

Teacher Guide: **WRITING THE CONSTITUTION**

In order of appearance in **Preparing for the Oath**, the Civics Test items covered in this theme are:

66. When was the Constitution written?
 - 1787
65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
 - The Constitution was written
 - The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution
67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
 - (James) Madison
 - (Alexander) Hamilton
 - (John) Jay
 - Publius
4. What is an amendment?
 - a change (to the Constitution)
 - an addition (to the Constitution)
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
 - twenty-seven (27)
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
 - the Bill of Rights

Overview

This Teacher Guide will take you through the Civics Test questions covered in the theme, **Writing the Constitution**. The instructional steps provided here target ESL students at the high beginning level. Watch the video on the Help screen and take some time to familiarize yourself with the elements and navigation of **Preparing for the Oath** so that you are comfortable presenting it to your class.

Introduction

To start the lesson, open the theme and present the Introduction Screen. Read the introductory paragraph aloud and discuss it with the students.

We call the Constitution a “living document.” That means that it changes as the country changes. The original document was written at the **Constitutional** Convention in 1787. Then, the country added **amendments**. More **amendments** might be added in the future.

Explore the Questions

These steps will help you guide your class through the theme, using an LCD projector:

1. Distribute the handout **Key Vocabulary—Writing the Constitution** and review the definitions with the students.
2. Click on the Start button to begin the video, **Constitution: Year**.
3. Play the video for the class with the captions on or off.
4. Pause the video where appropriate to discuss the vocabulary and images with the class.
5. Play the video again without pausing.
6. If there is a Practice activity available for this question, click on the “Practice” tab.
7. View and discuss the Practice activity.
8. Click on the “Try” tab.
9. Listen to the Civics Test item and have the students select the answer. Click on the “hear question” button to listen to the item repeatedly. After choosing the correct option, students can hear the answer aloud while they read along at the bottom of the screen.
10. Go through the rest of the videos in this theme, using the steps above.
11. Once the class has gone through all of the videos in this theme, wrap up this lesson with the handout, **Correct the Sentence—Writing the Constitution**, or assign it to the students for homework.

Key Vocabulary—Writing the Constitution

adopt: to accept an idea, plan, or way of doing something

amendment: a change or addition to the U.S. Constitution

arms: weapons, such as guns

assemble: to come together in one place

bill: a proposed plan for a law that the government reviews

constitutional: when something is allowed because it is in the U.S. Constitution

create: to make something new

delegate: someone who speaks for another person or group of people, often at a meeting or as part of a political office

federal: part of the central U.S. government, not state or local governments

independent/independence: free; not controlled by another person or country

petition: to formally ask the government to do something

press: newspapers, magazines, television, and Internet websites

protect: to keep something or someone safe

representatives: elected members of a government group in the United States, such as in Congress

right: something you are morally or legally allowed to do

speech: an expression of ideas and opinions that is made by someone who is speaking in front of a group of people

trial: a process in court to decide if someone is innocent or guilty of a crime

Correct the Sentence—Writing the Constitution

Read the sentences below. Each sentence has one mistake. Find the mistake and correct the sentence. Write the sentence again correctly.

1. The Constitution was written in 1783.

2. George Washington was one of the writers of the Federalist Papers.

3. The Bill of Rights has 12 amendments.

4. The Declaration of Independence was written at the Constitutional Convention.

5. The Constitution has 37 amendments.

6. The first ten amendments are called the Federalist Papers.

7. An amendment is an introduction to the Constitution.



Visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/index.=html?theme=2> to go directly to the *Writing the Constitution* theme.