

Constitution Day Vocabulary

amendment

the act of changing or modifying a legal document, especially the U.S. Constitution
The Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote.

balance of power

a division of authority to prevent any one branch of government from forcing its will upon or controlling any other
The Founding Fathers created three branches of government to ensure a balance of power.

Bill of Rights

The name given to the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution which limit the power of government and protect the rights of citizens.
The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion.

checks and balances

a system that allows each branch of a government to amend or veto acts of another branch so as to prevent any one branch from exerting too much power
The system of checks and balances allows the President to veto laws passed by Congress.

compromise

to settle disagreements by making concessions
The Founding Fathers debated various types of government and compromised to develop a system of government that all of them could support.

Constitution

a written document that sets forth the basic laws of a nation, state, or organization.
The United States Constitution serves as the foundation of American government.

delegate

a person acting as a representative of another person or group of people at a convention or conference
Every state except Rhode Island sent delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

executive branch

the branch of U.S. government responsible for ensuring that laws are executed (enforced)
The President of the United States is the head of the executive branch of government.



Founding Fathers

a leading figure in the Founding of the United States.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution are often referred to as America's Founding Fathers.

government

the individuals and/or agencies responsible for governing (leading) a city, county, state, country, or territory

The Founding Fathers wanted to create a system of government that did not allow any one person or group of people to have too much control.

judicial branch

the branch of government responsible for interpreting laws and answering questions about the law

The United States Supreme Court is at the head of the judicial branch of government.

law

rules of conduct established and enforced by government

It is against the law to take things that do not belong to you.

legislative branch

the branch of government responsible for making laws

The legislative branch of government is comprised of two parts: The Senate and the House of Representatives.

preamble

an introduction that gives the reasons for the parts to follow

The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution explains why the Constitution was written.

ratify

to give legal approval to

Nine of the original thirteen states had to ratify the U.S. Constitution before it went into effect.

republic

a form of government whose power is based on the consent of the governed and which is led by an elected individual or individuals rather than a monarch

The Founding Fathers wanted to create a republic, not a monarchy.

veto

the power one branch of government has to prohibit another branch of government from carrying out its wishes

The President vetoed a Congressional bill.

