

Change Beyond Amendments

How written rules, lasting practices, and state revisions can reshape government

7.5c "While the Constitution provides a formal process for change through amendments, the Constitution can respond to change in other ways. The New York State Constitution changed over time..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In paragraph 1, underline amendment proposal rules and circle ratification rules. In paragraph 2, star two unwritten practices. In paragraph 3, box one voting expansion and one exclusion.

Ways Constitutions Change

- ① A formal amendment changes the U.S. Constitution's written words. Congress can propose one by two-thirds votes in both houses. Alternatively, Congress must call a proposing convention when two-thirds of state legislatures apply. Ratification requires approval in three-fourths of the states, through legislatures or conventions as Congress chooses. These demanding rules make amendments uncommon. The Nineteenth Amendment, ratified in 1920, prohibited denying citizens the vote because of sex.
- ② Change also occurs through customs and actions that are not written amendments. First, President George Washington asked department leaders to advise him, creating the model for the presidential cabinet. The Constitution does not list a cabinet, but later presidents continued this practice. Second, political parties developed as citizens and leaders organized around different ideas and candidates. The Constitution does not create political parties, yet parties became important in elections and lawmaking. These lasting practices are often called part of the unwritten constitution.
- ③ New York's 1821 convention drafted a new state constitution, which voters ratified in January 1822. It broadened voting for white men by allowing qualifications other than property ownership, including tax payment or specified public service. But it imposed a \$250 property requirement on Black male voters, excluding many. Women remained excluded. The reform expanded participation unevenly rather than creating equal voting rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two stages must happen for a proposed amendment to become part of the U.S. Constitution?

2 How did Washington's cabinet and political parties change government without a formal amendment?

3 How did the 1821 New York Constitution make voting more democratic, and what important limits remained?

4 According to the passage, how was New York's new constitution of 1821 made official?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a new national change, such as a rule about technology or presidential advice. In 4 or 5 sentences, explain whether it should be a formal amendment or an unwritten practice, name the steps or actions it would need, and explain how it would respond to change.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In paragraph 1, underline amendment proposal rules and circle ratification rules. In paragraph 2, star two unwritten practices. In paragraph 3, box one voting expansion and one exclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two stages must happen for a proposed amendment to become part of the U.S. Constitution?	Congress can propose an amendment by two-thirds votes in both houses, or a convention can propose one after two-thirds of state legislatures apply. Three-fourths of states must ratify through legislatures or conventions as Congress chooses.
2	How did Washington's cabinet and political parties change government without a formal amendment?	Washington's cabinet became a lasting presidential practice even though the Constitution does not list one. Political parties developed through citizens and leaders organizing, even though the Constitution does not create parties.
3	How did the 1821 New York Constitution make voting more democratic, and what important limits remained?	It allowed white men to qualify without owning property, such as through tax payment or public service. Black male voters faced a \$250 property requirement, and women remained excluded.
4	According to the passage, how was New York's new constitution of 1821 made official?	A state convention drafted it in 1821, and voters ratified it in January 1822.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A national rule guaranteeing citizens the right to vote at age sixteen should be a formal amendment. Congress could propose it by a two-thirds vote in both houses. Then three-fourths of the states would need to ratify it by a method Congress chooses. This amendment would respond to arguments that younger citizens should have a voice in elections.

Accept equivalent descriptions of proposal and ratification methods in Question 1. For the open response, accept either type of change if the student gives a logical explanation, accurate amendment steps when chosen, and a clear connection to a changing need.