



## HIGH SCHOOL ★ EXHIBIT GUIDE ★

# THE STORY OF *We the People*

This guide will help you **UNCOVER THE WAYS THE CONSTITUTION AND AMERICAN CITIZENS**—just like you—**HAVE SHAPED OUR HISTORY AND FORMED THE AMERICAN IDENTITY.**

Through your journey you will also explore the ways the **CONSTITUTION CONTINUES TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN OUR DAILY LIVES.**

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



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# WELCOME TO THE RICHARD AND HELEN DEVOS EXHIBIT HALL

Throughout *The Story of We the People*, you will explore how individuals and events shaped the way our Constitution is understood today.

**DIRECTIONS:** As you make your way through the exhibit, follow the outer path to locate examples throughout history, such as persons, groups, events, documents, and artifacts that relate to each phrase in the Constitution's Preamble, using the graphic organizers to outline what you learned.

## We the People

of the United States, in Order to **form a more perfect Union,**  
**establish Justice,** **insure domestic Tranquility,** provide for the **common defence,**  
**promote the general Welfare,** and **secure the Blessings of Liberty**  
to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution  
for the United States of America.





## “form a more perfect Union”

Rewrite “form a more perfect Union” in your own words:

To create an effective government

Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? The Constitutional Convention

When did it happen? September 17, 1787

Who was involved? Framers of the Constitution

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? The Articles of Confederation did not create a strong union between the states, so the Framers created the Constitution.

## “establish justice”

Rewrite “establish justice” in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

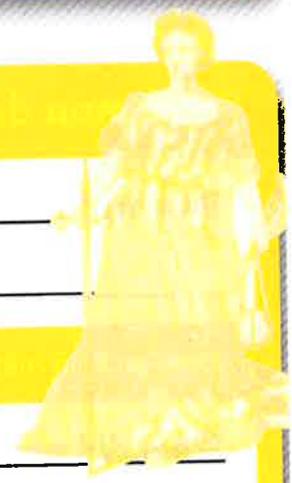
Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? \_\_\_\_\_

When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? \_\_\_\_\_





## “insure domestic Tranquility”

Rewrite “insure domestic Tranquility” in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? \_\_\_\_\_

When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## “common defence”

Rewrite “common defence” in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

**FUN FACT:**  
There was no standard spelling in 1787 so the word “defence” was spelled with a “c” instead of an “s.”

Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? \_\_\_\_\_

When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## “promote the general Welfare”

Rewrite “promote the general Welfare” in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? \_\_\_\_\_

When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## “secure the Blessings of Liberty”

Rewrite “secure the Blessings of Liberty” in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now, pick an historical example that fits your description.

What did you pick? \_\_\_\_\_

When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did it happen? How does it relate to the phrase? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# INTERACTIVE Constitution

The *Interactive Constitution* is a new, online tool that delivers scholarship from top constitutional experts right to your computer, tablet, or smartphone. It allows users to explore the history behind each part of the U.S. Constitution. Scholars reach across the partisan divide to co-author a "Common Interpretation" explaining the

things on which they agree. Then, the same scholars write individual "Matters of Debate" essays outlining leading viewpoints across a range of perspectives on how that part of the Constitution can or should be interpreted going forward.

You can access the *Interactive Constitution* at computer stations along the inner-most path through the main exhibit, online at [constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution](http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution), and as a free app for Apple and Android devices. Once you access the *Interactive Constitution*, select "Explore It" on the homepage. Then, select "Amendment" towards the top of the screen. Choose one of the first 10 amendments — the amendments that make up the Bill of Rights. Once you select an amendment you will be able to see the "Common Interpretation" and, under that, the "Matters of Debate."

## READ THE SHORT ESSAYS AND COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW.

What Amendment did you select? \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the scholars who wrote the essays? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

What are three important things on which they agree ("Common Interpretation")?

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What is each scholar's main argument, or thesis, in their "Matters of Debate" essays?

_____	_____
_____	_____

What is one question you would ask each scholar to find out more about their opinion?

_____	_____
_____	_____

Which scholar, do you think, presents her or his argument in a more convincing way? How so?

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