

Rights Under Guard

Read how constitutional limits protect individual freedoms.

SS.7.CG.2.4 "Explain how the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights safeguard individual rights."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline statements that describe a limit on government power. Circle each amendment named to show how the Constitution and Bill of Rights safeguard rights.

Limits That Protect People

- ① The Constitution creates a national government, but it also limits government power. Its first three articles divide power among Congress, the president, and the federal courts. This separation makes it harder for one person or group to control every decision. The Constitution also gives courts the job of deciding cases under the Constitution. When a law or government action conflicts with the Constitution, courts can review it. These limits help protect people from unfair uses of power.
- ② In 1791, the Bill of Rights added the first ten amendments to the Constitution. These amendments name important freedoms and protections. The First Amendment protects freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition. The Fourth Amendment guards people against unreasonable searches and seizures and requires warrants to meet rules. The Fifth Amendment protects due process and says the government cannot take private property for public use without just compensation. The Sixth Amendment protects rights of people accused of crimes, including a speedy, public trial and a lawyer.
- ③ Safeguards work when people can use their rights and when government must follow constitutional rules. For example, a student who peacefully joins a community meeting to speak about a park is using First Amendment freedoms. If officials tried to punish the student only for that peaceful opinion, a court could examine whether the action violated the Constitution. The Constitution and Bill of Rights do not allow every action, but they set boundaries on government. They give individuals ways to challenge government actions that ignore protected rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does dividing power among three branches help safeguard individual rights?

2 What protection does the Fourth Amendment provide according to the passage?

3 How does the Fifth Amendment protect a person whose private property is taken for public use?

4 In the park-meeting example, what could a court examine if officials punished the student only for a peaceful opinion?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about a government action that might affect an individual right. Name one amendment that could protect the person, then explain how a constitutional safeguard could limit or review the government action.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline statements that describe a limit on government power. Circle each amendment named to show how the Constitution and Bill of Rights safeguard rights. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does dividing power among three branches help safeguard individual rights?	It makes it harder for one person or group to control every decision and use power unfairly.
2	What protection does the Fourth Amendment provide according to the passage?	It guards people against unreasonable searches and seizures and requires warrants to meet rules.
3	How does the Fifth Amendment protect a person whose private property is taken for public use?	The government must provide just compensation.
4	In the park-meeting example, what could a court examine if officials punished the student only for a peaceful opinion?	A court could examine whether the officials' action violated the Constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A city bans residents from peacefully handing out flyers that criticize a new tax in a public park. This rule may conflict with the First Amendment protection for speech and petition. A court could review the rule and decide whether the city violated constitutional rights.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect a protected right to a limit on government power or court review. For the open response, accept a different accurate amendment and situation if the explanation correctly describes a safeguard.