

# Changing the Constitution

Trace how Article V moves an amendment from proposal to ratification.

**SS.7.CG.3.5** "Explain the amendment process outlined in Article V of the U.S. Constitution."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the two ways an amendment can be proposed, circle the rule that makes it part of the Constitution, and number the proposal and ratification stages 1 and 2.

### Article V in Action

- ① Article V provides a deliberate way to change the U.S. Constitution. An amendment can be proposed in either of two ways. First, two-thirds of both the House of Representatives and the Senate may vote to propose it. Second, Congress must call a convention for proposing amendments when two-thirds of state legislatures apply for one. Both routes concern proposing an idea, not putting it into the Constitution. The high thresholds require broad support before a proposed change moves forward.
- ② After an amendment is proposed, it needs ratification, or formal approval by the states. Congress chooses one of two ratification methods: approval by three-fourths of the state legislatures or approval by conventions in three-fourths of the states. A state convention is a meeting of delegates chosen for that purpose. Congress does not choose which states approve. Instead, the same three-fourths requirement applies whichever ratification method Congress selects. Proposal and ratification are separate stages, each requiring wide agreement.
- ③ Ratification requires approval from three-fourths of the states. Congress decides whether state legislatures or state conventions will vote on a proposed amendment. Once the required number of states approves it by the chosen method, the amendment becomes part of the Constitution. Article V also protects each state's equal representation in the Senate: no state can lose equal suffrage there without that state's consent. This protection shows that even the amendment process has a special limit.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What are the two ways an amendment can be proposed under Article V?

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**2** After an amendment is proposed, what choice does Congress make about ratification?

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**3** Compare the level of support needed for proposal with the level needed for ratification.

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**4** What protection for states does Article V include concerning the Senate?

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**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Imagine that people want to add a National Service Day amendment to the Constitution. Write a four-sentence explanation of its path through Article V, including both proposal routes, Congress's ratification choice, and the approval needed from the states.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline the two ways an amendment can be proposed, circle the rule that makes it part of the Constitution, and number the proposal and ratification stages 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                 | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What are the two ways an amendment can be proposed under Article V?                      | <b>It may be proposed by a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress, or by a convention that Congress calls after two-thirds of state legislatures apply for one.</b>                             |
| 2 | After an amendment is proposed, what choice does Congress make about ratification?       | <b>Congress chooses whether ratification will be done by state legislatures or by state conventions.</b>                                                                                            |
| 3 | Compare the level of support needed for proposal with the level needed for ratification. | <b>Proposal requires support from two-thirds of both houses of Congress or applications from two-thirds of state legislatures. Ratification requires approval from three-fourths of the states.</b> |
| 4 | What protection for states does Article V include concerning the Senate?                 | <b>A state cannot be deprived of its equal suffrage, or equal representation, in the Senate without that state's consent.</b>                                                                       |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

To propose a National Service Day amendment, two-thirds of both houses of Congress could vote for it. Alternatively, Congress would call a proposing convention if two-thirds of state legislatures applied for one. After proposal, Congress would choose ratification by state legislatures or state conventions. The amendment would join the Constitution only after approval by three-fourths of the states using that chosen method.

Accept equivalent wording that accurately separates proposal from ratification. For the open response, students should include both proposal routes, Congress's choice of ratification method, and approval by three-fourths of the states.