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WHAT IS A CONSTITUTION?

Multiple Choice Quiz

ABOUT THIS QUIZ



What Is a Constitution?

This quiz is about what a Constitution is.

All questions have 4-6 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:
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Constitution Definition

The word “constitution” comes from the Latin word *constitutio*. It is a collection of foundational principles or precedents that make up (or constitute) the legal basis of an organization or government by determining how that entity will be governed.

Constitution Meaning

Similar terms for a constitution include a charter, body of law, system of laws, and fundamental principles. It is a composition of something. As a legal document, it is a collection of laws and regulations that create a ruling document for a government. The most common usage of the word constitution is to refer to the ruling charter of a government.

The U.S. Constitution has three distinct characteristics:

- The Constitution serves as the supreme law of the land.
- It provides a framework for a government.
- The Constitution acts as a legitimate way to both grant and limits the powers of government officials.

How Does A Constitution Work?

A constitution is a set of rules that define and guide how a political organization will function.

As the word implies, a constitution is a collection, so this collected grouping of laws creates a set of expectations for how a government will function.

The political representatives are expected to follow the rules and laws set down in the Constitution to run the government.

How does the Constitution establish the government?

Typically, a constitution will establish the various branches of the government. It will also itemize and define how these branches will function. The Constitution will also describe what powers the branches of the government have.

Additionally, the Constitution will explain and define how the branches of the government will function within their stated powers.

Constitutional Rights and Freedoms

A constitution will also establish and state the rights, privileges, and duties of the country's citizens. With the rights of the citizenry spelled out in the Constitution, citizens can expect to have these rights guaranteed and not be denied without legal, due process.

What is the purpose of a Constitution?

A constitution functions on several important principles. The Constitution of a country defines the type of government a country has and forms the basis for that nation's sovereignty. It does this by creating the branches of government and a separation of the powers of those branches.

It also defines how each branch is independent of each other and how they are dependent on each other. In so doing, a constitution lays out the procedures that the branches of the government will follow while carrying out their constitutional tasks and responsibilities.

An essential function of a constitution is to direct the state and federal governments in making legislation. It does this by laying out procedures for the roles of legislation, administration, and the execution of the mechanics of the government.

A constitution provides for a system of judicial review to ensure the constitutionality of legislation.

Checks and Balances of a Constitution

Finally, a constitution acts as a check against the misuse of power by providing for accountability of the government and the representatives working in the government to the citizens of the country.

Importance of a Constitution

Arguably, the most important function of a constitution is to provide for a set of fundamental rights to the country's citizens. The safeguard of these fundamental rights is ensured by listing those rights and the checks and balances of the governmental structure and the separation of powers that protect those rights.

Why Do We Need A Constitution?

Why does a country need a constitution?

What purpose does it serve?

Here are some reasons why a constitution is needed:

- A constitution provides for the rule of a nation.
- A constitution provides for a separation of governing powers.
- A constitution divides power throughout the country between the state and federal governments.
- A constitution forms the relationship between the people and the government of a nation.
- A constitution sets the standards, principles, and procedures for the peaceful rule of law.
- A constitution provides for the rights of the citizens living within the country.
- A constitution allows for diverse groups of people to live peacefully together.

What Alternatives Are There To A Constitution?

There are types of national governments that are not based on a constitution. Any country that allows unlimited power to the national rulers or little control over those in authority would be a non-constitutional government.

A Non-Constitutional Government

In general, a nation ruled by hereditary monarchs or dictators is considered a non-constitutional country. In this situation, the person in power is the basis for the law of the land. A non-constitutional government is not formed through voter consent and cannot be removed through legal means.

The Constitution of the United States

The U.S. Constitution is the basis for the creation of the United States of America. It is at the same time the basis for the government that rules and runs the United States. The Constitution provides certain rights for citizens of the United States by defining those rights and the law based around those rights.

The U.S. Constitution provides for a separation of powers with a set of checks and balances within the three branches of the U.S. government.

The Constitution does this with the establishment of the three branches of government.

- The Legislative Branch
- The Executive Branch
- The Judicial Branch

The Constitution specifies that the Legislative Branch makes the laws to run the country, the Executive Branch has the authority to execute the laws, and the Judicial Branch interprets the laws to make sure they conform to the dictates of the Constitution.

The United States was the first nation in the world to create a constitution. The U.S. Constitution was formed in 1788 by the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, whose delegates developed the constitutional concept.

It was a unique and innovative idea.

A constitutional government was a revolutionary innovation that was in stark contrast to the existing governments of the day.

Since then, the constitutional concept has been adopted by many other countries seeking to create a new form of government for themselves.

Multiple Choice Quiz

1. What language did the word constitution originate from?

- A. Latin
- B. Spanish
- C. French
- D. Greek

2. Which of the following isn't included in the meaning of constitution?

- A. Charter
- B. Body of law
- C. Fundamental principles
- D. Equality principles
- E. System of laws

3. Which of the following is not a characteristic/function of the US Constitution?

- A. Serves as the supreme law of the land
- B. Establishes a system to promote freedom
- C. Provides a framework for the government
- D. Grants and limits the powers of government officials

4. Which of the following are the purposes and functions of a constitution in general?

- A. Establishing a set of rules
- B. Grouping a collection of laws together
- C. Creating a set of expectations for how a government will function
- D. All of the Above
- E. None of the Above

5. What specifically will a constitution establish with regard to its citizens?

- A. Rights and privileges
- B. Duties
- C. Needs
- D. A and B
- E. All of the above

6. What principle(s) are established in a constitution?

- A. Separation of powers
- B. Judicial review
- C. All of the above
- D. None of the above

7. What constitutional principle is most associated with preventing the misuse of power?

- A. Checks and balances
- B. Separation of powers
- C. Judicial review
- D. Proportional representation

8. What is the most important function of a constitution?

- A. Ensuring perfect equality
- B. Providing a set of fundamental rights
- C. Limiting all sources of federal power
- D. Delegating most power to the legislative branch

9. Which of the following is a reason that a constitution is necessary?

- A. It provides a rule of law
- B. It separates governmental powers
- C. It divides power between the state and federal government
- D. It allows diverse groups of people to live together
- E. None of the above
- F. All of the above

10. Which of the following best describes a non-constitutional government?

- A. A government with unlimited power
- B. A government with equal amounts of power delegated to different branches
- C. A government run by representatives
- D. A government led by a president and vice president

11. Who normally governs a non-constitutional government?

- A. President
- B. Hereditary monarch or dictator
- C. Prime minister
- D. Vice president

12. What 3 branches of government does the US Constitution create?

- A. Legislative, executive, and judicial
- B. Executive, judicial, and administrative
- C. Judicial, legislative, and military
- D. Legislative, executive, and law enforcement

13. What city was the Constitutional Convention held in?

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

Multiple Choice Quiz Answers

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