

Constitution of the United States (Simplified)

Article 1 – Creates the two parts of Congress. They are responsible for making laws.

Section 1

- A. Creates Congress and the two houses of Congress: the Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2

- A. Defines the House of Representatives, known as the lower house of Congress.
- B. Must be 25 years old, and serve a term of two years. Must have been a citizen for 7 years.
- C. Each state gets Representatives based on the state's population.
- D. Has a leader called the Speaker of the House.

Section 3

- A. Defines the Senate, known as the upper house of the Congress.
- B. Must be 30 years old, and serve a term of six years. Must have been a citizen for 9 years.
- C. Each state gets two Senators.
- D. Vice-President breaks tie votes.

Section 4

- A. Says that each state may establish its own methods for electing their members of Congress.
- B. Requires that Congress must meet at least once per year.

Section 5

- A. Says that Congress must have a minimum number of members present in order to meet.
- B. Fines may be charged for members who do not show up, and members may be expelled.
- C. Each house must keep a journal to record actions and votes.
- D. Neither house can adjourn without the permission of the other.

Section 6

- A. Establishes that members of Congress will be paid.
- B. They cannot be delayed while traveling to and from Congress.
- C. They cannot hold any other office in the government while in the Congress.

Section 7

- A. Explains how bills become law.

- B. All bills must pass both houses of Congress in the exact same form. That is, the House and the Senate must agree to the same wording on a bill before it is sent to the President.
- C. Bills that pass both houses are sent to the President.
- D. He can either sign the bill, in which case it becomes law, or he can veto it (Veto means that it is not signed to become a law).
- E. If he vetoes a bill, it is sent back to Congress, and if both houses pass it by a two-thirds majority, the bill becomes law despite the President's veto.

Section 8

- A. Gives Congress the power to establish and maintain an army and navy.
- B. Gives Congress the power to establish post offices, to create courts, to regulate commerce (business) between the states, to declare war, and to raise money (through taxes).

Section 9

- A. Cannot be held in jail without a reason of some kind.
- B. Cannot pass laws that make things illegal starting yesterday or last week, etc.
- C. No law can give preference to one state over another
- D. Congress cannot spend money without permission.

Section 10

- A. States can't make their own money, declare war, or tax goods from other states.

Article 2 – Creates the job of President, called the Executive. Responsible for enforcing the laws.

Section 1

- A. Establishes the office of the President and the Vice-President.
- B. Both serve four year terms.
- C. Presidents are elected by the Electoral College.
- D. Must be 35 years old. Must be born in the USA.
- E. Their pay cannot change, up or down, as long as he is in office.

Section 2

- A. The President leads the armed forces.
- B. He has a Cabinet (a group of advisors) to help him. The President can pardon (set free) criminals.
- C. He can make treaties (agreements) with other nations, but 2/3 of the Senate has to approve of the treaty.
- D. Chooses many of the judges and other members of the government.

Section 3

- A. President must give a yearly speech to the nation.

- B. Give suggestions to Congress.
- C. Meet with Ambassadors and other heads of state from other nations.
- D. Ensure the laws of the United States are carried out.

Section 4

- A. Explains how to kick the president out of office, called impeachment.
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Article 3 – Establishes Judges, called the Judiciary. They decide if a law is allowable, or if it goes against the Constitution.

Section 1

- A. Establishes the Supreme Court, the highest court in the United States.
- B. Judges are chosen serve for life, or until they want to retire.

Section 2

- A. Says what cases the Supreme Court must decide.
- B. It also guarantees trial by jury in criminal court.

Section 3

- A. Defines, without any question, the crime of treason (trying to overthrow your country's government or of helping your country's enemies during war).
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Article 4 – States Rights.

Section 1

- A. All states will honor the laws of all other states.

Section 2

- A. Citizens of one state are treated equally and fairly like all citizens of another.
- B. If a person accused of a crime in one state flees to another, he/she will be returned to the state that person fled from.

Section 3

- A. How new states can become part of the United States.
- B. Explains who controls federal lands.

Section 4

- A. Ensures a “Power by the People” government.
 - B. Guarantees that the federal government will protect the states against.
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Article 5 – How to change the Constitution.

- A. 2/3 of the Representatives must vote on the change.
 - B. 2/3 of the Senators must vote on the change.
 - C. 3/4 of the States must vote for the change (34 of 50)
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Article 6 – Concerns the United States.

- A. Guarantees that the Constitution and all laws and treaties of the United States to be the supreme law of the country.
 - B. Requires all officers of the United States and of the states to pledge loyalty to the United States and the Constitution when taking office.
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Article 7 – Explained how the Constitution was agreed to.

- A. Of the original 13 states in the United States, nine had to accept the Constitution before it would officially go into effect.

Source: http://www.atlcomputing.com/aaron/info/easy_constitution.htm

Source: <http://www.shmoop.com/constitution/article-1-section-1.html>