Opening Words, Lasting Goals

Interpret the vision in Indiana's constitutional preamble.

IS.2.1 "Interpret the Preamble of Indiana's Constitution to explore the authors' vision for Indiana's government."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that name who creates the constitution, circle its stated goals, and number two phrases officials should consider in the courthouse decision to trace the authors' vision for government.

What Indiana's Opening Words Say

1. In 1850, delegates met to revise Indiana's constitution. Their work produced the state constitution adopted in 1851. Before its rules about government, the document opens with a preamble, a short statement of purpose. A preamble is not a list of laws for every situation. Instead, its wording offers clues about what the authors hoped government would protect and how they understood its authority. Reading it closely means noticing both who is speaking and the goals named in the opening lines. Those choices can guide how you interpret the vision behind the rules that follow.

2. The preamble begins, "TO THE END, that justice be established, public order maintained, and liberty perpetuated: WE, the People of the State of Indiana, grateful to ALMIGHTY GOD for the free exercise of the right to choose our own form of government, do ordain this Constitution." These are the words of the 1851 constitution's opening, not a later summary. The sentence joins several aims rather than naming a single priority. Notice its verbs, including "established," "maintained," "perpetuated," and "ordain." Each verb points toward a different kind of action or timescale for government.

3. Imagine a county courthouse on a crowded day. Officials must decide how to keep a hearing orderly while allowing residents to speak about a proposed rule. One plan lets only a few people enter; another uses a longer schedule so more people can speak. Neither choice appears in the preamble, and the preamble does not provide a ready-made rule for the courthouse. Instead, its words can help readers ask what officials should weigh when they make decisions. Interpretations should point to specific words in the preamble and explain the connection, not simply repeat a phrase.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What do “WE, the People of the State of Indiana” and “do ordain this Constitution” suggest about the source of the constitution’s authority?

2. In the courthouse example, how could a longer schedule serve both “justice be established” and “public order maintained”?

3. What does the authors’ expression of gratitude suggest about how they valued the right to choose their form of government?

4. Why might “liberty perpetuated” matter when officials set rules for future hearings, not just this hearing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your town is considering closing a public park at sunset because of repeated noise complaints. In four sentences, recommend a rule and explain how two quoted phrases from the preamble guide your choice, including a tension between their goals.

ANSWER KEY

Opening Words, Lasting Goals

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words that name who creates the constitution, circle its stated goals, and number two phrases officials should consider in the courthouse decision to trace the authors' vision for government. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What do "WE, the People of the State of Indiana" and "do ordain this Constitution" suggest about the source of the constitution's authority?	**The wording presents the people of Indiana as the ones establishing the constitution and its authority.**
2	In the courthouse example, how could a longer schedule serve both "justice be established" and "public order maintained"?	**It could give more residents a chance to speak while spacing out the hearing to keep it orderly.**
3	What does the authors' expression of gratitude suggest about how they valued the right to choose their form of government?	**They viewed the freedom to choose their government as a valuable right for which they were grateful.**
4	Why might "liberty perpetuated" matter when officials set rules for future hearings, not just this hearing?	**The phrase suggests that officials should protect residents' freedom to participate over time, not only on one day.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would keep the park open until 9 p.m. but prohibit amplified music after sunset. The phrase "public order maintained" supports a clear noise limit that respects nearby residents. The phrase "liberty perpetuated" supports leaving people some evening access to a shared public place. A full closure might reduce noise further, but it would restrict access more than a targeted noise rule.

Accept interpretations that connect specific preamble words to a defensible claim. For the park task, accept different rules if the response quotes two phrases and explains a genuine tension between their goals.