

Amendment Pathway

Trace how a constitutional amendment moves from proposal to approval.

SS5CG2 "Explain the process by which amendments to the U.S. Constitution are made."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two ways an amendment can be proposed, circle the approval needed for ratification, and number the three main stages of the process 1, 2, and 3. Your marks will show how a proposed change becomes part of the Constitution.

Changing the Constitution

- ① The Constitution can be changed by an amendment, but the process is purposely demanding. First, an amendment must be proposed. Usually, two thirds of the members in both the House of Representatives and the Senate vote to propose it. The president does not sign or veto a proposed amendment. This high vote requirement means a proposed change needs broad support.
- ② Article V also gives states a second way to begin the process. If two thirds of state legislatures ask Congress to call a convention, Congress must call one to propose amendments. This method has never been used to propose an amendment. Whether Congress or a convention proposes the change, the proposal then goes to the states for ratification.
- ③ To ratify means to approve. Three fourths of the states must ratify a proposed amendment before it becomes part of the Constitution. Today, that means 38 of 50 states. Congress chooses whether state legislatures or state conventions will vote on ratification. Most amendments have been ratified by legislatures. If enough states do not approve it, the proposal does not become an amendment.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What vote is usually needed in Congress to propose an amendment?

2 Describe the second way an amendment can be proposed.

3 What must happen in the states for a proposed amendment to become part of the Constitution?

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

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences that explain how a fictional amendment could become part of the Constitution. Include how it is proposed, how Congress chooses a ratification method, how many states approve it, and the final result.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the two ways an amendment can be proposed, circle the approval needed for ratification, and number the three main stages of the process 1, 2, and 3. Your marks will show how a proposed change becomes part of the Constitution. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What vote is usually needed in Congress to propose an amendment?	Two thirds of the members in both the House of Representatives and the Senate must vote to propose it.
2	Describe the second way an amendment can be proposed.	Two thirds of state legislatures can ask Congress to call a convention. Congress must then call a convention to propose amendments.
3	What must happen in the states for a proposed amendment to become part of the Constitution?	Three fourths of the states must ratify, or approve, it. Today, that is 38 of 50 states.
4	After an amendment is proposed, what choice does Congress make about ratification?	Congress chooses whether state legislatures or state conventions will vote on ratification.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An amendment to protect public parks is proposed when two thirds of both houses of Congress vote yes. Congress sends the proposal to the states and chooses state legislatures for ratification. Thirty-eight states approve it. Because three fourths of the states ratify it, the proposal becomes part of the Constitution.

Accept either proposal route: a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress or a convention called after requests from two-thirds of state legislatures. For ratification, students must state that three-fourths of the states, currently 38, approve the proposal through the method Congress chooses.