

6. Why We Need a Bill of Rights | Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Fix the Flaws!

Government Type: _____

Civilization Name: _____

In our government, the biggest problem was:

This problem happened because:

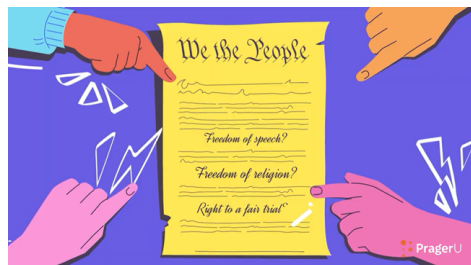
Which rights would bring more freedom for people? (check all that apply)

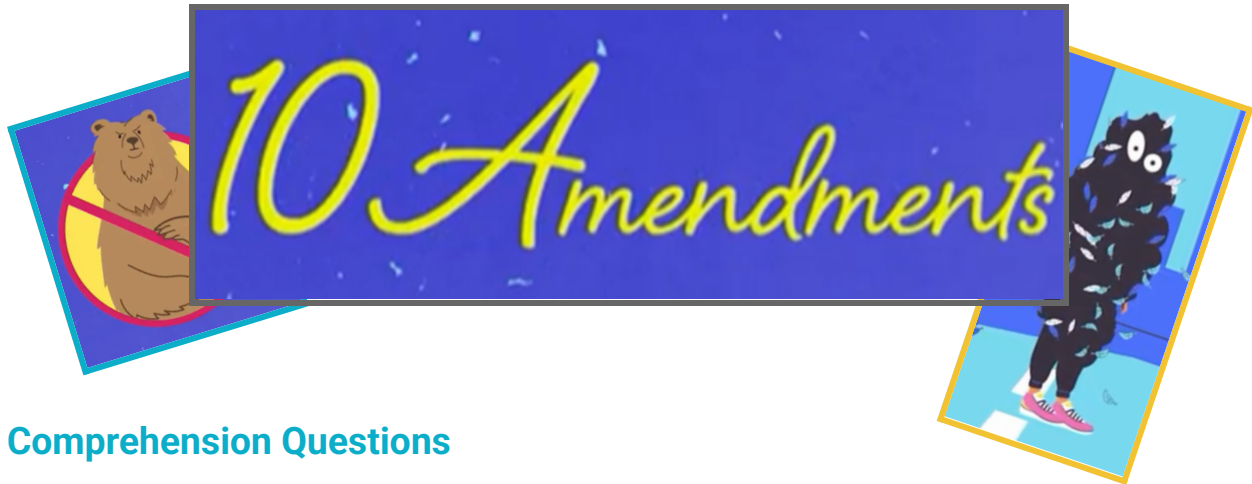
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of religion
- Protection from unfair searches or seizures
- Equal treatment under the law (including leaders)
- Right to a fair trial / lawyer / jury

Which guardrails would help protect those rights?

- Separation of powers into branches
- Equal representation for groups
- Independent judges / fair courts

We need these because:





Comprehension Questions

1. Why did some Founders think the original Constitution needed a written list of rights?

2. What did James Madison propose to add to the Constitution, and what is that addition called?

3. The First Amendment protects five freedoms; list three:

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Second Amendment: What does "the right to bear arms" mean, and what reason is given for why it matters?

5. Third & Fourth Amendments: What do these amendments protect about your home and personal property?



6. Fifth Amendment: What does "I plead the Fifth" mean, and how is it connected to the right to remain silent?

7. Sixth, Seventh, & Eighth Amendments: List two protections these amendments give to someone accused or convicted of a crime.

- _____
- _____

8. Ninth Amendment: What does it mean that some rights exist even if they are not written in the Constitution?

9. Tenth Amendment: What happens to powers that are not specifically given to the national government (who gets them instead)?

10. Why does the Constitution become "even greater" after adding the Bill of Rights?

Answer Key | Why We Need a Bill of Rights

Fix the Flaws!

Answers will vary by group. Grade for understanding. (Use this to check student responses against the intended model.)

What to look for in all groups:

- Students name a real risk to freedom they observed in their system (abuse of power, unfair punishment, silencing dissent, etc.).
- Their selected “rights” are specific protections (what government *cannot* do), not vague wishes (“be nice”).
- Their choices match the system’s weakness (ex: theocracy → religious freedom; dictatorship → speech + fair trial).
- If they pick “guardrails” (like separation of powers), students explain how it prevents loopholes or abuse.

Dictatorship

Likely problem: power in one person; punishment for disagreement; no fair process.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Freedom of speech/press (ability to criticize leaders)
- Due process / fair trial / evidence required
- Equal treatment under the law (leaders too)
- Written constitution/rulebook leaders must follow

Absolute Monarchy

Likely problem: ruler above the law; freedoms depend on the ruler; unclear rules when leadership changes.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Equal treatment under the law (including leaders)
- Fair trial / due process protections
- Written constitution/rulebook (limits ruler power)
- Basic protections for speech/religion (at least peaceful disagreement)

Oligarchy

Likely problem: laws benefit elites; unequal punishment; ordinary people have no voice.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Equal treatment under the law (leaders too)
- Equal representation / voice in lawmaking
- Fair trial / jury (regular people involved)

- Written rules that apply to everyone

Theocracy

Likely problem: forced belief; punishment for different beliefs; courts/rules controlled by religious power.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Freedom of religion (no forced belief)
- Freedom of speech (peaceful disagreement allowed)
- Equal protection / equal treatment under the law
- Fair trial / due process protections

Communist Government

Likely problem: speech controlled; truth/disagreement punished; government controls resources and courts.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Freedom of speech/press (ability to challenge leaders)
- Fair trial / due process / evidence required
- Privacy protections (limits on searches)
- Written constitution/rulebook + independent courts

Direct Democracy

Likely problem: majority can bully minority; emotional “mob rule”; rights can be voted away; unstable decisions.

Strong rights/guardrails to see:

- Protection of minority rights (rights can't be voted away)
- Fair trial / evidence required (slow down emotion)
- Written constitution/rulebook
- Representatives / separation of powers (guardrails)

Comprehension Questions | Answers

1. Why did some Founders think the original Constitution needed a written list of rights?
Because they worried that if rights weren't spelled out, the government could violate them or find loopholes and claim it wasn't breaking any rules.
2. What did James Madison propose to add to the Constitution, and what is that addition called?
He proposed adding ten amendments, which became the Bill of Rights.

3. The First Amendment protects five freedoms; list three:
 - Freedom of religion, speech, and the press. Also freedom to petition the government and gather peacefully if students remember from direct instruction rather than the video
4. Second Amendment: What does “the right to bear arms” mean, and what reason is given for why it matters?

It means the right to own guns. The episode says it matters because people have a right (and a moral obligation) to defend themselves and their loved ones—not only from criminals, but also from tyrannical governments.
5. Third & Fourth Amendments: What do these amendments protect about your home and personal property?

They protect your right to feel safe in your home: the government (including soldiers/police) can't just barge in or search your stuff without good reason.
6. Fifth Amendment: What does “I plead the Fifth” mean, and how is it connected to the right to remain silent?

It means you don't have to say anything that might get you in trouble. The episode connects it to the idea that if you're accused of a crime, you can stay silent until you have a lawyer.
7. Sixth, Seventh, & Eighth Amendments: List two protections these amendments give to someone accused or convicted of a crime.

Any two of the following:

 - Right to a lawyer
 - Right to a speedy trial
 - Right to a jury (regular people)
 - Protection from excessive or cruel punishment
8. Ninth Amendment: What does it mean that some rights exist even if they are not written in the Constitution?

It means people still have rights even if those rights aren't listed—just because it's not written down doesn't mean the people don't have it.
9. Tenth Amendment: What happens to powers that are not specifically given to the national government?

Those powers belong to the states (and are kept closer to the people).
10. According to the episode, why does the Constitution become “even greater” after adding the Bill of Rights?

Because the Bill of Rights clearly protects key freedoms and adds extra safeguards against big government, helping preserve liberty.