

Name _____

Date _____



What Is the Constitution?

In 1776,

The United States declared its _____.

Then it won the Revolutionary War.

King George couldn't tell 'em what to do anymore.

So who would tell Americans what to do

And lead the new country? Someone had to.

After all, this is how most countries worked,

Where a king or a queen or an emperor

Is the big boss calling all the shots.

They had more wealth and power than the people, by a lot.

But America's Founding Fathers didn't roll like that.

All that power led to tyranny. I don't think you're hearing me.

See, for a king it was too easy

For them to mistreat people and act sleazy.

That's not leadership; that is hypocrisy.

So Americans wanted to try _____.

They thought people should govern themselves.

Would it work? Could it work? Well,

The _____ weren't sure.

But they thought they'd have a chance if they went to work

With a well-thought-out set of rules

For government that everyone thought was cool.

So they came up with a solution

And made the United States Constitution.

We the people run our own government.

Here, there's no kings or queens running it.

We're following the law of the land

Laid out in the _____, so understand.

We the people run our own government.

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Laid out in the Constitution. That's the plan.

One of the Constitution's fundamental functions

Is to spread power evenly to prevent corruption.

See, the Founding Fathers took no chances,

So they split the government up into three branches.

The legislative branch—that includes Congress.

They make the laws. Yup, that's what their job is.

The executive branch—the president and their staff.

They carry out the laws on the people's behalf.

And the judicial branch, which includes the Supreme Court.

They interpret the laws to make sure they're in accordance

With the Constitution, which includes checks and balances—

Rules that prevent a branch from gaining too much power. In

Addition to that, the Constitution guarantees

The rights that we have, like freedom of speech,

The freedom of assembly, and the right to vote.

There's a whole lot more, if you'd like to know.

Not to mention, there are rules for how it can be amended,

Or changed. Over the years, there's been lots of things,

Like enslavement, which used to be legal—

But that was changed by the will of the people,

With the 13th _____ in 1865.

Without change, the Constitution couldn't survive,

And it needs citizens to be the guide.

The document of democracy, America's pride.

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