

We the People of the United States,

in order to form a more
perfect Union, establish
Justice, insure domestic
Tranquility, provide for the
common defense, promote
the general Welfare, and
secure the Blessings of
Liberty to ourselves and our
Posterity, do ordain and
establish the Constitution of
the United States of America.

Memorize The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

“We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish the Constitution of the United States of America.”

Directions: Cut out each of these phrases from The Preamble and practice arranging them in order.

We the People of the United States,

in order to form a more perfect Union,

establish Justice,

insure domestic Tranquility,

provide for the common defense,

promote the general Welfare,

and secure the Blessings of Liberty

to ourselves and our Posterity,

do ordain and establish

the Constitution of the

United States of America.

Learn The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

There was a time when students were required to memorize The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. These days it's more important than ever to learn the opening words to the document that defines the legal authority of our government. If you memorize the preamble in parts, it will be much easier for you. But first read the preamble several times so you can get used to its language. Then take the time to think about what the preamble is actually ensuring. By understanding what it means, it will help you to remember what it says. And finally - practice, practice, practice!

Summary

The Preamble explains the purpose of the Constitution, why it was created, and defines the powers of the newly established government as originating from the people of the United States.

Vocabulary

Common Defense - Protection of the people against attack, violence, danger or injury; national security.

Constitution - A system of fundamental rules, principles and ordinances for the government of a state or nation. It sets the boundaries of what the government is supposed to do. The United States Constitution is the highest law of the land.

Domestic Tranquility - One of the main goals of the Constitutional Convention was to make sure the federal government had powers to squash quarrels and smooth tensions between states.

Justice - The virtue which consists in giving to every one what is his due; practical conformity to the laws and to principles of integrity in dealing with one other.

Liberty - Freedom from the control of others.

Ordain - To order by or as if by a decree.

People - The body of persons who compose a community, town, city or nation; citizens.

Posterity - Future generations; all of a person's descendents.

Preamble - An introduction stating the reasons and intent of a document.

Union - States united. The United States of America are sometimes called the Union.

Welfare - Welfare in today's context has come to mean public assistance or other organized efforts on the part of public or private organizations to benefit the poor. This is not the meaning of the word as used by the Framers of the Constitution. At that time, welfare simply meant health, happiness, prosperity and well-being.

Did You Know...?

The capitalized words in the original Constitution don't have any special significance above and beyond the non-capitalized words. It's just that at the time it was written, the American spelling of words was inconsistent and nouns were commonly capitalized.

Constitutional Quotations for Copywork

“I’ve lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing Proofs I see of this Truth — That God governs in the Affairs of Men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his Notice, is it probable that an Empire can rise without his Aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that except the Lord build the House they labor in vain who build it. I firmly believe this, — and I also believe that without his concurring Aid, we shall succeed in this political Building no better than the Builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our Projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a Reproach and Bye word down to future Ages.” ~*Ben Franklin (at the 1787 Constitutional Convention)*

“Study the constitution! Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislatures, and enforced by the courts of justice.” ~*Abraham Lincoln*

“Miracles do not cluster. Hold on to the Constitution of the United States of America and the Republic for which it stands—what has happened once in six thousand years may never happen again. Hold on to your Constitution, for if the American Constitution shall fail there will be anarchy throughout the world.” ~*Daniel Webster*

“The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil Constitution, are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors: they purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood, and transmitted them to us with care and diligence. It will bring an everlasting mark of infamy on the present generation, enlightened as it is, if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of false and designing men.” ~*Samuel Adams*

“In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.” ~*Alexander Hamilton*

“No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.” ~*Patrick Henry*

“Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people. Those who have known freedom and then lost it, have never known it again.” ~*Ronald Reagan*

“You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it.” ~*John Quincy Adams*