentence below.

Article I –

Article II –

Article III –

Article IV –

Article V –

Article VI –

Article VII -

2. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?

3. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?

4. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?

5. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or to office holders are called *express* powers.

a. Identify two express powers of the president.

b. What are the express powers of the vice president?

c. Identify two express powers of Congress.

6. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of the government must have control over the other branches.

Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances.

- a. A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch:
- b. A power that the executive branch holds over the judicial branch.
- c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch.
- d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch.
- e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch.
- f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch.

7. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?

8. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

PART II - MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY

The Constitution requires a simple majority for some actions and a supermajority for others. A simple majority means more than half, while supermajority requirements can involve a 2/3 majority or a 3/4 majority. Most elections in the United States require a plurality, or the most votes, but not necessarily a majority.

1. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto?
What margin is required to override a presidential veto?
Where in the Constitution is the veto power described?
2. What body has the power to ratify treaties?
What margin is required to ratify treaties?
Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described?
3. *To impeach* means “to bring charges against” or “to indict”.
What body has the power to impeach the president?
Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?
4. What body has the power to convict the president of charges brought against him in the process and thereby remove him from the presidency?
What margin is required to convict and remove a president?
Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?
5. What body has the power to accept or reject a president’s nominations to the Supreme Court

What margins is required to elevate a president’s nominee to a seat on the Court?
Where in the Constitution are judicial nominations described?

6. If no candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body has the power to choose the president? What margin is required to choose the president?
 7. The Constitution specifies a three-fourths majority for just one process. What?
 8. See Article VI. Explain the supremacy clause in your own words.
 9. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be proposed?
 10. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be ratified?
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Part III - THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Some parts of the Constitution require a simple majority, others a supermajority, while still others protect citizens from the will of the majority. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights protect citizens from the will of the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

1. Outline the general purpose of the first 10 Amendments.

Amendment 1 –

Amendment 2 -

Amendment 3 –

Amendment 4 -

Amendment 5 -

Amendment 6 -

Amendment 7 -

Amendment 8 -

Amendment 9 -

Amendment 10 –

11. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of women?

12. Summarize what this amendment(s) of the Constitution says

13. Which amendments (s) of the Constitution protect the rights of African Americans?

14. How were US Senators chosen before the Seventeenth Amendment?

15. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment describes the sequence of events that would install the vice president as acting president against the will of the president. Outline that sequence of events.

John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government*

Available at: <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

Directions: Read the following sections of John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* and answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Chapter II – On the State of Nature

1. Summarize Locke's description of the state of nature.

Chapter IX

1. Summarize the first question Locke poses in paragraph one of this section.
2. The great chief end, therefore, of men uniting into commonwealth, and putting themselves under government is
3. List two of the three wants Locke list next
4. What "inconveniences" are discussed in the next paragraph?
5. What two powers does Locke say man has?
6. What does man give up as result?

Chapter XI

1. The great end of man's entering into society is what?
2. What are some the "bounds of trust" that are discussed in Section 142?

Chapter XIX

1. What is the importance of the Constitution?

Summary

1. What documents in American politics are influenced by John Locke?
2. What parts of government and ways of thinking can be traced to Locke?