



Federal Government: SS.7.CG.1.8
Preamble of the U.S. Constitution
VIDEO SCRIPT



1. Have you ever asked yourself, what does our government DO? What are the goals and purposes of our government? Where would I look to find this information?

2. The United States Constitution outlines the structure and function of our government. The Preamble is the introduction to the whole document. The Preamble is what explains the goals and purposes of our government.

3. In this video, we will explore the Preamble and after watching you will be able to:

- explain how the Preamble serves as an introduction to the U.S. Constitution (e.g., establishes the goals and purposes of government).
- identify the goals and purposes of the national government as set forth in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution (i.e., form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity).
- recognize that the intention of the phrase “We the People” means that government depends on the people for its power and exists to serve them.

It’s similar to a rulebook if you were playing a game. For example, a football playbook makes sure players follow a set of rules to score touchdowns, make field goals and keep players from getting hurt or injured

Another example might be if you are playing a board game, the rulebook outlines the purpose and object of the game, and the rules you must follow to win the game!

4. Much like board game rules outline the goals and purposes of the game, the Preamble outlines the goals and purposes of our government

5. Take a look at how the U.S. Constitution begins... What do you notice about the first three words?

Yes! They are written larger than the rest of the document. What are the first three words?

The first three words are WE... THE... PEOPLE!

6. Why do you think the writers of the U.S. Constitution made those first three words larger than all the other words? Why would YOU write or type words larger than the rest? Could it be that they wanted to make the words to stand out more, to stress their importance, or to show importance?

7. The Preamble begins with the phrase, “We the People” for a reason! When the writers of the U.S. Constitution began the Preamble with WE-THE-PEOPLE they wanted to make it clear that the PEOPLE would be the source of the government’s power. They also wanted to make sure that power would not fall into the hands of a single ruler.

8. Also, by starting the Preamble with WE-THE-PEOPLE, the writers were saying that the government exists to work for and serve the PEOPLE and must answer to THEM and not the other way around!

10 Let's check in: What is the meaning of "We the People"?

Answer To Question

11. 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.

12. Remember, the Preamble is the first sentence of the U.S. Constitution and outlines the goals and purposes of the government. Now that we know what 'We the People' means, let's look at how the Preamble outlines the goals and purposes of government.

13. If we look again at the full text of the Preamble, we can see that after We the People of the United States, there are six phrases separated by commas. These are the goals and purposes of government.

Now, we are going to break each of these goals down and explain their meaning.

14. The first phrase is "Form a more perfect union"

This means that the purpose of the U.S. Constitution was to create an even better government than the one that was already in place under the Articles of Confederation, which was the first constitution of the United States.

15. The second phrase is "establish justice"

Let's break down the meaning of the goal "establish justice". Establish means to create or to officially put a process in place. Justice means to provide fairness. So, "establish justice" means to create a process so that EVERYONE is treated fairly and equally.

16. In other words, the government places the law higher than any individual, including government officials. Our court systems are in place to establish justice. This also means that all people will be treated fairly and equally under the law.

17. The third phrase is "insure domestic tranquility" [bold text on screen]

Insure means to make sure, domestic means dealing with things in the home or within one's country. And finally! ... the word tranquility... Tranquility means peaceful. When we put it all together, "insure domestic tranquility" means to make sure we have peace within our country. The government will protect citizens from conflict in the country and make sure that states do not go to war with each other.

18. The fourth phrase is "provide for the common defence"

If a wild animal tries to attack, you do everything you can to protect or defend yourself, right? So, defense means protection. We also want to take a look at the use of the word common. In context, the word common refers to something that is equally shared or belonging to a whole community.

19. This means that the government will provide one central defense to protect the people and every part of the country against any attacks from outside countries or groups, or internal threats.

20. The fifth phrase is “promote the general welfare”

To look out for a person’s welfare is to be concerned for their health and happiness. So according to this phrase in the Preamble, a purpose of government is to help and encourage the health and happiness or well being of the people. This means that government is focused on the public interest and that every state and individual can benefit from what the government can provide.

21. The sixth phrase is “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity”

Let’s focus on the two words: liberty and posterity. What do you think of when you hear the word liberty? Maybe you think about the Statue of Liberty, maybe you think about the word freedom. You are right, liberty represents our rights and freedoms.

22. The second half of the goal mentions “to ourselves and our posterity”. Posterity is not a word commonly used in the time period we live in now. It means our future generations. A goal of the government is to protect all the benefits of living in a free society for us and for our future generations.

23. Let’s check in: We are going to look at a few scenarios. Try to identify the purpose or goal of government from the Preamble that applies to the scenario.

24. Our state and federal lawmakers receive letters, e-mails and phone calls from citizens about their concerns and suggestions for change. The lawmakers work to create laws that improve the function, safety and well being of the country or the state. Which goal in the Preamble is reflected in this government action?

ANSWER:

25. A protest in Tampa turned violent when several demonstrators were injured and businesses were broken into. This created an unsafe environment and the local law enforcement was called to protect the citizens and their property. Which goal in the Preamble is reflected in this government action?

ANSWER:

26. The Department of Agriculture provides healthy eating guidelines in a graphic showing how much of your plate should consist of each food group. Which goal in the Preamble is reflected in this government action?

ANSWER:

27. To summarize, the Preamble is the one sentence introduction to the U.S. Constitution. It begins with the phrase “We the People” because the people play the most important role in our government.

28. There are six goals and purposes of government outlined in this sentence and the Preamble ends with the phrase: “do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America”. The final phrase of the Preamble means that the people establish the U.S. Constitution to begin a new national government.