

Rights That Matter

Read how the Bill of Rights began, what it protects, and why it matters.

SS.5.CG.1.4 "Describe the history, meaning, and significance of the Bill of Rights"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline facts that tell how the Bill of Rights began, circle examples of rights it protects, and number three ideas that explain why it still matters.

A Promise of Freedoms

- ① In 1787, delegates wrote the Constitution to create a new national government. Some people worried that the document did not clearly protect personal freedoms. These critics, called Anti-Federalists, wanted a list of rights added before they would support the Constitution. In 1791, the states approved the first ten amendments. Together, these amendments became known as the Bill of Rights.
- ② Each amendment limits government power in a certain way. The First Amendment protects freedoms such as speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition. The Fourth Amendment guards people against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Sixth Amendment gives people accused of crimes important protections, including a speedy, public trial and help from a lawyer. These rights belong to people, not only to government leaders.
- ③ The Bill of Rights matters because it helps protect liberty and fair treatment. It gives people a way to speak up, practice beliefs, and receive legal protections. Courts use the Bill of Rights when deciding whether government actions follow the Constitution. Over time, these amendments have shaped debates about freedom and justice. They remind both citizens and officials that government power has limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did the Anti-Federalists want a list of rights added to the Constitution?

2 What happened in 1791, and what name was given to the first ten amendments?

3 Choose one amendment named in the passage. What protection does it give people?

4 How does the Bill of Rights help limit government power today?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about one right in the Bill of Rights. Tell when the Bill of Rights was added, explain what your chosen right means, and explain why that right is important today.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline facts that tell how the Bill of Rights began, circle examples of rights it protects, and number three ideas that explain why it still matters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Anti-Federalists want a list of rights added to the Constitution?	They worried that the Constitution did not clearly protect personal freedoms.
2	What happened in 1791, and what name was given to the first ten amendments?	The states approved the first ten amendments, which became known as the Bill of Rights.
3	Choose one amendment named in the passage. What protection does it give people?	Answers may name the First Amendment and its freedoms, the Fourth Amendment protection from unreasonable searches and seizures, or the Sixth Amendment protections for people accused of crimes.
4	How does the Bill of Rights help limit government power today?	Courts use it to decide whether government actions follow the Constitution, and it reminds citizens and officials that government power has limits.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Bill of Rights was added in 1791 after people asked for clear protections. The First Amendment means the government cannot silence peaceful speech or stop people from practicing religion. This right matters because people can share ideas and beliefs. It also limits government power.

Accept accurate explanations of the history, meaning, and significance of the Bill of Rights in students' own words. For the open response, accept any accurately described Bill of Rights protection and a clear explanation of why it matters today.