

Summer Reading - US Government

The Know Your Bill of Rights Book: Don't Lose your Constitutional Rights, Learn Them by Sean Patrick

*** There may be limited editions of hard copies of this book. You can purchase this book for \$2.99 on Amazon in an electronic version and read it on a Kindle, iPad, or your computer. You may also want to look at textbooks.com. If you buy the hard copy, the content is the same, but the chapters are divided differently.

Note from :

In our study of US Government, one cornerstone of understanding why we have the government that we have is understanding our protected rights. I am counting on you to remember your American History to know the background to why these amendments were necessary. Each chapter will remind you of some things in your previous history classes to help you understand our Bill of Rights. You are on your honor to complete this assignment. Do not copy from other people.

Grading: This reading guide will count as two quiz grades.

Due Date: We will study the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the second half of the first quarter. The reading guide is due the first day of school. You may submit it on OnCampus in PDF format or submit a hard copy.

Note from the Author:

Have you ever had trouble understanding the United States Bill of Rights?

Have you ever wondered what was really meant by one or more of the ten amendments?

Have you ever been unsure as to how these rights apply to modern society?

Have you even questioned if the Bill of Rights should still be held as inviolable law, nearly 250 years after its writing?

Here's the truth: the Bill of Rights is not easy to understand if you just pick it up and give it a read. The eloquent style in which it's written can be confusing. The language can cause misunderstandings. There's a lot of legal terminology that's beyond most of us. Without an understanding of the historical background of certain amendments, it's impossible to fully understand their importance and scope.

"In free governments, the rulers are the servants and the people their superiors and sovereigns."

Benjamin Franklin

Reading Guide Questions: Part 1 - 1st quiz grade

As you read through this book, you will discover that these rights were recognized by the British government, beginning as early as 1215 with the Magna Carta. It is ironic that the reason for the American Revolution came down to the fact that these rights were not being recognized.

Write a short paragraph about how these rights were first recognized by the British government. You might want to keep notes as you read on which British documents were the foundation of the American Bill of Rights. You should write this paragraph after you complete the book. (4 points)

Be sure that you read each amendment as you read the chapters concerning the rights. Each chapter states the amendment at the end of the chapter. Each question is worth 4 points.

Chapter 1 - Why Should you Buy this Book?

Background: The American Revolution and US Declaration of Independence were both based on the ideas promoted through Enlightenment Ideology. In order to understand the reasons for the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights, an understanding of Enlightenment Ideology concerning the purpose of government is required. You may need to research this. The first chapter explains how Enlightenment philosophy influenced the formation of US government. The author does not specifically name this philosophy, but he gives a concise explanation of the philosophy of the new government. Find a 2-3 sentence quote in this chapter which explains the philosophy. (Remember that one major source of disagreement at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 was that slavery was not outlawed in the US Constitution.)

Question 1

Write your quote and give a short explanation of the meaning.

Chapter 2 - The Hidden Barrier to Understanding Your Constitutional Rights

Question 2

Explain what the author means when he says that the “hidden barrier” to understanding the Bill of Rights is “words”.

Chapter 3 - The Foundations of Our Government

In this chapter the author gives the reader definitions of words that he believes are essential to understanding the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. Study the author’s definition of these words.

Question 3

For each of the following words, write a correct definition in your own words:

Freedom

Constitution

Government

Amendment

Chapter 4 - The Cornerstone of Your Rights: The First Amendment

Question 4

“ Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public Liberty, without Freedom of Speech.”

Benjamin Franklin

Explain the meaning of this quote.

Question 5

“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

Voltaire (Enlightenment Philosopher)

Explain the meaning of this quote.

Question 6

Define the Establishment Clause. In your definition also give the reason why this clause was necessary.

Question 7

How does this clause differ from the Free Exercise Clause?

Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Speech (Freedom of Expression)

Question 8

According to the author, why is Freedom of Expression essential to democracy?

Question 9

Give an explanation of what speech is not protected by this right.

Chapter 5 - To be Armed or Not to Be: The Second Amendment

Question 10

“The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.”

Thomas Jefferson

According to Thomas Jefferson, how should the Second Amendment be interpreted?

Question 11

This amendment is one of the most widely interpreted. What are the two interpretations of what this amendment means as far as the right to own weapons is concerned? (Be sure to read the Second Amendment.)

Question 12

When this amendment was written, it applied only to Federal government, and state governments could expand the right to own weapons to people protecting themselves against criminal activity. How is this amendment applied today?

Question 13

This amendment is also one of the most controversial protections in the Constitution. In light of the recent increase in active shooter incidents, what is your opinion concerning the right to bear arms?

Chapter 6 - Troops Shall Not Live in Your Home: The Third Amendment

Question 14

How does this amendment guarantee the right to privacy, even if the word "privacy" is not stated anywhere in this amendment?

Chapter 7 - A Man's House is His Castle: The Fourth Amendment

The Fourth Amendment also guarantees the right to privacy.

Question 15

Why did American's (as British colonists) object to the way that search warrants were executed in the colonies?

Question 16

How does this amendment guarantee privacy?

Chapter 8 - You Have the Right to Remain Silent: The Fifth Amendment

This amendment protects the people against the abuse of government in legal proceedings. It guarantees several different rights.

Question 17

Explain the right to no self incrimination.

Question 18

Explain the double jeopardy clause.

Chapter 9 - A New Age of Justice: The Sixth Amendment

Question 19

“I consider trial by jury as the only anchor ever yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution.”

Thomas Jefferson

Explain the meaning of this quote.

Chapter 10 - The Power of the Jury: The Seventh Amendment

Questions 20

“In suits of common law, trial by jury in civil cases is as essential to secure the liberty of the people as any one of the pre-existent rights of nature.”

James Madison

Explain the meaning of this quote. In your answer give a short explanation of the reason for this amendment.

Chapter 11 - Equal and Fair Justice for All: The Eighth Amendment

Question 21

What was the reason for this amendment?

Chapter 12 - Power to the People: To the People: The Ninth Amendment

Question 22

This amendment is about unenumerated rights. What does that mean, and what unenumerated rights does this amendment protect?

Chapter 13 - Keep the Government Limited: The Tenth Amendment

Question 23

“The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in State governments and numerous and indefinite.”

James Madison

This quote gives the reason for the 10th Amendment. How does this amendment reflect the idea of federalism? (You may need to look up “federalism.”)

Chapter 14 - Your Greatest Defense

Question 24

“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people...They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.” He also said, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free... it expects what never was and never will be.”

Thomas Jefferson

What did Jefferson mean when he said this in relation to the bill of rights?

Part 2 - Each amendment counts 5 points - 2nd quiz grade

Go to <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/constitutionClips/>

You will see a copy of the US Constitution and a collection of short video clips on the right side. For every phrase which is highlighted, there is a short video clip pertaining to that subject. Scroll down to the amendments. For each of the first 10 amendments, choose one video clip and answer the following questions. Most of the highlighted phrases have at least two or three clips.

Amendment 1 - Fundamental Rights

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in the first amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 2 - The Right to Bear Arms

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in this amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 3 - Quartering of Soldiers

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 4 - Search and Seizure

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in this amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 5 - Trial and Punishment, Compensation for Takings

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in this amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 6 - Right to a Speedy Trial, Confrontation of Witnesses

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in this amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 7 - Trial by Jury in Civil Cases

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 8 - Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in this amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 9 - Construction of the Constitution

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Which clause in the first amendment is this speaker speaking on? (What highlighted clause did you click on?)

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.

Amendment 10 - Powers of the States and People

Who is the primary speaker in this clip?

What is the occasion that called for this speaker to talk?

Give a four sentence summary of what this speaker says.