# The United States Constitution

## *How and why did the framers distribute power in the Constitution?*

### Speaking of Politics

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers:

| | |
|---|---|
| due process | independent judiciary |
| republican government | strict construction |
| checks and balances | loose construction |
| federalism | judicial review |

### PREVIEW

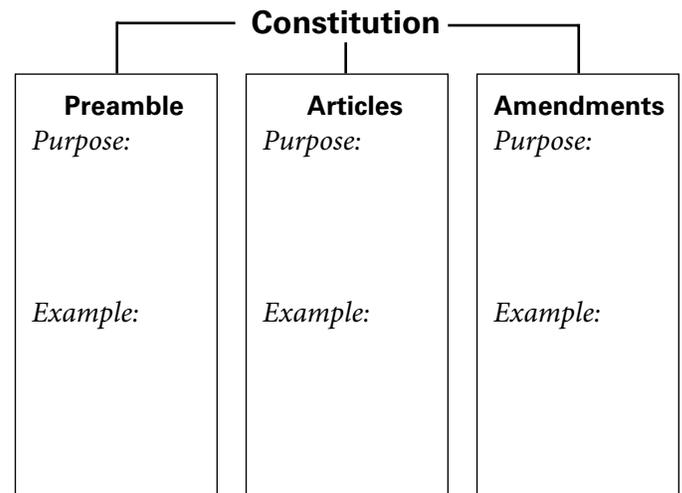Examine the outline of the Constitution on Notebook Handout 4. Then answer these questions in your notebook:

1. What observations can you make about the way the framers organized the Constitution?

2. Which branch of government did the framers give the greatest number of specific (expressed) powers to? What might be some reasons for that?

3. What inferences can you make about how the framers intended to distribute power within the federal government?

### READING NOTES

#### Sections 4.2 and 4.3

Read Sections 4.2 and 4.3. Then do the following:

1. Create this diagram in your notebook. In your diagram, clearly explain the purpose of each of the three main parts of the Constitution. Then list an example from the Constitution that illustrates the purpose of each part.

**Constitution**

| **Preamble** | **Articles** | **Amendments** |
|---|---|---|
| *Purpose:* | *Purpose:* | *Purpose:* |
| *Example:* | *Example:* | *Example:* |

2. Explain the difference between enumerated and implied powers and describe how the Constitution establishes both.

3. Discuss why each branch of government has a different set of responsibilities and powers. List at least two powers of each branch.

4. Create a simple flowchart that illustrates the most common method of amending the Constitution.

## Section 4.4

1. Create the following table in your notebook. Complete the first three columns by listing each guiding principle, creating a simple illustration to represent it, and briefly explaining it in your own words.

### Guiding Principles of the Constitution

| Principle | Symbol or Simple Illustration | Brief Explanation | Example from the Constitution |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

2. Read Section 4.4, and identify at least one place in the Constitution that illustrates each principle. In the fourth column of your table, give the exact location in the Constitution as well as the exact text that exemplifies each principle.

## Section 4.5

Read Section 4.5, and then do the following:

1. Explain the difference between strict and loose construction of the Constitution.

2. On a page in your notebook, complete the table below for the three landmark cases discussed in the section.

   - Enter the case's name and the year it was decided.
   - List two or three main facts of the case.
   - Write a short summary of the Supreme Court's decision.
   - Describe the significance of the decision in terms of its effects on the government and on the interpretation of the Constitution.

### Three Landmark Court Cases

| Name and Date of the Case | Facts of the Case | Summary of the Decision | Significance of the Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

The framers developed the U.S. Constitution more than 200 years ago with the hope that it would remain relevant and effective for future generations. One way they sought to accomplish that was through the provisions of Article V, which spell out how the Constitution can be changed.

In recent years, Congress has fielded many proposals for changes to the Constitution, including the following:

- Requiring the federal government to balance the national budget
- Restricting the amount of money that can be spent during national electoral campaigns
- Abolishing the Electoral College and having the president and vice president elected by popular vote
- Lowering the age restriction for public offices such as senator and representative
- Repealing the Twenty-second Amendment, which sets presidential term limits
- Guaranteeing all citizens access to quality health care

If you had the opportunity to change the Constitution in one way in order to improve it, what would you propose? In a short paragraph, explain your proposal and discuss why you think the Constitution will be a stronger, better document with this change.