Rights Can Grow

Read how the Constitution gained protections for people's rights.

SS24.4.7b "Explain why the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution and how the amendment process allows changes to protect or expand rights."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline why people wanted rights added to the Constitution. Circle one right the passage names, then number the two steps described for adding an amendment.

Adding Rights to the Constitution

1. In 1787, delegates wrote the Constitution to set up a new national government. But some people feared that this government might become too powerful. The Constitution did not yet list certain freedoms that people wanted clearly protected. Imagine speaking at a town meeting and worrying that leaders could punish you for your words. To win support for the new plan, leaders promised to add protections.

2. After the Constitution took effect, Congress proposed changes called amendments. The states approved ten of them in 1791. These first ten amendments are the Bill of Rights. One protects freedom of speech, so the government cannot stop people from speaking just because leaders dislike their ideas. Others protect freedoms such as religion and peaceful assembly. Adding these rules helped answer fears about the new government.

3. The Constitution can change again when a new need for rights becomes clear. First, an amendment can be proposed by a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress. Then, three-fourths of the states must approve it. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment protected the right to vote regardless of sex. It expanded voting rights to many women who had been kept from voting.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did some people want protections added to the Constitution?

2. How did the Bill of Rights answer that worry? Use one freedom from the passage.

3. How can Congress and the states work together to add an amendment?

4. How did an amendment expand voting rights in 1920?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine people want an amendment that protects access to clean drinking water. Write three or four sentences explaining why they might want it, how Congress and the states could add it, and how it could protect people's rights.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline why people wanted rights added to the Constitution. Circle one right the passage names, then number the two steps described for adding an amendment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did some people want protections added to the Constitution?	**They feared the new national government might become too powerful and wanted freedoms clearly protected.**
2	How did the Bill of Rights answer that worry? Use one freedom from the passage.	**It added rules protecting freedoms, such as freedom of speech, from government action.**
3	How can Congress and the states work together to add an amendment?	**Two-thirds of both houses of Congress can propose an amendment, and three-fourths of the states must approve it.**
4	How did an amendment expand voting rights in 1920?	**The Nineteenth Amendment protected voting rights regardless of sex, expanding those rights to many women who had been kept from voting.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Some people might want an amendment because they worry that not everyone can get clean drinking water. Two-thirds of each house of Congress could vote to propose it. Then three-fourths of the states would need to approve it. If added, the amendment could protect access to clean water as a right.

Accept answers that connect the Bill of Rights to fears of a powerful government and describe the congressional proposal and state approval steps accurately. For Your Turn, accept a reasonable reason for the proposed right and an explanation of how it could protect people.