

The Bill of Rights and the Civil Rights Movement

The Bill of Rights are the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution. The idea behind the Bill of Rights was to insure certain freedoms and rights to the citizens of America. It put limits on what the government could do and control. Freedoms protected include freedom of religion, speech, assembly, the right to bear arms, unreasonable search and seizure of your home, the right to a speedy trial, and more. Many delegates of the states were against signing the Constitution without a Bill of Rights included. It became a major issue in ratifying the Constitution in some states. As a result, James Madison wrote 12 amendments and presented them to the First Congress in 1789. On December 15, 1791 ten of the amendments were passed and made part of the Constitution. They would later become known as the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was based on several previous documents including the Magna Carta, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights. Here is a list of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights:

The First Amendment - states that Congress shall make no law preventing the establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise. Also protected are freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Second Amendment - protects citizen's right to bear arms.

The Third Amendment - prevents the government from placing troops in private homes. This was a real problem during the American Revolutionary War.

The Fourth Amendment - this amendment prevents the government from unreasonable search and seizure of the property of US citizens. It requires the government to have a warrant that was issued by a judge and based on probable cause.

The Fifth Amendment - The Fifth Amendment is famous for people saying "I'll take the Fifth". This gives people the right to choose not to testify in court if they feel their own testimony will incriminate themselves. In addition this amendment protects citizens from being subject to criminal prosecution and punishment without due process. It also prevents people from being tried for the same crime twice. The amendment also establishes the power of eminent domain, which means that private property can not be seized for public use without just compensation.

The Sixth Amendment - guarantees a speedy trial by a jury of one's peers. Also, people accused are to be informed of the crimes with which they are charged and have the right to confront the witnesses brought by the government. The amendment also provides the accused the right to compel testimony from witnesses, and to legal representation (meaning the government has to provide a lawyer).

The Seventh Amendment - provides that civil cases also be tried by jury.

The Eighth Amendment - prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments.

The Ninth Amendment - states that the list of rights described in the Constitution is not exhaustive, and that the people still have all the rights that are not listed.

The Tenth Amendment - gives all powers not specifically given to the United States government in the Constitution, to either the states or to the people.

1. What is the importance of the Bill of Rights for America as well as the Civil Rights Movement:

2. How would your life in America be different today if the Bill of Rights never existed?

3. If you could add any additional Amendments to the Bill of Rights, what would you like to see added and why?

Bill of Rights

Test Quiz

Questions on this quiz are based on information from
Bill of Rights.

1. What historic document is the Bill of Rights a part of?
 - a. The Declaration of Independence
 - b. The Emancipation Proclamation
 - c. The Constitution
 - d. The Gettysburg Address
 - e. The Pledge of Allegiance
2. How many amendments are included in the Bill of Rights?
 - a. Just the 1st
 - b. 3
 - c. 5
 - d. The first 10
 - e. All 27 amendments are included.
3. Which amendment gives citizens the right to bear arms?
 - a. The second
 - b. The third
 - c. The fifth
 - d. The tenth
 - e. The first
4. Who wrote the amendments that became the Bill of Rights?
 - a. John Adams
 - b. James Madison
 - c. George Washington
 - d. Thomas Jefferson
 - e. Abraham Lincoln
5. Which of the following describes the Bill of Rights?
 - a. A document that insures the basic freedoms of the citizens of the United States.
 - b. A document that limits the powers and controls of the government.
 - c. A document that protects the freedom of religion and speech.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. None of the above.
6. Which amendment guarantees citizens the freedom of religion and the freedom of speech?
 - a. The first
 - b. The second
 - c. The fifth
 - d. The ninth
 - e. The tenth
7. What right does the fifth amendment protect?

- a. The right to bear arms
- b. Freedom of speech
- c. The right to legal representation
- d. Freedom of religion
- e. The right to choose not to testify against oneself

8. True or False: The ninth amendment states that 100% of the rights of the citizens are called out in the Constitution. That they have no rights beyond what the Constitution says.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE
- c.
- d.
- e.

9. According to the tenth amendment, who gets all of the powers that are not specifically called out in the Constitution?

- a. The President
- b. The people and the states
- c. The Congress
- d. The Supreme Court
- e. The government

10. What are some documents that the writers used to base the Bill of Rights off of?

- a. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Magna Carta
- b. The Articles of the Confederation, the Gettysburg Address, and the English Rights Law
- c. The Magna Carta, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights
- d. The Emancipation Proclamation, the Magna Carta, and the Articles of the Confederation
- e. The Constitution, the Articles of the Confederation, and the Declaration of Independence

About this quiz: All the questions on this quiz are based on information that can be found on the [Bill of Rights](#) page at /history/us_bill_of_rights.php.

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