



FL State & Local Government: SS.7.CG.3.12
Comparing Constitutions
VIDEO #1 SCRIPT



Comparing the U.S. and Florida Constitutions Video #1

1. Did you know that there is more than one constitution in the United States? Wait... what??
2. Yes, that's right. In our country, the United States Constitution is the supreme, or highest, law of the land, but each state also has a constitution. That means that in addition to the U.S. Constitution, there are fifty other constitutions – one for each state.
3. The U.S. Constitution creates the structure and function of the national government. It also determines the powers of the national government, the powers that belong to the state governments, and the powers that the federal and state governments share.
4. Each state has their own constitution, which outlines the structure and function of that state's government.
5. In this video, we will compare the U.S. Constitution and the Florida Constitution.
6. After watching this video, you will be able to:
 - identify the purposes of a constitution, and
 - recognize the structure of the U.S. and Florida constitutions.
 - recognize the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

Let's get started!

7. So what is a constitution? Well, a constitution is a written plan for government.
8. Now that we know a constitution is a written plan for government, what is its purpose?
9. The purpose of a constitution is to explain the powers and responsibilities of government, to explain how the powers of government are limited in certain ways, and to describe how the rights of the people are protected.
10. Let's use the U.S. Constitution as an example. The U.S. Constitution provides a plan for how the United States government will work. The U.S. Constitution creates three branches of government – legislative, executive and judicial – and defines the powers, responsibilities, and roles of each branch.

11. The U.S. Constitution also creates a system called “checks and balances” that limits the power of each branch of government. Checks and balances make sure that no one branch of government can become more powerful than the other branches.

12. The U.S. Constitution also protects the rights of the people. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791, four years after ratification of the Constitution, to list the rights of the people and further explain the limits on the power of the government.

13. Let’s Check In: What are the three purposes of a constitution?

14. ANSWER TO QUESTION

Well done!

15. Let’s recap what we’ve learned so far. One, a constitution is a written plan for government. Two, it identifies the powers of government, power limits, and people’s rights. Three, the US Constitution creates three branches of government. Four, it established a system of checks and balances. And five, it contains a Bill of Rights.

16. Now that we know the purpose of a constitution, let’s take a look at the structure of the U.S. and Florida constitutions.

17. After the U.S. Constitution was ratified, or approved, by the states, states wrote or changed their own state constitutions. The U.S. Constitution served as a guideline for many states. Many state constitutions look very similar to the U.S. Constitution, including the Florida Constitution.

18. The U.S. and Florida constitutions have a similar structure; both documents have a preamble, articles and amendments.

19. A preamble is an introduction that states the purpose and goals of the government. Both the U.S. and Florida constitutions begin with “We the People”. This means that both the U.S. government and Florida state government get their power from the citizens, “the people”.

20. Articles are the sections of the document that describe the powers and functions of the government. The U.S. Constitution has 7 articles while the Florida Constitution has 12 articles.

21. Amendments are changes that have been made to a constitution. The U.S. Constitution has 27 amendments. The first ten amendments are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights is a list of rights for the people.

22. The Florida Constitution, on the other hand, has the Florida Declaration of Rights, which lists the rights of the people. The Florida Declaration of Rights includes many of the same rights listed in the United States Bill of Rights. Unlike amendments to the US Constitution being added at the end, amendments to the Florida Constitution are incorporated into the document.

23. It is important to point out something in the U.S. Constitution that the Florida Constitution does not have – the Supremacy Clause. In Article VI, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution, the Supremacy Clause states that the U.S. Constitution is the highest law of the land. This means that laws cannot go against what is in the U.S. Constitution or federal laws.

24. Let's Check In: Why do both constitutions begin with 'We the People'?

25. ANSWER TO QUESTION

26. In your own words, define the terms preamble, articles, and amendments.

27. ANSWER TO QUESTION

28. What is the Supremacy Clause?

29. ANSWER TO QUESTION

30. Let's recap what we've learned so far. The U.S. and Florida Constitutions have a preamble, articles, and amendments. A preamble is an introduction that states the purpose and goals of government. Articles describe the powers and functions of government. Amendments are changes to a constitution, and the US Constitution's Supremacy Clause states that the US Constitution is the highest law of the land.

31. Now that we know the purpose of constitutions and the structures of the US and Florida Constitutions, I bet you can't wait to learn about how each document can be amended. We'll see you next time.