Promises in the Preamble

Read a town meeting through the Constitution's opening words

8.C.4.2.A "Examine the purpose of government, including its responsibilities to citizens, as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each goal quoted from the Preamble, then number two concerns raised at the meeting that show different responsibilities government has toward citizens.

Questions After the Storm

1. After a severe storm, residents crowd a town hall. One asks why governments exist at all. The Constitution's Preamble begins with "We the People," showing that its authority comes from the people. It states goals for the government the Constitution creates, not a list of specific laws. One goal, "form a more perfect Union," points to states working together instead of acting as separate countries. Another, "establish Justice," calls for fair laws and courts. Both aims matter when people disagree about how storm aid should be shared.

2. At the meeting, two concerns sound similar but are not the same. Some residents fear fights over limited supplies. The Preamble says "insure domestic Tranquility," a goal of peace and order within the country. Others worry about an attack from another nation while resources are strained. "Provide for the common defence" points to protecting the country from outside threats. These goals explain why government must consider both public order at home and national safety. They do not mean officials can ignore people's rights whenever they claim an emergency.

3. A parent at the meeting wants clean water restored quickly. The Preamble calls on government to "promote the general Welfare," meaning support the well-being of the public. Another parent asks whether recovery plans will leave future residents with choices and rights. "Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity" includes protecting freedom for people living now and for later generations. The Preamble names purposes and responsibilities, but it does not itself give officials a detailed storm plan or unlimited power to carry one out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do “We the People” and “form a more perfect Union” describe both the source of the government's authority and one of its purposes?

2. Residents disagree about how storm aid should be shared. Why does “establish Justice” matter to this decision?

3. Which concern at the meeting relates to domestic Tranquility, and which relates to the common defence? Explain the difference.

4. How do the two parents' concerns in the last paragraph point to different responsibilities toward citizens?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Congress proposes checking every online message before it appears to prevent threats of violence. In four sentences, recommend a decision or change, explain how it addresses two different Preamble goals, and describe its effect on citizens now and in the future.

ANSWER KEY

Promises in the Preamble

GRADE 8 · 8.C.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each goal quoted from the Preamble, then number two concerns raised at the meeting that show different responsibilities government has toward citizens. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do "We the People" and "form a more perfect Union" describe both the source of the government's authority and one of its purposes?	**The government's authority comes from the people. One purpose is to bring the states together to work as a union.**
2	Residents disagree about how storm aid should be shared. Why does "establish Justice" matter to this decision?	**The government should use fair laws and processes when deciding how to share aid.**
3	Which concern at the meeting relates to domestic Tranquility, and which relates to the common defence? Explain the difference.	**Fights over supplies concern peace within the country, or domestic Tranquility. An attack from another nation concerns protection from an outside threat, or the common defence.**
4	How do the two parents' concerns in the last paragraph point to different responsibilities toward citizens?	**Restoring clean water supports the public's well-being, or general Welfare. Protecting choices and rights for current and future residents supports the Blessings of Liberty.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress should reject the plan to check every online message before it appears. Preventing threats could support domestic Tranquility by helping keep peace within the country. But checking every message before it appears would limit people's freedom to speak, which conflicts with securing the Blessings of Liberty. Congress could consider a narrower response to threats that protects people now without taking away that freedom from future citizens.

Accept other supported decisions in Part 3 if the response accurately applies two distinct Preamble goals and addresses citizens now and in the future. Do not require students to claim that the Preamble itself grants Congress a specific power.