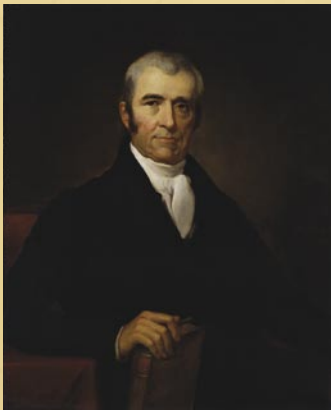




The
CONSTITUTION
INITIATIVE

Celebrating the U.S. Constitution

*Learn more about the
Constitution of the
United States*



John Marshall,
by James Reid Lambdin;
National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution; gift of
the A.W. Mellon Educational
and Charitable Trust, 1942

*“...a constitution,
intended to endure
for ages to come, and
consequently, to be
adapted to the various
crises of human affairs.”*

-John Marshall

THE CONSTITUTION INITIATIVE

What is the Initiative?

In recognition of Constitution Day (September 17th), each Federal agency is required to provide educational and training materials concerning the United States Constitution to all employees on an annual basis. All new employees will receive educational and training materials at orientation programs.

Why do we have a Constitution?

The Constitution of the United States is the cornerstone of our American government. In 4,543 words this document describes the structure of the government and the rights of the American people. No law may be passed that contradicts its principles and no person or the government is exempt from following it. The Constitution not only establishes our system of government, it actually defines the work role for Federal employees; “to establish Justice, . . . promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty . . .”

Where was the Constitutional Convention held and in what year?

Philadelphia, 1787

How long did it take to frame the Constitution?

It was drafted in fewer than 100 working days.

The votes of how many states were necessary to ratify the Constitution?

Nine

How many delegates attended the Constitutional Convention?

55 actually attended, although 74 delegates were appointed. Rhode Island was the only state that refused to send delegates.

When was the Constitution ratified and when did all 3 branches of the U.S. government go into operation under the Constitution?

June 21, 1788; February 2, 1790

Are there original ideas of government in the Constitution?

Yes, but its main origins lie in centuries of experience in government, the lessons of which were brought over from England and further developed through the practices of over a century and a half in the colonies and early State governments, and in the struggles of the Continental Congress. Its roots are deep in the past and its endurance and the obedience and respect it has won are mainly the result of the slow growth of its principles from before the days of the Magna Carta.

What constitutes the Bill of Rights?

The Bill of Rights consists of the Constitution's first 10 amendments and includes freedom of speech, religion, the press, peaceful assembly, and the rights to jury trials.

How many amendments have there been to the Constitution? How many have been repealed?

Since the original 10 amendments (Bill of Rights), seventeen more amendments have been passed. The most recent Amendment XXVII, was ratified May 2, 1992. Only one amendment has been repealed – the Eighteenth (Prohibition).



Celebrating the U.S. Constitution



THE OATH OF OFFICE

As Federal civil servants, we take an oath of office by which we swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. The history of the Oath for Federal employees can be traced to the Constitution, where Article II includes the specific oath the President takes –to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.” Article VI requires an oath by all other government officials from all three branches, the military and the States.

Oath

I, (name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

5 U.S.C §3331

At the conclusion of the
Constitutional Convention,
Benjamin Franklin was asked,
“*What have you wrought?*”
He answered,
“*a Republic, if you can keep it.*”



Benjamin Franklin,
by Joseph Siffred Duplessis;
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution;
gift of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

For more information on the United States
Constitution, please visit the
following websites:

The National Archives
www.archives.gov

The Office of Personnel Management
www.opm.gov/constitution_initiative/



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