

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is the Constitution?

In 1776,  
The United States declared its independence.  
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 democracy.  
They thought people should govern themselves.  
Would it work? Could it work? Well,  
The Founding Fathers 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 Constitution, so understand.  
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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 Amendment 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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