

Preamble of the Constitution & Bill of Rights

Preamble:

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility [peace], provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, & secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Bill of Rights

ACTUAL TEXT	MEANING
1. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, & to petition the government for a redress of grievances.	Congress cannot set up an official religion for the country or pass laws to stop people from following their own religion. Congress cannot make laws that stop people from speaking & writing what they wish. Congress cannot make laws that stop people from holding peaceful meetings or from asking the government to correct a wrong action.
2. A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.	The people have the right to protect themselves by serving as armed citizens (militia) and Congress cannot stop them.
3. No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.	In peacetime, citizens cannot be forced to give soldiers a place to sleep or meals in their homes. In wartime, this may be done only with federal law.
4. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.	A person cannot be arrested, & his or her house cannot be searched and property or papers taken away, except with a warrant issued by the Courts. Whoever asks for a warrant must explain why, exactly where the search is to be made, & who or what is to be taken.

5. No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.
6. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy & public trial, by an impartial jury or the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.
7. In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States than according to the rules of the common law.
8. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.
9. The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.
10. The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

Before anyone can be tried in a federal court, a grand jury must formally accuse that person in an indictment, however, this rule does not apply to the armed forces in times of war.

A person cannot be tried twice for the same crime

No one can be forced to say anything that would help convict him/herself

The federal government cannot take away a person's life, liberty, or

Property without giving them a fair trial. This amendment reinforces the belief that people have the right to liberty and ownership of property.

An accused person has the right to a prompt, public trial by jury. The must be chosen in the state the crime was committed in. The accused must be told of the charges and be present when witnesses speak in court. The accused has a right to a lawyer and has the power to make witnesses come and speak in court on his behalf.

In many disputes that involve more than twenty dollars, either side can insist on having a jury trial. The right of the judges to interfere with a jury's decision is limited to the law

Bails, fines, & punishments must not be excessive or cruel or unusual

The mention of certain rights in the Constitution does not mean they are The only rights people have.

The states or the people have all powers that have not been assigned to the federal government or Prohibited to the states.