

Rights Have Rules

How the Constitution limits government power to protect citizens.

SS5CG1 “Explain how a citizen's rights are protected under the U.S. Constitution.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every phrase that names a protected freedom or fair treatment, circle each amendment name, and write 1 beside the sentence that explains what courts can do.

Constitutional Protections

- ① The U.S. Constitution protects citizens by setting limits on government power. Its first ten amendments, called the Bill of Rights, list important freedoms. For example, the First Amendment protects freedom of speech, religion, press, peaceful assembly, and petition. A citizen may share an opinion, practice a faith, join a peaceful meeting, or ask the government to solve a problem.
- ② When the government accuses a person of a crime, other amendments require fair procedures. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Fifth Amendment says the government must follow due process, or fair legal steps. The Sixth Amendment protects rights in criminal trials, including a speedy, public trial and help from a lawyer. These rules make government officials follow the law.
- ③ The Fourteenth Amendment requires states to give people equal protection of the laws and due process. If a citizen believes a government action violated a constitutional right, the person can challenge that action in court. Judges compare the action with the Constitution. Courts can stop government actions that break the Constitution, helping protect rights even when leaders make unfair choices.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the Bill of Rights? Name two freedoms protected by the First Amendment.

2 What does due process require the government to do?

3 How does the Sixth Amendment protect a person accused of a crime?

4 What can a court do when a government action breaks the Constitution?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences about an invented citizen whose constitutional right is threatened by a government action. Name one protection from the passage, explain the action, and tell how the Constitution or a court could protect the citizen.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every phrase that names a protected freedom or fair treatment, circle each amendment name, and write 1 beside the sentence that explains what courts can do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the Bill of Rights? Name two freedoms protected by the First Amendment.	The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution. It protects freedoms such as speech, religion, press, peaceful assembly, and petition.
2	What does due process require the government to do?	It requires the government to follow fair legal steps.
3	How does the Sixth Amendment protect a person accused of a crime?	It protects rights in criminal trials, including a speedy, public trial and help from a lawyer.
4	What can a court do when a government action breaks the Constitution?	A court can stop the government action.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jordan wants to attend a peaceful meeting about safer crosswalks. A town rule says that no one may attend the meeting. The First Amendment protects peaceful assembly. Jordan could challenge the rule in court, and a court could stop it if it breaks the Constitution.

Accept any two First Amendment freedoms named in the passage for Question 1. For the open response, accept a realistic invented situation that correctly connects a government action, a constitutional protection, and a possible court response.