

Georgia's Rulebook

Read how Georgia's constitution is organized and connected to federal law.

SS8CG1.a "Explain the basic structure of the Georgia state constitution (preamble, bill of rights, articles, and amendments) as well as its relationship to the United States Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the passage's explanations of the preamble, Bill of Rights, articles, and amendments 1 through 4. Circle the sentence that states which constitution has higher authority when rules conflict.

A Constitution with Two Levels

- ① Georgia's current constitution, approved by voters in 1982 and effective in 1983, is the state's basic plan for government. Its preamble introduces the document and states its purposes, including establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, and promoting the general welfare. After the preamble comes the Bill of Rights, Article I. It protects individual rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, and lists limits on government power. These protections guide Georgia officials when they make laws and carry out public duties.
- ② The constitution's 11 articles organize major subjects. Article II addresses voting and elections. Article III creates the General Assembly, Georgia's lawmaking branch, while Article V covers the executive branch, led by the governor. Article VI establishes the judicial branch and Georgia's courts. Other articles address topics such as taxation, education, local governments, property, and miscellaneous provisions. This organization helps readers locate rules about a particular part of state government or public policy.
- ③ Amendments are official changes or additions to the Georgia Constitution. A proposed amendment usually must receive support from two-thirds of both houses of the General Assembly and then be approved by Georgia voters. The Georgia Constitution works alongside the United States Constitution. The U.S. Constitution creates the national government and is the supreme law of the land. Georgia may govern state matters and protect rights, but no Georgia constitutional rule, law, or amendment may conflict with the U.S. Constitution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the purpose of the preamble, and what does the Bill of Rights protect?

2 How many articles organize the Georgia Constitution? Name the branches covered by Article III and Article VI.

3 What two steps does a proposed Georgia constitutional amendment usually need before it becomes approved?

4 If a Georgia constitutional rule conflicts with the U.S. Constitution, which document controls? Use information from the passage to explain.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence explanation for a new Georgia resident who wants to understand a proposed state rule. Explain how the preamble, Bill of Rights, articles, and amendments could help the resident examine the rule, and explain what happens if the rule conflicts with the U.S. Constitution.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the passage's explanations of the preamble, Bill of Rights, articles, and amendments 1 through 4. Circle the sentence that states which constitution has higher authority when rules conflict. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the purpose of the preamble, and what does the Bill of Rights protect?	The preamble introduces the constitution and states its purposes. The Bill of Rights protects individual rights and limits government power.
2	How many articles organize the Georgia Constitution? Name the branches covered by Article III and Article VI.	There are 11 articles. Article III covers the legislative branch, and Article VI covers the judicial branch.
3	What two steps does a proposed Georgia constitutional amendment usually need before it becomes approved?	It usually needs support from two-thirds of both houses of the General Assembly and approval by Georgia voters.
4	If a Georgia constitutional rule conflicts with the U.S. Constitution, which document controls? Use information from the passage to explain.	The U.S. Constitution controls because it is the supreme law of the land.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The preamble tells the resident the broad purposes of Georgia's government. The Bill of Rights can show whether the proposed rule affects an individual right or a limit on government power. The articles can help the resident find which part of state government has duties connected to the rule. An amendment could change the Georgia Constitution if it is approved through the required process. If the proposed rule conflicts with the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Constitution controls.

Accept clear explanations that accurately connect all four Georgia Constitution parts to examining a state rule. The response must state that Georgia rules cannot conflict with the U.S. Constitution because federal constitutional law is supreme.