

Freedom's Feast PRESIDENTS' DAY

On-line Ceremonies to get the most out of your AMERICAN holiday Celebrations.

★ TABLE TALK! CONVERSATION STARTERS ★

Bill of Rights Summary

Understanding the Bill of Rights & what it means to me, my family, and my community.

James Madison, often called the Father of the Constitution, was the principal author of the Bill of Rights. The Constitution kept a careful balance of power between the three branches of our government. The founders of our country did not think that the new Constitution guaranteed the same kind of balance between individual citizens and our government. They used Article 5 of the Constitution to create the first ten amendments which they called "The Bill of Rights."

Please choose from the following:

1. Have your group read the brief Bill of Rights summaries below (most articles have additional sections) OR read a full transcript of the [Bill of Rights](#).
2. Pick one or two amendments to discuss.
3. Start a conversation about the Bill of Rights using one of the following questions:

- Pick an amendment and ask: how does this amendment affect us today?
- When and how did the Bill of Rights impact our American stories?
- What were the creators of the Bill of Rights concerned about with each amendment?
- Do we still have concerns today?
- Can you think of recent news stories that highlight one of the amendments discussed?
- What do you think the right to free speech and assembly allows us to do?



AMENDMENTS SUMMARY

Reader Amendment 1 guarantees freedom of religion, of conscience, of speech, and of the press, and protects the right of the people to assemble peacefully and petition the government.

Reader Amendment 2 establishes the right of the people to keep and bear arms.

Reader Amendment 3 requires the homeowner's consent to house soldiers.

Reader Amendment 4 protects the people against unreasonable police search and seizures without advanced warrant.

Reader Amendment 5, 6, 7, & 8 describe the conditions for a fair trial; no one can be forced to testify against himself; no one can be tried twice for the same criminal offense or be jailed or convicted without due process. Speedy and public trials with impartial juries along with the right to have legal defense counsel and confront witnesses are guaranteed. Excessive bail, excessive fines, or "cruel and unusual punishments" are prohibited.

Reader Amendment 9 ensures that the rights of the people defined in the Constitution do not limit other rights of the people not included in the document. Recent court rulings say that this amendment establishes one's right to privacy.

Reader Amendment 10 gives all powers not expressly given to the United States, or prohibited to the States by the Constitution, to the States or the People.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the Bill of Rights is written on one piece of paper, 28 5/8" x 28 5/8"? It is also displayed in a special helium-filled case at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Over 1 million visitors see the Bill of Rights annually.

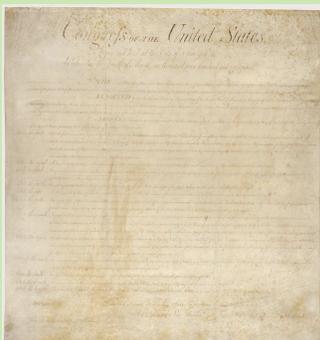


PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RESOURCES

Learn more about building a culture of citizenship at [Citizen University](#).

Visit the [Bill of Rights Institute](#), a site dedicated to giving students the resources to be better informed citizens.

To learn more about the freedom of the press, visit the [Newseum](#) site.