



CONSTITUTIONUS.COM

WE THE PEOPLE

Multiple Choice Quiz

ABOUT THIS QUIZ



We the People

This quiz is about 'We the People' and the US Constitution.

All questions have 4 possible answers of which only 1 is correct.

You may read the article over the next few pages to freshen up before taking the quiz!

At the back of the book, will be an answer sheet.

For more information, go to:
<https://constitutionus.com>



A huge amount of thought was put into the words used in the US Constitution and their phrasing. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the preamble of the constitution starts with We The People.

What Is We the People?

We The People refers to everybody who lives in the United States and is going to be ruled by the constitution.

Scroll down to find out the meaning of We The People and who it refers to.

Why Does the Constitution Begin With the Words “We the People”?

People tend to focus on the 27 amendments and the 7 articles of the United States Constitution, especially those related to modern governance and the succession of power. But, we can't overlook the importance of the beginning of the constitution starting with “We the People of the United States.”

The preamble to the constitution acts as an introduction to the laws and clauses. In addition, it serves as a declaration from the Founding Fathers to “ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

However, the first words don't appear to fit with the idea of those higher power figures making this declaration to the world. It begins, “We the People of the United States.”

This term has taken on a life of its own since it was first written. But why did those who wrote the Constitution decide to use it?

Why Does the Preamble to the Constitution Begin With “We the People”?

There are different theories as to why one of the most important documents in United States history begins with these words. One view is that this was an attempt to appear relatable, with the representatives referring to themselves as American people like everyone else.

Another is that this was an attempt to show that the US people had the most power, and it was, therefore, their document. Whatever the reason, it is interesting to look at the deeper meanings of the word “people” and the importance of this statement.

We the People Are the Typical People of the United States

Declaring themselves to be “people of the United States” gives the impression that citizens created this document.

It is a clever way of suggesting that the State Representatives are people and makes them relatable to all those who would rely upon the constitution.

In other words, there isn’t an “us against them” approach here where the everyday person of the US could feel detached from what was said. So, therefore, as soon as you get into clauses about the rights of the people of the United States and their freedoms, there is the sense that this applies to everyone.

We the People Was Necessary at the Time of Creating the Constitution

The Constitutional Convention brought together representatives of almost all states to Philadelphia to create a new government form. The aim was to create a government that could oversee the United States people on a more national level without holding so much power that it would put citizens’ fundamental rights at risk.

This led to the checks and balances approach and the distinction between federal and state law. It was a requirement that all states give “full faith and credit” to other states’ laws and procedures. Therefore, everyone was all in this together at a national level while retaining personal freedoms and dealing with state laws.

Or, Perhaps They Weren’t Talking About Themselves at All

Another way to look at the term “we the people” is that the state representatives involved weren’t talking about themselves at all. Instead of making themselves relatable as fellow citizens of the US, they may have referred to the fact that, ultimately, the US’s people have the greatest power.

The final constitution could not be credited to 12 or 13 men only, and it couldn’t be perceived as something derived solely from the coalition of the states. They couldn’t turn to the nation and say, “We, the representatives of the states of America, have decided how to run this country.”. It had to be credited to the US as a whole.

The constitution could only gain sovereignty from the acceptance of the US people, so it was, therefore, the people of all 13 states that had to give that declaration to “ordain and establish” it.

The decision is little more than a gesture. While it is true that the people of the US will elect the representatives and leaders and that they should have the most power, in the end, the blueprint for the system of government was the result of that handful of representatives.

The People of the US vs. the Citizens of the US

Finally, we have to look at the word “people” here rather than the word “citizens.” Some suggest that the term people of the United States only refers to those with citizenship status. In other words, this would reinforce the idea that the rights and clauses within are only related to those with legal status in the country.

However, the term “people”’s broadness is also a great way of ensuring that everyone from each state is included. That means men, women, and children from all aspects of society.

Any Color or Race

We could also assume that this could mean “people” of any color or race. This is where the vagueness of language in the preamble, as with the constitution more generally, becomes dangerous. It is easy to make assumptions if you don’t have a more cynical outlook.

In the preamble case, it is clear that the Native Americans outside of the 13 states weren’t classed as people of the United States. So it wasn’t long before the nation worked on the process of “advancing” and “civilizing” Natives and creating treaties to acquire their land.

Of course, over the centuries, amendments would alter the constitution to ensure that specific groups achieved equal rights, such as the rights of those previously enslaved in the US or the rights of women to vote. However, the use of people instead of citizens does imply that those creating the constitution were speaking to everyone within the country.

We the People: Citizens, Representatives, Society, or Something Else?

Whatever the underlying reason for this choice of words, the phrase “we the people” has become engrained in American politics and culture.

We the People Flags

We the People flags are often seen and acquired through flag or souvenir shops. Other items are also available with the We the People logo or We the People images.

We can continue to debate the original purpose of those words while also appreciating their impact, regardless of initial intentions. Watch the video below to find out the We the People meaning:

Multiple Choice Quiz

1. How many amendments does the US Constitution have?

- A. 23
- B. 25
- C. 26
- D. 27

2. How many main sections/articles does the US Constitution have?

- A. 5
- B. 6
- C. 7
- D. 8

3. What is the introduction to the US Constitution referred to?

- A. Preamble
- B. Introduction
- C. Beginning
- D. Commencement

4. What famous 3-word phrase opens the text of the US Constitution?

- A. We the Citizens
- B. We the People
- C. We the Individuals
- D. We the Americans

5. Which of the following is not a major theory of why the Founding Fathers opened the US Constitution as they did?

- A. They wanted to appear relatable
- B. They wanted to emphasize the power of the state governments
- C. They wanted to convey the idea that the American people ultimately held the most power
- D. They wanted to convey that the American people created the document

6. What city was the Constitutional Convention held in?

- A. Philadelphia
- B. New York City
- C. Washington D.C.
- D. Massachusetts

7. Who does "We the People" refer to?

- A. Everyone in the world
- B. Free people, Native Americans, and slaves
- C. Everyone living in the United States that is governed by the US Constitution
- D. The Founding Fathers

8. What word best describes the purpose of the wording of the beginning of the US Constitution?

- A. Pragmatism
- B. Courage
- C. Strength
- D. Relatability

9. Which of the following best describes the purpose of the Constitutional Convention and the creation of a new constitution?

- A. To create a federal government with a stronger scope and influence without jeopardizing the rights of citizens
- B. To enact minor revisions and updates on the Articles of Confederation
- C. To enhance the power of the state governments
- D. To curtail the liberties and freedoms of citizens

10. Which of the following groups of people did not possess the same rights and privileges laid out in the US Constitution?

- A. Slaves
- B. Native Americans
- C. Women
- D. All of the above

11. How were previously excluded members of society granted constitutional rights?

- A. State conventions
- B. Amendments
- C. National conventions
- D. Statutes

12. Which of the following is not a purpose behind the beginning of the US Constitution?

- A. Introduce the laws
- B. Introduce the clauses
- C. Serve as a declaration to establish the US Constitution
- D. Lay out grievances against Great Britain

13. Which of the following is an appropriate description of the first 3 words of the US Constitution?

- A. Vague
- B. General
- C. Unassuming
- D. All of the above

Multiple Choice Quiz Answers

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. D
9. A
10. D
11. B
12. D
13. D