

# The Constitution: Amendments 1-10

## (Known as the Bill of Rights)

The Preamble to The Bill of Rights

### **Congress of the United States**

begun and held at the City of New-York, on  
Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and  
eighty nine.

**THE** Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of  
their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to  
prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further  
declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as  
extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will  
best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.

**RESOLVED** by the Senate and House of Representatives of the  
United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both  
Houses concurring, that the following Articles be proposed to the  
Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution  
of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by  
three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and  
purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

**ARTICLES** in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of  
the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by  
the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of  
the original Constitution.

**Note:** The following text is a transcription of the first ten  
amendments to the Constitution in their original form. These  
amendments were ratified December 15, 1791, and form what is  
known as the "Bill of Rights."

---

### **Amendment I**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,  
or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of  
speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to  
assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

---

### **Amendment II**

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free  
State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be  
infringed.

---

### **Amendment III**

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without  
the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be  
prescribed by law.

---

### **Amendment IV**

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers,  
and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be  
violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause,  
supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the  
place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

---

### **Amendment V**

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

---

#### **Amendment VI**

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

---

#### **Amendment VII**

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

---

#### **Amendment VIII**

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

---

#### **Amendment IX**

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

---

#### **Amendment X**

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.