



*Constitutional Principles and
Structures: SS.7.CG.3.5*
The Amendment Process
READING #1

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.5 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will recognize the methods used to propose and ratify amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Article V (5) of the United States Constitution describes two methods for **proposing amendments** to the Constitution and two methods for **ratifying** amendments. The Founding Fathers wanted to make sure that there was a way for the Constitution to be a “living document” that could change with the times if necessary.

There are two methods for proposing amendments to the Constitution.

1. An amendment may be proposed by the Congress with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.
2. An amendment may be proposed through a constitutional convention called for by two-thirds (2/3) of the state legislatures.

Both of these methods require a two-thirds majority to pass. A two-thirds majority is a “supermajority” (more than 50% plus one, a simple majority). An amendment to the Constitution would make a constitutional change for the entire nation, and having a large majority supporting that change helps the democratic process.

Once the amendment is proposed by either method described above, the amendment then has to be ratified in one of two ways:

1. Three-quarters (3/4) of the states (at least 38 out of 50) must ratify the amendment by a vote of approval in the state legislature.
2. Three-quarters (3/4) of the states (at least 38 out of 50) must ratify the amendment by a vote of approval at a state ratifying convention.

It is also possible when an amendment is added to the Constitution, laws that go against that amendment might be found **unconstitutional** by the U.S. Supreme Court.

amendment - a change to a constitution (e.g., U.S. Constitution, Florida Constitution)

propose - to make a suggestion

ratify - confirm by expressing consent; formally approve

unconstitutional - not in agreement with the U.S Constitution