


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

 **SS.7.1** List the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation as set forth by their critics.

## What problems did the new United States government face?

**SET THE SCENE** If you had to write a set of rules for your school, what would those rules be? Would some rules be for just your class, while others were for the entire school? As American leaders set up a government for our new country, they faced similar questions.

### Preview the Lesson

#### Vocabulary

**confederation** (n.) a group of states that unites to form a larger state with a central government

**federal** (adj.) of or relating to the central government of a confederation

**Vocabulary Activity** The root word *foederis* means “treaty or league.” Find and circle the root word in both vocabulary words above.

#### People

Alexander Hamilton

#### Reading: Draw Conclusions

When you *draw conclusions*, you use facts from the text to form an opinion, or conclusion. Writers sometimes present their own conclusions. Signal words such as *therefore* can tell you when a writer is drawing a conclusion. As you read, circle signal words that tell you the writer is drawing a conclusion.





## A New Government Is Created

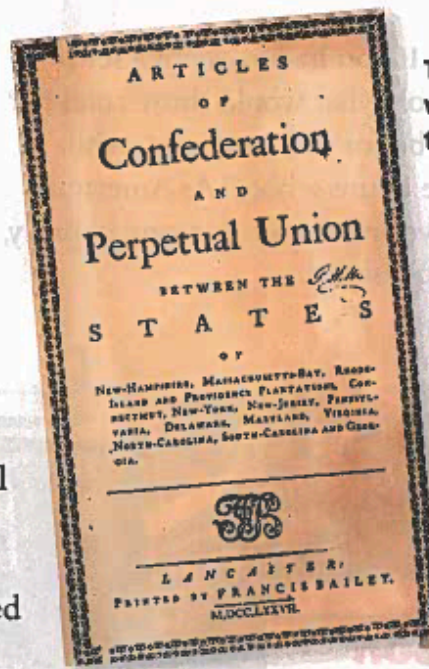
After declaring independence, the United States needed to form a new central government. However, leaders were afraid of giving this government too much power. They feared that a strong central government would abuse its power, as Britain's King George III and Parliament had done. Therefore, leaders decided to create a central government with limited powers.

The Continental Congress wrote a document called the Articles of Confederation to plan this government. A **confederation** is a group of states that unites to form a larger state with a central government. The Articles were ratified in 1781, and they created a central government with few powers. For example, Congress needed approval from the states in order to pass new laws. Leaders would soon see that such limits on the central government created problems for the new nation.

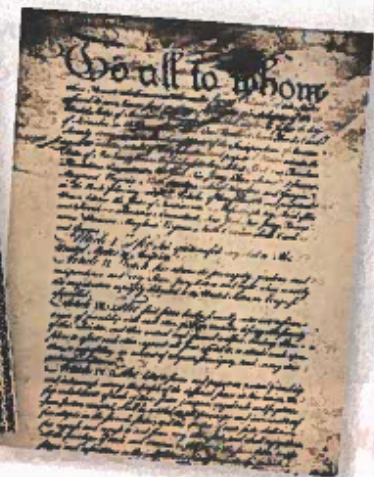
## Short of Money

One way the Articles of Confederation limited the power of the central government was by not allowing Congress to tax the states. Instead, Congress could only ask the states to give money to support the government. This created a problem because after the Revolution, the United States had millions of dollars of debt. The United States had needed to borrow this money from France and other countries in order to defeat Britain. Without the ability to tax the states, Congress had no way to pay back the money the country owed.

1. Draw Conclusions **Underline a sentence in the text that draws a conclusion based on the fact that American leaders felt the British government had abused its power.**



The Articles of Confederation were legally in use from 1781 to 1789.



2. **What limit in the Articles of Confederation made Congress unable to pay back the debts the United States owed?**

*Main Idea and Details*



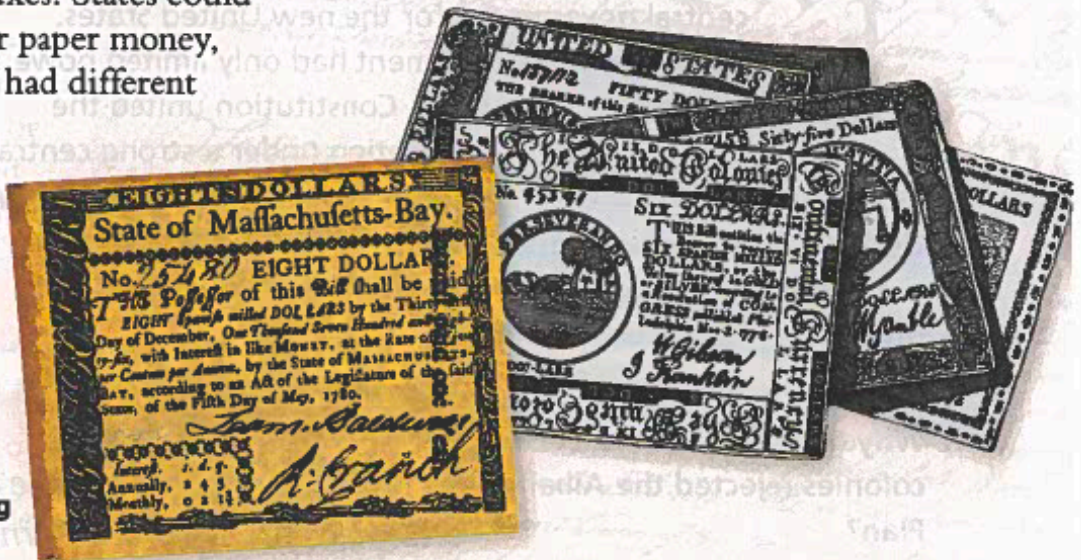
Handwritten notes on lined paper, including the words "People" and "the central government".

## Problems with Trade

The Articles of Confederation also limited the central government's ability to control foreign trade. After the war, the British government forced American merchants to pay high taxes on items exported to Britain. Yet British merchants were able to export goods freely and cheaply into most of the United States. Why? Congress did not have the power to pass laws that taxed goods coming into the country.

Congress did not have the power to control trade between the states either. Most states had their own laws about trade and taxes. States could print their own currency, or paper money, too. These currencies often had different values. With different laws and money among the states, merchants in the United States had a difficult time doing business with one another.

Congress and the states printed paper money during and after the Revolution.



## 3. Why was trade between the states so difficult?

Main Idea and Details

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## Leaders Call for a New Government

Alexander Hamilton and other leaders began to worry about the future of the United States. They believed that the government created by the Articles of Confederation would lose the respect of its own citizens and of other countries. Therefore, the new nation might fail. Hamilton supported creating a stronger federal government. **Federal** means of or relating to the central government of a confederation. Hamilton's ideas, and those of other leaders, would become part of a new plan of government—the United States Constitution.

4. Draw Conclusions **Underline a sentence in the text that draws a conclusion about the future of the United States under the Articles of Confederation.**

## Summary

The limits on the central government created by the Articles of Confederation led to problems for the new United States. What problems did the Articles cause for the new nation?

# Documents: The Albany Plan

**Learn More** Sometimes documents and other primary sources can help us understand the history of an idea. The Albany Plan was a document written by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Hutchinson at the Albany Congress in 1754. It proposed to unite the colonies under a “general,” or central, government. This government would protect the colonies in case war broke out between Britain and France.



Thomas Hutchinson

Neither the colonies nor Britain accepted the Albany plan, but the idea of a central government did not go away. In 1781 the Articles of Confederation created a central government for the new United States. However, this government had only limited powers. Finally, in 1787 the U.S. Constitution united the



Benjamin Franklin

nation under a strong central government. Read the excerpts from the Albany Plan below and then answer the questions.

1. Underline some powers that the government would be given under the Albany Plan.

*Identify*

2. Why do you think the colonies rejected the Albany Plan? *Analyze*

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*“It is proposed that humble application be made . . . of which one general government may be formed in America, including all the said colonies, within and under which government each colony may retain [keep] its present constitution. . . .*

1. *That the said general government be administered by a President-General, to be appointed and supported by the crown; and a Grand Council, to be chosen by the representatives of the people. . . .*
15. *That they raise and pay soldiers and build forts for the defence of any of the Colonies . . .*
16. *That for these purposes they have power to make laws, and lay and levy [collect] . . . taxes, as to them shall appear most equal and just . . .”*

**H-SS 5.7.2** Explain the significance of the new Constitution of 1787, including the struggles over its ratification and the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights.

# How did the United States create a constitution?

**SET THE SCENE** Have you ever started to work on something and then realized that you needed to start over? As you have learned, the Articles of Confederation created a weak government that did not have the respect of its people or the rest of the world. How did leaders work to solve this problem?

## Preview the Lesson Vocabulary

**compromise** (n.) a settlement of a disagreement in which each side agrees to give up part of its demands

**Federalist** (n.) a person who supported a strong national government and was in favor of adopting the Constitution

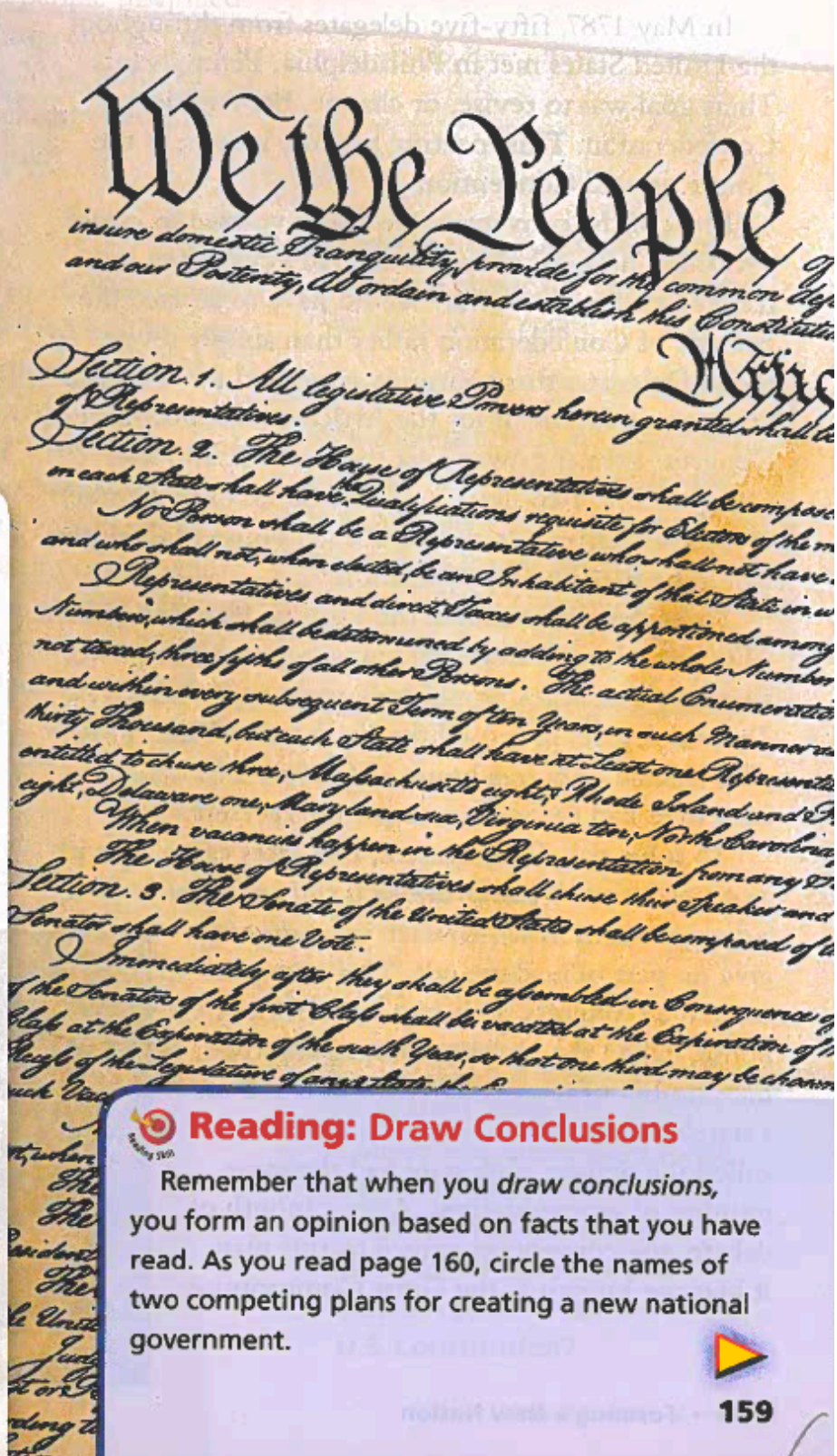
**Antifederalist** (n.) a person who opposed a strong national government

**amendment** (n.) a change or addition

**Vocabulary Activity** The prefix *anti-* means "against." When you use this prefix, you usually create an antonym, or a word that means the opposite of another. Circle the two words in the list above that are antonyms.

## People

James Madison



### Reading: Draw Conclusions

Remember that when you draw conclusions, you form an opinion based on facts that you have read. As you read page 160, circle the names of two competing plans for creating a new national government.






## New Plans for a National Government

In May 1787, fifty-five delegates from throughout the United States met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Their goal was to revise, or change, the Articles of Confederation. This meeting became known as the Constitutional Convention.

Most of the convention delegates wanted to create a stronger national government. However, they soon realized that to do so they would have to replace the Articles of Confederation rather than simply revise them. Delegates from Virginia suggested the Virginia Plan as a replacement for the Articles. This plan gave Congress greater power over the states. It also split Congress into two houses, or assemblies. The number of representatives a state had in each house of Congress would be based on its population.

Some delegates thought the Virginia Plan was unfair. They felt it gave states with many people more power because those states would have more representatives. These delegates proposed the New Jersey Plan. This plan created only one house in Congress in which each state had the same number of representatives.

To solve this disagreement, delegates came up with a compromise. A **compromise** is the settlement of a disagreement in which each side agrees to give up part of its demands. This new plan created a Congress with two houses. In one house, called the House of Representatives, the number of representatives was based on a state's population. In the other house, called the Senate, each state had the same number of representatives. After a month of debate, the convention agreed to this plan. It became known as the Great Compromise.

1.  Draw Conclusions **Why did supporters of both the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan agree to the Great Compromise?**



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Delegates to the Constitutional Convention met behind closed doors and boarded windows so they could speak freely.



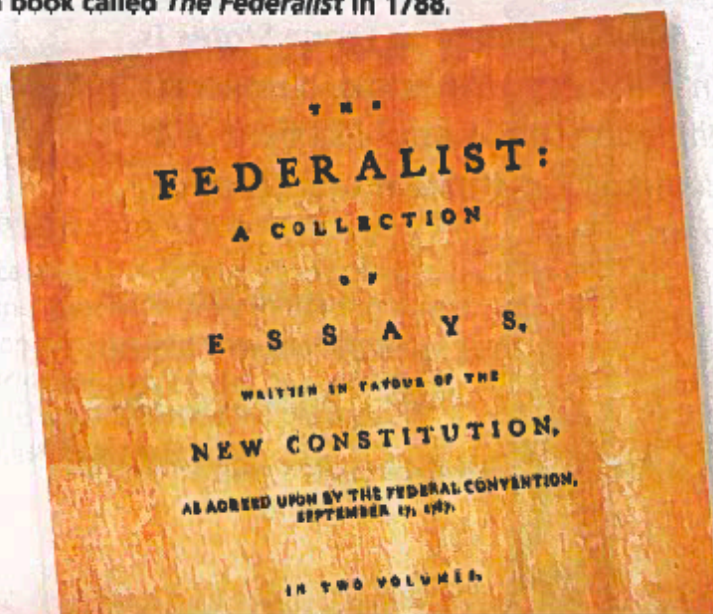
## Debate over Enslaved People

Delegates also debated whether enslaved people should be counted as part of a state's population. States with many enslaved people wanted them counted. This would give these states more representatives in Congress. States with fewer enslaved people disagreed. Finally, delegates reached another compromise. Only three out of five enslaved people would be counted as part of a state's population. This solution became known as the Three-Fifths Compromise.

## Ratifying the Constitution

After the convention, the new plan of government, called the Constitution, had to be ratified by the states before it could go into effect. **Federalists** supported a strong national government and wanted to ratify the Constitution. **Antifederalists** opposed a strong national government. They believed that it gave the government too much power and did not protect people's rights. Antifederalists wanted **amendments**, or changes and additions, made to the Constitution to list the rights of all citizens. The Federalists agreed to add this list at a later time, and in 1788 the Constitution was ratified. In 1791 Congress passed ten amendments that became known as the Bill of Rights.

Beginning in 1787, Federalists wrote a series of essays for New York newspapers in support of the Constitution. The essays were collected in a book called *The Federalist* in 1788.



## 2. Why did some states want to count enslaved people as part of their population?

*Main idea and Details*

## 3. Underline the Antifederalists' concerns about the Constitution.

*Main idea and Details*

*"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, [no] . . . controls on government would be necessary."*

— James Madison,  
*The Federalist: No. 51, 1788*

## Summary

At the Constitutional Convention, there were many debates about how to create a new central government. What compromises led to the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution?

# James Madison, 1751–1836

**Learn More** James Madison was a small, soft-spoken man with big ideas and strong beliefs. Throughout his career in politics, he held many offices, including Secretary of State and President. However, he also made important contributions to our country by helping to write, ratify, and amend the Constitution.

During the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Madison kept a detailed daily journal of what the delegates said and did. Because the delegates met behind closed doors, Madison’s journal helps us understand what actually happened at the convention. In 1787 and 1788, Madison wrote some of *The Federalist Papers*, along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay. These essays helped convince the states to ratify the new Constitution. In 1789 Madison proposed twelve amendments to the Constitution. Ten of these amendments were ratified by 1791. They are known today as the Bill of Rights.

Read the quotation and then answer the questions below.

1. Circle two offices that Madison held during his long career in politics. *Identify*
2. How do Madison’s accomplishments still contribute to our country today? *Analyze*

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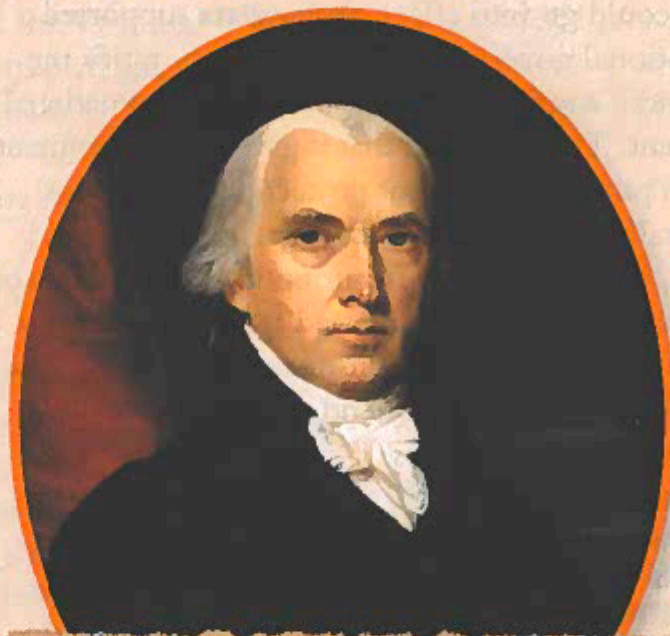
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*“ . . . the Union of so many States is, in the eyes of the world, a wonder; the harmonious establishment of a common Government over them all, a miracle.”*

— James Madison,  
in a speech to the Virginia  
state convention, 1829



**H-SS 5.7.3** Understand the fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy, including how the government derives its power from the people and the primacy of individual liberty.

## What are the rights of U.S. citizens?

**SET THE SCENE** The writers of the Constitution created rules to guide the relationship between our country's citizens and their government. They made certain that the new government would protect citizens' freedoms and encourage them to become involved. What rights do U.S. citizens have? How are those rights protected?

### Preview the Lesson

#### Vocabulary

**Preamble** (*n.*) the introduction of the U.S. Constitution

**liberty** (*n.*) the condition of being free

**republic** (*n.*) a form of government in which citizens elect representatives to make laws and run the government

**principle** (*n.*) a rule or idea

**Vocabulary Activity** Words that sound alike but do not have the same meaning are called homophones. A *principal* is the head of a school. Circle a homophone for *principal* in the list above.



### Reading: Draw Conclusions

When you *draw conclusions*, you use information in the text to help you make statements not directly stated in the text. As you read the first section on page 164, underline information that will help you state ideas about the importance of the introduction of the U.S. Constitution.



## The Power of the People


The Constitution explains the rights of all U.S. citizens. These rights begin with the very first words in the Preamble. The **Preamble** is the introduction of the Constitution. It states that “We the People”—rather than a king, a queen, or any other kind of ruler—form the government. The Preamble also explains the purposes of the Constitution: to establish justice, to ensure peace, to defend the nation, and to protect the people’s well-being and liberty. **Liberty** is the condition of being free.

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

The Preamble to the Constitution states the role that people have in our government.

## The Right to Vote

The Constitution says that citizens will form a government by electing representatives. This means that the United States is a republic. A **republic** is a form of government in which citizens elect representatives to make laws and run the government. The right to vote is one of the most important **principles**, or rules or ideas, in a republic. When citizens vote, they choose the person they feel will best represent them. If citizens feel that their representatives are not serving them well, they may vote for somebody else. Citizens vote to elect the President and members of both houses of Congress in the federal government.

1.  Draw Conclusions **What is the importance of the Preamble to the Constitution?**



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2. **In a republic, how do citizens participate in government?** *Main Idea and Details*



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## The Bill of Rights

As you have learned, after the Constitutional Convention, the Federalists agreed to add a list of amendments to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution. It lists the rights that are guaranteed to all U.S. citizens.

The writers of the Bill of Rights believed in the importance of fairness. They remembered how the British government had treated the colonists in the years before the American Revolution. The British passed laws and collected taxes that attempted to control what the colonists could do, but they did not give the colonists a voice in the government. When the colonists protested, Britain sent soldiers rather than listen to the colonists' complaints.

The amendments in the Bill of Rights make sure that the government respects the liberty of individual people. The First Amendment guarantees the freedom of religion, speech, and the press. It also says that people may gather peacefully to discuss issues. Citizens may petition, or formally ask, the government to correct something that is wrong. This means that people can express their ideas freely, even if they do not agree with the government. Other amendments give people who are accused of a crime the right to a "speedy and public trial" by jury. A jury is a group of citizens who decide the outcome of a trial. People and their belongings are also protected against "unreasonable searches and seizures" by the government. This means that officials must have a good reason for looking through or taking away a citizen's property. The freedoms listed in the Bill of Rights and in other amendments apply to all U.S. citizens.

3.  Draw Conclusions **Underline details in the second paragraph that help you draw the conclusion that Britain treated the colonists unfairly.**



The Bill of Rights secures citizens' right to practice religion, to speak and write freely, and to have a fair trial.

### Summary

The Constitution protects the rights of all U.S. citizens. Describe some ways in which the Bill of Rights affects the lives of citizens of the United States.

# Amending the Constitution

**Learn More** The U.S. Constitution has been called a “living document” because it can be changed to reflect new ideas about individual rights and the role of government. However, amendments to the Constitution are added only after a long process. That is why thousands of amendments have been suggested, but only twenty-seven have been officially approved.

So far, every amendment has passed in the same way: two-thirds of the members of both houses of Congress must vote to propose, or suggest, the amendment. After that, an amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures. The chart below lists some important amendments about citizens’ rights that have been added over time. Look at the chart and then answer the questions.

## Key Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

| Amendment  | Purpose                                       | Ratified |
|------------|---|----------|
| Thirteen   | Outlawed slavery                              | 1865     |
| Fourteen   | Guaranteed equal rights for all U.S. citizens | 1868     |
| Fifteen    | Gave all men the right to vote                | 1870     |
| Nineteen   | Gave women the right to vote                  | 1920     |
| Twenty-six | Lowered the voting age to eighteen            | 1971     |

- Three amendments have a similar purpose. Circle the word in each that shows the similarity. *Analyze*
- Why do you think so few suggested amendments have been ratified? *Evaluate*

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