

Florida Constitution Change

Compare government, rights, and public education across two constitutions.

SS.8.CG.1.2 "Compare and contrast the 1838 Florida Constitution and 1868 Florida Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one feature shared by both constitutions, then circle three details that show differences between them, so you can compare their rules.

Florida's Changing Rules

- ① In 1838, delegates wrote a constitution as Florida prepared to become a state. It created a governor, a legislature with two houses, and courts. The document limited voting to white male citizens who met age and residence rules. It protected slavery and treated enslaved people as property. This constitution reflected a society in which political power belonged mainly to white men. Florida entered the Union as a state in 1845 under this constitution after years as a territory. It set aside school land proceeds to support common schools.
- ② After the Civil War, Florida's 1868 constitution was written during Reconstruction. It kept a governor, a two-house legislature, and courts, but it expanded political participation. It gave adult men the right to vote without a racial limit. It also required the state to provide a uniform system of public schools for all children and declared that all men were equal before the law. These changes responded to emancipation and the new rights of formerly enslaved Floridians in the state.
- ③ Both constitutions organized Florida's government with a governor, courts, and a legislature of two houses. Each addressed schools, but the 1838 document set aside school land proceeds while the 1868 document required a uniform system for all children. The 1838 document protected slavery and restricted voting to white men. The 1868 document recognized equality before the law and removed the racial restriction on male voting. Comparing the texts shows how the Civil War and Reconstruction changed Florida's laws and ideas about citizenship and participation in government for many residents.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What government features did both the 1838 and 1868 constitutions establish?

2 How did voting rules change from the 1838 constitution to the 1868 constitution?

3 Compare how the two constitutions addressed slavery and equality before the law.

4 How did the school provisions differ between the two constitutions?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence comparison of the two constitutions. Include one similarity, two differences, and a final sentence explaining what the changes suggest about Florida after the Civil War.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one feature shared by both constitutions, then circle three details that show differences between them, so you can compare their rules. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What government features did both the 1838 and 1868 constitutions establish?	Both established a governor, courts, and a legislature with two houses.
2	How did voting rules change from the 1838 constitution to the 1868 constitution?	The 1838 constitution limited voting to white male citizens who met age and residence rules. The 1868 constitution gave adult men voting rights without a racial limit.
3	Compare how the two constitutions addressed slavery and equality before the law.	The 1838 constitution protected slavery and treated enslaved people as property. The 1868 constitution declared that all men were equal before the law.
4	How did the school provisions differ between the two constitutions?	The 1838 constitution set aside school land proceeds to support common schools. The 1868 constitution required the state to provide a uniform system of public schools for all children.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both constitutions created a governor, courts, and a legislature with two houses. In 1838, voting was limited to white men, but in 1868 adult men could vote without a racial limit. The 1838 constitution protected slavery, while the 1868 constitution declared that all men were equal before the law. These changes suggest that Reconstruction broadened political participation and legal rights for formerly enslaved Floridians.

Accept equivalent wording that accurately identifies shared government structure and contrasts voting, slavery and equality, or school provisions. In the open response, look for one accurate similarity, two accurate differences, and a reasonable explanation connecting the changes to Reconstruction.