

Name _____

Date _____



Amending the Constitution

The US Constitution is a living document.

It's evolved and changed over time as the values of the country have shifted.

But how have those changes been made?

It's alive!

The Constitution has evolved over time.

It's alive!

We ratify a recommended change by adding an amendment.

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In 1787, the Constitution was penned

As the foundational document of our government.

The founders of our country, however, they could admit

A document like this could never be perfect.

Society will change, and we'll have to adjust,

So amendments must be made to the Constitution—that's just!

Because of this, the founders wrote Article V—

That's where the amendment process is outlined.

The Constitution can be changed through this practice.

And over history, we've made many positive actions.

The Constitution's been amended 27 times. These

Amendments were made to adapt to changes in society.

The first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights,

Which guarantees the freedoms of all people alike,

Including the right to a fair trial and free speech,

And Amendment 13 ended slavery.

In 1920, the 19th Amendment had set the precedent
That gave women the right to vote in any election.
The 26th Amendment was passed in '71,
Which lowered the voting age to 18 from 21!
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Proposed amendments easily exceed 11,000;
Only 27 have been ratified or passed—astounding!
So how does Article V work within our nation?
It's done in two steps: proposal and ratification.
Congress can go ahead and propose an amendment;
Two-thirds of the House of Reps and Senate must accept it
To pass. But that's not the only route for a proposal.
They can also come from specific states that are vocal.
States can also propose amendments of their invention,
If two-thirds of their legislators request a convention.
Then Congress can pick how an amendment is ratified;
State legislatures can be asked to decide.
To pass, it'll need three-quarters of the votes,
Or elected delegates will have to go on their own
To state conventions. If an amendment's approved,
It's added to the United States Constitution.
Congress has proposed all 27 amendments,
But only the 21st was sent to state conventions.
With all these moving parts, it starts to become clear—
Ratification takes a long time, even several years!

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