



Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.12 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will recognize the basic outline of the U.S. and Florida Constitutions (e.g., both have preambles, articles and amendments).

After the U.S. Constitution was ratified (approved by the states), the states wrote or amended their own state constitutions. Article IV, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution states: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government.” Because the U.S. Constitution served as a guideline, many state constitutions look very similar to the U.S. Constitution, including the Florida Constitution. The U.S. and Florida constitutions both have a preamble (an introduction that states the purpose and goals of government), articles (sections that describe the powers and functions of the government), and amendments (changes that have been made to the constitution). While the basic outline of the U.S. Constitution and the Florida Constitution are the same, the contents of the two documents have major differences.

Below is a brief comparison of the major similarities and differences between the two documents:

United States Constitution	Florida Constitution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with “We the People” – shows that the federal government gets its power from the citizens • Shorter than the Florida Constitution • Seven articles • 1 (large) page • Contains a Bill of Rights (enumerated list of rights for the people) • 27 amendments • Written as a “living document” to be interpreted and changed over time • Contains a “Supremacy Clause” stating that the Constitution is the highest law of the land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with “We the People” – shows that the state government gets its power from the citizens • Longer than the U.S. Constitution • 12 articles • 80 pages • Contains the Florida Declaration of Rights (a list of the rights of the people that includes many of the same rights as those in the U.S. Bill of Rights) • Written as a “living document” to be interpreted and changed over time. Several amendments to the Florida Constitution are quite specific. • Addresses public education, motor vehicles, and elections • Deals with day-to-day issues that affect state residents

Bill of Rights - the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution

Florida Declaration of Rights - the part of the Florida Constitution that lists the basic rights guaranteed to all citizens who live in the state

Supremacy Clause - the clause that states that the U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and that national laws are supreme over state laws; found in Article VI (6)