Rules for Power

Read how the Constitution guides government and participation.

SS24.6.13 "Describe major ideas, concepts, and limitations of the Constitution of the United States. 13a Explain how a written constitution aids in establishing limited government and the rule of law..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one limit on government, circle two goals named in the Preamble, and number two rules about citizenship or voting. Use your marks to see how written rules shape power and participation.

A Plan That Limits Power

1. Imagine a president announcing a new federal tax without Congress. The Constitution does not allow the president to create that tax alone. This written plan gives Congress the power to pass federal tax laws, the president the job of carrying out laws, and courts the job of deciding cases. It also sets limits on each branch. The rule of law means leaders, like everyone else, must follow the law. Because the rules are written down, people can point to them when they challenge a leader's action.

2. The Preamble explains why the Constitution was written. It begins with "We the People," showing that the government's authority comes from the people. Its goals include forming a more perfect union, establishing justice, keeping peace at home, defending the country, promoting the general welfare, and securing liberty for present and future generations. These words describe work the authors wanted government to do, not a promise that every goal had already been reached. A strong government could act for the country, but its power still had to follow the Constitution.

3. The Fourteenth Amendment says people born or naturalized in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction are citizens. Congress sets uniform rules for naturalization, which lets eligible immigrants become citizens. Citizenship supports voting by eligible adults. The original Constitution did not guarantee voting rights to everyone; later amendments banned voting restrictions based on race or sex and protected voting at age eighteen or older. Changing the Constitution is difficult: one way to propose an amendment requires two-thirds of both houses of Congress; ratification requires three-fourths of the states.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why can't the president create the federal tax in the first paragraph alone? How does the written Constitution help people respond?

2. Which two Preamble goals could guide lawmakers working on fair trials and safer roads? Explain your choices.

3. How can an eligible immigrant become a citizen, and what role does the Constitution give Congress in that path?

4. Why would changing voting rights through a new amendment take more than a simple vote in Congress? Use both steps described in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your school gives a student council a written charter. In six sentences, state a council power, a limit on its leaders, a Preamble goal to guide it, a way students can participate, a fair process for changing the charter, and how one rule protects students.

ANSWER KEY

Rules for Power

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.13

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one limit on government, circle two goals named in the Preamble, and number two rules about citizenship or voting. Use your marks to see how written rules shape power and participation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can't the president create the federal tax in the first paragraph alone? How does the written Constitution help people respond?	**Congress has the power to pass federal tax laws. People can point to that written limit when they challenge the president's action.**
2	Which two Preamble goals could guide lawmakers working on fair trials and safer roads? Explain your choices.	**Establishing justice could guide fair trials, and promoting the general welfare could guide safer roads.**
3	How can an eligible immigrant become a citizen, and what role does the Constitution give Congress in that path?	**An eligible immigrant can become a citizen through naturalization. Congress sets uniform rules for that process.**
4	Why would changing voting rights through a new amendment take more than a simple vote in Congress? Use both steps described in the passage.	**One proposal method requires a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress, and the amendment must then be ratified by three-fourths of the states.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The student council may propose rules for shared spaces. Council members must publish each proposed rule before any vote. Like the Preamble's goal of establishing justice, the council should make fair rules for all students. Every student may suggest a rule and vote on council members. A charter change needs a two-thirds council vote and approval by a majority of students. Publishing proposals protects students by giving them a chance to speak before a vote.

For the Preamble question, accept another goal if the student explains a clear connection to the proposed work. For the charter task, look for six sentences and a workable change process that does not let leaders change the rules alone.