

Why This Constitution

Read how the Preamble states the Constitution's purposes.

SS.7.CG.1.8 "Explain the purpose of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the six phrases that name goals in the Preamble, then number them 1 through 6 to show the purposes the Constitution announces.

An Opening Statement of Purpose

- ① The Constitution opens with the Preamble, a short introduction that begins, "We the People." Written in 1787, it tells readers why the people were creating a new national government. The Preamble does not list the government's detailed powers or rules. Instead, it announces the Constitution's broad purposes. Its words present a shared plan: Americans would join together, seek fairness and peace, protect the country, support the public good, and preserve liberty for people living then and in the future as well.
- ② Each phrase in the Preamble points to a goal. "Form a more perfect Union" means strengthen the nation's unity. "Establish Justice" names fairness under law, while "insure domestic Tranquility" refers to peace and order at home. "Provide for the common defense" concerns protection from threats. "Promote the general Welfare" points to conditions that help the public. Finally, "secure the Blessings of Liberty" expresses a desire to protect freedom for "ourselves and our Posterity," or future generations.
- ③ Because the Preamble is an introduction, it helps readers understand the Constitution before they examine its articles and amendments. The rest of the Constitution explains how the government is organized and what it may do. The Preamble gives those later parts a purpose by naming the aims they should serve. It does not set out detailed legal rules by itself. Its value is that it states the people's reasons and hopes for the new government in one clear opening statement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the main purpose of the Preamble?

2 What two goals are described by “establish Justice” and “insure domestic Tranquility”?

3 How does the Preamble connect to the articles and amendments that follow it?

4 Which Preamble goal includes future generations, and what does that goal seek to protect?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that your neighborhood is writing an opening statement for a new community club. Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining why the club exists. Include at least two Preamble goals in your own words, without copying Preamble phrases word for word.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the six phrases that name goals in the Preamble, then number them 1 through 6 to show the purposes the Constitution announces. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the main purpose of the Preamble?	It introduces the Constitution and states the broad purposes for creating the new national government.
2	What two goals are described by “establish Justice” and “insure domestic Tranquility”?	They describe fairness under law and peace and order at home.
3	How does the Preamble connect to the articles and amendments that follow it?	The Preamble names the aims the later parts should serve, while the rest of the Constitution explains how the government is organized and what it may do.
4	Which Preamble goal includes future generations, and what does that goal seek to protect?	“Secure the Blessings of Liberty” includes future generations, or posterity, and seeks to protect freedom.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our neighborhood clean-up club brings residents together to make shared spaces safer and fairer. We will work peacefully, protect one another during projects, and improve parks for everyone. We also want future residents to enjoy a healthy community and the freedom to use it.

Accept answers that identify the Preamble as an introduction stating broad goals, rather than a list of governmental powers or detailed rules. For the open response, accept varied community purposes if the student clearly adapts at least two Preamble goals.